FACULTY
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
Charles University

Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Lorenza Fortunati

Title: Civil Applications of Autonomous Systems: Implications for the Military Sector

Programme/year: MISS, 2023

Author of Evaluation (external reviewer): Mgr. Luka Nikolić

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	**10**	9
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	**30**	28
	Methodology, analysis, argument	**40**	35
Total		***80***	72
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	**10**	9
	Style	**5**	4
	Formal requirements	**5**	5
Total		***20***	18
TOTAL		***100***	90

Evaluation

Major criteria:

See below

Minor criteria:

See below

Overall evaluation:

With the most immense pleasure, I can state that the thesis in front of us represents an effort that emanates very high academic standards. Moreover, it indicates that the author has been diligently committed towards polishing a set of necessary analytical skills to produce such an output. Starting with clear research aims and focused methodology, going over a robust literature review, all the way to an in-depth constitutive theorization, this thesis is well crafted and logically coherent. It treats the topic of civil application of autonomous systems, while trying to map its possible impact on the military domain. The topic is academically relevant, treated sufficiently carefully to bridge the literature gap in the scantly analyzed aspect of links between emerging technologies and state apparatuses. Although the theoretical treatment of the topic is predominant, the core research tenets are practically applicable and policy relevant. Case selection has been well justified, data sources are valid and reliable. Referencing style is consistent throughout the thesis, while academic English used is fluent with minor deficiencies, not interfering with the flow of the text.
The least convincing parts of the thesis are the actual transferable lessons and their unfinished form limits the academic value of the research. Aside from the question of legal responsibility paired with ethical reflections, there are no other cases that actually fit the framework of providing useful insights for the military domain. Particularly problematic are the self-driving cars and attempt to apply trolley problem equally to the civilian and military sectors. The fact that challenges the utilitarian solution is the existence of belligerents in a military conflict (therefore, a structural necessity and permissive cause for discrimination, even morally justified) and their lack in a driving session. Much stronger connection has been established in the section on legal responsibility, although keeping the proximity criteria, rather than full identification.
There are three points that I would like to raise. Those should be perceived as food for thought or analytical comments on what could have been improved, rather than

indications of crucial mistakes within the very thesis.
First, the thesis strictly differentiates between the civilian and military domains. Although there are mentions of their 'cooperative relationship', 'blurred boundaries', and interdependence, this issue could be approached in more detail because it offers a completely new perspective on 'transferable lessons'. Namely, volumes written on dual-use technologies (majority of civilian ASs fall under the category) and civil-military integration or fusion are witnesses that the moral and legal lessons have already been transferred by the very fact of civilian participation in the military-led processes. A great example can be found in a volume by Peter Singer where he describes the process in which military personnel was tasked to raise ethical concerns over applying drones in civilian sector, while industrial stakeholders were commenting the other way around. In a nutshell, integrated environment can be even more conducive to the technology transfers as described in the thesis.
Second, being a devil's advocate of hawkish realism, it is necessary to raise the question: does military sector really want moral and legal lessons that come from civilians? This is certainly tied to the question of differing interests (revenue vs. defense), but also guiding principles of the two, still relatively divergent domains. The reasons of national security can be a major obstacle for any legal provision or ethical attitude to penetrate the military apparatus.
Third, the theoretical framework presented in the thesis is technologically deterministic. While not axiologically burdened to value certain artefacts, it takes for granted that autonomous systems will make significant impact on our lives. To speculate (etymologically, speculatif means worth great attention), the current hype around those systems can hit the ceiling and the disruptive effect will be quickly erased. Therefore, an additional question would be: does military even need moral and legal lessons from civilians in this case? Especially in the conditions of excessive civilian tabooization of AWS with the aim of regime formation or outright ban (read Hynek and Solovyeva, 2021).

For the very end, it is my pleasure to recommend the thesis for the defense and to assess it with the highest grade.

Suggested grade: A-

Signature: