



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Josef Mališ

Title: Anti-System Activism in the Czech Republic: Radicalization Pathways and the Quest for Significance

Programme/year: Security Studies (Bezpečnostní studia)/2024

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Markéta Kocmanová

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	30
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	35
<i>Total</i>		80	75
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	20
TOTAL		100	95



Evaluation

Major criteria:

Josef Mališ has presented a thesis titled *Anti-System Activism in the Czech Republic: Radicalization Pathways and the Quest for Significance* that draws on unique data collected in the field. The work not only persuasively demonstrates the motivations of the organisers and supporters of Czech anti-system activism related to issues like the COVID-19 pandemic or the Russo-Ukrainian War, but also facilitates understanding of their radicalization pathways shaped by their offline and online activities.

The selection of the theoretical framework, which includes not only the Significance Quest Theory as a major lens in radicalization studies but also the framing in theories of online radicalization juxtaposed with conspiracy theories, is particularly commendable. These concepts are relevant to the case, as we cannot separate offline and online radicalization pathways today if we want to understand radicalization drivers.

I highly appreciate the research design, which combines theory testing (the deductive component) with an exploratory inductive element that is particularly suited for the analysis of primary data collected through interviews. The research design's deductive component, which maps the needs, narratives, and networks of the SQT, serves as an appropriate tool for conceptualising the motivations of the research participants. This enables the student to perform a very disciplined thematic analysis that remains open to new concepts beyond the pre-established themes.

Although the analytical part is very strong, I would appreciate a more comprehensive examination of the inductively identified concepts that extend beyond the SQT paradigm. Additionally, the final section of the thesis would benefit from a more detailed discussion of the implications the research carries, not only for radicalization studies but also for practice in the area of preventing and countering violent extremism and perhaps other domains, such as cognitive security.

Despite these minor shortcomings, Josef's thesis maintains a superb quality of research. He makes a unique contribution in two respects: firstly, empirically, as the only study presenting original empirical evidence obtained from in-depth interviews with leading figures of the anti-system groupings in the Czech Republic, and secondly, theoretically, by presenting first-hand evidence on how



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real-world individuals at risk of radicalization use social media and how this behaviour facilitates radicalization.

Minor criteria:

The text demonstrates exceptional academic skill and is engaging to read. I particularly appreciate the concise but very efficient style that proves Josef's ability to convey a relevant message without burdening the text with unnecessary ballast. The overall structure of the text is well organized, and the ideas are presented clearly and coherently.

Assessment of plagiarism:

Based on the anti-plagiarism software checks, it is formally confirmed that the submitted thesis is original and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not, in an ethically unacceptable manner, draw from the works of other authors.

Overall evaluation:

It was a great privilege to serve as Josef's supervisor, and I am extremely pleased to recommend his thesis for defense because it showcases the results of unique and original research into the motivations and character of radicalization in the Czech anti-system scene. I hope this work will make a valuable contribution to academic debate on the nature of contemporary radicalization in our country.

Suggested grade:

A

Signature: