



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Arnima Singh

Title: Terrorism and the Question of Morality

Programme/year: International Relations (MAIN)

Author of Evaluation (second reader): PhDr. Radana Makariusová, Ph.D.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	5
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	20
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	28
Total		80	53
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	5
	Style	5	3
	Formal requirements	5	3
Total		20	11
TOTAL		100	64



Overall evaluation:

Thesis aims to answer the question whether terrorism can be morally justified. It is very difficult question by itself and therefore the author tackled a very complicated topic. Arnima herself admits such an analysis is subjected to the individual interpretation of the specific author/ philosopher/ expert who comments on the topic. As the author presents on p. 12: „whether certain acts of terrorism could be morally permissible or justifiable through the given theories will be done primarily by analysing a number of works by prominent political philosophers like Michael Walzer, Virginia Held, Andrew Valls etc and their take on terrorism and acts of terror in regards to moral philosophy“ (p. 12) I wonder whether this number of experts covers sufficient scale for the analysis of this subject?

The diploma thesis contains a very simple structure of only three main chapter as the introduction and conclusion cannot be considered as chapters. The division of individual chapters, each of which has its own introduction and conclusion, is surprising. Such a structure is unusual and a bit confusing.

In terms of content, while the author defines the term violence in the introduction, she does not define the term terrorism at all, and gets to the definition of terrorism by the page 46. In the introduction, Arnima presents that the definition of terrorism is "immensely difficult" to formulate and further on that "view of terrorism and its justification remain a personal interpretation" (p.9). I need to agree with such a proclamation but on the other hand I am asking whether the author doesn't undermine all her analysis within her thesis with such a statement?

In addition to the interpretation of terms - sometimes the author swaps the terms terrorism and terror. (for example p.14)

The thesis contains a large number of shortcomings. As the author does not anchor terrorism in the beginning and doesn't present clear and evident research method when operating with analysis of terrorism and terrorist groups it results in a large number of question marks.

For instance, the author claims that her analysis is based only on jihadist groups as presented on page 13: „Due to the length of the project, the paper mainly refers to jihadist terrorism groups when talking about terrorism, and disregards all other terrorist groups“ (p.13). Considering this given task Arnima nevertheless turns to the arguments of Leon Trotsky, who spoke about the phenomenon of terrorism in a completely different period of time when jihadist groups had not operated yet. Why are Trotskys' arguments relevant for her analysis then? As Arnima states. „He (Trotsky) considers terrorism to be harsh reality of revolution and war“.(21) I understand Trotsky but Arnima in her analyses operates with completely different „type“ of terrorism than Trosky in his period of time. Similar situation comes to place with analysis of Walzer: „Michael Walzer has been a dominant figure in studying the ethics of war and terrorism. After his 1977 book Just and Unjust Wars, his take on warfare has



been sought after by his supporters and critics alike.“ (p. 26) But in 70s Walzer cannot take into account the activity of jihadist groups as well.

The orientation on just war theory and its development in chapter 2 is unfortunately not very obvious as well. Arnima explains her purpose on p. 34 but still it is not clear. Furthermore within the subchapter „Interpretation of Terrorism though Just War Theory“ the author mentioned connection between just war and war against terrorism. The connection is clear but how is fight against terrorism connected to justification of the phenomenon of terrorism itself? Terrorism as a form of violence and fight against terrorism are two different phenomenons.

I have a few questions that may be answered during the defense.

1. On p. 26 Arnima presents: „In her essay ‘Terrorism and War’ Virginia Held states in the very beginning that she will not be answering the questions about the morality of terrorism, but rather showing how war is just as bad.“
 - Why is Arnima using Virginia Held for her analysis then?
2. Cited on page 48: „For instance, Michael Walzer, who considers modern terrorism to be unjustifiable would define terrorism in more absolutist terms than someone like Virginia Held or Andrew Valls, who maintain that in certain situations violence can be justifiable.“
 - All right, but violence and terrorism are different terms. Violence is much wider term than terrorism and terrorism is one form of violence. As a result it does not mean Held and Valls justify terrorism. Do you agree or disagree?
3. „Analysing terrorism and the moral justifications for the acts of terror plays an important role into understanding terrorism itself.“ (p. 57)
 - Why do you think so?
4. „Those arguing that terrorism can be justified do so by laying out the conditions within which indiscriminate killing could be justifiable, and those opposing it take on the stance that killing another human being can never be justified, and should never be justified.“ (p.59)
 - It is not clear who says what? Who is arguing for justification an who against it?
5. „Committing an act of violence against an individual is bad enough but killing people indiscriminately just for political or some other form of gains makes it understandable as to why many consider terrorism to be *prima facie* immoral. However “Provided it can be shown that killing in the course of terrorist acts can be justified, terrorist acts – and terrorist strategies – can, in principle, be justified. (p. 52) ”⁹⁴



FACULTY
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
Charles University

- Whose conclusion is this? Is this Arnima's conclusion or Schwenkenbecher's? It is not clear.

As the author mentions in the beginning: „The purpose of the thesis is to seek to understand whether terrorism could be ethical and justifiable in certain situations, and if so, in what conditions could it be deemed ethical.“(13)

I am not sure whether Arnima succeeded in fulfilling her purpose but nevertheless I recommend her thesis to be defended.

Assessment of plagiarism:

<https://secure.urkund.com/view/136233530-732411-975767>

Suggested grade: D

Signature: