

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2712570 DCU 21268501 Charles 87572690 Trento
Dissertation Title	Applying Situational Crime Prevention to Illegal Logging: Comparative Policy Analysis between Romania and Brazil

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

		Late Submission Penalty no penalty
Word Count Penalty (1-15% over/under = 1 gr point; 15-20% over/under = 2 gr points; 20-25% over/under = 3 gr points; more than 25% over/under = 0 fail)		
Word Count: 24,187 Suggested Penalty: 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: A4 [19] **After Penalty:** A4 [19]

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>	Very Good
• <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>	Very Good
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Very Good
• <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>	Very Good
• <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>	Yes

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- *Appropriate word count*

Yes

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

This is an excellent dissertation, answering a clear research question: ‘What lessons can be applied to Romania from Brazil’s success in reducing illegal logging as a result of using situational crime prevention?’

To answer this question, the dissertation engages in comparative policy analysis. The literature review provides key terminologies, definitions and context-setting, and moves on to explain the theoretical rationale, relying on Situational Crime Prevention Theory (SCPT) and the theory of Crime Scripts Analysis (CSA). While the ‘SCP theoretical framework guided the conceptual aspect of this study...the CSA analytical framework focused on the research methodology for data examination and interpretation’ (pg 44). The former develops several clear main principles: “‘increase the effort of crime, increase the risks of being apprehended, reduce the rewards, reduce provocations, and remove excuses”” (pg 32). The latter was specifically developed to support the former: ‘CSA was developed by Cornish (1994) to support SCPT by breaking down crime into its constituent steps to understand each stage and “draw attention to a fuller range of possible intervention points” (Cornish, 1994, p. 151).’ (pg 44)

This theoretical framework allowed for a coherent and closely aligned methodological approach. Data collection involved secondary and primary sources, including semi-structured interviews with Romanian NGO experts. Thematic analysis guided by Crime Script Analysis (CSA) was employed for data analysis, ‘cross-referencing information from multiple NGOs and the triangulation of data from these sources with other types of evidence, such as governmental reports and academic literature, following the recommendations of Adams, et al. (2007).’ (pg46) The comparative policy analysis chapter examines SCP policies towards illegal logging in Brazil and Romania, considering a diversity of factors including geographic characteristics, socio-political considerations, economic growth, the rule of law and international agreements or mechanisms.

The findings chapter explains that the coding was ‘underpinned by the aforementioned four codes originating from the CSA analytical framework: ‘during pre-harvest’; ‘during harvesting and transport’; ‘at the time of delivery, scaling or inventory’; ‘at point of sale’. Moreover, in order to set the stage for the discussion of these findings, a second theme was used to interpret the interviews, namely SCP. More specifically, the five characteristics of SCPT were used as codes, as follows: ‘increase the effort’, ‘increase the risks’, ‘reduce the rewards’, ‘reduce provocations’ and ‘remove excuses’. Additionally, from the analysis of the interviews, a series of themes emerged, as follows: actors, policy, corruption violence, tax fraud, money/timber laundering, policy instruments (National Forest Inventory, national strategy, and technology and innovation as child codes), and social preventative factors.’

In discussing the findings, we learn that ‘reduce rewards’ is absent from the interviews. ‘Corruption’ meanwhile is endemic. ‘Increase risks’ is emphasized, with a focus on the effectiveness of the traceability system SUMAL in monitoring and detecting illegal logging. In terms of lessons to be drawn from Brazil, specialized prosecutors, a centralised prosecutor removed from the locality, technology esp to trace deforestation, and greater international involvement are proposed as additional SCP measures. The dissertation concludes with some recommendations about potential future research, like the dangers of corruption at a time of political and economic transition, as well as the effects of deforestation on indigenous

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communities, making a pitch for the importance of the research for ‘livelihoods, cultural practices, and ecosystem services.’ (pg. 80)

The argument that the countries’ policies are similar but that Brazil is at a more advanced stage is both surprising and convincing. More attention to the different scales of organised crime, to diverging state capacity to implement the suggested policies, and to concrete effects in Romania might have strengthened the result. Moreover, I felt that more systematic investigation of Brazil might have strengthened the thesis methodologically.

Reviewer 2

This is a very interesting dissertation that benefits from a clear premise, contribution to the literature via its case studies and it draws very clear conclusions. There is a methodological maturity on show here that seem more akin to a PhD candidate than an MA candidate, and the author must be commended on this—especially re. securing interview with NGO figures. The application of SCP techniques—while also elucidating on the central aspects of logging practices and policies in both countries is also to be commended.

The literature review is careful, attentive to numerous fields and engages a wide range of sources. The theoretical framework is very sound indeed—again, evidencing the author’s ability to adequately account for a range of mutually complimentary approaches—particularly, SCPT and its relationship with rational choice theory. The student takes time to flesh out the comparative case study approach, which is appreciated—and often neglected in similar studies. The provision of semi-structured interviews is a real boon and entails that the student may indeed be able to publish aspects of the dissertation in the future.

The policy comparison and attendant discussion is a little more heavy and focused on Brazil than it is on Romania, tipping the dissertation away from a fine balance that had been maintained to that point. To that extent, it is surprising that it draws engages in some erroneous assumptions re. Brazilin government policy and its trajectory and state of development. Nonetheless, these are minor flaws in what is otherwise a fantastic piece of work. Well done.