Joint Dissertation Review

Name of the student:	**Yulia Chervotkina**
Title of the thesis:	Why did they lose? A study on how the Russian democratic opposition lost support after the For Fair Election movement and did not win it back
Reviewer:	Dr Stanisław Górka

1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

Yulia Chervotkina in her thesis has focused on a very important and understudied problem of the demobilisation of protest movements and in the case of Russia on reasons for the loss of public support by the Russian non-systemic opposition in 2012. The student has examined very extensive literature in English and Russian. She has discovered that the topic of demobilization is insufficiently covered in the literature. She has identified multiple gaps and grey zones (e.g. the relationship between repressions and demobilization, the importance of institutionalization and radicalization as demobilization factors), which require more attention from the research community in the future).

2. ANALYSIS

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

Key concepts (mobilisation, demobilisation, de-escalation, repressions, radicalisation, institutionalisation, systemic and non-systemic opposition) have been clearly defined. The author has paid special attention to the analysis of the relationship between repressions and demobilization.
The student showed a good ability to work with sources, in many cases drawing attention to the insufficient treatment of the topic in the reviewed literature.
The student has used the data provided by independent analytical centres or researchers, mass media, and primary and secondary literature. She is aware of the limitations of studying protests in a non-free authoritarian country, as well as the problem of generalising insufficient, incomplete, or contradicting data.

3. CONCLUSIONS

(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

In her work, Ms. Yulia Chervotkina has demonstrated a great deal of knowledge (although not without the shortcomings characteristic of students) about the specificity of the functioning of the opposition and civil society in authoritarian regimes. All main views and judgments of the author are supported by data, skillfully gathered from the sources used. Ms Chervotkina has reconstructed the history of political and social protests in Russia well. Personally, in some places, I would differently place the accents or evaluate the presented events, but in general, I agree with the narration presented by her.
Ms Chervotkina has attempted to understand "Why did non-systemic opposition fail to get more civil society support after the protest movement's weakening in 2012". This question will probably never find a complete and uncontroversial answer. However, the student's efforts have contributed to the existing literature by applying theoretical findings to the case of the Russian non-systemic opposition and made it possible to significantly advance the state of research of the problem: to a large extent, she persuasively explained the events that took place and long-term consequences of the opposition's loss of support.

4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

The language of the thesis is appropriate, calm and balanced, free from emotion. Minor linguistic and editing errors (e.g. on p. 50: "For the firsttime in reviewed period, it happened on 6 May 2012 in Bolotnaya square for the first time in the reviewed period") do not reduce the value of the thesis. The citation is correct (the student applied the Harvard referencing style). The layout of the thesis is clear, with good structurization, which makes it easy to read and find needed fragments that have already been read. All academic standards are met.

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

I rate Ms Chervotkina's thesis very high. Its main advantages and strengths have already been described above. I have doubts concerning some of her opinions and judgments, as I have already mentioned. Unclear passages (probably due to carelessness) are really rare (e.g. on p. 5: "The collapse of the Soviet Union brought about high hopes for democratisation in Russia, supported by the long-going mass protests of 2011–2012").

Grade (A-F): B	
Date: 18.01.2023	Signature:

classification scheme

Percentile	Prague		Krakow		Leiden		Barcelona	
A (91-100)	91-100 %	8,5%	5	6,7%	8,5-10	5,3%	9-10	5,5 %
B (81-90)	81-90 %	16,3%	4,5	11,7%	7.5-8.4	16.4%	8-8.9	11,0 %
C (71-80)	71-80 %	16,3%	4	20%	6,5-7,4	36,2%	7-7,9	18,4 %
D (61-70)	61-70 %	24%	3,5	28,3%			6-6,9	35,2 %
E (51-60)	51-60 %	34,9%	3	33,4 %	6-6,4	42,1 %	5-5,9	30,1 %

Assessment criteria:

Excellent (A): 'Outstanding performance with only minor errors';
Very good (B): 'Above the average standard but with some errors';
Good (C): 'Generally sound work but with a number of notable errors';
Satisfactory (D): 'Fair but with significant shortcomings';
Sufficient (E): 'Performance meets the minimum criteria';
Fail: 'Some/considerable more work required before the credit can be awarded'.