



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Stefanie Frenzel

Title: Russia's critique of Western liberalism under Vladimir Putin

Programme/year: MAIN 2018

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): Jakub Franěk  
(supervisor)

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	<b>10</b>	8
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	<b>30</b>	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	<b>40</b>	35
<i>Total</i>		<b>80</b>	68
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	<b>10</b>	9
	Style	<b>5</b>	5
	Formal requirements	<b>5</b>	5
<i>Total</i>		<b>20</b>	19
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	87



## Evaluation

Major criteria:

In her thesis, the author uses the conceptual framework of Carl Schmitt's political theory to analyse the political rhetoric employed by Russia's president in his critique of Western liberalism, or, more generally, Western international politics. The stated objectives of the thesis are twofold: (1) to reveal the rationale of Russia's foreign policy (vis-à-vis West) and (2) to demonstrate that Russia's arguments are related to a broader critique of liberalism and of the current world order. Apart from that, in the penultimate (4<sup>th</sup>) chapter, the author also attempts to outline some basic principles that should guide Western approach not only to Russia but also to other illiberal regimes.

The thesis is divided into three chapters, excluding the Introduction (Chapter 1) and the Conclusion (Chapter 5). The second chapter outlines the relevant aspects of Schmitt's political theory, the third chapter consists of the discursive analysis of Putin's selected speeches and finally the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter attempts to outline principles that should guide Western policy vis-à-vis Russia and other illiberal regimes.

Of these three chapters, Chapter 2 appears as the most persuasive. The author has done a very good job in presenting relevant aspects of Carl Schmitt's political theory drawing upon Schmitt's most important works as well as relevant secondary literature.

While the discursive analysis of Putin's speeches in Chapter 3 is generally speaking well executed, it also suffers from some shortcomings. First of all, the author should have paid greater attention to the discursive framework of these speeches. Specifically, she could have attempted to address more clearly the question of the primary target audience of various rhetorical figures employed by Putin. (E.g. one has to wonder whether the speeches emphasising the Christian and traditional values are addressed primarily to the Western or rather domestic audience.) Last but not least, she should have paid more attention to the apparent contradictions in Putin's rhetoric – e.g. emphasis on international law versus apparent disregard for it, claims that Russia is more democratic and more liberal than the West versus the critique of decadent Western liberalism and democracy, or the critique of American exceptionalism versus claims of Russian exceptionalism implicit in the notion of greater Russian area, which includes not just Russian federation but also e.g. Ukraine.

The concluding chapter (Chapter 4), which draws primarily upon the works of Mouffe, Rawls, Walzer and Petit, rather than on Carl Schmitt, is the least persuasive part of the work partly because the author draws upon authors who employ very different theoretical perspectives, partly because this concluding chapter is not clearly enough connected with the previous argument.



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Minor criteria:

Overall evaluation:

In spite of the above described shortcomings, the work as a whole is a well-researched MA thesis, which certainly deserves to be admitted to the defence.

Suggested grade: **B**

Signature: