

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2409756 DCU 18114679 Charles 41472531
Dissertation Title	Effectiveness of Countering Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation Strategy: A comparative analysis between the United States and the United Kingdom

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Reviewer 1 Initial Grade <i>Select from drop down list</i>	Reviewer 2 Initial Grade <i>Select from drop down list</i>	Late Submission Penalty <i>no penalty</i>
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: N/A Suggested Penalty: <i>Select from drop down list</i>		

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: C2 [13] **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>	Satisfactory
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Good
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Satisfactory
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>	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>	Satisfactory
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Satisfactory
• <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	No

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

The dissertation analyses policies aimed at countering violent extremism and de-radicalisation approaches, implemented by the US and the UK. This is an ambitious research topic given its complexity. The central research question formulated by the Author concerns the effectiveness of these policies. While the dissertation offers a number of interesting insights and demonstrates the attainment of most of the learning outcomes of the programme, there are some serious weaknesses.

The dissertation lacks a clear analytical framework that would allow for comparing the US and the UK policies in a systematic manner. While the choice of methodology is well justified – a comparative case study – and its limitations clearly presented, the theoretical and conceptual background is absent. Section 2.6 enumerates theories that explain the process of radicalization but none of those theories is employed for further analysis.

The literature review chapter is difficult to follow as the dissertation discusses both scholarly literature on the topic of countering violent extremism and concrete policies implemented by particular states. The discussion of conceptual challenges also switches between scholarly literature and policy documents (e.g. p. 5). As a consequence, large parts of chapter 1 lack focus and shift from topic to topic. Moreover, the engagement with the topical literature could have been broader. Some assertions, e.g. ‘Most of the literature on radicalisation focuses on Islamist extremism and Jihadist terrorism’ (p. 13), are not supported with reference to relevant works. The construction of chapter 2 is a bit confusing. The emergence of countering violent extremism policies is discussed only in the section 2.5 rather than in the opening of the dissertation. The timeframe covered by the research is not precisely defined. While the dissertation aspires to compare effectiveness, it avoids the answer as to how to study effectiveness. Subsections on qualitative (2.4.1) and quantitative (2.4.2) analysis are vague.

Chapters 3 and 4 would have benefitted from a broader engagement with the literature and a clearer analytical framework.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the effectiveness of the programmes. The criteria used for measuring effectiveness are broad and do not allow for a more in-depth assessment. This chapter is also under-referenced. As a result, the assessment and evaluation is anecdotal rather than systematic.

Minor remarks:

- some citations are not properly referenced, e.g. on p. 5 the critique of the US strategy is cited as the UK strategy;
- The title of chapter 2 might be more precise; titles of sections 1.3 and 1.4 are also misleading (whose perspective?);
- proofreading would have helped to avoid stylistic and grammatical mistakes.

Reviewer 2

The thesis covers a hot and very complex topic of CVE/counter-radicalization. Much has already been written on this topic, yet, as the author correctly notes, many gaps remain in the existing knowledge and research. Unfortunately, the author has not managed to review all relevant literature, especially when it comes to the literature on radicalization and de-radicalization. There is also a substantial body of policy reports, e.g., the many reports by the EU Radicalization Network, which the author appears to neglect entirely. The review of different theories

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attempting to explain the use of violence for political (and other purposes) is interesting, but it is not really directly linked to the CVE/radicalization literature. There are different models of radicalization which would be more appropriate for the topic of the thesis. See, for example, the literature reviews by Borum (2011) and Schmid (2013).

There are also several problems with the methodology. Firstly, why the US and UK were selected as case studies? There is only a brief and not very convincing justification in Chapter 2. Secondly, there are substantial shortcomings in the discussion of the criteria of effectiveness and the ways to measure effectiveness. The author is correct that this is a rather tricky issue, but s/he does not really explain how s/he will proceed with assessing effectiveness in the thesis. In particular, despite his/her claim to the contrary, the author is unable to prove causality, i.e., that the presence/absence/change in his/her direct and indirect criteria are linked to the (un)successful execution of CVE policies. There are too many other variables that may explain the changes in the selected effectiveness indicators (the number of terrorist attacks, deaths, and injuries) and the selected research design does not allow to control for them.

Another shortcoming is that the analyses of US/UK CVE policies contain almost no references. The author admits that s/he conducted no interviews and one can assume s/he has not participated in any of the US/UK CVE initiatives. I, therefore, wonder what is the evidence and/or sources of information for the claims made in sections 3.9 and 4.7? There is a similar problem with evidence/references to the existing literature in section 5.2. CVE is a complex and sensitive topic, so one needs to be very careful and transparent when it comes to the sources of information. In this respect, the author has done a much better job in the remaining sections of chapter 5.

There are occasional minor spelling and grammar issues in the thesis

Overall, however, the author has demonstrated his/her ability to write in a formal academic manner. The author has arguably attempted to cover a complex topic, which would be tricky even with proper engagement of the existing literature. w