

BACHELOR THESIS EVALUATION: THESIS OPPONENT

Thesis topic: To Fear or Not to Fear?

Author: Michal Žiga

Advisor: Sylvia Tiriyaki

Opponent: Clarissa Tabosa

Study program: Political Science, Liberal Arts

Evaluation contains objective and critical analysis of a bachelor thesis proposal. Evaluation should be considered by the following criteria:

Criteria for the evaluation of the final thesis	Max. points	Points given by evaluator
1. Methodological aspect (Logical frame, process of inquiry, topic specification, how realistic are set goals and how adequate are proposed working methods)	10	5
2. Sources of domestic and foreign literature, familiarity with relevant literature	15	10
3. Formatting and style	15	15
4. Scope and proportionality of content	5	5
5. Systematic approach	15	15
6. Evaluation of achieved results	40	35
Total	100	85

Final evaluation: A (95-100 points), B (83-94 points), C (68-82 points), D (55-67 points), E (50-54 points), Fx(<50 points)

Evaluation, comments, recommendations:

This thesis aims “to map relations within the chosen regional conventional and unconventional players for the Israeli regional security analysis in the contemporary era” (p. 31). Throughout the thesis, the author tries to sustain the claim that “the State of Israel, in pragmatic manners conditioned by the end of the Cold War, shapes the regional dynamics and security power layout conditioned by the regional circumstances due to the continual threat with expansive character enhancing the security dilemma.”

Overall, the thesis provides a detailed analysis of the relations within the Israeli regional security landscape, supported by a solid understanding of securitization theory. On the positive side, the author's research questions are clear and well-defined, and the thesis is grounded in a strong theoretical foundation. The author shows a good understanding of securitization theory, and the effort put into the research is evident.

However, there are several areas for improvement that could strengthen the work. First, the literature review is limited and could benefit from a more varied range of sources that reflect the debates around securitization theory, especially by looking at securitizing PRACTICES (Balzacq, Hansen, Huysmans), beyond speech acts. Additionally, the concept of a security dilemma is central to the author's main argument, but he did not explain what a security dilemma is (and only introduces it on p.13), neither cited relevant authors/literature addressing the concept (e.g. Mearsheimer). Second, there is a methodological gap between the theoretical perspective and the research design, mostly, because the Copenhagen School focuses on speech acts (even if other authors have advanced the theory to look at securitization PRACTICES – but the student does not discuss these in the literature review). The author chooses to apply securitization theory to his analysis, but does not analyze speech acts per se, but rely on the analysis of documents and secondary discourse analyses. The author also conducts interviews

but provides no details on the methodological aspects of these interviews (even if he provides the interviews annexed to the thesis).

The author puts a great effort on p. 51 proving an overview of the Israeli operations and dividing them into aims, threat, and routine or emergency (measures?). However, the author does not provide an explanation of the table. This is crucial for the understanding of the securitization process. The author needs to clarify the steps followed to define a particular outcome as "routine" or "emergency," as these are key for securitization theory. It is also important to identify the target audience for the securitizing speech acts, as this is important for understanding whether or not the author's findings support the core definition of securitization theory. The core definition of securitization theory involves framing something as an existential threat to a reference object IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY THE ADOPTION OF EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES. This is Buzan et al. definition. If there is no extraordinary measure involved, then, theoretically speaking, we cannot talk about securitization. Also, if there is no acceptance by the audience (in this case, who is the audience? It's not clear in the thesis), then the securitizing speech acts (or practices) are just securitizing moves, but not securitization. My second question, below, aims at having a better understanding of the authors main findings.

Questions for the author (relevant to the content of the Thesis):

1. In the thesis, the author mentions the concept of ontological in/security, but did not explain it. Explain the concept of ontological security (Mitzen) and how it relates to your study.
2. Your main claim is that "the State of Israel, in pragmatic manners conditioned by the end of the Cold War, shapes the regional dynamics and security power layout conditioned by the regional circumstances due to the continual threat with expansive character enhancing the security dilemma." From a theoretical perspective, what is the referent object in your case? What is being securitized? Who are the securitizing agents in this case? And based on what we can claim that this has been successful securitization and not just a securitizing move?

In Bratislava, on 30.04.2021

Signature of evaluator: Blavinc do N. 1 doje