Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: *Vojtěch Bahenský*

Title: Hybrid Warfare, Wars, and Threats: A Conceptual Analysis

Programme/year: SS/2016

Author of Evaluation (external assessor): *Jan Kofroň*

Criteria	Definition	Maximm	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	**10**	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	**30**	28
	Methodology, analysis, argument	**40**	34
Total		***80***	72
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	**10**	10
	Style	**5**	5
	Formal requirements	**5**	5
Total		***20***	20
TOTAL		***100***	92

Evaluation

Major criteria: The thesis deals with recent, policy relevant phenomenon. As such the thesis is highly original and offers real value added – something quite uncommon for a master thesis.

There are four aspects of the thesis that deserve an appraisal:

1) Explicit attempt at disciplined assessment of a concept. Considering that naturalist (or positivist) security studies (and IR in general) prefer causal analysis, while conceptual analysis is too often side-lined, I appreciate that the thesis goes beyond this standard mode of research.
2) What is more important, in contrast to a number of diploma theses, theoretical concepts and methodological tools are not (in this thesis) insulated from the main body of the text - actually they constitute and structure key chapters, thus making the thesis and its main argument more coherent and plausible.
3) The second chapter offers (according to my knowledge) one of the most comprehensive and well-structured overview of numerous iterations of "hybrid war/fare" to be found in the literature.
4) Straightforward conclusions well supported by the analysis.

There are three – in the context of a master thesis rather minor – areas where an improvement would help to make the thesis even better.

1) While the second and third chapters are very good (in some aspects I dare to say excellent), the final (fourth) chapter – while still very good – lacks their comprehensiveness. Considering that the discussion of usefulness of the "Hybrid war/fare" was the key task of the thesis, it would be logical to expect that the fourth chapter will be the "centre of gravity" of the thesis – sadly it is not.
2) I think it is quite unfortunate that the 3rd research question ("How useful are… concepts") does not specify – useful for what? While it may be deduced from the broader context, I would (once again) recommend more precise framing of the 2nd research question.
3) As I said 2nd and 3rd chapters are very good, yet I think they could have been even better, had the author attempted to create an original typology of HW concepts or at least a graph providing easily memorisable mental map of different concepts of HW. While these chapters are just fine as they are, they could have been a bit more captivating and reader friendly with such explicit typology or a graph.

Minor criteria: The thesis engage with number of relevant, up to date literature. Style is generally appropriate. Some sentences are unnecessarily long, or complicated, thus making part of the text unnecessarily "user unfriendly" – nevertheless this is a minor point.

I was sceptical about (excessive) length of the second chapter (which discusses all the different concepts of hybrid war/fare), initially. Nevertheless, I had to change my opinion recently. When working on a brief chapter for MoD, I quickly learnt to appreciate the value of this chapter – simply as far I know there is not similar comprehensive and up to date chapter on the subject.

Overall evaluation: The thesis is well-focused, well-structured, mostly well-written. It aims at original, policy relevant and academically interesting questions. It uses explicit methodology and the conclusions are well-supported by the research. While there are areas for improvement, these do not undermine the main argument of the thesis or its general quality.

It is my hope that the author will improve his analysis along the suggested lines, make it short(er) and publish it.

Suggested grade: Ecellent/výborně

Signature: