IMSISS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

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Dissertation Title	Profiling a State?
	Combining the Methods of Micro-Level Profiling with the Scope of Macro-Level Strategic Analysis

Word Count Penalty *(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)*

Word Count: 21476 ***Suggested Penalty:*** *no penalty*

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

> ***Final Agreed Mark*** B1 [17]

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	
• *Originality of topic*	Excellent
• *Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified*	Very Good
• *Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work*	Good
• *Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions*	Excellent
• *Application of theory and/or concepts*	Very Good
B. Use of Source Material This refers to your skills to select and use relevant information and data in a correct manner	
• *Evidence of reading and review of published literature*	Very Good
• *Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument*	Very Good
• *Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence*	Very Good
• *Accuracy of factual data*	Very Good
C. Academic Style This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• *Appropriate formal and clear writing style*	Excellent
• *Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation*	Excellent
• *Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)*	Excellent
• *Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?*	Yes

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• *Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)*	Not required
• *Appropriate word count*	Yes

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

The originality of the work was well established from the outset and the study framed effectively at the intersection between profiling and strategic analysis, including a very clear rationale and structure.

A very wide range of relevant literature was reviewed, including very effective analysis of work on profiling and neoclassical realism, taking in the most up-to-date scholarly publications. There was similarly very good consideration as to the preference for using certain theories in this initial study and justification for these, including the selection of The Big 5.

The Strategic Analysis chapter itself included strong discussion of both theory and previous forms of forecasting at national/international levels, discussed in 3.2, 3.3 and elsewhere in the dissertation. It could have been beneficial further to have foregrounded/highlighted some of this material in the introduction and in the chapter itself, including these different methods of behaviour forecasting previously undertaken, to enhance the otherwise well-developed examination of the approach in subsequent chapters.

Throughout the study there was excellent knowledge of detail across the different theoretical and case study examples cited. A particularly impressive feature is the interweaving of the material from a variety of distinct disciplinary backgrounds to present a coherent line of reasoning in constructing the model. Occasionally, representations of concepts could have been qualified, such as, in reference to 'historical facts' (p. 41), given those defined in the discussion and their contested nature between states.

There were very good qualifications made of the potential risks entailed by Criminal profiling, including those guided by social considerations. When discussing the removal of these risks in the model presented, it could have been helpful further to have commented on the extrapolation of such risks in profiling of traits to a society-level (and of social/national prejudices).

Logical reasoning for considerations underpinning development of the model contributed to strong arguments around this, and there was scope identified for future adaptation. The different nodes were methodically analysed, including potential implications behind their usage, relating these to each of the other components of the model and to both the previous profiling methods being adopted and the relevant IR literature. The case study of Russia drew together a wide range of information and analysis. In some instances, it could have been beneficial further to have reflected on the evidential approach for analyst judgement, such as when discussing the underpinning consideration of the 'Pessimistic (population)' trait, as was done well in the grounding of other traits in the analysis.

The conclusion provided a very effective summary of the main arguments and potential future directions for research. The work was well-written and structured throughout.

A thought-provoking, original and sophisticated examination of the potential for combining methods to create a new method of national profile strategic analysis. It makes excellent use of evidence and arguments, but with scope for some development of points and framing.

Reviewer 2

The dissertation investigates the possibility of elaborating a new technique for country profiling in order to predict the international behaviour of states. The thesis is well-written and well-articulated. The student demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of scholarly literature and uses in an original way insights derived from different batches of scholarship: Criminology, Social Psychology and Sociology. By analyzing one case study (Russia), the student is able to produce a preliminary test of the heuristic potential of the framework.

The work is very original and demonstrates the student's capacity to manage different types of theoretical concepts.

However, there are some points that would deserve a more in-depth analysis. The first critical point is that the student does not take into account IR literature on country profiling: i.g., Margareth Hermann's Profiler Plus technique and Alexander George's Operational Code approach. The second point that would deserve a more in-depth analysis would be the specification of the assumptions about the micro-macro level interaction. A third critical point is about the criteria used to identify national "traits": using behaviour to infer national traits risks a tautological process.

In the end, the thesis is a good piece of academic work, and the student demonstrates an excellent capacity to carry out scientific research satisfying the standard required for an M.A. degree.