



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Ewan Gordon

Title: Between Securitization and Secularisation (A Political Discourse Analysis on Members of Parliament in the British House of Commons and the Securitization of Islam and British Muslims)

Programme/year: MISS (2017)

Author of Evaluation (thesis supervisor): Dr. Ondrej Ditrych

Criteria	Definition	Max.	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	<b>10</b>
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	<b>25</b>
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	<b>33</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	10	<b>10</b>
	Style	5	<b>5</b>
	Formal requirements	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>88</b>



## Evaluation

The thesis examines the securitisation discourse of Islam in the U.K., and more precisely in the statements articulated in the House of Commons of the British Parliament. It seeks to use the CDA apparatus, in particular in investigating ideological foundations of the positions assumed in this field.

The thesis is generally well structured, however the divisions could be made somewhat more logically; the research is well situated in the broader field of knowledge; and the objectives are well justified. The author demonstrates solid understanding of the securitisation theory including its ontological and epistemological fundamentals; even though the inspiration taken from the Paris school is limited to ontology (inversion of the relationship between regimes of truth and speech acts) rather than impacting the focus of the analysis (bureaucratic routine, instead of political discourse). Methodology is also clearly stated, with the backbone formed by the apparatus of discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough. While it is mobilised in a limited way in the actual analysis (and the exposition suffers from a certain patchiness, including e.g. short but underdeveloped diversions to Žižek or Foucault), the latter remains faithful to its interpretive spirit.

The strong interpretive element of the political discourse analysis, with several key themes ('points of deliberation') identified and developed in detail is the thesis' strongest moment, balancing several minor deficiencies. The discussion of historical conditions of the emergence of the regime of truth could be placed elsewhere, and while using sufficient amount of authoritative sources, it also occasionally resembles a patchwork whose elements could be better bound together. Secularism is discussed competently and critically, albeit with almost no reference to primary sources; and some venues of argument, e.g. political theology, are open yet not pursued further.



Given the thesis' focus, more attention could be paid to (the discourse of) Islam in the U.K., but basic mapping of the discourse field is successfully conducted and some important issues (such as competing loyalties) are identified. In investigating the discourse of political right, more focus could be placed on how the more radical securitisation discourse here actually shares and reproduces a fundamentalist vision of Islam advertised and promoted by violent jihadi movements such as ISIS' propaganda machines. More importantly, in investigating the discourse of the political left, the author commits several sweeping generalisations based on a selection of tendentious sources (e.g. that Islamists and the radical left formed an 'ideological alliance' united by 'master framework', p. 43/44) which would not withstand a closer scrutiny. It is one of key ontological 'wagers' of the Foucauldian research tradition that the discursive field is fragmented and does not warrant such loaded generalisations. The exposition into Islamism, jihad and key related concepts is not clearly justified and related to the general argument, while e.g. the claim that the contemporary jihadis use violence in a 'noninstrumental' manner is dubious and is conditioned on the ideological formation of 'new terrorism' that subjectifies the terrorist as someone who is fundamentally irrational (and so are his actions, supposedly lacking a link between means and political ends).

In summary, the thesis presents a solid political discourse analysis with strong interpretive moment even as the relationship between the analysis and the theoretical framework could be stronger, and the methodological toolbox (CDA) could be deployed more thoroughly.

Suggested grade: Excellent / Very good

Signature: