



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Matyáš Maděra

Title: Ontological security and anxiety:
establishing the conceptual link

Programme/year: International Security Studies 2023-24

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Aliaksei Kazharski

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	7
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	20
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	30
<i>Total</i>		80	57
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	7
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	3
<i>Total</i>		20	15
TOTAL		100	72



Evaluation

Major criteria:

Minor criteria:

Assessment of plagiarism:

1% overlap according to SIS protocol. No indications of plagiarism.

Overall evaluation:

This is a theoretical thesis that sets out on a fairly ambitious mission: refining our understanding of ontological security in IR by connecting it to the philosophical and psychological/psychoanalytical discussions of the phenomenon of human anxiety. The thesis is written in good English, although some expressions do raise an occasional eyebrow (e.g., “conceptual analysis of concepts” (p. 16) or, arguably, the most mysterious term in the thesis, “the *bibliographical* narrative”). The text shows that the author is very immersed in the intellectual discussions surrounding anxiety and OS and has made an independent intellectual attempt to make sense of them. I generally appreciate the literature review which gives a fair representation of the OS debates, though surprisingly, some important names and topics - e.g., Filip Ejdus and his examination of material environments and ontological security of states - have also been omitted altogether. I also appreciate the fact that the author addressed some of the most notable pitfalls of ontological security theory and correctly identified the response that OS scholars have given on that account.

When it comes to the discussions of anxiety the thesis tends to get a little more confusing, less effectively structured, and more difficult to follow, though some interesting observations are made in that part as well. What I would probably suggest, given the disciplinary framework of the thesis, is a better discussion of the implications that the author’s conclusions should have for IR and security studies-oriented analyses. If the main purpose of the thesis is theoretical, it should somehow help us refine our research methods, not only satisfy the author’s intellectual curiosity, which is a role largely reserved for the philosophy department. Thus, the author seems to conclude, in the end, that “the argument is that in its current form, the state itself does not experience ontological insecurity, but individuals’ experience of ontological insecurity drives state action” (p. 61).



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Does that mean anything for our empirical strategies?

Suggested grade: "C" (72)

Signature: *Alku*