



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Valeriia Alikina

Title: Russian-American Relations and the Mass Media Securitization of Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump in the American Press

Programme/year: MAIN (2018)

Author of Evaluation (Second Reviewer): Dr. Ondrej Ditrych

Criteria	Definition	Max.	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	<b>8</b>
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	<b>25</b>
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	<b>32</b>
<b>Total</b>		80	<b>65</b>
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	10	<b>5</b>
	Style	5	<b>5</b>
	Formal requirements	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>		20	<b>15</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		100	<b>80</b>



## Evaluation

### Major criteria:

The present thesis has a sensible research design and argument (concerning the linkage of the USSR / Russia securitisation discourse and the discourse in which Donald Trump is depicted as a threat in liberal media. The author demonstrates a solid understanding of the securitisation theory as a speech act theory, and discusses also securitisation in the media and the limits of securitisation theory. The methodology, on the other hand, could have been more developed, which limits the interpretive depth of the discourse analysis of two liberal media, *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, which is also rather parsimonious in relation to the rest of the thesis. The two contextual chapters, on the other hand, are rather expansive while short on sources and relying on perhaps intellectually provocative, yet not academically balanced accounts such as Herman and Chomsky (1988) or resorting to longer paraphrases of a single source (e.g. Mankoff 2010). In the second contextual chapter, certain metatheoretical inconsistencies may be detected since the (constructivist) ontological assumptions of the securitisation theory are hardly commensurable to either Baudrillard's simulacrum/hyperreality or the conventional propaganda model in which truth and (manufactured) falsehood can unproblematically be established (with emancipatory potential). Moreover, the argument is meandering at times. In the case analysis, it is not entirely clear that to choose the two media based on Trump's own accusations on Twitter has been the best methodological choice, in particular as the author seems to have *a priori* assumptions regarding their (liberal) bias and not controlling for / situating the analysis in the context of other securitising moves unrelated to Russia. The argument about the deeper stratum of securitisation discourse related to Russia / USSR as conditioning particular framing of Trump is intriguing, however only partially substantiated by evidence: for that, it would have seemed to make sense to e.g. detect possible similar discursive / rhetorical mechanisms in the past.



Minor criteria:

The thesis is competently written; yet the argument could at times be more streamlined and better structured, without unnecessary meandering in the contextual chapters. The case discourse analysis is commenced relatively late.

Overall evaluation:

The thesis has a good design and an intriguing argument in the form of proposition that however could be better substantiated and the interpretive potential of the discourse analysis could have been enhanced by more engagement with relevant methodology.

Suggested grade:

**B**

Signature: