



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Matevž Vogrinec

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

Programme/year: MISS, 2nd year

Author of Evaluation: Tomáš Karásek (supervisor)

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	7
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	24
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	32
<i>Total</i>		80	63
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	3
	Formal requirements	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	15
TOTAL		100	78



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The thesis focuses on the cases of Slovenia and Croatia since their independence through the prism of the theory of strategic culture. The author's declared goal is to find out how the countries' strategic cultures developed from the beginning of 1990s until present time, assuming (and ultimately confirming) a strong influence by both states' wish to enter the Euro-Atlantic security structures.

The thesis starts with a solid, if not exhausting, review of various approaches to the concept of strategic culture (unfortunately, no comparable overview is provided for the two empirical cases). While the reflections on the evolution of the theory are lucid and robustly explained, the decision to stick to Gray's culture-as-context position is not clearly justified. The author decided to utilize my and Jan Beneš's variation on Christoph Meyer's conceptualization (and operationalization) of European strategic culture, but it is a bit of a pity that he did not subject it to any critical review and possible adjustment.

Perhaps the biggest problem of the thesis stems from the fact that the author stuck exclusively to official documents as a source of his understanding of strategic culture. While strategic plans and other relevant sources do provide valuable insight into strategic culture, especially in a situation of their absence their worth, naturally, decreases. Unfortunately, the thesis does not focus more extensively on the founding moment of both Slovenian and Croatian strategic culture, i.e. act of gaining and preserving independence and territorial integrity. Especially the analysis of the Croatian case is strangely mute on the wars the country waged in the first half of 1990s. The holistic approach to the study of strategic culture would surely benefit from a more complex analysis of this phenomenon.

Minor criteria:

The author must be lauded for basing the analysis on a wide selection of relevant sources. Given the lack of country-specific studies on the cases in vogue, the ability to draw on both theoretical academic writings and related accounts of Croatia's and Slovenia's security and defence policies serves the thesis well.



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The style of the thesis is not particularly remarkable, but the language is clear and occasional mistakes and errors of writing do not disturb the generally positive image.

Overall evaluation:

The thesis starts with a logical choice of two cases that are subjected to a theoretically informed analysis. The results could, however, be 'sharper' at both the conceptual and empirical level. As a survey of Slovenian and Croatian strategic thinking the thesis does a fine job, but a deeper, more complex understanding of the nuances of their strategic cultures proves elusive.

Suggested grade: 2

Signature: