



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Alexander Sherwood

Title: A Framework to Weaponize Risk, Targeting an Opponent's Supply-Chain Vulnerabilities

Programme/year:2023/24

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Prof. Nik Hynek, PhD

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	<b>10</b>	8
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	<b>30</b>	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	<b>40</b>	35
<i>Total</i>		<b>80</b>	68
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	<b>10</b>	9
	Style	<b>5</b>	5
	Formal requirements	<b>5</b>	5
<i>Total</i>		<b>20</b>	19
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	87



## Evaluation

**Major criteria: see below**

**Minor criteria: see below**

**Assessment of plagiarism: not detected**

### Overall evaluation:

This diploma thesis explores the strategic exploitation of supply-chain vulnerabilities, with a specific focus on critical raw materials (CRMs), using magnesium as a case study. The work aims to develop a framework that allows state actors to deliberately induce risks in supply chains to destabilize an opponent's critical infrastructure, grounded in the theoretical approach of offensive realism.

The thesis is ambitious in its scope and investigates a complex and relevant topic. It is well-structured, with the author providing a thorough literature review and a clear articulation of the research questions and objectives. The use of offensive realism as the theoretical framework is innovative, and the methodology combines quantitative and qualitative elements, allowing for a detailed analysis of the risks associated with CRMs, particularly during periods of systemic stress such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the thesis has several shortcomings. Firstly, while the literature review is comprehensive, it often lacks critical engagement with opposing viewpoints or alternative theoretical frameworks that could provide a more nuanced understanding of the issue. The focus on offensive realism, though well-explained, could benefit from a discussion of its limitations and the potential applicability of other theories in understanding the broader implications of weaponizing supply-chain risks.

Furthermore, the empirical analysis, although detailed, appears somewhat narrow in its focus on magnesium. The selection of this specific case study, while justified, may not fully capture the diversity and complexity of supply-chain vulnerabilities across different materials and sectors. This limitation raises questions about the generalizability of the findings.

Finally, the conclusions drawn, while logically consistent with the analysis, could be more robust in discussing the broader implications for theory and practice. I grade it A/B depending on the defence.



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**Suggested grade: A/B**

**Signature:**