Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: von Neuhalfen, Alexander

Title: Dealing with Uncertainty in Security Analysis Products: How different Approaches to communicating Uncertainty affect the Perception of Intelligence Reports and Policy Memos

Programme/year: 2024,

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/second reader): Jan Kofron

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	**10**	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	**30**	29
	Methodology, analysis, argument	**40**	37
Total		*80*	76
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	**10**	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
Total		*20*	20
TOTAL		*100*	96

Evaluation

Major criteria: The topic is super relevant. Somebody could argue that similar works have already been done – that Is true, nevertheless (i) the key studies have been done in the USA, (ii) I think that even an attempt at replicating studies done in other countries (with possibly different strategic culture) would be perfectly fine (and I think the author went well beyond just replicating already existing studies).

Actually, I like the thesis in its entirety. Beyond the research question and the methodological approach, I appreciate the literature review, informative methodological section, and the presentation of the empirical results. An intriguing aspect of the thesis is e.g. the distinction between "consumers and producers" of the intelligence reports. Similarly, the discussion between experts and non-experts seems similarly interesting. My point here is that the author tried to productively conceptualize and theorize key categories of individuals issuing or reading probabilistic (intelligence) statements (and to integrate this theoretical insight into his empirical analysis).

When it comes to empirical analysis, the thesis has two limitations. The first one is the sample size (154). This means weak effects (group differences) are not easy to see (by the naked eye or by statistical testing). Also theoretically, a few outliers (in a given group) could affect the results here (provided data and charts however do not indicate that such a problem would affect the key results here). At the same time, the author (as a master's student) could not be blamed for the relatively low (even though still informative) number of respondents.

The second limitation is the fact that the sample is (probably) not representative – yet given the topic and the objective limitations, it is hard to blame the author. He collected the best possible data he could.

Minor criteria: I like the overall presentation of the thesis, the charts, the tables, and the language as well. The appendix provides the dataset, as well as the form used for generating the data…

Assessment of plagiarism: None

Overall evaluation: A really nice piece of work. Relevant and interesting research question, excellent presentation, thorough analysis.

Suggested grade: A

Signature:

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