

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2684004 Trento 233479 Charles 84345133
Dissertation Title	Georgian Foreign Policy Towards the North Caucasus

<p>Word Count Penalty (1-15% over/under = 1 gr point; 15-20% over/under = 2 gr points; 20-25% over/under = 3 gr points; more than 25% over/under = 0 fail)</p> <p>Word Count: 22,574 Suggested Penalty: no penalty</p>		

JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

Final Agreed Mark C1 [14]

DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

Assessment Criteria	Rating
A. Structure and Development of Answer	
This refers to your organisational skills and ability to construct an argument in a coherent and original manner	
• <i>Originality of topic</i>	Excellent
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Very Good
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Very Good
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Good
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Excellent
B. Use of Source Material	
This refers to your skills to select and use relevant information and data in a correct manner	
• <i>Evidence of reading and review of published literature</i>	Excellent
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Excellent
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Very Good
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Excellent
C. Academic Style	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Very Good
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Very Good
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Excellent
• <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>	Yes
• <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i>	Not required
• <i>Appropriate word count</i>	Yes

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ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

This is a very well-written and researched dissertation which analyses Georgia's policy towards the North Caucasus throughout successive presidential administrations. The topic is itself highly original as this is the first of its kind academic treatment of Georgia's political establishments approach towards the neighbouring region. The student's opportunity to work with original language sources has further enriched the discussion, adding more empirical novelty to this research. The application of theory to case study was generally very effectively performed with the student referring back to the theory when discussing the empirical evidence. Discussion on research methods (discourse analysis) was very nuanced, providing sufficient justification and rationale for the selection of the chosen research method.

My main point of criticism is that unfortunately the discussion on the Georgian Dream period was hardly one page long and did not engage in an in-depth analysis of speeches and statements as was performed for cases of previous political regimes in Georgia. In case if there were no relevant statements released by the Georgian Dream, the student could explicitly explain it in the chapter. As it is, the chapter on Georgian Dream looks incomplete and for the very least requires more explanations and discussion. No details on the Georgian Dream were also provided in the conclusion, where the student could have for the very least explained the overall attitude towards the North Caucasus in the Georgian politics over the past ten years. Considering that the Georgian Dream period lasts since 2013, this is a fairly major oversight in the analysis.

Reviewer 2

This is an original piece of research that looks into a timely and important topic of post-Soviet affairs. I have two major problems with the thesis though. First, I am not entirely convinced Georgia has conducted foreign policy toward the North Caucasus - after all, North Caucasus isn't a subject of international politics. Given the "verticale of power" built by Moscow over the last two decades, the republics of the North Caucasus, perhaps with the very specific exception of Chechnya, haven't conducted foreign policy, and haven't been recipients of foreign policy either. In itself, the North Caucasus is a highly fragmented region, with Adygea, Karachay-Cherkessia, Chechnya, and Dagestan having little in common. This having said, the whole concept, research problem, and lit review around which the thesis is built is somewhat flawed as it draws on a questionable premise. Second, the empirical parts are built chronologically, while a more topic-based approach would serve the purpose of the thesis much better. Unless the author seeks to look into the evolution of Georgia's FP towards Russia's North Caucasus region (which might be the right framing of the thesis), individual chapters focusing on topics such as Tbilisi's recognition of the Circassian Genocide, Tbilisi's framing of the (South) Ossetian and Abkhazian separatism issues (surprisingly missing in the thesis), and other researched topics would shed a more systematized light on the problem. Apart from that, I don't see a clear link between the empirical findings of the thesis and its conceptual framing; this could have been made more explicit to make sure both concept and data speak to each other. The thesis is well-written, well-researched, and well-referenced.