



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Shreya Sharma

Title: A Gender Perspective on the Responsibility to Protect : Case Study of Machsom Watch in Israel

Programme/year: MISS/2021

Author of Evaluation (external assessor): Mgr. Markéta Kocmanová

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	37
<i>Total</i>		80	72
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	2
<i>Total</i>		20	15
TOTAL		100	87



Evaluation

Major criteria:

In her thesis titled *A Gender Perspective on the Responsibility to Protect: Case Study of Machsom Watch in Israel*, Shreya presents a unique perspective on the gender aspect of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agendas and their lacking interconnectedness in practice. More specifically, she aims to critically examine how deficiency in WPS's and R2P's synergy impact active women's involvement in peacebuilding efforts, while pointing to the persisting reference to women as victims and their omission from security practice. The author seeks to address this gap by conducting field research in the West Bank to map the activities of an Israeli grassroots organization that could provide precisely this missing link, arguing that the agency of women and their ability to create change and their role in conflict prevention have not been sufficiently documented.

The theoretical part is well researched and generally persuasive – it enables to inform the reader why feminist security studies can “offer a more complete picture of security that is reflective of the real world”, while managing to emphasize how this approach influences ontological and epistemological choices of her research. However, it tends to be overly descriptive in parts, lacking critical reflection. It concerns especially the Women, Peace, and Security subchapter whose parts just seem to be basically listing the historical development of the agenda which, in the end, does not prove to be very instrumental in performing the empirical analysis, giving an impression it represents no more than a padding of the text. On the whole though, it demonstrates Shreya's sound knowledge of theoretical underpinnings related to the realm of gendered security.

The methodological section is clearly structured and complex, including all the necessary components like data collection, data analysis and also the research limitations brought about by the pandemic and violence-induced travel restrictions. The granularity of the methodology must be commended – the author includes all the necessary components such as the problem of gaining access, sampling strategy, the interview and observation design, the process of transcription and data verification method. What must be also appreciated is the careful construction of an elaborate coding scheme for the data analysis. However, despite being supported by five field visits, the number of interviews (three) is not sufficient, as the author herself points out.



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The scope of the empirical base relying on primary data seems to be balanced by secondary sources provided by the Machsom Watch website, but this fact should have been articulated more explicitly, given the fact that it secures the necessary triangulation and the reliability of the findings.

The analytical section of the thesis capitalizes on a very fortunate, inherently feminist, case selection. Machsom (Checkpoint) Watch as an informal organization consisting of several hundred women volunteers was wisely chosen as a grassroots-level group demonstrating how micro-level action may work more effectively in comparison with sometimes rather cumbersome large-scale programmes. Moreover, the analysis benefits from carefully formulated research questions and devised coding scheme, enabling the author to introduce her research findings in a systematic manner. Thus, we learn not only about who the women engaged in Machsom are, but also what specific activities they undertake and about the roles of mediators, knowers, witnesses and activists that they assume. Through her respondents accounts, Shreya is able to mediate the numerous micro injustices that the Palestinians encounter on an everyday basis and how these are addressed by the Machsom women, so that we get an accurate picture of how they establish their agency and break the simplistic stereotype of victims deprived of active creation of security. As for the conclusion, it blends both the discussion of empirical findings and conclusion. Despite the limited number of interviews, the author was eventually able to gather sufficiently ample data that could have been discussed in a separate chapter, e.g. a very valuable age aspect as an empowering and liberating element present in Machsom women's agency, but these were not exploited to provide further theoretical framing to the findings. The way it is presented, the conclusion gives a rather disorganized impression when presenting a heterogeneous collection of new empirical evidence from the interviews, a number of references to academic sources and strategic documents which do not seem to make the conclusion very persuasive.

Minor criteria:

The structure of the text could have been more coherent, primarily with respect to the interconnectedness of the theoretical and analytical parts. Additionally, the inclusion of the methodological section into the empirical part could be questioned – its integration into the middle of the empirical part gives the impression it should have increased the length of the analysis. I also have one minor terminology remark – interviews are semi-structured and questions are open-ended when talking about qualitative interviewing.



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The text also contains quite a lot of typos, minor grammar and vocabulary issues and textual inaccuracies.

Additionally, the thesis does not follow the formatting required by the faculty, e.g. numbering of subchapters, spacing, missing keywords, thesis reference or the text length. There are no plagiarism issues present in the text.

Overall evaluation:

In sum, Shreya's Master's Thesis can definitely be recommended for defence. It makes a very meaningful contribution supporting calls for prioritization of preventative and non-coercive measures in volatile security environments that has been credibly documented by the case of Machsom Watch. Despite minor shortcomings, Shreya has undoubtedly proved her ability to provide original research findings that could represent a pilot research into the effects of gender-based grassroots movements on everyday security in conflict zones.

Suggested grade:

B

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kocmanová'.