

## IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

<b>Student Matriculation No.</b>	<b>Glasgow 2685526 DCU 21109583 Charles 95949903 Trento</b>
<b>Dissertation Title</b>	From Dependency to Independence: How the United States Supports the Taiwanese Military in Defending Against a Potential Chinese Invasion

### INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

		<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> 22037 <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:** C1 [14]      **After Penalty:** C1 [14]

### DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<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>	Satisfactory
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Poor
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Poor
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Weak
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Satisfactory
<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>	Good
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Good
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Satisfactory
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Very Good
<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>	Very Good
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Very Good
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Very Good
• <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 author must be lauded for having substantially revamped the text from the previous version of the dissertation. As in the previous iteration, it remains very informative on various elements on U.S. and Taiwan security and defence policies and the relationship between the two actors. The author's insight into the subject matter is clear and indisputable.

That being said, the scope of the problematic aspects of the dissertation remains rather wide. First of all, the research question is still formulated in a loose fashion that does not provide the necessary guidance for the subsequent analysis which is, as a result, overly descriptive.

There is also a lot of confusion with the terminology (and, more importantly, the meaning of various concepts) in the chapter on methodology. The part called "Research background and purpose" should rather have become a part of the introduction. The author uses the notions of qualitative and quantitative analysis in a way that does not make much sense in academic terms, and the same characterization can be applied to the convoluted explanations of the alleged utilization of case study and comparative method. Most importantly, the intention to use literature review as the main "research method" is simply misguided, although the literature review then does, problematically, occupy a large portion of the text. The author's outline of research limitations (pp. 11-12), while candid, does not fulfil the purpose such a reflection is expected to serve.

The literature review is overlong and, while it lists various relevant sources of information on the subject matter, also somewhat aimless. For no apparent (and definitely not clearly stated) reason it combines general works in various IR theories (realism, liberalism, social constructivism) with thematically specialized sources like, including e.g. U.S. Congress reports. There is no understanding of the purpose the theoretical works should play in the subsequent analysis.

In the analytical chapters, there is no clear idea for the categorization of the factors or categories which are presented in analytical chapters. For example, when challenges to U.S. security policy towards Taiwan are described, there is no introductory text that would clarify the logic of the chapter's argumentation. This does not mean the arguments are irrelevant, but their relevance is not systematically explained and defended. The result is a long list of very divergent points with no apparent interweaving narrative.

Finally, at several points the text is still riddled with unnecessary bullet points, for example in pp. 44, 48-49, 86-87.

#### Reviewer 2

This dissertation examines the US support for Taiwan. While the paper engages with a diverse set of arguments, it suffers from multiple shortcomings. Several aspects required attention. First, the main research question and the analytical timeframe are not explicitly stated. Second, the study reveals a rather poor grasp of social science research design (the methodology section mentions 'literature review' as the chosen method for answering the main research question; the student

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appears to embark on a descriptive/idiographic single case study analysis) and the main purpose of conducting the case study enquiry is not clarified. Further, the inclusion of descriptive statistics does not, by itself, make a study quantitative (see pages 6 and 7). Third, and relatedly, the methodology includes a set of poorly formulated bullet points rather than a coherent narrative about the design employed and the rationale for why the adopted design is suited to answer the research question. Fourth, the literature review provides a short overview of the dominant realist, liberalist, and constructivist theories that have been advanced to explain US-China interactions over Taiwan but does not fully elucidate which of these dominant frameworks carry the most explanatory power regarding the US strategic assistance provided to Taiwan. Also, the theoretical overview completely ignores power transition theory (see, among others, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/714950651>; <https://www.routledge.com/China-the-US-and-the-Power-Transition-Theory-A-Critique/Chan/p/book/9780415440240>). Fifth, the study does not advance any theoretical framework or explicitly attempt to probe existing ones; hence, most the dissertation is overwhelmingly descriptive rather than explanatory. Finally, the discussion part abounds in bullet points that are loosely connected to one another.