

IMESS DISSERTATION



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

(cc Julia Korosteleva j.korosteleva@ucl.ac.uk and Marta Kotwas m.kotwas@ucl.ac.uk)

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:	Navraj Gata-Aura
Dissertation title:	The Czech Republic and the UK, a Eurosceptic comparison

	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:	D	UCL Mark:	56	Marker:	S Hanley
<i>Deducted for late submission:</i>			0	Signed:	
<i>Deducted for inadequate referencing:</i>			0	Date:	9 June 2017

MARKING GUIDELINES

A (UCL mark 70+): Note: marks of over 80 are given rarely and only for truly exceptional pieces of work. (Charles mark = 1)

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. (Charles mark = 2)

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. (Charles mark = 3)

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*):

Best features

This dissertation provides clearly written overview of the position of major eurosceptic Czech parties in 2001-2015; of the British Labour Party and Conservative parties in early 1970s at time of the United Kingdom accession to European Economic Community; and pro- and anti- campaigns in the British referendum of 1975 on remaining in the EEC and, to a much less extent, on the accession referendum in the Czech Republic. It also reviews several different typologies of Euroscepticism. Where possible the author draws directly on manifesto and opinion poll data.

Area for improvement

The dissertation's principal weakness is that it largely fails to provide any meaningful analysis or the topic(s) /cases it discusses and essential offers descriptive overview of party positions and/or summaries of key works on the euroscepticism (Taggart. And Szczerbiak; Kopecký and Mudde; Flood

1. Research question

The research question the dissertation sets out – asking whether Eurosceptic discourses involve ideas about economy and democracy - is brief and unchallenging and the writer does not justify or explain why it a useful or interesting to ask (why would we expect this?).

A quick glance of media coverage or reading of the secondary literature on euroscepticism shows that this is the case. A research question at this academic level needs to be more specific and focused – for example, whether comparing different ideas about the nature of statehood in the superficially similar Eurosceptic discourses of the British and Czech centre right (or indeed left).

2. Comparison

. The idea of comparing British and Czech euroscepticism during their respective accession periods is an interesting one. However, it demands a clearly focused and comparative research design. In particular the dissertation needs to tell us this why the comparison makes sense and what if anything tell us more broadly, beyond the fact that the two contexts/cases are different

This the dissertation fails to do. The writer very notes (p. 6) that that the politics, history and geopolitical position of the two countries and the nature of the EEC in 1970s and the EU in the 2000s were hugely different and attempts to address the point. However, the rational offered is brief and very unclear.

To be sustainable a comparison of this type would entail focusing in on comparable phenomena e.g. of left-wing Euroscepticism then characteristic of much of the British centre-left in the 1970s (neglected in the dissertation) with the left eurosceptic positions of the Czech Communists (or indeed the Europhilia of the Czech Social Democrats in 1990s and 2000s

There is also very little direct empirical comparison of the two countries, beyond the fact that they are juxtaposed in the same dissertation. in the end,

3. Cases

- (i) The author does not explain the choice much simpler and not criticised hard/soft typology of Taggart and Szczerbiak. The empirical analysis makes very limited use of the theoretical literature reviewed.

- (ii) The writer presents the dissertation as a comparative study of the politics of the accession period and says that he will focus on the main parties. Towards the end of the dissertation, however, there is quite a long discussion of recent politics and of the very small and politically unimportant Free Citizens Party (SSO). UKIP is important, but only to British de-accession: radical right challenges were relatively weak in 1970s (Powellite conservatism + very limited gains of National Front).

4. Other

There are specific errors that should be corrected:

Page 1 (title page): The name of our institution is the UCL School of Slavonic (not "Slavic") and East European Studies

Page 7 Spelling error: "principle political parties" should be "principal political parties".

Page 15: There was no parliamentary election in the Czech Republic in 1997 – this should be 1996 and 1998.

Page 16: The discussion of Enoch Powell is confusing. Powell resigned from the Conservative Party in 1974, but was sacked from the Shadow Cabinet in 1968 because of his views on race and immigration (the "Rivers of Blood" speech mentioned), well before the UK accession process under Heath got underway

Overall assessment

The dissertation shows an ability to engage in systematic (empirical) enquiry and in the sustained research need to product an effective empirical overview. However, it does not have a high level of analysis.

It shows some awareness of its chosen method (comparison) in noting the differences between the two contexts, but not good understanding of it. Based on the above marking guidelines my mark is a UCL Pass / ECTS D grade: 56

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

- Can you give some specific points of comparison between the Czech and British accession politics and/or euroscepticism that are significant/teach us wider lessons?
- How, if at all, did the specific concerns of left-wing and right-wing eurosceptics relating to democracy and economy differ?
- What do we learn from comparing the two cases that we would not learn from studying them separately?
- Why did you choose the Taggart/Szczerbiak typology of hard/soft euroscepticism when (as literature review suggests) it is simplistic and has superseded by more sophisticated typologies? What do we learn by applying it that would not otherwise be obvious?
- The British EU referenda of 1975 was called because the governing Labour Party was split over the issue of EEC membership: how does British left-wing/centre-left euroscepticism compare with left-wing (Communist)?
- In what respects, if any, was Czech right-wing (centre-right) euroscepticism in 1990s/2000s similar to Powellite (or other) conservative euroscepticisms of 1970s?