



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Liliana Pîrlea

Title: The Mexican War on Drugs (An Analysis of the Militarised Approach and its Consequences)

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	7
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	20
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	35
<b>Total</b>		80	62
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<b>Total</b>		20	20
<b>TOTAL</b>		100	82



## Evaluation

The thesis demonstrates the author's considerable intellectual curiosity, determination and competence to treat in detail a complex subject relevant to the field of security studies yet so far not submitted to definite treatment. The argument is clearly situated in the existing body of research, focused, logically structured, and all its key aspects are well researched. The conclusion that the government strategy not only has been ineffective, but has actually been counterproductive in terms of pushing adversaries (violent drug cartels) toward structural and territorial fragmentation and has resulted in hypermilitarisation and the increase of risk to human security is both sensible and substantiated in the thesis.

That said, the thesis suffers from imperfect linking of the theoretical and methodological framework and empirical analysis which results in a certain indeterminacy of the objectives and limits the scope of the conclusions reached. In literature review, the author introduces and discusses thoroughly concepts that are relevant to the chosen case (Mexico), but does not derive a theoretical framework from here (which could structure the case study covering the recent developments). Indeed, they are accompanied by immediate reflections on the case study, but the theoretical chapter that follows turn to securitisation theory (and constructivism broadly speaking) and "ungoverned spaces". While the former is a robust lens for discourse / process tracing analysis of how a certain issue has become elevated beyond the realm of politics and to what social effects (premised on internalisation of certain ontological assumptions associated with social constructivism which the author does not make entirely explicit); the latter, on the other hand, cannot really be considered a theory as such, while it functions ideologically to reify a certain ideal of nation state where these spaces, not governed in the "modern way" do not exist.



Neither is properly used in the empirical analysis as, instead of engaging in interpretive research (e.g. exploring patterns of intertextuality, recurrent discursive themes etc.), it seeks to evaluate the effects of the Caldéron government strategy to counter violent drug cartels, and in particular whether the strategy empowered drug cartels instead of debilitating them. It is presented as content analysis in terms of method, but in effect it is more of a dense historical narrative benefiting from a wealth of secondary literature and compiled expert observations while it lacks a thoroughly employed methodology, bearing on the originality of the argument's conclusions even as the thesis is successful in treatment many aspects of an undoubtedly complex problematique in a coherent and reasonably exhaustive manner.

Suggested grade: Very Good

Signature: