FACULTY
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
Charles University

Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Valeria Cavallin

Title: Perspectives on Resilience Against Radicalization in the Ranks: Personal Experiences of the U.S. Ex-Military Personnel

Programme/year: Security Studies / 2024

Author of Evaluation (second reader): Jan Ludvík, Ph.D.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	**10**	5
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	**30**	15
	Methodology, analysis, argument	**40**	20
Total		***80***	40
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	**10**	0
	Style	**5**	3
	Formal requirements	**5**	0
Total		***20***	3
TOTAL		***100***	43

Evaluation

Major criteria:

Valeria Cavallin's thesis sets out with an ambitious and noble goal: to offer a preliminary exploratory study aimed at enriching the knowledge base for policies, training programs, and interventions to counteract radicalization in the U.S. military, especially in the post-9/11 era. The thesis ambitiously attempts to weave together social theories and psychological approaches to dissect the risk and protective factors linked with military service. The use of in-depth interviews with former U.S. military personnel and the application of both deductive and inductive reasoning reflect a thoughtful approach to understanding the resilience mechanisms and strategies these individuals employ.

However, the journey from intent to execution reveals some complexities and challenges. The thesis presents a range of research questions that, while insightful, tend to be broad, which may diffuse the focus required for a deeply analytical exploration of such a multifaceted topic. This breadth in the questions sets a tone that reverberates throughout the thesis, affecting its overall cohesiveness.

The literature review is extensive and demonstrates a commendable effort to lay a solid foundation for the study. However, the thesis might have benefited from a more pinpointed approach in both the literature review and the subsequent theoretical and empirical discussions. The theoretical section, rather than standing on its own, unfolds more as an extension of the literature review.

The empirical heart of the thesis beats with the voices of two ex-military personnel, whose experiences are indeed invaluable. While the use of interviews is a significant strength, relying solely on two online interviews may not provide the breadth or depth of data typically expected in a thesis. The author's acknowledgment of this limitation is honest and transparent, yet the constraints it imposes on the study's capacity to generalize findings are a critical point to consider, especially in the realm of social science where broader applicability often underpins the value of research.

The analytical portion of the thesis, which promises an interplay of inductive and deductive approaches, seems to fall short of a structured analytical framework, leaning instead towards presenting isolated quotes from the interviews. The conclusions, while extensive, appear to be floating without the anchor of robust theoretical or empirical substantiation, and their focus seems to waver.

Minor criteria:

Valeria Cavallin's thesis commendably draws on a wide array of sources, showcasing a rigorous and comprehensive engagement with the existing literature, which undeniably stands as one of its most notable strengths. However, the thesis is marred by a significant oversight in its citation practice, as references are consistently cited only by the author's name and date, without the essential inclusion of specific page ranges. This lack of precise referencing not only undermines the scholarly rigor but also hampers the reader's ability to follow and verify the research trail effectively. Furthermore, the thesis' presentation could be significantly enhanced with meticulous editing. The text, in its current form, is somewhat diminished by the presence of typographical errors, repeated words, and other linguistic inaccuracies. Addressing these issues through careful revision would undoubtedly elevate the overall clarity, coherence, and scholarly impact of the work.

Assessment of plagiarism:

The anti-plagiarism software detected a 31 percent similarity score with numerous unacknowledged direct or slightly modified citations. I think this is beyond the acceptable and could not be an oversight.

Overall evaluation:

In its essence, the thesis is an earnest and well-intentioned endeavor. The literature review is a particular highlight, showcasing the author's dedication and understanding of the subject matter. However, the thesis might benefit significantly from narrowing its focus, deepening its empirical base, and sharpening its analytical acumen. This would not only strengthen the current study but also pave the way for future research to build upon its foundations, further illuminating the complex phenomenon of radicalization in the military. Last but not least, the thesis is mired with citation malpractice and possibly deliberate plagiarism. The overall extent of citation malpractice does not allow for the recommendation of the thesis for defense.

Suggested grade: F

Signature: Mgr. et Mgr. Jan Ludvík, Ph.D.

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