



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Štěpán Konopásek

Title: Military Strategy of the Russian Federation in Early 21st Century

Programme/year: Bezpečnostní studia (2016)

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Tomáš Karásek

Criteria	Definition	Max.	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	30
<i>Total</i>		80	65
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	20
TOTAL		100	85



Evaluation

Major criteria:

First of all, I must appreciate the apparent enthusiasm with which the thesis has been written. Both at the conceptual/theoretical and empirical level, the author is evidently deeply interested in the topic – and it serves the text well. Secondly, the rigor and attention to detail and structuring which the author exhibits are highly laudable.

The only problem stems from misunderstandings of the links between the theoretical concepts and their methodological implications, as well as their translation into the actual analysis. Firstly, while the author very ably explains Gray's and Johnston's approaches to strategic culture, it makes little sense to assume they can be easily merged – certainly not without further explanation (and, btw, Gray and Johnston *are* considered typical representatives of the first and third generation of strategic culture research, respectively). The author also does not make clear how he reconciles a typical positivist methodology of process-tracing with the constructivist underpinnings of his work. Thirdly, the decision to separate strategic culture, strategic documents and strategic decisions as independent variables that influence military strategy is problematic. It could probably still be defended as a methodological way of overcoming the agency-structure challenge which the author mentions – and could potentially result in something akin to a 'discourse process-tracing' exercise. However, in the actual empirical analysis, the author clearly abandons this research structure in favour of a more 'structuralist' approach (more logical but not announced at the outset of the thesis).

Minor criteria:

Much praise should be heaped on the author in connection to the formal aspects of the thesis. In this regard the text, including many explanatory and summarizing tables, is basically flawless.

Overall evaluation:

Complex, detailed analysis of a pressing contemporary issue. The effort at theoretical underpinning is appreciated, but during the oral defence the author should attempt to explain his methodological choices and their application (or lack of it) in the analysis.



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Suggested grade: 1-2

Signature: *Tomáš Kovář*