

## JOINT DISSERTATION REVIEW

Name of the student:	<b>Meline Margaryan</b>
Title of the thesis:	<b>Football club supporters and the self-determination processes: The political behavior of supporters of the major football clubs in Scotland and Catalonia</b>
Reviewer:	Prof. Jaume López

### 1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

The research question is relevant and the literature review is quite complete with regard to general and classical references on sport. However, it is less precise about case references (football in Scotland and Catalonia and their history and relationship with politics).

### 2. ANALYSIS

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

Given the limited time and available resources, empirical research has been based on qualitative questionnaires through Facebook. It is necessary to value positively the attempt to obtain information through this way but, on the other hand, it is necessary to criticize the lack of awareness on the limits to which this type of methodology leads and the need to be very cautious about its results. It is missing a clearer description of the steps to obtain the information. In this same sense, the selection of cases should probably be placed before the presentation of hypothesis and the research design.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

(persuasive conclusions, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

The conclusions could have been more worked. First, again, showing that the limits of generalization through this data and methodology are known. For that reason it would have been good to distinguish between a Results section (where to summarize the main conclusions of the non-random sample worked) and one of Conclusions in which to make some general inferences in the provisional light of the results obtained. In the second place, the conclusions take for granted that it is the club that conditions the political behaviour of the supporters, when the only thing that is possible to know is the existence of a correlation. With the available information it is not possible to distinguish if supporters with a certain political profile feel more attracted to a certain club or it is the other way round (the direction of the causal arrow). In fact, in the conclusions it is rightly stated that this is a descriptive research but nevertheless explanatory conclusions are derived. It is logical because the research question is posed in explanatory terms ("because of"), when it would have been sufficient to have raised it in purely descriptive terms ("it exists a relationship between ...").

### 4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

Language and citations are appropriate. With regard to the organization, it has already been said that it would have been more convenient to present the selection of cases before the research design and, probably, better to distinguish between a section of Results from the empirical data and another of Conclusions and further research.

It would also have been clearer to present in different sections the analysis of the Catalan and Scottish supporters and to place in each of them the data on social capital that are now a little hung and unrelated with the rest of the argument. This data is nevertheless very important for the present conclusions since it presents a possible causal mechanism that would link membership to a club (and the coming to the football field with friends and family) with a certain political profile. (Still the direction of the causal arrow remains unclear.) On the opposite direction, the current section on media consumption that currently appears in a separated

section does not have enough entity to form a separate one. It should be placed along with the rest of the information provided by the supporters.

### **5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT**

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

Beyond the general correction of the thesis, the student has dared to make an effort to find empirical information which is difficult to obtain by posing some questionnaires by facebook. This seems to be its main point of strength.

At the same time, and in the opposite direction, the lack of awareness of the limits of this methodology (or, at least, an explicit comment on it) and a clearer separation between what this limited sample can produce and the more general inferences on the relationship between the political support to the self-determination referenda and supporting of a football team can be pointed as the main negative aspect of the thesis.

<b>Grade (A-F): B+</b>	<b>8 (scale 1 to 10)</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>
17.06.2019	