



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Simone de Roode

Title: Small State Agency in International Relations Exploring Opportunities for the Netherlands in the Security Relationship to the United States through Missile Defence

Programme/year: MISS, 2019/2020

Author of Evaluation (external reviewer): Prof. Nik Hynek, PhD

Criteria	Definition	Maximm	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	5
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	15
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	20
<i>Total</i>		80	40
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	6
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	14
TOTAL		100	54



Evaluation

Major criteria and evaluation:

This is a thesis dealing with an important security topic, namely how small states can deepen their strategic intra-alliance relations with hegemony through technological innovation. The empirical focus here is on the Netherlands-U.S. dynamics through the technology of missile defence. While the proposed topic is certainly of merit, the execution is, unfortunately, disappointing. The reasons are as follows: first, the thesis does not deal with the promised topic at all, except for the chapter 4 where the Dutch involvement – purely from an a-theoretical and policy-making perspective – gets discussed. Second, the thesis does not contain any relevant theoretical treatment of the topic, i.e. scholarship on deterrence and missile defence, as well as technological innovation, except for two paragraphs (pp. 19 and 20), which are insufficient both in terms of scope and depth. Third, given the fact that the thesis really spends most of the time on strategic competition between great powers (US, China, Russia), it is then inevitable that any theorisation of small state agency, i.e. the very topic of the thesis (see the title) is ignored by the author. This is deeply problematic, especially given the fact that both the literature on small states in intra-alliance security dynamics is existing and serve as the vital component in this thesis. Finally, the chapters of this thesis do not communicate with each other, giving the impression of an overly compartmentalised work without a clear message coming out of this. The topic is therefore treated in a disjoint fashion, which is further exacerbated by underdeveloped and ill-oriented theoretical framework, empirical analysis and used literature. The formatting criteria and stylistic features are adequate for this type of work. For these reasons, I cannot grade it better than “E”.

Suggested grade: E

Signature:

Nik Hynek