

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2687290 DCU 21109028 Charles 35799089 Trento
Dissertation Title	Scotland's ethical paradiplomacy as strategic narratives

<p>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)</p> <p>Word Count: 21603 Suggested Penalty: 1gr point</p>		

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

Final Agreed Mark:

Before Penalty: A4 [19] **After Penalty:** A5 [18]

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>	Ex-Select from list-
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	ex-Select from list-
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	ex-Select from list-
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	ex-Select from list-
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	ex-Select from list-
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>	ex-Select from list-
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	ex-Select from list-
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	ex-Select from list-
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	ex-Select from list-
C. Academic Style	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	ex-Select from list-
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	ex-Select from list-

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• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	ex-Select from list-
• <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>	y-Select from list-
• <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i>	n/a-Select from list-
• <i>Appropriate word count</i>	y-Select from list-

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

A3/20

(in section above 'ex' = excellent – drop down menu not functioning).

Overall, this is an excellent dissertation and one I very much enjoyed reading. The author distils original, sound research questions, justifying their significance clearly (empirically and theoretically). The dissertation is robust in sticking to the task of answering these questions and, more importantly, answers these questions in a clear, evidence-based fashion. The originality of the empirical contributions, and the claimed significance they hold for subfields of substate paradiplomacy, FFP studies and Scottish politics, are convincing.

Regarding literature, the selection of literature is erudite, displaying a sophisticated grasp of several fields – with the rationale for engaging these fields to situate the RQ in being well made (e.g. substate paradiplomacy, soft power, strategic narratives). The engagement of literature is intelligent, critical and precise.

This dissertation is exceptionally robust in its development of the theoretical and methodological framework – something the author should be commended for (but see small note below on transparency on deployment). All decisions (importance of core theoretical concepts, analytical time frame, importance of the case, selection of and scale of empirical material etc.) are sound and, importantly, completely transparent.

In terms of other key 'nuts and bolts' of a dissertation: limitations are acknowledged and defended neatly; interesting further lines of enquiry are well identified (with the potential to explore the development of the 'official' Scottish FFP made clear); the writing is crystal clear; the organisation of content is logical, intelligent and well-signposted.

In terms of kicking this up even further, there are a few small notes. Mainly, the precise nature of the full coding process could have been a touch more transparently reported in the results (e.g. having another table that provided more detailed information regarding the main codes identified in each document – this would have helped provide a clearer sense of scope).

Overall, this is a first-class effort. Well done!

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Reviewer 2

In terms of empirics, this is a meticulously researched and convincingly articulated thesis which looks into the issue of why (less) and how (more) Scotland has relied on soft-power and gendered FP for its articulation of its recognition in and handling of international affairs. As Scotland is not an independent country (yet), and diplomatic conduct (TRACK 1 diplomacy) is therefore impossible, the efforts are investigated at two fronts: official preparatory documents – via the means of qualitative content analysis (or thematic analysis, really?) – and the sum of her international activities, conceptualised through the concept of paradiplomacy. The notions of strategic narrative and soft power are used to further give the thesis conceptual traction.

There are a few issues to my mind: first, the notion of strategic narrative relies too heavily on conceptualizations of Roberts and Miskimmon et al., which are focused on reconstruction of the connection to soft power. While this may fit well with the mainstream non-military discourse of Scottish politicians, it certainly does not meet the rigor and richness of the original conceptualization by Lawrence Freedman who coined it (he is not even mentioned). This would have allowed the author to take a more profound critical distance from the subject matter, rather than studying it uncritically (see Max Weber's Politics as Vocation for this needed distance between theory and practice – here, feminist theory is used to study gendered proto-FP). Thus, one wonders why Scottish paradiplomacy should be, inter alia, read as ethical – one reminisces on British officially labelled “ethical FP” in late 1990s/early 2000 by Blair and Cook and its resulting in the Gulf War 2 (unintended consequence? Or lack of genuine ethics? Or else?). The only difference seems to be the capabilities gap and direction, but the problem of tight theory/practice nexus remains. The notion of paradiplomacy itself is underdeveloped too (Duchacek, Soldatos, Agguire, to mention but a few most important names). The self vs other (Scotland vs UK) which is the obvious driving force of the nature of the Scottish political self-narrative gets only fleetingly mentioned in part 7.2. This pivotal connection, the composite discourse, should have come much earlier, stronger, and should guide the conceptual choices (it is similar to understand Canadian peacekeeping vs US warfighting, New Zealand's antinuclear stance vs. ANZUS nuclear visiting in Australia etc.).

As for the style, terminology, formatting and referencing, all is in order here.