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Security Sector Reform in the Southern Caucasus: Georgia and Azerbaijan

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The theme of the thesis, relevant and clearly defined, is security sector reform in Azerbaijan and Georgia. The author aims at answering the research question why was the latter more 'successful' in the security sector reform than Azerbaijan. To that end, she proposes to run a comparative analysis of the reform processes in both countries. The thesis does not, however, answer the research question in an entirely satisfactory way; a result of brevity and absence of clear methodological framework in which the analysis is conducted. In other words, the analysis is short and not clearly organized, with not insignificant part of the thesis spent on a very general introduction on globalization and national security (followed by a problematic conceptual definition of the security sector through 'sectors of security', rather than institutionally or sociologically). There is no clear link to theory, e.g. in defining the hypotheses, which are present in the project but then referred to only in the thesis' conclusion; and criteria for the comparative analysis. Indeed, the author attempts to develop a set of independent and dependent variables based on the reviewed literature. However, the effect of this effort is limited due to 1) the difference between them mistakenly postulated as consisting of either being under the control or not (by whom is unspecified), and 2) their effective absence as structuring devices in the comparative analysis that follows. This analysis, which therefore turns out to constitute more two separate descriptions, only concludes, problematically, that the security sector reform in Georgia, all things being the same, was more effective there because the country "was able to reach better results on dependent variables" (p. 47). The conclusion then merely reiterates what has been written before. On the other hand, while the thesis' argument is arguably underdeveloped, it is logically structured, and the author has demonstrated a grasp of the concept of the security sector (reform) and factors of its effectiveness based on the study of relevant literature on the subject.

RECOMMENDED GRADE: VERY GOOD / GOOD