

## IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

<b>Student Matriculation No.</b>	<b>Glasgow 2316275 DCU 21109231 Charles 47022204</b>
<b>Dissertation Title</b>	Digital Threats to Democracy: Investigating the Complexities of Election Interference by Non-State Information Operations Actors and its Connection to Data Colonialism in the Global South

<b>Word Count:</b> 20,018 <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:** B1 [17]      **After Penalty:** B1 [17]

### 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>	Very Good
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Very Good
• <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>	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>	Excellent
• <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>	Excellent
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Excellent
• <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>	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 dissertation investigates attempts to influence some of the past Kenyan presidential elections. The conceptual as well as methodological approach is appropriate, and the selected evidence supports the presented argument. All key factual pieces information are included. My main point of objection is that the link to digital colonialism is not robust enough. The problem lies in the fact that private actors exploiting social media for elections manipulation use the same techniques in the West and Global South. That being said, there is a laudable, critical effort to show that these private actors attempted to gain experience in elections manipulation in the Global South. This is a correct and important conclusion, and it is clear that the argument is on the right track, even given some conceptual inconsistencies. Overall, this is a well-researched dissertation, aiming to conclude with a critical take on exploitative practices of Western private actors in the Global South.

#### **Reviewer 2**

The research explores patterns of influence within the dynamics of presidential elections. The conceptual and methodological framework is sound, and the evidence presented is accurate and consistent with the overarching thesis. A universal observation emerges: the tactics used to manipulate elections through digital means are consistent across different global contexts. However, the study highlights that certain entities may refine these tactics in one region before expanding their reach. Despite minor conceptual discrepancies, the argument seems well founded and I appreciated the critical analysis. In essence, the research offers a nuanced perspective on the digital manipulation tactics used in electoral dynamics. Overall this is a well-researched thesis that aims to bring some order to a rather interesting research topic.