

BACHELOR'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT
PPE – Bachelor's in Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	The Impact of Just War Technology on Just War Theory
Student's name:	Anna Shabalina
Referee's name:	Jakub Franěk

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	50	37
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	15	11
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	15	11
<i>Total</i>		80	59
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	10	9
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	5	4
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	17
TOTAL		100	76

Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score:

[NB:] If the plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score is above 15%, the reviewer has to include his/her assessment of the originality of the reviewed thesis in his/her review.

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria (min. 1800 characters including spaces when recommending a passing grade, min. 2500 characters including spaces when recommending a failing grade):

The author has written an interesting, well researched, and in many ways really thoughtful thesis on an important and relevant topic. Nonetheless, the resulting text is not fully convincing as it suffers from several shortcomings in various areas.

Let us start by the definition of the research aims. The author proposes to examine the limitations of contemporary Just War Theory (JWT) as formulated by Michael Walzer in the context of recent developments of warfare technology with special focus on autonomous weapon systems (AWS). While I typically advise students to define the topics of their research projects as narrowly as possible, in this case it would actually be advisable to broaden the focus of the research and include also other recent technological and potentially also political/legal changes in modern warfare. The point is that truly (or fully) autonomous advanced weapon systems have not yet been deployed in any significant numbers. Hence it would be useful to pay more attention to other technological

innovations (such as UAVs, which can be considered only partially autonomous, although their use also involves ethical dilemmas) and possibly also an increasing involvement of non-state actors in contemporary armed conflicts. If the author decided to take this route, it would have been also logical to choose a different case for her case study – e.g. the use of UAVs for targeted killings of alleged terrorists by the USA in the context of its “War on Terror”. Talking about the case selection: While the use of advanced military technology by Azerbaijan in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was certainly interesting in many ways, its study cannot really illuminate the challenges posed to JWT by the existence of AWS because Azerbaijan in this conflict, at least to my knowledge, did not use fully autonomous weapon systems, but only partially autonomous UAVs.

The theoretical part of the study also suffers from two interrelated problems: (a) It is too wordy and often repetitive, greatly due to an unreasonably high number of citations employed by the author. (b) The discussion of both historical development of JWT and its formulation by Micahel Walzer relies almost exclusively on secondary sources. At least in case of the discussion of Walzer’s formulation of JWT, it would have been advisable to engage directly with his own texts. At the same time, the overview of the historical evolution of JWT unfortunately neglects both the recent developments in the field of International Law and related discussions in the field of IR theory.

On the other hand, the empirical part of the thesis, i.e. the case study, would deserve to be better developed. In its present form it strikes me as a bit rushed. The author also could have done a better job connecting the empirical and theoretical parts of her thesis.

Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): C

Suggested questions for the defence are:

I do recommend the thesis for final defence.

Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	C	= good
61 – 70	D	= satisfactory
51 – 60	E	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	F	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.