IMSISS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2240997 DCU Charles
Dissertation Title	Narratives and Interstate Relations: Understanding the depth of the Sino-Russo Partnership through the Narratives China and Russia propagate.

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Reviewer 1 Initial Grade	Reviewer 2 Initial Grade	Late Submission Penalty
Select from drop down list	*Select from drop down list*	*Select from drop down list*

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)*

Word Count: **Suggested Penalty:** *Select from drop down list*

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:** Select from drop down list

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	
• *Originality of topic*	Excellent
• *Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified*	Excellent
• *Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work*	Excellent
• *Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions*	Very Good
• *Application of theory and/or concepts*	Very Good
B. Use of Source Material This refers to your skills to select and use relevant information and data in a correct manner	
• *Evidence of reading and review of published literature*	Very Good
• *Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument*	Excellent
• *Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence*	Very Good
• *Accuracy of factual data*	Excellent
C. Academic Style This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• *Appropriate formal and clear writing style*	Very Good
• *Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation*	Very Good
• *Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)*	Excellent
• *Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?*	Yes
• *Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)*	Not required

• *Appropriate word count*	Yes

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

The dissertation addresses a well-identified gap in the vast literature on Sino-Russian relations. It proposes an alternative approach, focusing on strategic narratives propagated by Russia and China. The findings are discussed at length. The methodological issues are presented with clarity and the Author skilfully employs the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The choice of 2019-20 timeframe is well justified. The recognition of limitations of the research's validity is another plus. The chapter on global narratives is well embedded in the topical literature on Russia and China. The results of the Western European case study are particularly interesting, with China's positive placement towards Russia stronger than vice versa. The lack of negative placement is another interesting finding of the dissertation.

The dissertation would have benefitted from more substantial engagement with the existing literature, including the juxtaposition of its findings with the mainstream approaches to Sino-Russian relations. The theoretical framework could have elaborated more on a 'conventional constructivist' approach. The section of the literature review chapter 'documents acquired from media' is a bit convoluted and difficult to follow.

While the discussion of how to define a 'strategic narrative' and distinguish it from propaganda is logical and convincing, it would have benefitted from engagement with literature other than Miskimmon 2013.

Proofreading would help avoid minor stylistic and typo mistakes.

Reviewer 2

The dissertation seeks to explore the relationship between Russia and China, through a narrative analysis of strategic communications in the international context. In doing so, the dissertation explores a clearly defined research question that the author convincingly shows represents a key (and promising) gap in the literature. The dissertation is clearly and logically structured, and generally well-written - although at times, the style is somewhat informal (e.g. frequent use of contractions).

The study is generally well-situated in the literature, in particular in identifying a gap in existing research, but in some areas, could have drawn more extensively on existing research - both conceptual and methdological - to inform its framing. In particular, the sections defining the central conceptual concept (strategic messaging and narratives), and the central research methodology (media content analysis) collectively draw on only one study, without much engagement with wider research, competing conceptualisations, findings from studies using similar approaches etc.

The empirical sections display an impressive command of a range of evidence and methodological approaches. However, the added analytical value of comparative analysis between the global, Western European and Balkan cases is not fully realised. In comparing two states' strategic messaging, across three discrete contexts, it appears that at times, the study moves fluidly from a comparison between these different categories (in other words - it is not always clear whether the key comparative analysis is focused on the differences and similarities between Russia and China; or between the different scales / contexts in which the two are projecting communications) making it difficult at times to parse the core argument and follow the analytical thread. A clearer pairwise comparison, or a clearer and more succint statement of the findings

from the outset of the dissertation, may have been useful in scaffolding the analysis. In presenting the findings, the author might also have considered using tables, graphs or other alternative presentation techniques that could have more clearly and succinctly communicated the significance of so many figures, particularly where some of the percentage shares are very low (<1%) and presented without the additional contextualisation of, for example, the frequency or relative share of other key terms.

Although the author presents a rich and in places, sophisticated, analysis, the discussion and conclusion section could have more clearly contrasted the findings presented with existing ressearch and prominent policy framing. Given the claim to address a key gap in the literature at the outset of the dissertation, leveraging the findings to more effectively highlight what added value addressing this gap presents, would have strengthened this section.

Overall, this is a high-quality dissertation, on a theoretically and empirically important topic, that demonstrates a command of relevant theories and methods and the potential for further scholarship.