



Report on the part of the final state examination Record of the thesis defence

Academic year: 2022/2023

Student's name and surname: Arghawan Farsi
Student's ID: 33817311

Type of the study programme: Master's (post-Bachelor)
Study programme: International Master in Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies (IMSISS)

Study ID: 722483

Title of the thesis: Hidden Swallows- The role of female agents in Iranian intelligence practices
Thesis department: Department of Security Studies (23-KBS)
Language of the thesis: English
Language of defence: English
Advisor: Ing. Bc. Luděk Michálek, Ph.D.
Date of defence: 21.09.2023 **Venue of defence:** Praha
Attempt: regular

Course of defence: The student wrote about how Iranian intelligence agencies use female agents to track down opposition figures - how women are used as agents of seduction, something that is very tabooed, especially in Iran. The student used secondary sources - about 23 newspaper articles, because she could not access primary sources, and she had also thought about interviewing a high female figure in Iran but could not as she was imprisoned. The articles were both in Farsi and English, also more pro-government and less-so. She used a specific theory of queer security studies, both for analytical purposes and also to try and expand the male-dominated field. In the analysis, the student had four empirical cases of female agents who were used to seduce - two for internal targets (MPs accused of corruption), two for external. In the former, there was a pattern - affiliated with the regime, possibly used the agents to divert attention, but it was very much about speculation and objectification of the women. The latter: two exiled opposition targets and the women were used to lure the targets so that they could be kidnapped. The student then briefly concluded that the issue deserved greater attention. Turning to reviews: 1) well done when it came to connection between intelligence and feminist fields; 2) some minor grammar mistakes; 3) good job bringing in the gender issue, especially in relation to Iran. The student agreed with everything that they said but there was not much criticism. The student said she could have developed her research questions better, more nuanced; arguments also could be more concise. The committee asked what was the general contribution, above empirical one. The student emphasized the queer / gender dimension, especially in relation to the Global South. Another comment was: the empirical case is not new, we already see traces in Hungarian secret police during Communism, qualifying the

said novelty of the topic. The committee thanked the student and announced her successful completion of the defense.

Result of defence: excellent (A)

Chair of the board: prof. PhDr. Emil Aslan, Ph.D. (present)

Committee members: Marcin Kaczmarski, Dr. (present)

Sarah Leonard (present)