



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: **Matevž Vogrinc**

Title: **Progressive divergence? The development of Croatian and Slovenian strategic cultures since independence**

Programme/year: **ISSA**

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): **Jan Beneš**

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	6
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	30
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	26
<i>Total</i>		80	62
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	2
<i>Total</i>		20	17
TOTAL		100	79



Evaluation

Major criteria:

Research question, definition of objectives

The Author has selected relevant topic, both from theoretical and strategic point of view. Balkan countries represent a very interesting ground for the examination of strategy and strategic thinking. Strategic culture of the two selected countries in comparison is a great field for academic work.

The thesis sets a research question and hypothesis. The research question – how has the strategic culture developed in both countries since their secession from Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991? - is simple, clear and valid. However, the topic provides sufficient space for further elaboration stemming from comparison (which is in this particular work highly intuitive and suggested) and analysis of strategic culture (all three generations of strategic culture offer space for either more in-depth or broader scope). The tested hypothesis - The development of Slovenian and Croatian strategic culture after independence was heavily influenced by both countries' goals to achieve Euro Atlantic integration – is relevant. Nevertheless, deeper inquiry into the political motives, changes in national mindset or relationship between military, politics and strategy would be very beneficial for this type of work.

The research goals are well set and valid, however greater ambition would be helpful and avoid the thesis being too simplistic.

Theoretical/conceptual framework

The conceptual and theoretical framework is provided in very detailed and thoughtful manner. The thesis is including most of the important authors and works. The author is offering a knowledgeable presentation of strategic culture. I highly value showing the academic discussion among the strategic culture scholars and presenting the three generations of thinking about strategic culture.

Methodology, analysis, argument

The methodology of the thesis stems from the usage of the first generation of strategic culture. The first generation of scholars dealing with strategic culture is focusing on greater narrative, combining various factors, like historical events, military strategy and tactics, myths and symbols, historical figures, politics, institutions and so on. The methodology is not as rigorous as in other theories of international relations. The author is analysing the historical track of Slovenia and Croatia since their unity in SFR Yugoslavia through 3 periods: 1991 – 2000; 2000 – until the NATO accession; post NATO accession period. The periods are chosen well and reasonably.



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I would appreciate more detailed information about the link between the question – hypothesis – theory – analysis – outcome.

The author is focusing mostly on official documents. That is fine for this type of academic work and the thesis is providing the necessary context. The author uses sufficient amount of documents, including all important ones. The analysis is clever, well argued, sufficiently deep, using original documents, working in terms of strategic culture.

However, the analysis ends too early. The conclusions drafted from the analysis are rather vague. I am missing further analysis, more context, tracing the changes between documents with respect to historical events and changes in society and military. It should also be mentioned that the EU and NATO have developed through the observed period, they are not static phenomena. The hypothesis' confirmation is based on solid arguments stemming from the analysis, nevertheless the author didn't avoid to state the obvious or provide vague argumentation.

I am a bit missing better comparison that would lead to a non-obvious and non-trivial outcomes.

In sum, the empirical part is a great work and it is a pity, the author didn't used it enough to provide us with better analysis and conclusion.

Minor criteria:

Sources

The sources are chosen carefully and reasonably. The author is using primary sources, distinguished authors (incl. Snyder, Gray and Johnston) and in absolutely sufficient amount.

Style

The style of the thesis is corresponding with the demands for this type of work.

Formal requirements

The thesis suffers from a few mistakes and formatting problems. The note no. 1 has a missing part. Graphics of the table with results is a bit confusing.



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Overall evaluation:

Overall, the thesis is fulfilling the expectations, stemming from the usage of strategic culture. The author has selected a relevant topic. The theoretical grounding in strategic culture is very well argued and elaborated. The methodology is corresponding with the selected theoretical framework, however the link between research questions, theory, methodology, analysis and outcomes is weaker, than it should have been. The empirical analysis is carefully done with reliance on a large number of primary and other valid sources. The outcomes and conclusions are a bit vague, simplistic and missing deeper analysis. Nevertheless, the thesis is providing a good example of application of the strategic culture on a given country.

Suggested grade:

2

Signature:

