

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2338344 DCU 17116465 Charles
Dissertation Title	Countering Religious Extremism and Online Radicalization in Uzbekistan

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Reviewer 1 Initial Grade <i>For internal use only</i>	Reviewer 2 Initial Grade <i>For internal use only</i>	Late Submission Penalty no penalty
Word Count Penalty (1 UofG grade point per 500 words below/above the min/max word limit +/- 10%) Word Count: 19331 Suggested Penalty: 5 points 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: B3 [15] **After Penalty:** D2 [10]

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>	Very Good
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Satisfactory
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Good
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Good
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Weak
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>	Good
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Good
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Very Good
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Very Good
C. Academic Style	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Good
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Good
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Good
• <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

The dissertation is well researched and the student displays clear knowledge around the empirical cases examined. The research questions should have been narrowed down in the first instance; this may seem like a relatively paltry issues, but when dealing with two inquiries of this conceptual magnitude, one runs into depth of analysis problems. This is evinced, somewhat, by the paltry treatment of the literature review (very narrow, and relying on a limited number of sources); aims & objectives and research design & methodology. It almost reads as if the student wants to tick these boxes and get them out of the way, before moving on to the crux of the analysis. These categories are well worn in dissertation design for a reason, however; with the literature review of particular importance. Its relative neglect here is harmful.

Nevertheless, the student engages in a decent overview of issues surrounding radicalisation (and online radicalisation) and their application to the central Asian region ensures contribution to the literature. I would have liked to have seen more on de-radicalisation, as this is one of the key topics in the literature and an exploration of such programmes in the region would have provided an excellent contribution to the literature. Similarly, I'm not sure the degree to which securitization theory, as it is presented here, contributes to our understanding of the issues at hand--again, this highlights the essential nature of research design and justification for same.

The dissertation benefits from clear analysis and a grasp of historical and current events; this is, perhaps, the greatest strength on show. With a more careful, narrow and considered approach, the dissertation could have been better. A very good piece of work, nonetheless.

Reviewer 2

The reviewed dissertation deals with two research questions, each of which deserves to be focused on on its own. In fact, while the topic(s) of the dissertation is (are) timely and under-researched, given the well-known scarcity of data on Central Asia-related issues, its emphasis on two interrelated, but still separate phenomena reduces the overall contribution of the dissertation. Namely, the author deals with both (a) online radicalization and (b) de-radicalization, which are phenomena that need to be researched separately - as a matter of fact, they are researched separately. (Moreover, the author looks at whether the threat of online radicalization is tangible or not, which presents a third topic). Instead of linking either phenomenon to the body of theoretical (supraempirical) literature, the author does their best to consolidate empirical evidence on all 2 (3) topics. He or she ends up telling something about each of the topics, but never goes in-depth. He or she fails to show how the empirical evidence related to the literature on, say, de-radicalization, which is a shame given how little has been published on the Uzbekistan case and the need to see how Uzbekistani experience adds up to what we know about various existing de-radicalization approaches across the world. The author's use of "securitization theory" is, in my understanding, unnecessary. Author's use of this concept makes sense when/if related to the third topic covered by author, e.g. on whether online radicalization poses a "real" threat or not/how it is being instrumentalized by Uzbek regime to take against political opponents, and is rather unrelated to the remaining two topics. Yet even in the third case, the use of the concept is unnecessary as most experts dealing with Uzbekistan would agree that online radicalization does pose a threat as evidenced by the hundreds of Uzbek citizens traveling to Syria to join locally--operating jihadi forces. As for the instrumentalization ("securitization") of the radicalization issue, it has been well-known since the early 2000s that regimes in Uzbekistan and Central Asia in general have made solid use of it to compromise and persecute any form of dissent. To sum up, the topic was promising as it might have come up with interesting findings on the de-radicalization programs used in Uzbekistan against the background of existing de-radicalization programs. It might have contributed to our empirical knowledge of the Uzbekistani case, still less known in the de-radicalization studies community, as well as to the general state of the art on de-radicalization programs deployed around the globe. Instead, the dissertation is too broad in its focus, it is not guided by a sound theory, and

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

its supraempirical contribution is non-existing. These formal aspects reduce the added value of the dissertation which is otherwise marked by certain strengths, such as factual accuracy, analytical boldness, and preoccupation with a critically under-researched phenomenon.