

IMESS DISSERTATION



Note: Please email the completed mark sheet to Year 2 coordinator (jiri.vykoukal@post.cz)

Please note that IMESS students are not required to use a particular set of methods (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, or comparative) in their dissertation.

Student:	Jingjing Xu
Dissertation title:	Can Nationalism Influence Democracy – Analyzing the Impact of Azerbaijan Nationalism

	70+	69-65	60-61	59-55	54-50	<50
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Knowledge <i>Knowledge of problems involved, e.g. historical and social context, specialist literature on the topic. Evidence of capacity to gather information through a wide and appropriate range of reading, and to digest and process knowledge.</i>					x	
Analysis & Interpretation <i>Demonstrates a clear grasp of concepts. Application of appropriate methodology and understanding; willingness to apply an independent approach or interpretation recognition of alternative interpretations; Use of precise terminology and avoidance of ambiguity; avoidance of excessive generalisations or gross oversimplifications.</i>					x	
Structure & Argument <i>Demonstrates ability to structure work with clarity, relevance and coherence. Ability to argue a case; clear evidence of analysis and logical thought; recognition of an argument's limitation or alternative views; Ability to use other evidence to support arguments and structure appropriately.</i>					x	
Presentation & Documentation <i>Accurate and consistently presented footnotes and bibliographic references; accuracy of grammar and spelling; correct and clear presentation of charts/graphs/tables or other data. Appropriate and correct referencing throughout. Correct and contextually correct handling of quotations.</i>					x	
Methodology <i>Understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.</i>					x	

ECTS Mark:	E/52	Charles Mark:	E/52	Marker:	Karel Svoboda
<i>Deducted for late submission:</i>			<i>No</i>	Signed:	
<i>Deducted for inadequate referencing:</i>				Date:	

MARKING GUIDELINES

A (UCL mark 70+) = A (Charles mark 91-100 - excellent): Note: marks of over 80 are given rarely and only for truly exceptional pieces of work.

Distinctively sophisticated and focused analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.

B (UCL mark 69-65) = B (Charles mark 81-90 - very good)

C (UCL mark 64-60) = C (Charles mark 71-80 - good): A high level of analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Good understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research. 65 or over equates to a B grade.

D (UCL mark 59-55) = D (Charles mark 61-70 - satisfactory)

E (UCL mark 54-50) = E (Charles mark 51-60 - sufficient):

Demonstration of a critical use of sources and ability to engage in systematic inquiry. An ability to engage in sustained research work, demonstrating methodological awareness. 55 or over equates to a D grade.

F (UCL mark less than 50) = F (Charles mark 0-50 - insufficient):

Demonstrates failure to use sources and an inadequate ability to engage in systematic inquiry. Inadequate evidence of ability to engage in sustained research work and poor understanding of appropriate research techniques.

Please provide substantive and detailed feedback!

Comments, explaining strengths and weaknesses (*at least 300 words*):

I was not consulted with limiting the paper to the case study of Azerbaijan, which is not the country of my primary interest. However, restricting the research to one country may be seen as a positive sign. On the other hand, there are some points that might (and should) have been better. Primarily the research in Azerbaijani reality is only shallow. The author claims several times that before 1993 the regime was democratic in Azerbaijan. However, such a claim is only hardly defensible. Same may be said about constant use of the term “democratization”, especially considering the data which indicate an opposite direction of political affairs in the country.

It can be also better structured. The literature review is the longest part of the thesis – around fifteen pages. Restricting relatively broadly connected theories of nationalism to one paragraph and concentrating on the previous research on the link between nationalism and democracy would be better than discussing the theories of democracy. The author should have left more space to the quantitative and qualitative research and their results. The difference is glaring when even looking at the table of contents.

Methodology is also more intuitive than anything else. The author speaks about quantitative methods, but then makes comment on the surveys, counting a proportion of yes/no answers. No deeper analysis is made, therefore talking about a unique mix of quantitative and qualitative methods is debatable.

The research is limited only to 2011-2017. This should be explained in the introduction (although the part on methodology contains this explanation, at least a brief reason should be mentioned). However, we only learn that the author is aware of this limit. Especially in the qualitative part, this could have been addressed. The Freedom House Democracy index starts only in 2013, so the reason for using 2011-2017 is even more unclear.

In general, compared to the previous version and even to the version I saw (I got it one week before submission), the thesis improved, especially in understanding a local context and the regime itself. Thanks to this, I may recommend it for a defence. On the other hand, there are several shortcomings in the thesis that do not allow to score it higher than E.

Specific questions you would like addressing at the oral defence (*at least 2 questions*):

- **Your research ends only in 2017. However, since then, significant changes occurred and Azerbaijan, among others started a war against Armenia for Nagorno Karabakh. How would you comment this based on your research findings?**
- **Can we even speak about “democratization” in Azerbaijan?**