

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2409572 DCU Charles
Dissertation Title	Hybrid governance in Latin America A case study of the response of Mexican criminal syndicates to the COVID-19 pandemic

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Reviewer 1 Initial Grade Select from drop down list	Reviewer 2 Initial Grade Select from drop down list	Late Submission Penalty no penalty
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: 20282 Suggested Penalty: no 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: B1 [17] **After Penalty:** B1 [17]

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>	Very 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>	Very Good
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Very 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>	Very Good
• <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>	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

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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

This dissertation focuses on a novel topic in terms of the applicability of the concept of hybrid governance as an analytical tool to explore the governance role of organised crime groups, particularly in Global South contexts. Overall, the dissertation is well-structured and accessible to the reader making a clear justification for the focus on Mexico as an empirical site of interest as well as a theoretical contribution in terms of the original focus on hybrid governance as applied to criminal groups.

The literature review is extensive, demonstrating a very good, expansive engagement with the diverse literatures on both hybrid governance and organised crime, acknowledging too the disparities in framing between Global North and South contexts and situating the dissertation focus within these literatures. At times, however, the dissertation shifts focus on different concepts - 'organised crime', 'criminal groups', 'gangs' etc. These terms are treated differently in the criminological literatures and it would have been good to consciously opt for a term throughout - appropriate to the case study - rather than moving from term to term as the dissertation progresses. In this regard, it is good that there is an inclusion of interdisciplinary engagement, but a specific mention and summary of the criminological literature is missing, unless this has been incorporated under 'sociology'. The methodology provides a very good justification for the chosen methods as well as a frank admission that there are limitations to solely relying on document analysis. This comes through to some extent in the analysis, where it may have been good to spend a bit more time at the outset on the types of activities undertaken by organised crime groups, this comes out later on in the analysis chapter, but it would have benefitted the dissertation if there was an expansion/elaboration of the actions of the criminal groups upfront.

Ultimately there is a very good attempt at systematically applying the parameters of hybrid governance to the findings and overall a convincing case is made, however, section IV/B/1.1 should have focused on the Mexican state in the context of COVID because that is where hybrid governance is being tested specifically, whereas this section focuses on broader governance issues. As mentioned, ultimately a good case is made to convince the reader of the relevance and applicability of the concept of hybrid governance, but perhaps in the findings chapter more time could have been spent on developing a more critical argument on the implications of these findings reflecting back on some of the conceptual issues that were covered in the literature review on organised crime (e.g. how does the applicability of hybrid governance relate to the organised crime literatures focusing on typologies of the state for instance?).

Overall, a well-structured and compelling read where the dissertation clearly engages with an original topic and makes a contribution to prevailing theoretical and conceptual debates on organised crime in the Global South.

Reviewer 2

The dissertation seeks to evaluate whether the framework of hybrid governance is an appropriate and useful lens through which to understand the role of Mexican drug cartels. In doing so, the

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dissertation explores a clearly defined research question that the author convincingly shows represents a key (and promising) gap in the literature. The argument generally flows logically and the dissertation is well-written overall - however, I find the unique formatting style difficult to follow in places, with sub-sections assigned throughout to singular paragraphs or short sections of text that are as a result more difficult to situate in the overarching chapter / dissertation structure.

The study is generally well-situated in the literature, in particular in identifying a gap in applying a prominent framework to a promising empirical case. In doing so, the author effectively demonstrates critical evaluation skills and the ability to synthesise and distil key points from, and appraise and interrogate, existing research. The dissertation contains an outline of proposed research design and methodology, but the section seems under-specified: a more systematic discussion of source selection, range and potential biases, alongside the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the chosen design and methods, and references to methodology texts outlining good practice (and common pitfalls) that the author has considered in their application of these techniques, would have been welcome.

The empirical sections display a clear and detailed familiarity with the context and attention to a wide range of sources. However, in places, the empirical analysis reads rather vaguely and overly descriptive: it strikes me that the actions of criminal groups during the pandemic ought to be a central focus of the study, but these are summarised rather briefly and impressionistically, in just a single paragraph (pp. 52-53), where a more systematic and detailed treatment would have helped to more robustly ground the analysis that follows. Instead, a greater portion of the dissertation is afforded to further discussion of existing literature, giving the impression that the study moves between original analysis and literature review rather fluidly in places. A clearer and more succinct statement of the criteria (or what the dissertation identifies as axes) against which the concept of 'hybrid governance' is assessed, followed by a systematic treatment of these criteria might have facilitated a clearer analysis. Stylistically, some minor issues with clarity and comprehensibility, alongside some inconsistencies in referencing format.

Overall, this is a good-quality dissertation, on a theoretically and empirically important topic, that demonstrates a rich command of relevant theoretical material and the specific context of study, and points to the potential for further scholarship.