

BACHELOR'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT
PPE – Bachelor's in Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	A Polish Tale of Securitization: The Polish Law and Justice Party's Securitization in the Context of Different Refugee Movements between 2015 and 2022		
Student's name:	Jonte van Giesen		
Referee's name:	Janusz Salamon		
Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	47	
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	15	
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	15	
Total		77	
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	10	
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	5	
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	5	
Total		20	
TOTAL		97	

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria:

I believe, Jonte van Giesen wrote an exceptionally good Bachelor's thesis which makes a genuine contribution to the study of the Securitization Theory by filling two gaps in the existing research: (a) while previous studies assume audience acceptance of the interpretation of something as a security threat, Jonte van Giesen focuses on the evidence for the audience acceptance; (b) while previous studies focus on the phenomena of securitization in narrow timespan and often in a transnational context, Jonte van Giesen provides an exemplary analysis securitization processes in a single country and over an extended period of time, creating an opportunity for inquiry into the relative importance of the explanatory factors, as is the case with his analysis of three different 'migration crises' in Poland. Jone attends to diverse ways in which the process of securitization occurs in the context of the three following events: (i) the European migrant crisis of 2015 having to do with the movement of refugees primarily from the war-torn Syria; (ii) the Polish-Belarusian border crisis in 2021 during which the Belarusian authorities attempted to "assist" refugees from the global South to cross the EU border; (iii) the influx into Poland of 1 million of the Ukrainian refugees after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

In the thesis, Jonte explains – in a way coherent with the version of the Securitization Theory which stresses the importance of the audience –different reactions of the same government of the PiS party which in the name of national security attempted to resist the acceptance of a single Syrian or Iraqi refugee in 2015 and in 2021 but supported acceptance of the Ukrainian refugees in 2022.

Jonte's explanation points to the crucial role the audience's (i.e., the Polish public) role in the securitization processes in shaping the response of the government on each occasion. It was the

concern of the populist government with the electoral support of the public that explained the selective treatment of refugees, and thus shaped variously the securitization narratives. By the same token, Jonte explains the otherwise unexpected (given a frequent anti-EU rhetoric of the PiS government) convergence between the policies embraced on each occasion by the PiS party and that of the EU. Consistent with Jonte's main finding (about the importance of the audience of the securitization efforts of governments) was the identification of deep divisions in the Polish society regarding the policies towards refugees from different parts of the world, as well as the securitization of LGBTQ individuals, and a broader attitude towards the pillars of the Polish security – a finding that has been vindicated by the results of the recent parliamentary elections which removed the PiS party from power. These skilfully argued main theses of the paper allowed Jonte to formulate important insights into the relationship between securitization and desecuritization (as the audience's opinion's shift influencing the government's policies), and also identify the need for the normative, as opposed to descriptive, treatment of the securitization issues, given the prominence of the 'constructivist' aspect of the securitization processes which make the shifts from securitization to desecuritization possible. In short, Jonte van Giesen's thesis is an exemplary piece of academic work. The sources referred to in the thesis are most impressive. The two questions, secondary to the main thread of the thesis, to which I have found no answers in the paper are listed below.

Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): A

Suggested questions for the defence are:

(1) Since we are dealing with the thesis written by a PPE student, I allow myself to formulate an epistemological question. Given the undeniable presence of the 'constructivist' element in the securitization processes (the presence of the alleged 'security threat' being at least in some instances and to a significant degree a matter of the perception by the public and policy makers), how does the Securitization Theory negotiate these 'subjective' factors that effectively shape the security policies of the state with 'objective' reality of genuine and obvious security threats? Is the distinction between mere 'perceptions' and objective 'reality' in this context theoretically viable?

(2) PiS party is referred to in the thesis as 'Conservative', 'nationalist' and 'populist'. Given the main finding of the thesis, did the first two dimensions of the ideological makeup of the PiS party shape in significant ways the security policies of the PiS government? Is it not the case that the populist character of the PiS party alone is sufficient for explaining the policy decisions of the PiS government? (Note that a Conservative and nationalist government might have ideological reasons for resisting an influx of over 1 million of Ukrainians, many of whom are likely to stay in Poland permanently.) Moreover, if the audience impact thesis is correct, wouldn't it follow that all governments in electoral democracies are likely always behave in a populist manner responding to the 'security perceptions' of the audience, no matter what the ideological inclinations of the party(ies) involved?

I recommend the thesis for final defence.

Janusz Salamon

Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	C	= good
61 – 70	D	= satisfactory
51 – 60	E	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	F	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.