

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE
Faculty of Social Sciences
Institute of International Studies

PROTOCOL ON DIPLOMA THESIS ASSESSMENT
(Supervisor)

Name of the student: Matěj Hejtmánek

Title: The Role of Privacy in Forming the European Union's Normative Power through Regulation

Supervisor: Mitchell Young

1. TOPIC AND OBJECTIVE (short information on the thesis, research objective):

The thesis addresses the topic of European power in international affairs, particularly the concept of Normative Power Europe and the norm of privacy in the digital sphere. The thesis builds on the idea of the 'Brussels Effect' by Anu Bradford, and looks at how privacy has been addressed by the EU over time as internet technologies develop.

2. CONTENT (complexity, original approach, argument, structure, theoretical and methodological backing, work with sources, appropriateness of annexes etc.):

The author builds on the work of Manners and Bradford, expanding however, the timeframe of their studies. The periodicity developed by the author (what he refers to as three 'generations') is original. It allows him to analyze how the EU's approach to digital privacy governance has developed. The author attempt to provide a complex understanding of the concept of privacy, and the first part of the literature review brings together a range of disciplinary understanding of that concept: legal, economic, political. He mentions several others (philosophical and psychological) but those are not explicitly addressed. The second part of the literature review focuses on the works on Manners and Bradford. He does a nice job explaining both of their theories, but it would have been good to have brought in more of the authors involved in this discourse. The author has a clear research question and structure. It would have been advantageous though for the various parts to have been brought into a single framework at the end of the first section. The argument, that the EU is increasingly engaging in attempts at global regulation of digital privacy in a large part due to the rise of giant digital companies, is interesting and extremely relevant. The theses uses methods of discourse analysis.

3. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE (quality of language, citation style, graphics, formal aspects etc.):

The thesis is well written and shows a command of the language. The citation style and formal aspects are all adequate, though it is not necessary to include dates of access for articles. The references are clearly organized, and the list of primary sources is extensive, showing a depth of research into the policy documents that doesn't come though as clearly while reading the text.

4. STATEMENT ON THE ORIGINALITY OF THE THESIS

The thesis was checked by the Turnitin/URKUND/Theses anti-plagiarism software and is original.

5. SHORT COMMENTS BY THE REVIEWER (overall impression, strengths and weaknesses, originality of ideas, achievement of the research objective etc.):

Overall this is an interesting thesis which is most successful in delineating the history of the concept of digital privacy in the EU's external affairs over the past three decades. The author displays the ability to research within the primary literature and brings together legal precedents and policymaking papers in a creative way. The periodization of the EU's privacy regulation efforts is logical and well supported by the author. It makes a good frame from which to analyze the policy developments. The author puts forth a clear research question: "To what extent has the rise of global technology companies helped to increase the EU's global role as a normative power through regulation?", and while he does mention the technology companies throughout, this could have been done in a more systematic way that would better link them to the EU's policymaking efforts. As well, the author could have been clearer in summing up the exact changes in the regulation and the conceptualization of privacy in each period.

6. COOPERATION WITH THE SUPERVISOR (communication with the supervisor, ability to reflect comments, shift from the original intention, etc.)

The cooperation with me as the supervisor was excellent. We had many in-depth discussions about how to frame and study the topic. This was extremely challenging, and Mr. Hejtmanek had to reformulate the research a number of times before finally settling on what was submitted. There were earlier attempts at a more ambitious project which were deemed by the author as not feasible. These struggles are part of the process and I think a great deal of learning took place in the attempts to figure out and structure the project.

7. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DURING THE DEFENCE:

Is the EU more interested in promoting privacy in itself or in using the norm of privacy as an effective vehicle for exerting global power?

How have the global technology companies affected the EU's policymaking?

8. ~~(NON)~~RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE:

YES – B (on A-F scale)

Date: 28.8.2022

Signature: