



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Prushankin, Keith Chandler

Title: Who's Afraid of the Lurking Bear: The Resecuritization of Russia in the Post- Crimean United States National Security Discourse

Programme/year: MAIN/2017

Author of Evaluation (external assessor): Dr. Ondrej Ditrych

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	8
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	35
<i>Total</i>		80	68
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	2
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	17
TOTAL		100	85



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The thesis' objective is to interrogate the contemporary securitisation discourse of Russia in the United States and to historicise it by tracing how Russia has been constructed in this discourse, i.e. what linguistic devices / 'packages' have been used in relation to Russia since the founding of the American Republic. It is generally successful in isolating key discursive patterns in the current discourse and persuasively demonstrating how this discourse is consistent with historical 'paradigms' (and how some of the imageries are reinscribed in the current process of 'resecritisation').

That said, the thesis suffers from several shortcomings. In the theoretical section, an assortment of concepts is presented, but some of those are either not used in the following analysis (Drulak's metaphors) or are indeed operationalised but later used only superficially (Gamson and Modigliani's 'discursive packages'). Moreover, the research design is not clear on how the historicisation of the current securitising moves would be conducted. The author could have benefited here e.g. by assuming a genealogical perspective when historicising the current discourse (leading to its *wirklich* history). Finally, I would take issue with the author's association of liberalism with threats; the description of anarchy in constructivist understanding as an 'imagined community'; discarding in a somewhat cavalierly manner the normative criticism of securitisation theory by Aradau or Dillon; or the assertion that neither the Copenhagen nor Paris school define the criteria of successful securitisation.

Second, in terms of method it is not made clear *what* discourse (i.e. statements produced at *which* discursive sites, *enoncés* made by *whom*) are the proper subject of the author's investigations; and as a result, they seem to be drawn from whatever sources could be assembled without however making clear how representative the chosen examples are. Moreover, as a result of missing robust theoretical frame for the discourse analysis, the argument is often rather descriptive (but short of *thick* description of the statements' context promised) or leaves the premises of discourse altogether, instead presenting a timeline and descriptions of important episodes in U.S.-Russia relations.



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Third, despite being generally well structured and engagingly written, the thesis' argument seems somewhat convoluted; a shortcoming that is however successfully balanced by including summarising tables at the end of the two empirical chapters.

Minor criteria:

The style of references (footnotes) is inconsistent throughout the thesis and at several occasions the author relies heavily on a few sources, leading to extended paraphrases despite the fact that overall, the corpus of secondary literature perused is rather extensive.

Overall evaluation:

The thesis is written on a relevant subject and from innovative perspective. It could have benefited from a more robust theoretical and methodological anchoring and more clarity and direction of the argument. However, it succeeds in presenting key patterns of the subjectification and securitisation of Russia in the current political and general discourse in the U.S., and in historicising key patterns of these processes.

Suggested grade:

Excellent / Very Good

Signature: