

## IMSISS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

<b>Student Matriculation No.</b>	<b>Glasgow 2573193 DCU 20109377 Charles 71707609</b>
<b>Dissertation Title</b>	Strategic autonomy in the global tech order: a study of European Union's pursuit of technological sovereignty vis-à-vis US and China

### INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

<b>Reviewer 1 Initial Grade</b>	<b>Reviewer 2 Initial Grade</b>	<b>Late Submission Penalty</b> no penalty
<b>Word Count Penalty</b> (1-15% over/under = 1gr point; 15-20% over/under = 2 gr points; 20-25% over/under = 3 gr points; more than 25% over/under = 0 fail) <b>Word Count:</b> 20570 <b>Suggested Penalty:</b> no penalty		

### JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

**Final Agreed Mark.** (Following correspondence reviewers should list the agreed final internal grade taking before and after any penalties to be applied).  
**Before Penalty:** A5 [18]      **After Penalty:** A5 [18]

### DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

Assessment Criteria	Rating
<b>A. Structure and Development of Answer</b>	
This refers to your organisational skills and ability to construct an argument in a coherent and original manner	
• <i>Originality of topic</i>	Excellent
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Excellent
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Very Good
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Very Good
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Very Good
<b>B. Use of Source Material</b>	
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>	Very Good
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Very Good
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Excellent
<b>C. Academic Style</b>	
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>	Very Good
• <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

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- *Appropriate word count*

Yes

### ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

#### **Reviewer 1**

The dissertation presents an interesting and intriguing analysis of power relations from a technological angle. The author introduces and discusses the concept of technological sovereignty (or autonomy), and uses the European Union as a centre of gravity for his analysis.

While the dissertation notionally relies on the idea of a strategic triangle, in practice the analysis rests on two case studies dealing with overwhelmingly bilateral relations – between the European Union and the US in the context GDPR as a tool for establishing and maintaining Europe's footing in the protection of digitalized personal information, and between the EU and China in the struggle over access to 5G networks. Each of the cases is highly interesting and revealing, but the notion of a strategic triangle as an analytical tool (as opposed to a mere characterization of an existing situation) seems rather unfulfilled. Neither is the promise of a discourse analysis, which in practice means interpretation (knowing and sophisticated, it must be acknowledged) of crucial documents and policies relating to the technological domain.

Though the author acknowledges the specific features of the European Union as an actor, I miss a bit more elaborate reference to the wide body of academic literature which has dealt with this topic for several decades. Also, the dissertation implies but does not explicitly explain how the situation with 'new technologies', i.e. those enabling communication and exchange of information, differs from other technological spheres (e.g. transport).

#### **Reviewer 2**

I really enjoyed reading this thesis. The topic is very relevant as it touches upon some of the most recent developments in the field of technological/digital sovereignty, which is a crucial policy area in the EU. I also found very interesting the link that the thesis makes between technological/digital sovereignty and strategic autonomy. Having said that, here are some comments to consider:

1) There is a lot of literature on the role/place of technology in International Relations. See for example *Technology and World Politics* (Routledge); *The Global Politics of Science and Technology* (Springer); *Technology and Agency in International Relations* (Routledge). The thesis does not seriously engage with this literature and, perhaps as a result, lacks a better conceptualisation/theorisation of its impact on global politics.

2) The chosen methodology is discourse analysis. However, some parts of the thesis seem to just reproduce and summarise, instead of properly analyzing and problematising, the discourse of EU institutions in regards to strategic autonomy and technological sovereignty. An example: at the beginning of Chapter 3 it is emphasized the EU's "cultural perception" of technology which is driven by "values" like privacy, data protection, etc. However, it is not really clear what makes these values European. It is also questionable the extent to which these "values" are indeed translated into concrete technical implementations. We do have GDPR, which is of course crucial, but in parallel we see the emergence of large-scale surveillance infrastructures in the field of EU Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). Surveillance and "values" like privacy and data protection are difficult to balance.

3) Some elements of the structure of the thesis are problematic. It is the first time that I see a thesis having as a last chapter (after the conclusion) a theory & methodology chapter. Theory and



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methodology appear typically after the introduction of the thesis in order to allow the reader to understand the theoretical and methodological approach adopted and subsequently see how this is implemented in the analytical chapters.