



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Natacha Cailler

Title: **United we stand? European strategic culture in the fight against terrorism**

Programme/year: 2018/2019

Author of Evaluation (external assessor): Prof. Oldřich Bureš

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	5
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	20
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	35
<i>Total</i>		80	60
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	18
TOTAL		100	78



Evaluation

The reviewed thesis attempted to address an important and timely topic via the following research question: Does the European Union have a common strategic culture when addressing Jihadi terrorism? The answer to this question is focused at the national level and the thesis covers two arguably key EU states – France and Germany. While there is a justification offered for this choice in the thesis, it remains questionable how representative are the selected two states of the entire EU/Europe when it comes to the terrorist threat/s (even when limited just to jihadist terrorism), its/their perceptions, and responses to this threat. The original thesis proposal also envisaged a comparison of three countries, including Sweden. Similarly, I would argue that it is highly problematic to completely disregard the supranational EU level from the analysis. In my reading, the thesis therefore tells us a lot about the similarities and differences of the German and French strategic cultures in the fight against terrorism, but the EU/European-related claims are rather far-fetched. Moreover, when the author talks about Europe in the thesis, it is usually in reference to Council of Europe, not the EU.

There are two additional limitations of the proposed EU-/Europe wide focus. The first one stems from the narrow focus on jihadist terrorism only, albeit statistically speaking, more than 90 percent of terrorism in Europe is, and has been for decades, non-jihadist. This ought to be at least mentioned in the thesis. Secondly, within the EU, counter-terrorism has been largely addressed under the former third pillar, i.e. primarily as a matter of internal security. This again ought to be reflected in the thesis since it may raise doubts about the relevance of strategic culture as a conceptual frame commonly used for external security analysis. This is also well apparent from the discussion on the use of force in both France and Germany in the thesis. Also, while there is indeed a no clear line between external and internal security, this is addressed in the thesis only in one sub-chapter for Germany.

When it comes to the structure of the thesis, it is very suitable for a comparison of the German and French strategic cultures in the fight against terrorism. There is a solid literature review of the still contested concept of strategic culture, one operationalization of the concept is then selected and applied empirically in the remaining chapters of the thesis. The methods are suitable, albeit the samples analyzed are relatively small. Similarly, the selected time-frame is relatively short (post-2015), especially given the importance of historical context in most conceptualizations of strategic culture.



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Overall evaluation:

Despite my criticism about the purported EU-/European findings in the thesis, for the purposes of an MA thesis, the work actually presented on France and Germany is acceptable and it certainly meets the standards required for this type of academic work. The thesis is also overall well written in terms of style and grammar. I therefore recommend this thesis to be defended.

Suggested grade: B

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, cursive letters that appear to be "B. M." followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Signature: