

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
Institute of International Studies

**PROTOCOL ON DIPLOMA THESIS ASSESSMENT**  
**(Opponent)**

Name of the student: **Ekaterina Razinkova**

Title: **Cinema as a Tool of Nation Branding Strategy: A Case Study of Georgia**

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Opponent: Maria Alina Asavei (IMS)

**1. TOPIC AND OBJECTIVE (short information on the thesis, research objective):**

The chosen topic is innovative as there is a lacuna in the studies dedicated to nation branding in post-communist contexts (especially Caucasus). The research objectives are ambitious and concern an exploration of how national cinema in Georgia can be employed as a tool for nation branding. Ekaterina Razinkova attempts to disentangle specific strategies in Georgia's nation branding. The objectives are clearly and convincingly stated but the argument put forth is not fully unpacked.

**2. CONTENT (complexity, original approach, argument, structure, theoretical and methodological backing, work with sources, appropriateness of annexes etc.):**

The MA dissertation displays, nevertheless, a great degree of complexity by aiming to combine various theoretical frameworks from several disciplines. To my knowledge, the approach is original delving into an under-researched topic. The theoretical background is generally appropriate, and the discussion is detailed enough (although not analytical enough). Methodologically wise, the general model designed for film analysis is appropriate, yet the analysis of films fails to fully follow this methodological model. The key criteria for material selection are clearly presented.

### **3. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE (quality of language, citation style, graphics, formal aspects etc.):**

Although generally well written there are a few places where the reader can spot grammar mistakes as well as sloppiness in formulating sentences. The citation style is generally consistent. Some formulations are evasive and inappropriate for academic text (e.g., only on page 11 there are formulations like: “a *sufficiently* modest amount of scientific research”; “The previously written studies the instrumental correlation between the concepts of nation branding and national cinema on a *relatively superficial* level”; “within the area of post - Soviet space, the proposed approach appeared to be *relatively novel*”).

### **4. STATEMENT ON THE ORIGINALITY OF THE THESIS**

The thesis was checked by the Turnitin/URKUND/Theses anti-plagiarism and the similarity index does not reveal plagiarism.

### **5. SHORT COMMENTS BY THE REVIEWER (overall impression, strengths and weaknesses, originality of ideas, achievement of the research objective etc.):**

The general impression about the thesis is that although the topic is highly interesting - and with a great potential for disentangling the main strategies for nation branding through national film productions through the lens of several disciplines – it reads more like a cultural policy report than like an academic, analytical endeavour to engage with the intricacies of the topic proposed. Many paragraphs read more like policy recommendations (e.g., “However, as far as the industry is concerned, it is to be mentioned that it probably requires more investments from the government at the levels of production and distribution since all of the discussed examples are the results of coproduction with other states, primarily with European ones”).

#### **Strengths**

A very good knowledge and contextualization of the post-Soviet background. The great potential of an academic engagement with an under-researched topic. Detailed exposition of the theories revolving around national branding.

## **Weaknesses**

As far as weaknesses are concerned, I missed a solid engagement with the reception of the films analyzed. The concept of “tradition” (*per se*) is not sufficiently addressed. The thesis merely describes elements regarded as belonging to the Georgian traditional culture but a more nuanced approach to what “traditional” entails in Georgian culture is less addressed. The thesis allocates much more space to describe the theoretical framework, concepts, context... and much less to the analysis of the four films selected as representative for the national cinema. The analysis is covered only in the very last pages before the conclusions, and I find it insufficiently profound since it relies too much on descriptions. In the same vein, the analysis of each film is rather hasty and unconvincing. Each film is introduced by providing general information about its content, authorship, technicalities about production, screenings, prizes, and so on. While these descriptions are informative, the filmic structures are not adequately analyzed in terms of aesthetic credentials, means of representation, connotation...Although not all five different levels that could be examined in the analysis of any filmic structure (presented in the Introduction 1.8) are mandatory, at least those selected require a deeper engagement with. The thesis came too quickly (without enough evidence and argumentation) to the conclusion that in the Georgian context there is a frequent representation of traditional features compared with the Western-oriented aspect of the country's nation branding.

**6. COOPERATION WITH THE SUPERVISOR (communication with the supervisor, ability to reflect comments, shift from the original intention, etc.)**

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**7. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DURING THE DEFENCE:**

1. Is nation branding explored in this thesis a tool for commercial nationalism?
2. To what extent is nation branding (revealed through the film productions analyzed) stereotyping Georgian culture?
3. Does nation branding offer a genuine insight into Georgian culture or on the contrary?

**8. RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE: between B and C**

Date: 29 May 2023

Signature:

