

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

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Dissertation Title	Easier said than done: Analysis of EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse in the online realm

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Reviewer 1 Initial Grade B2	Reviewer 2 Initial Grade B2	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: 20854 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: B2 **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	
• <i>Originality of topic</i>	Very good
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Good
• <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>	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>	Excellent
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Good
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Good
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Very good
C. Academic Style This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	

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• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Good
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Satisfactory
• <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>	Yes

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

This is a well-researched dissertation. You have delved deep into the issue of EU's efforts to combat online child sexual abuse. You have, in particular, sought to assess the impact of these efforts by comparing stated objectives with actual measures and their effects. You show good knowledge of the subject and there is evidence of wide reading.

You provide a clear explanation of the methods used and justify your choices, while also referring to the relevant literature. You explain clearly why you have chosen securitisation theory. You summarise your main findings in a clear way and the text is generally well-structured. Throughout the dissertation you also include a number of insightful observations on the EU's internal dynamics, and you have clearly reflected on the implications of your findings. The part that I found most interesting is that on power dynamics, and the extent to which the EU/EC can enforce its regulations vis-à-vis the members states.

In some cases the dissertation could have been further improved. In particular, you seem to assume the desirability of securitisation in the context of online child sexual abuse: your approach seems to be normative, by which you imply that the EU **should** in fact securitise. Certainly there is a very strong argument for protecting the rights of children, but is 'securitisation' definitely the best way to do so? Is 'securitisation' the same as 'dealing with a security threat'? You seem to equate the two.

You tend to focus on obstacles to a more effective fight against the crime, and the reasons behind this. These parts are well researched but sometimes you distance yourself from considerations on securitisation itself (and to what extent securitisation has taken place).

It is certainly an interesting approach to look at strategies and policy tools employed by the EU. Your main argument is that in most cases speech **does** tend to securitise the crime, while actions do not. You reflect on the language used in documents, but there could have been more on this. You selected a good range of documents for your analysis, and it probably took a great deal of time to access and analyse them. At the same time, the analysis of these documents is presented quite briefly in the dissertation. You could have perhaps shortened the parts on the strategy itself, and brought out more data from the other documents that you accessed, elaborating further on our analysis.

You could have further reflected on what constitutes an 'emergency measure' in the context of your case study (at what stage there is a shift from a 'strong' measure to an 'emergency' measure). For example, is setting up a European centre or an Innovation Hub dealing with the crime an emergency measure? Perhaps a temporary derogation from provisions on the processing of personal data (which you also refer to) could be considered an emergency measure, but you could have clarified what criteria you used to classify measures as 'emergency' measures.

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In the first part of the dissertation you mix some measures/documents of the EU and Council of Europe. You could have better explained the two institutions' different roles and how they interact.

Finally, the text needed more editing and proofreading. The meaning of your text was not always clear or it could have been more precise at times.

These comments notwithstanding, overall a good dissertation.

Reviewer 2

Overall this is a good dissertation that addresses a substantively important topic. One issue with the framing of the dissertation is that at times it elides the difference between successful securitization and a successful (or otherwise) policy. The evidence presented does point towards securitizing speech acts that are not followed through by securitised practices but there is more going on here in terms of institutional relationships between the EU and Member states – framed in the way it is here, it is difficult to see how the EU could ever successfully securitise an issue that falls in many cases within domestic jurisdictions.

One avenue of investigation unexplored in the thesis was to examine how EU securitising language travelled into domestic political argument, how well it translated in that context and what frictions emerged from domestic sources. This is a gap but not a fatal one in the thesis.

In terms of the evidence presented, more examples beyond the core strategy would have helped support the key arguments.

Careful proof-reading and some work on structure would also help bring out the arguments strengths.

Overall this is a good thesis with potential to be really excellent but one that unfortunately doesn't quite deliver on this promise.