Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Keith Chandler Prushankin

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

Programme/year: MAIN, 2nd year

Author of Evaluation: Tomáš Karásek (supervisor)

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	**10**	9
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	**30**	28
	Methodology, analysis, argument	**40**	36
Total		*80*	*73*
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	**10**	10
	Style	**5**	5
	Formal requirements	**5**	4
Total		*20*	*19*
TOTAL		*100*	*92*

Evaluation

Major criteria:

The author selected a topic that is both relevant from a long-term perspective, and currently among the hottest issues in international relations. With its actions against Ukraine since 2014, Russia forced itself back as a serious security challenge for European states and their North American allies, reviving various previous concepts, ideas and modes of thinking framing the attitudes to this great power.

Keith Prushankin's take on the issue reflects and respects the current developments, but on the other hand offers a sweeping historical account against which the situation can be judged. The research questions of the thesis focus on the ways of securitizing Russia in the U.S. discourse, coining an original thesis of 'resecuritization', i.e. a return of an issue to a securitized level after it was deescalated therefrom. The presented analysis of the U.S. discourse starts with a robust survey of securitization packages as they developed over the two hundred plus years of the countries' parallel coexistence. These packages are then tested against discursive reactions of American officials as well as media representatives vis-a-vis the Crimean crisis. The thesis persuasively argues that there are indeed deep-seated elements present in the contemporary U.S. discourse on Russia, but at the same time documents various specific innovations.

The author's handling of the theoretical and conceptual issues is sure, knowledgeable and clear. While the securitization theory often degrades to a banal 'analysis' of what people say about security, here it is put to a service of a clearly defined research goal that is supported by a robust methodology, focusing on a textual analysis in the framework of a wider discourse. The resulting research offers a persuasive insight into historical and contemporary U.S. perceptions of Russia.

With each page, the thesis also demonstrates a passionate interest of the author in the topic. The only criticism would concern the fact that this passion perhaps prevented the author from being more economic in dealing with some of the issues, especially the historically oriented analysis. In blunter words, the thesis could have been shorter without a negative impact on its quality.

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Minor criteria:

Besides being apparently fond of the topic, the author also likes to write – this is a thesis that stands well as a piece of writing, not 'just' a result of a research. While the author sometimes verges close to a journalistic jargon (that is, after all, evident from the thesis's title) and seems particularly fond of metaphors, his good taste keeps the text within the realm of interesting, rather than annoying. The thesis, in short, is a pleasure to read. It is also clear that the author's stylistic panache helps him convey the message concerning the results of the discourse analysis.

The aforementioned ability would not be efficient if not supported by a breadth of sources the author utilized. In this respect, too, the thesis must be praised, as the scope of primary and secondary sources is impressive and put to good use.

Overall evaluation:

Keith Prushankin wrote an interesting, well conceptualized, methodologically sound, clearly structured, deeply researched and nicely presented analysis of a relevant and topical issue. While perhaps more extensive than necessary, the thesis represents a fine example of a scholarly analysis.

Suggested grade: **1**

Signature: