



Universiteit
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Thesis evaluation Giorgi Tkhelidze

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Programme details

Programme: European Politics and Society

Specialisation:

EC: 30

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Thesis details:

Title: The EU in Georgia – Inducing Democratic Reforms with(out) Conditionality in Place

Is the thesis in your assessment free of plagiarism?

Yes to my knowledge the thesis is free of plagiarism

Yes, I did not encounter any suspicious section in the whole text. The sources, also, are properly referenced.

Can the thesis be made publicly available in the Leiden University Repository?

by A. Brisku: it can be made public through the repository.

Summary assessment/comments

The student has produced an original thesis, raises an important and relevant research demonstrates a firm grasp of the scholarly and theoretical literature of the subject matter of European conditionality, EU-Georgia relations and a clear understanding of Georgia's contemporary history and politics. however the argument is not clearly and explicitly delivered. There were some issues regarding the chosen method as highlighted above, but the thesis is clearly and logical structured. This is a good contribution to the emerging literature on EU-Georgia relations.

Criteria

Knowledge and insight

Yes, the research question as to "how the EU attempt to induce democratic reforms in Georgia without conditionality in place" is soundly embedded in the contemporary EU-Georgian relations scholarship. The student shows a great clarity in the definition of the problem and the subject matter is very relevant as we speak - both cases within the case of Georgia that he has selected are part of the political and social discussion and debate in the country. And in this light, a high degree of originality is demonstrated in this thesis in that the question of whether the EU exercises a level of conditionality towards Georgian's reforms, without the formal conditionality of EU membership, has not been posed as explicitly in the literature as in this thesis.

Assessment: good

Weighing: n/a

Application knowledge and insight

On this section, the student demonstrates a elegant mastery of critical use of material sources, does apply the chosen conceptual apparatus, throughout, in his analysis. Does use extensively secondary literature, though especially since mentioned several times how EU's recent political mediation in Georgia echos with those in the Western Balkans, the student did not include a book that compares Albanian and Georgian discourses on Europe, Bittersweet Europe (Berghanh Books, 2013).

What I was left a bit wanting in terms of the methodology is that the student does not discuss the nature of the comparison which he has selected, its advantages and disadvantages.

Assessment: good

Weighing: n/a

Reaching conclusions

There is indeed a high degree of reasoning and conclusions are well founded, drawing on the conceptual and theoretical framework of external governance and context-bound analysis of the two cases, which are logically and clearly presented. As for the degree to which the research question is answered, the student does not answer explicitly. The main argument of the thesis, as an informed answer to the research question, is not explicitly made. One has to wait for it at the very end of the thesis to get to the findings, one of it being that in the first case, namely, the Association Agreement and Visa liberalization conditioned and conducted Georgian politics into adopting the Anti-discrimination law, and in the second case through political mediation. But such findings are descriptive and are not lifted up to formulate a clear argument. The research question thus remains still unanswered, based also on the theoretical framework, how does the EU attempt to induce democratic reforms in Georgia, is it via the hierarchical mode or network mode or something in between?

Assessment: good

Weighing: n/a

Communication

Regarding language use, the student demonstrates strong level of linguistic competence, readability (though he uses awkwardly and repeatedly the pronoun 'per' when he sometimes means in or for. He does use correctly concepts and terminology, although, he emphasizes that writes that "the paper (and this is not a paper but a thesis) assumes that nuanced analysis will be an added value to the academic literature on EU-Georgian relations" (p. 7). But he does not clarify what does he mean by 'nuanced analysis'.

The structure and the layout of the thesis are within the standard of thesis writing and the student does properly reference his sources.

Assessment: good

Weighing: n/a

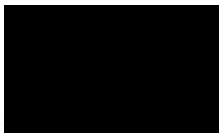
Formal requirements

No remarks on this section

Final assessment

This thesis is graded with a 7.8

Signatures



A. Brisku