

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2716717 DCU 21110913 Charles 83044238
Dissertation Title	<i>The Motivations of Foreign Fighters: The Case of the Chechen Diaspora in Ukraine</i>

Word Count: 23600		

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

Final Agreed Mark C3 [12]

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>	Very Good
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Good
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Weak
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Satisfactory
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Poor
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>	Very Good
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Satisfactory
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Weak
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Good
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>	Good
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Good
• <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>	Yes

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| • Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology) | Not required |
| • Appropriate word count | Yes |

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

The thesis seeks to explain what has motivated Chechen Foreign Fighters (Ffs) to participate in the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War; to investigate the role played by the custom of blood revenge (and customary law-related practices in general) in these motivations; and to see whether and if yes, to what extent, is blood revenge still a factor in the Western-based Chechen diaspora. While the first objective is workable, the second one, as we've discussed several times, is extremely hard to validate given how sensitive the topic is and how rare the data is. The third objective is rather unrelated to the title of the thesis. Most of the thesis deals with background information about Chechens, their cultural background and the modern history of Russo-Chechen conflict, among other things. The sections on the actual objectives of the thesis are rather shallow. The thesis isn't theoretically-informed. Nor is it conceptually-informed, apart from the author's explanation of the basics of Chechen customary law and the custom of blood revenge in general. There is little to no engagement with a theory/research problem; in this specific case, the general literature on why foreign fighters join armed conflicts is lacking. Unfortunately, while the initiative was in itself ambitious and fairly realistic given the author's knowledge of Russian language and some open sources on the topic that still beg to be systematized, the author has rather missed the opportunity to make an interesting and original statement and to contribute either to the literature on how socio-cultural codes drive foreign fighters, or to at least empirically shed some important light on why Chechens have joined the war in Ukraine, either due to the need to retaliate or some other reasons.

Reviewer 2

This thesis focuses on an interesting and very relevant topic of participation of Chechens in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. Unfortunately, there are far too many issues with this dissertation.

I will start with the literature review chapter. Instead of focusing on existing debates in academic literature, the literature review chapter engages into in-depth analysis of selected studies. The number of direct quotations in the literature review chapter is excessive. In addition to the above issues, the literature review chapter makes up for nearly half of the entire dissertation.

The purpose of the historical background chapter is also unclear as the student did not explicitly discuss linkages between the American Civil war of 19th century and violent mobilisation of Chechens. The discussion of historical conflicts in North America and Europe is clearly beyond the analytical scope of this dissertation and those sections stand out as completely redundant. To make matters worse, those sections are purely descriptive lacking any critical analysis or engagement with either of the proposed research questions.

Chapter 7 is the only part of the dissertation that directly engages with the research puzzle of this study. Yet this is also the shortest chapter that fails to provide empirical support to either of the research questions. Patchy empirical evidence presented in that chapter does not demonstrate any causal or relative connections between blood revenge and either individual or group participation in the conflict.