

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2567105d DCU Charles 54792037 Trento 225142
Dissertation Title	Grassroots Organisations and the logics of humanitarianism: the framing of, and actions towards People on the Move on the Aegean Island of Lesvos.

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Reviewer 1 Initial Grade	Reviewer 2 Initial Grade	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: 23,372 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>	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>	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>	Excellent
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Very Good
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Excellent
C. Academic Style	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Very Good

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

• <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
• <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i>	Yes
• <i>Appropriate word count</i>	Yes

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

The dissertation analyses the work and activities conducted by grassroot organizations (GOs) in Lesbos with people on the move. The aim is to understand whether GOs attend to practices and logics of humanitarianism or they put them into discussion through their approach and practices.

The analysis of GOs' work is structured around the four core principles of humanitarianism – humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence – to highlight differences and similarities with more traditional humanitarian actors such as international NGOs. The dissertation draws from the recognition of problematic aspects related to humanitarianism as highlighted by migration literature in the last decade. In this regard, the debate points to the securitizing aspects of humanitarian action and its consequent limits. The student intended to fill a gap in the literature regarding GOs' engagement with humanitarianism vis-à-vis increasingly stringent structures of action due to processes of criminalization of aid work.

Despite some shortcomings, I think that the value of this thesis is given especially by the conduction of fieldwork in Lesbos, something uncommon at this stage of study. The student autonomously gained access to GOs and local organisations where she was able to conduct participant observation as well as to prepare and conduct several interviews with activists. Fieldwork preparation included a serious engagement with ethical aspects of research and the positionality of the researcher, aspects that were always present also throughout the conduction of research.

Accordingly, results are valued by the accounts of direct participants in solidarity networks and projects in Lesbos, and they are presented rigorously and coherently with the research's questions and aims. The dissertation's findings, however limited in scope, add interesting insights to the analysis of the humanitarian-security nexus, showing how independent work provides the ground for contesting the migration and border regime and for avoiding reproducing hierarchies of deservingness among people on the move.

The shortcomings regard the analysis of the literature, and specifically the choice to draw on securitization theories that are not actually used in the analysis. The initial aim was to connect humanitarianism with the securitization of migration and solidarity actions, but the result is confusing. However, the presentation of the scholarly debates regarding humanitarianism, its critique, and the specificities of GOs is exhaustive and presented clearly, which provides a strong theoretical background for the analysis.

Overall, I think that the complexity of the object of study and the choice to conduct fieldwork represent important elements to positively evaluate the dissertation, although the grade needs to take into consideration the limitations of this study regarding the coherence of the literature review in relation to the analysis.

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Reviewer 2

This dissertation seeks to understand (a) how GOs [grassroots organisations] engage in humanitarianism at the borders, and (b) in what ways GOs challenge/uphold the humanitarian logic through their approach to migrants and bordering processes. The student finds that GOs in Lesvos engaged with four core principles (neutrality, impartiality, independence, humanity), and practiced various forms of solidarity. They were not apolitical, but also sought to oppose state-led and humanitarian aid system-hierarchies. They were motivated by responding to human suffering, while their attempts at impartiality came in contrast to the Greek state's regulations. GO's work is independent but, ultimately, also constrained by various factors on the ground.

The student does a good job giving us a broad picture of the structural constraints within which GOs function in Lesvos, and also demonstrates awareness of relevant debates around the European migration crisis and the humanitarian/GO response to this. Yet, a few points of critique:

- The findings of the dissertation support broadly held assumptions within the field of migration and refugee studies around the inner contradictions of the logic of humanitarianism and, thus, essentially confirm what we would expect to see in how GOs work on the European periphery. Thus, the argument here is not precisely original. I am also not sure on how the theory is applied to the analysis - how does securitisation theory allow for a better understanding of GO's operations, and how does it lead the student to look at the four core principles? There is a gap here that does not logically flow.
- In terms of use of source material: there is a confusion between what a literature review is and a case's historical background, particularly in the discussion of Greece in the literature review, which is more of a background to the Greek asylum system and the evolution of the refugee crisis rather than a critique of academic work in order to identify gaps. At the same time, the engagement with scholarly work on the topic is either missing ("securitisation of migration in Greece"), or seriously lacking: the discussion on "Academic approaches to securitisation", for instance, draws on too few works (and most of them from the 1980s and 1990s), and does not include any discussion on research regarding the 2015-16 European migration crisis.
- In terms of academic style: the research design and methodology part focuses on data collection and methods (still not giving enough information: who were these semi-structured interviews with? How were these participants selected? Is this snowballing, or something else?). But it does not discuss the study's research design: I understand this to

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

be a single-case study, qualitative approach, yet the student does not engage with this literature (what is a case study? What are its strengths and limitations? Why was it chosen over other approaches?). Some attention to structure and, in particular, paragraph writing would help enhance readability and understanding (with some paragraphs being over a page long - see pp. 17-18, for instance).