MASTER THESIS EVALUATION PROTOCOL

(Supervisor’s review)

Student: Salome Tsereteli

Thesis title: “Theory in Practice: Applying IR Approaches to NATO-Georgia Relations”

Supervisor: Mgr. Petr Anděl, Ph.D.

This MA thesis represents an analysis of the NATO-Georgian Relations. It is mainly theoretical oriented analysis accompanied with a case study approach. Based on the deep exploration of diverse IR theoretical approaches it is attempting to explain NATO-Georgian relations in the post Cold War period. On basis of solid arguments the student identified neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism and social constructivism as the most promising and most relevant IR theories to explain IR framework beyond NATO-Georgian relations. Salome identified three main actors (or key movers) of NATO-Georgian relations, they are: Georgia, United States of America, and the last main actor is Russia. Mutual relations of the three key actors are too complex to allow explanation by one simple theoretical concept. Theory always represents great level of generalization and therefore also high number of inaccuracies. However, it is always possible to divide the object of study into relevant parts (or segments) that can be explained by well selected theoretical concepts. This approach allows the student to test, to analyze and to find regularities allowing reaching clear conclusions on NATO-Georgian relations.
The student poses several logical research questions:

- Which of the dominant IR theories provides the most comprehensive explanation of the evolution of NATO-Georgia relations since end of Cold War?
- What theory is best equipped to account for United States' perspective on NATO Enlargement to Georgia?
- What theory is best equipped to account for Russia’s perspective on NATO Enlargement to Georgia?
- What theory is best equipped to account for Georgia’s aspirations to join NATO?

The structure of this MA thesis is mature, logical as well as functional. The student is using well rounded correct expressions; the number of grammatical mistakes or wrong formulations does not exceed the level common to MA students in general.

Formally, the student uses appropriate number of resources, many of them of high quality and academic relevance. Used number of electronic resources is also high, but those are used wisely and responsibly. The student proved she is well aware of methodological limits of her work and proved, she approached all resources critically. However, the final list of resources should have been categorized and structured according to the hierarchy of primary and secondary resources.

The main idea of this MA thesis suggests that the social constructivist approach explains best Georgian aspirations to join NATO, but it would be extremely hard to explain Russian and American position toward Georgian membership in NATO by this theoretical concept. It is neorealism that explains best Russian forceful opposition to NATO enlargement. Russian approach is clearly security oriented, realistic in its core, identifying enlargement as lethal danger to the further existence of sovereign Russian state with its national interests. The position of United States as well as the position of NATO can be explained by a combination of all tested theories. The U.S. position can be perceived as an amalgam of all concepts, providing arguments for enlargement, as well as against it. However, according to the student, it seems that NATO enlargement to Georgia will not be worth of antagonizing Russia in the foreseeable future.

Having clear research questions and hypothesis, the student answered her questions, and by doing so, she reached all declared goals of her thesis. More than that, the student proved she is well aware of complexity of the U.S., NATO, Russian and Georgian mutual relations.

This thesis is composed logically; the author collected a large amount of academic as well as other relevant sources to support her arguments. Her judgments, based upon collected academic knowledge, are logical and sound.
During the defense, the author should present her perspective on continuation of Georgian cooperation with NATO and EU under the impact of current U.S.-Russian fight for dominance in the region.

In all aspects, this thesis reached its declared goals fully. It also met all required criteria and can be defended in front of the examination committee.

I do suggest an EXCELLENT mark (A+).