

IMSISS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2652576 DCU 21109265 Charles 13871785
Dissertation Title	The Rise of Net-States in the Cyberspace: Cyber Power Dynamics and the Disruption of International Security

Word Count: 21,177		

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

Final Agreed Mark. A2 [21]

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>	Excellent
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Excellent
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Excellent
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Excellent
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Excellent
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>	Excellent
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Excellent
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Excellent
• <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

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- *Appropriate word count*

Yes

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

The dissertation presents an innovative study that examines the emergence of net-states in the context of international security. By applying a neorealism framework, the author explores the concept of cyber sovereign entities alongside traditional states, challenging established IR paradigms.

The dissertation's structure is well-organized, dividing the content into conceptual exploration and empirical analysis. The assertion that net-states could be considered on par with traditional states within the cyber-international system adds depth to the discourse.

The dissertation's analysis of cases, such as the US-TikTok conflict, highlights the geopolitical implications of cyber power struggles and supports the disruptive potential of net-states. The conclusion emphasizes the impact of cyberspace on the international system and the emergence of cyber sovereign entities, contributing significantly to traditional realist theory.

In summary, this dissertation offers a remarkable contribution by introducing the concept of net-states and analyzing their role in cyber power and international security. Its structured approach, theoretical framework, and insightful analysis collectively position it as a pioneering work that enriches the field of international security studies.

Reviewer 2

This is an outstanding dissertation that I would recommend for eventual publication. I felt as if I was reading an output from a polished academic rather than a postgraduate taught student. The author demonstrates a mastery of the wider theories of international relations (particularly realism and neo-realism) and comes up with detailed case studies as to how traditional theory has not kept up with the cyber realm. The case studies are justified, well thought out and evidenced. The process is well organised. I particularly like how the candidate thinks of their cases as "units of analysis"--they do so with considerable thought--this is a real challenge given that traditional realist theory in international relations still prioritises states as the unit. The author may wish to consider the works of Brandon Valeriano and Ryan Maness if they wish to pursue further work in this area!