

IMESS DISSERTATION



Note: Please email the completed mark sheet to Year 2 coordinator

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Please note that IMESS students are not required to use a particular set of methods (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, or comparative) in their dissertation.

Student:	Roland Arbesleitner
Dissertation title:	On the Role of the Manufacturing Industries in Economic Resilience

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Poor
Knowledge <i>Knowledge of problems involved, e.g. historical and social context, specialist literature on the topic. Evidence of capacity to gather information through a wide and appropriate range of reading, and to digest and process knowledge.</i>	x		
Analysis & Interpretation <i>Demonstrates a clear grasp of concepts. Application of appropriate methodology and understanding; willingness to apply an independent approach or interpretation recognition of alternative interpretations; Use of precise terminology and avoidance of ambiguity; avoidance of excessive generalisations or gross oversimplifications.</i>	x		
Structure & Argument <i>Demonstrates ability to structure work with clarity, relevance and coherence. Ability to argue a case; clear evidence of analysis and logical thought; recognition of an arguments limitation or alternative views; Ability to use other evidence to support arguments and structure appropriately.</i>		x	
Presentation & Documentation <i>Accurate and consistently presented footnotes and bibliographic references; accuracy of grammar and spelling; correct and clear presentation of charts/graphs/tables or other data. Appropriate and correct referencing throughout. Correct and contextually correct handling of quotations.</i>	x		

ECTS Mark:	A	UCL Mark:	75	Marker:	Mitchell Young
<i>Deducted for late submission:</i>				Signed:	
<i>Deducted for inadequate referencing:</i>				Date:	

MARKING GUIDELINES

A (UCL mark 70+): Note: marks of over 80 are given rarely and only for truly exceptional pieces of work.

Distinctively sophisticated and focused analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.

B/C (UCL mark 60-69):

A high level of analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Good understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research. 65 or over equates to a B grade.

D/E (UCL mark 50-59):

Demonstration of a critical use of sources and ability to engage in systematic inquiry. An ability to engage in sustained research work, demonstrating methodological awareness. 55 or over equates to a D grade.

F (UCL mark less than 50):

Demonstrates failure to use sources and an inadequate ability to engage in systematic inquiry. Inadequate evidence of ability to engage in sustained research work and poor understanding of appropriate research techniques.

CONTINUES OVERLEAF

Comments, explaining strengths and weaknesses (at least 300 words):

The thesis examines the resilience of national economies in the face of financial crises. Using the 2008 crisis as a natural experiment, the author asks whether the share of manufacturing in an economy increases its resilience. The work takes an original approach in two ways, first, by using the concept of resilience, which is still relatively newly making its way into the social sciences, and second, by examining recovery from the crisis, rather than the more common approach of attempting to determine its causes. The specific research question is both interesting and important as it helps us to imagine the sort of policies that would minimize the effects of future crises.

The author displays a good understanding of the concept of resilience in his literature review, and does a fine job in operationalizing it for his study. There is also a good discussion of the metrics used and an understanding of their possible distorting effects.

The author uses a mixed methods approach, using a quantitative study to first ascertain broader trends and from those results selecting cases to explore in more detail. The quantitative study seeks to answer the question of whether the manufacturing intensiveness of an economy affects its resilience. The cases studies, using both quantitative and qualitative data, investigate more deeply the factors and context that influence the different groupings identified in the first part. The first part of the study approaches the research question using two different sets of variables (employment in manufacturing and gross value added), which then produces two sets of country groups. These groups are similar but not entirely overlapping, and the author proposes his ideas about why that is so. I would have liked to see even more focus on analyzing and understanding these differences. In the cases, the author does a good job combining quantitative and qualitative observations and displays knowledge of a broad range of countries.

Formally the writing is excellent, with only a very rare mistake. The argument is made clearly, particularly in chapter 3. In chapter 4, the linkage between the broad first study and the cases could have been more explicit. The thesis is filled with nicely formatted tables, showing comprehensive research; however, there are a couple of minor problems (p.21 left column data is missing, p.29 data for Poland seems to be another country). I would have appreciated the inclusion of more charts, which could have made the evidence more readily visible than the tables.

Overall I find this to be a very successful thesis. It finds evidence supporting a not-self-evident proposition, and while there may yet be found alternative explanations for the findings, the author has presented a strong case that advances our knowledge. There are insightful comments and observations throughout. The conclusion could have been more robust though, particularly by bringing together the quantitative part with the cases in a more comprehensive way.

As supervisor it was a pleasure working with Mr. Arbesleitner. He was extremely diligent in his approach, starting work on his thesis very early and kept in regular contact. He was always well prepared and focused in our meetings.

Specific questions you would like addressing at the oral defence (at least 2 questions):

According to your research, did the EU choose wisely in setting an aim of country's having 20% of GDP in manufacturing? Is it a proper percentage to ensure resilience? Would it have been better if they had included any other factors or indicators, i.e. one relating to GVA or employment? Explain.

What do we learn from the cases that we didn't already learn from the quantitative part of the study?