

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2686607 DCU Charles
Dissertation Title	An Assessment of Russia's Disinformation Campaigns in the Western Balkans since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

		Late Submission Penalty 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: 21,385 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: B1 [17] **After Penalty:** B1 [17]

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>	Very Good
• <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>	Very Good
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Very Good
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>	Very Good
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Excellent
• <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>	Very Good
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Excellent
• <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>	Not required
• <i>Appropriate word count</i>	No

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ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

This is an original and ambitious dissertation. It explores Russia's disinformation campaigns in the Western Balkans since the beginning of the war against Ukraine. The dissertation demonstrates the Author's understanding of the Balkan political context and of Russia's influence in the region.

The introduction could have been more elaborate. The chapter presenting the background could have been incorporated in subsequent parts or shortened a bit; or formed a part of the literature review. A brief discussion of why specific concepts were selected for the literature review would have strengthened the overall argument. The literature review chapter demonstrates the Author's familiarity with key debates and major works in the field. The analysis of the literature discussing Russia's disinformation activities in the Western Balkans could have been streamlined as it is a bit difficult to follow in the current form. The presentation of the theoretical framework would have benefitted from more details in turn. It is not exactly clear how the two theories will exactly be employed. The methodological approach is an ambitious one, combining three distinct methods and linking qualitative and quantitative approaches. The analysis itself is robust and shows the Author's skills in applying the methods to the chosen problem. The discussion of particular countries in Western Balkans provides a comprehensive outlook. The discussion chapter could be merged with the concluding section.

Overall, this is a very good dissertation, which could have been strengthened in some areas.

Reviewer 2

This is a strong dissertation, grounded in theoretical debates, thoroughly researched, systematic in its approach to studying the topic, well-structured and easy to follow overall. There are certain shortcomings too, however. The work suffers from theoretical confusion as it drops in too many concepts and approaches and not always are there explicit explanations of their role in this particular analysis and the logic of separating their discussion into different sections (hybrid warfare, information warfare, propaganda, agenda setting theory, media effects theory...). As a result, the theoretical basis is rather general and does not provide the author with clear indicators for empirical analysis - otherwise, the analysis is focused and sufficiently detailed. For such a complex and multi-faceted analysis, the "discussion" and concluding sections are rather short.