

## IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

<b>Student Matriculation No.</b>	<b>Glasgow</b> 2596958 <b>DCU</b> 20109954 <b>Charles</b> 75264825
<b>Dissertation Title</b>	The Instrumentalisation of Child Trafficking: Competing Discursive Constructions between the US Government and QAnon?

<b>Word Count:</b> 24116		

### JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

*Final Agreed Mark* : A3 [20]

### DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

Assessment Criteria	Rating
<b>A. Structure and Development of Answer</b>	
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>	Excellent
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Excellent
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Excellent
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Excellent
<b>B. Use of Source Material</b>	
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>	Excellent
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Very Good
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Excellent
<b>C. Academic Style</b>	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Excellent
• <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

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|---|--------------|
| • Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology) | Not required |
| • Appropriate word count  | Yes          |

### ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

#### Reviewer 1

A3/20

(in section above 'ex' = excellent – drop down menu not functioning).

Overall, this is an excellent dissertation and one I very much enjoyed reading. The author distils original, sound research questions, justifying their significance clearly (empirically and theoretically). The dissertation is robust in sticking to the task of answering these questions and, more importantly, answers these questions in a clear, evidence-based fashion.

Regarding literature, the selection of literature is erudite, displaying a sophisticated grasp of the wider field of Critical security studies and the many subtleties in the sub-field of securitization studies. The engagement of literature is intelligent, critical and precise. Concepts, theoretical weaknesses (and thus areas to contribute to – ST from below, ST applied to CT) and theoretical fuzziness (what is success and for whom?) are neatly handled and dealt with skillfully. One omission however was Doty 2007 which is an important rare piece in exploring ST from below. Engaging this directly would have grounded your work even more robustly. The more 'context'-heavy literature (contextualizing CT and THB etc. is also very well handled, and helps the author display a sophisticated understanding of the topic.

Methodological robustness in securitisation research can, often, be rather lacking. This dissertation is exceptionally robust in its deployment of the theoretical and methodological framework – something the author should be commended for. All decisions (theoretical interpretations, analytical time frame, case study approach, focus on US, selection of empirical material etc.) are sound and, importantly, completely transparent. The breadth of data employed, and how different 'types' are used to cut across different elements of 'success' is well handled and shows an impressive degree of theoretically-informed empirical research.

In terms of other key 'nuts and bolts' of a dissertation: limitations are acknowledged and defended neatly; interesting further lines of enquiry are well identified (exploring identity more, for example); the writing is crystal clear; the organisation of content is logical, intelligent and well-signposted.

In terms of kicking this up even further, there are a few small notes. The 'normative' debate is hinted at ('issue brought to light but blurring its perception') – what does this mean for whether securitisation is 'good' or 'bad' normatively speaking? Using your work to engage this question in a bit more depth would have enabled another interesting contribution, I think. The piece could also have been strengthened by repositioning the extended detail on QAnon (what it is, how it works etc. This directly preceded the analysis – but would have fitted better in the introduction and methodology, to contextualise the work even more clearly). Last, on to very minor issues, there were a few small typos and errors in the piece and a couple of omissions from the bibliography (Hammerstad 2012 is used extensively but is missing, for example).

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Overall, this is a first-class effort. Well done!

### **Reviewer 2**

This dissertation is at the cutting edge of one of the most pertinent phenomena in modern politics, being ontologies of conspiracy and the discursive frameworks in which they operate. Examining the treatment of child trafficking from a QAnon perspective is on point and by comparing this to official declarations and policies of the US government, the student makes a genuine contribution to the literature. Setting the scene re. child trafficking is important: its history, and policy relevance, often gets lost in literature that focuses on QAnon. This section is clear and well researched. The research aims and objectives are clear.

On the literature review; a small issue, but it is 'securitization theory', not 'the securitization theory. Nonetheless, I was surprised to see this chapter structured around securitization; surely a literature review should tackle, in more depth, the literature on child trafficking, conspiracy, QAnon and so on. By foregrounding securitization as you do here, it shifts the dissertation to be more so about an evaluation of this framework, rather than applying the framework as a heuristic device to get to the heart of the matter. The discussion on securitization theory is well realised and shows expertise and understanding. I wonder if familiarity with this framework dictated its foregrounding in the dissertation as opposed to the child trafficking/conspiracy literature?

The methodology chapter is substantial and convincing; it is clear that the student possesses a birds eye view on how methodological frameworks are positioned in relation to each other and this is to be commended. The intro to QAnon in chapter 4 is on point, but short--relating to my prior point re. the literature review.

When the discourse analysis kicks in, it is very well done and convincing; it also aligns nicely with securitization theory. The discussion chapter squares the circle nicely and justifies the securitization framework, ultimately. The conclusion is a missed opportunity to expand on the observations but over this is a very good piece of work borne of a clear work ethic and dedication. Well done.