

Name of the student:	Luísa Pussieldi Moratelli
Title of the thesis:	Narratives about the Bosnian War: The United States Intervention through a Discourse Analysis of CIA Documents
Reviewer:	PhDr. Ondřej Žíla, Ph.D.

### 1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

Luísa Pussieldi Moratelli decided to focus on a discourse legacy of the Bosnian War, analyzing it from an innovative decolonial perspective. Applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), she examined the CIA collection of recently declassified documents *Bosnia, intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency: The Role of Intelligence and Political Leadership in Ending the Bosnian War*. In doing so, she scrutinized the narratives used by the U.S. authorities in their interpretation and intervention in the Bosnian War.

Her thesis is an innovative, well-structured, and intriguing contribution to the extensive scholarship on the role of discourse concerning the Bosnian War.

Research questions are well connected to the current academic literature on the post-colonial/decolonial theories, which she discusses in a particular chapter.

### 2. ANALYSIS

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

As stated in the previous part, I consider Moratelli's thesis to be a convincing analysis. She demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of the main theoretical concepts chosen considering the research objectives (Post-Colonial and Decolonial theories). Her literature review is well-elaborated and consists of many enriching details. I salute how she reframes the lenses through which the scholarship has traditionally interpreted the Balkan region and its turmoil interruptions. Instead of analyzing it via the same optics tinged with a Western (and therefore with a modern/colonial pre-supposition) perspective and thus repeating the traditional arguments on peace, security, memory, nationalism, and post-socialist transformation, she proposes a more critical, i.e., decolonial approach.

She applies a method of the CDA, working with recently declassified CIA documents. Her methodological framework is coherent, discussing potential threats and limitations. The empirical evidence is original and extensive. Regarding the CDA, she offers a detailed description of gathering data.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

In general, I find Moratelli's writings appropriate. The author's analysis connects research objectives and hypotheses with the gathered data persuasively, and her findings contribute to and intervene in broader post-colonial and decolonial debates.

She should polish the conclusion part of the thesis —her elaboration on conclusions should discuss her findings about the scholarship presented in the theoretical chapter. There is no broader return in the conclusion to the theory that would explain how her theoretical framework has been strengthened or weakened.

#### 4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

In terms of presentation and style, I do not have any critical comments. There are only marginal things that could be improved (typing errors).

The candidate is consistent in using her citation style.

#### 5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

I have the following comments and questions on Moratelli's thesis:

- 1) I appreciate Moratelli's effort to understand how the decolonial approach may contribute not only to our understanding of the U.S. engagement during and after the Bosnian War but also to look for alternative explanatory approaches to the hegemonic discourse on the Bosnian War. Also, the findings on the Muddle-Through discourse stemming from the CDA are significant. Moratelli contrasts the U.S. being at a political dead-end during the conflict and its post-war narrative.
- 2) I miss a more robust, comprehensive, and broader discussion of the relevance of her findings within the post-colonial and decolonial theoretical debates. For example, I find what the CIA stated on behalf of the future scenarios in BiH between 1992 and 1994 fascinating. The CIA authors viewed the impossibility of having a multicultural, unified BiH, discussing an option of a "more manageable objective (...) that would be the survival of a fragmented Muslim-majority state following a partition of BiH" (p. 52). This statement and other authors' intriguing findings from the CDA should be confronted with post-colonial theories and the literature extensively discussed in the literature review (Todorova, Bakić-Hayden, Verderi, Chary, etc.). What lessons have we learned from Moratelli's thorough analysis concerning "thinking between the posts" and decolonial lenses?
- 3) Abstract – it should not be about discussing the structure of the thesis (providing a list of chapters) but about introducing the main arguments, the most important findings, applied theories and methods, gathered sources, etc.
- 4) Regarding the Bosniak-Croat relationships in BiH, the author should incorporate the findings of authors other than Zdeb and Toal. Mirjana Kasapović and Dražen Pechar, among others, have extensively published on this issue.
- 5) The reference to the Bosniaks in 1974 is incorrect. At that time, the official title of the sixth Yugoslav nation was the Muslims. Only in 1993 did this Bosnian constituent nation change its name to Bosniaks.

Irrespective of these minor critical points mentioned above, Moratelli's thesis represents a well-elaborated theoretical exercise with plausible and convincing arguments. For these reasons, I recommend that our colleague Luísa Pussieldi Moratelli consider its publication in a reduced and edited version.

Finally, I am pleased to recommend Moratelli's thesis with a proposed assessment of A.

<b>Grade (A-F):</b>	A
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>

26.8.2024

classification scheme

Percentile	Prague		Krakow		Leiden		Barcelona	
	Score Range	%	Score	%	Score Range	%	Score Range	%
A (91-100)	91-100 %	8,5%	5	6,7%	8,5-10	5,3%	9-10	5,5 %
B (81-90)	81-90 %	16,3%	4,5	11,7%	7,5-8,4	16,4%	8-8,9	11,0 %
C (71-80)	71-80 %	16,3%	4	20%	6,5-7,4	36,2%	7-7,9	18,4 %
D (61-70)	61-70 %	24%	3,5	28,3%			6-6,9	35,2 %
E (51-60)	51-60 %	34,9%	3	33,4 %	6-6,4	42,1 %	5-5,9	30,1 %

**Assessment criteria:**

Excellent (A): 'Outstanding performance with only minor errors';

Very good (B): 'Above the average standard but with some errors';

Good (C): 'Generally sound work but with a number of notable errors';

Satisfactory (D): 'Fair but with significant shortcomings';

Sufficient (E): 'Performance meets the minimum criteria';

Fail: 'Some/considerable more work required before the credit can be awarded'.