

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

Thesis title:	Mechanisms of Securitization of Identities and Polarization in Turkey
Student's name:	Mehmet Emin Akyar
Referee's name:	Pelin Ayan Musil, PhD

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	50	40
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	15	13
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	15	10
Total		80	63
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	10	5
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	5	5
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	5	5
Total		20	15
TOTAL		100	78

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria:

This thesis has a twofold aim: First it aims to understand the mechanisms through which the Turkish government securitizes marginalized identities (such as the Kurdish minority, the LGBTQ+s and the women), and second it aims to demonstrate how such securitization reinforces societal polarization in Turkey. The student demonstrates a strong ability to apply the concept and theoretical framework of securitization on the case of Turkey. His illustrations of securitization through the discourse of selected governmental figures are well-chosen and to-the-point in the empirical section of the thesis. That been said, the causal link showing how such securitization contributes to polarization in the country could have been empirically stronger. It could have perhaps been better if the thesis overall had dropped this latter goal (i.e. contribution to social polarization) not only to provide a more robust analysis of the mechanisms of securitization but also to avoid providing somewhat lukewarm empirical support for the second pillar of the argument. Of course, the logic that links 'securitization'

to 'polarization' is clear but it is the empirical manifestation that is not strong. The measurement of polarization requires an analysis of the public opinion surveys contrasting the views of the supporters of the government to the supporters of the opposition on such issues as gender equality and Kurdish question and the widening gap between the two over time.

However, the thesis still does a good job in clearly outlining its objectives, research questions in the beginning and drawing a general picture of the securitized identities in Turkey. It is a timely topic and theoretically informed analysis. I am not sure whether there was particularly a need for merging the methods of thematic analysis and discourse analysis since the latter method could be more than sufficient. I was not able to see the contribution of thematic analysis to the thesis; indeed it was not clear how it was actually done. Discourse analysis, on the other hand, is not easy to conduct in a research project; requires a deep understanding of the historical and cultural context to explain the meaning of the chosen words and statements by the actors. The student has such competence, and the chosen examples are used to exactly show that.

Another question that has arisen for me while reading the thesis is whether or not the emphasis on three identities; women, the LGBTQ+s and the Kurds, was already too much for the scope of analysis. I agree that these three identities are particularly marginalized and securitized in Turkey and there is something common across them. But rather than comparing the shared features of securitization on these identities, it seems to me that the thesis studies them individually and separately. In the beginning, the thesis provides an overview of how these identities were politicized in Turkey and each of them has its own historical background. Keeping these identities as the main units of analysis without studying them comparatively or demonstrating 'their common securitized features' brings forth the problem of a lack of depth in the analysis. If the focus was just on the Kurds or the LGBTQ+s, the literature review on each could have been richer, the number of examples would be higher and the analytical discussion of the mechanisms of securitization could have had more depth. Again, I am not saying that the student should have chosen only one identity, but if a decision is made toward increasing the number of the units of analysis, then it should focus more on the 'comparative' aspects of these units rather than each of them individually to increase analytical depth, because otherwise there will never be enough space to deeply delve into each into unit.

Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): 78 C

Suggested questions for the defence are:

1/ In your thesis you have chosen to analyse how the Turkish government securitizes the identity of the Kurdish minorities, LGBTQ+s and women. Could you explain clearly why you made this choice—what is it that is shared across these three identities (as opposed to some other potentially marginalized identities such as the Alevi minority)?

2/ Can you give some empirical examples of how—for instance the securitization of the Kurdish minority by Turkish government—contributes to further polarization between the supporters of the government and the opposition? How does it widen the gap between the political positions of these two groups?

Grading Scale:

- A = 91-100 % – excellent
- B = 81-90 % – very good
- C = 71-80 % – good
- D = 61-70 % – satisfactory
- E = 51-60 % – minimal pass
- F = 0-50 % – fail