

SECINTEL Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2229949	Charles 59501117
Dissertation Title	The Process of Regionalism in the Black Sea Region between 1991- 2016	

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Glasgow Marker <i>Office Use</i>	Charles Marker <i>Office Use</i>	Grade Conversion <i>UoG-CU CU-UoG</i>	Charles Additional Info <i>Please advise ranking</i>
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JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

Final Agreed Mark C1 [14] 3 [Satisfactory]

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>	Good
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Satisfactory
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Satisfactory
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Good
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Very Good
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>	Good
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Excellent
C. Academic Style	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Excellent
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Excellent
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Excellent
• <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>	Yes
• <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i>	Not Required
• <i>Appropriate word count</i>	Yes

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ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Combined assessors comments

The dissertation contained some interesting analysis and conceptual ideas. However, it was let down by poor research design. Firstly, the premises of the research were not entirely clear. The dissertation states that “the choice of this research topic arose primarily from the desire of achieving a valuable work of great interest, by debating a topical and offering subject” (p.5). Yet, there is relatively little justification beyond the statement.

Similarly insufficiently justified are dissertation’s two research questions (p.6). How is emerging the process of Regionalism in the Black Sea Area after a 25-year span? How is the process of regionalism seen from the perspective of a smaller actor – in this particular case - Romania? How did the author came up to these questions? What is puzzling with them? Why is this puzzle relevant? The first question was fairly descriptive and did not invite real analytical engagement. As such, much of the dissertation was too descriptive. Instead of analyzing a phenomenon, the author simply outlined the facts behind (the lack of) regional integration. This was therefore disappointing.

The dissertation promises innovation by its “holistic approach... (providing an in depth analysis of the regional dynamics between 1991-2015)”. Yet, whereas the dissertation delivers a rich picture portraying nation-state actors in the Black See region, their interests, and various cooperative initiatives Black See states undertook since the end of the Cold War, this does not really meet expectations one has from the in depth analysis. Instead most aspects (actors, interests, initiatives etc.) are only briefly introduced and relatively little is said to their causes and consequences.

The literature review is well organized and relatively comprehensive. In contrast to that, the section on methodology is mostly reduced to ‘cheap talk’ statements. The section does not really explain what research strategy is taken, how, and why. The methodology, for example, promises to conduct discourse analysis of various documents. This could have been used in order to determine the ideational ‘regionness’ of the Black Sea region and could have therefore been linked back to the theoretical sections on regions. In actual fact, there is hardly any discourse analysis in the empirical chapters. Instead, the author prefers to list levels of cooperation and various initiatives. This was also disappointing .

The theoretical section extends literature review. While there is nothing wrong in building on the literature in principle, the theoretical section would have benefited from more extensive synthesis. Conceptualization of the region is promised, but only other authors’ understanding of the region is delivered as an annotated list. But what is the synthesis? How this thesis defines region? Region is its central concept. It is deeply problematic that the thesis does not say what the region from its perspective is. If we had heard the author’s voice a little more, then it would have been possible to have constructed a more robust research method. For example, if region was understood as an ideational construct, then the author could have examined the extent that identities are conducive to regional cooperation.

Two empirical chapters basically show that there is relatively poor cooperation among the nation-states in the Black See region. This is repeated in the conclusion as dissertation’s main finding. This observation is almost certainly correct. Yet, what is the value of this observation? It does not seem very original, nor is it surprising.

Please note that this grade is recorded as the provisional final grade for the University of Glasgow degree. All grades remain provisional until confirmed at the joint examination board.

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The Czech State Exam/Oral Defense may make a difference to the final grade for the Charles University degree.

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Notes for Markers: When grading the SECINTEL Dissertation markers are asked to reflect upon the aims and learning outcomes for the dissertation. Each dissertation should also adopt a clear security focus reflecting the relevant programme pathway

Aims: The course aims to provide students with independent research opportunities. It will include engagement with research methods training leading up to a period of independent research and the production of a substantial dissertation that builds upon themes and issues covered within the MSc International Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies. Students will be encouraged to develop their own ideas and demonstrate their capacity for original thought and independent research. The dissertation element aims to enable students to identify and research particular issues or problems, linked to security, intelligence and strategy, at a deeper level than is possible within assessed essays and to develop a critical analysis of the existing body of academic work relating to their topic of choice. Students taking this course will be prepared for further research, study or professional careers through the development of their skills in data collection and analysis, use of original and secondary sources and the conducting and writing up of a detailed research project.

Intended Learning outcomes: By the end of the dissertation, students will be able to:

- > Devise a realistic programme of research on a topic reflecting the main themes of the programme;
- > Collect, select and critically analyse relevant background literature and arguments of a range of scholars;
- > Understand and select the appropriate methodology for dealing with information sources and data;
- > Apply these methods to gather and interrogate data in an open-minded, rigorous and undogmatic manner;
- > Be able to critically evaluate competing theories and apply relevant theoretical frameworks to guide the study
- > Organise the data collected and analyse the findings in a competent manner that allows for a fluid and logical argument to be presented;
- > Be reflexive and self-critical about findings and the limitations of analysis;
- > Work independently, organising and maintaining own programme of study to meet academic deadlines so as to produce work containing a substantial element of originality.

Word Count:

Dissertations should be 20,000 words in length for students undertaking work-placement as part of the independent study portfolio and 22,000 words in length for standard dissertation students. Word counts exclude the title page, abstract, contents, bibliography and appendices). All dissertations must display an accurate word-count including the citations, footnotes/endnotes and chapter/section titles.

Language:

The dissertation **must** be written in British English. A Czech Language cover page / abstract may be included

Late Submission Penalty:

Dissertations that do not have an extension or are submitted after an extension deadline are subject to a penalty of 2 secondary bands per day (this includes weekends and holidays) on the Glasgow grading Scale.

Plagiarism:

Dissertations which suffer from excessive (e.g. serious and/or deliberate) plagiarism will be subject to a grade of 0/Fail and be referred to the appropriate authorities at both universities. Dissertations that contain some elements of plagiarism, but which are deemed not to be excessive (e.g. minor instances that are not considered deliberate) based on consultation of both internal markers, should be graded accordingly and will be subject to scrutiny from the external examiner and could still result in a mark of 0 as well as referral to appropriate authorities for disciplinary action.

Consultation prior to final grading:

First marking by both institutions should be completed blind with no prior consultation. Once both markers have graded the dissertation and provided written comments, they should consult on the grading and come to a joint final grade, taking into consideration any late submission or excessive word count penalty. It is the responsibility of the Glasgow marker to oversee this. Where markers cannot come to a joint agreement then the dissertation should be referred to the Programme Convenors at Glasgow and Charles (Dr. Eamonn Butler & Dr Vít Střítecký). The external examiner will be used to moderate any dissertation in this position and the comments referred back to the internal markers for confirmation.