SECINTEL Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 807959 Charles
Dissertation Title	Between Securitization & Secularisation: A political discourse analysis on Members of Parliament in the British Hourse of Commons and the Securitization of Islam and British Muslims

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Glasgow Marker	Charles Marker	Grade Conversion		Charles Additional Info
Office Use	*Office Use*	*UoG-CU*	*CU-UoG*	*Please advise ranking*

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

Final Agreed Mark
B1 [17]   *2 [Very Good]*

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	
• *Originality of topic*	Excellent
• *Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified*	Excellent
• *Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work*	Very Good
• *Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions*	Very Good
• *Application of theory and/or concepts*	Very Good
B. Use of Source Material	
This refers to your skills to select and use relevant information and data in a correct manner	
• *Evidence of reading and review of published literature*	Very Good
• *Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument*	Very Good
• *Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence*	Very Good
• *Accuracy of factual data*	Very Good
C. Academic Style	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• *Appropriate formal and clear writing style*	Very Good
• *Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation*	Very Good
• *Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)*	Good
• *Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?*	Yes
• *Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)*	Not Required
• *Appropriate word count*	Yes

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ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Glasgow Marker

There are many things about this dissertation on the securitization of Islam and of British Muslims as seen through critical discourse analysis of statements made by MPs in the British HoC between 2014-17 that are very good and indeed sometimes border on excellent. For one, the topic itself, and the research questions, are clearly laid out throughout. The dissertation is well written and coherently organised. It has been proofread and it is professionally presented, making use of the full scholarly apparatus, though on several occasions citations were not footnoted. The student demonstrates a solid grasp of securitization theory on the one hand and of the broad field of discourse analysis on the other. These are competently discussed in the methodology section. The following section then demonstrates a solid understanding of the phenomenon of Political Islam and British, or Western, responses to it. My main criticism in these two sections has to do with a tendency to vear toward the derivative. What I mean here is the student's tendency, whilst discussing a myriad of writers from Aristotle, Hobbes, Diderot, Pascal, Kant and Weber to Said, Schmitt, Huntington, Foucault, Zizek, Anderson, Strauss, Chomsky, Fairclough and many more, to really draw on the scholarship of a rather more limited range of scholars - e.g. Mavelli or Ajala.

The final section, the actual heart of the dissertation, is stronger. It sees the student analyse an impressive range of primary sources (HoC statements). The theories and methodologies outlined in the first section are not fully applied here and, but the student shows considerable insight and analytical skill and has identified four different strands and that stand out in the political discourse: a) efforts to emphasise the brutality of 'IS'; b) efforts to defend Islam and British Muslims; c) efforts to identify the problems of Political Islam; and d) efforts to defend and highlight British (secular) values. These four strands were, on the whole, well identified. That being said, I did find the analysis in this final section somewhat superficial and whilst the student raised many astute points, what I would have liked to see more of is consistent contextualisation of the statements presented as evidence as well as as greater sense of nuance and differentiation. For instance, I found myself asking whether the student was able to identify differences or gradations in the language used by MPs to describe IS depending on their political affiliation? Did the student identify a change in tone or in theme over time? Did rhetoric change depending on context - for instance immediately after a terrorist incident; when discussing domestic policies or foreign policies; around elections? Did political affiliation (or indeed the makeup of local constituencies) help explain who among the MPs was more likely to defend/criticise Islam/British Muslims and who was more likely to speak up for British values? and indeed, what kind of values did MPs on different sides of the bench tend to stress and hold dear?

In relation to those final two questions, I would have liked the student to dwell more in his earlier sections on what those 'British values' are, especially in relation to the discussion on secularism. The sections on the Political Left/Right and Islam might also have been used more effectively in this respect, as they in fact focus on the far right and far left, where were not represented in parliament during the years 2014-17.

On the whole then, this was a very good dissertation that demonstrated the student's solid ability to understand and deploy complex political theory and engage in critical discourse analysis of a substantial set of primary sources, but that analysis did require more nuance and there might have been more 'dialogue' between the first and last sections in this dissertation.

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The thesis examines the securitisation discourse of Islam in the U.K., and more precisely in the statements articulated in the House of Commons of the British Parliament. It seeks to use the CDA apparatus, in particular in investigating ideological foundations of the positions assumed in this field. The thesis is generally well structured, however the divisions could be made somewhat more logically; the research is well situated in the broader field of knowledge; and the objectives are well justified. The author demonstrates solid understanding of the securitisation theory including its ontological and epistemological fundamentals; even though the inspiration taken from the Paris school is limited to ontology (inversion of the relationship between regimes of truth and speech acts) rather than impacting the focus of the analysis (bureaucratic routine, instead of political discourse). Methodology is also clearly stated, with the backbone formed by the apparatus of discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough. While it is mobilised in a limited way in the actual analysis (and the exposition suffers from a certain patchiness, including e.g. short but underdeveloped diversions to Žižek or Foucault), the latter remains faithful to its interpretive spirit. The strong interpretive element of the political discourse analysis, with several key themes ('points of deliberation') identified and developed in detail is the thesis' strongest moment, balancing several minor deficiencies. The discussion of historical conditions of the emergence of the regime of truth could be placed elsewhere, and while using sufficient amount of authoritative sources, it also occassionally resembles a patchwork whose elements could be better bound together. Secularism is discussed competently and critically, albeit with almost no reference to primary sources; and some venues of argument, e.g. political theology, are open yet not pursued further. Given the thesis' focus, more attention could be paid to (the discourse of) Islam in the U.K., but basic mapping of the discourse field is successfully conducted and some important issues (such as competing loyalties) are identified. In investigating the discourse of political right, more focus could be placed on how the more radical securitisation discourse here actually shares and reproduces a fundamentalist vision of Islam advertised and promoted by violent jihadi movements such as ISIS' propaganda machines. More importantly, in investigating the discourse of the political left, the author commits several sweeping generalisations based on a selection of tendentious sources (e.g. that Islamists and the radical left formed an 'ideological alliance' united by 'master framework', p. 43/44) which would not withstand a closer scrutiny. It is one of key ontological 'wagers' of the Foucauldian research tradition that the discursive field is fragmented and does not warrant such loaded generalisations. The exposition into Islamism, jihad and key related concepts is not clearly justified and related to the general argument, while e.g. the claim that the contemporary jihadis use violence in a 'noninstrumental' manner is dubious and is conditioned on the ideological formation of 'new terrorism' that subjectifies the terrorist as someone who is fundamentally irrational (and so are his actions, supposedly lacking a link between means and political ends). In summary, the thesis presents a solid political discourse analysis with strong interpretive moment even as the relationship between the analysis and the theoretical framework could be stronger, and the methodological toolbox (CDA) could be deployed more thoroughly.

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Please note that this grade is recorded as the provisional final grade for the University of Glagsow degree. All grades remain provisional until confirmed at the joint examination board.

The Czech State Exam/Oral Defense may make a difference to the final grade for the Charles University degree.

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Notes for Markers: When grading the SECINTEL Dissertation markers are asked to reflect upon the aims and learning outcomes for the dissertation. Each dissertation should also adopt a clear security focus reflecting the relevant programme pathway

Aims: The course aims to provide students with independent research opportunities. It will include engagement with research methods training leading up to a period of independent research and the production of a substantial dissertation that builds upon themes and issues covered within the MSc International Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies. Students will be encouraged to develop their own ideas and demonstrate their capacity for original thought and independent research. The dissertation element aims to enable students to identify and research particular issues or problems, linked to security, intelligence and strategy, at a deeper level than is possible within assessed essays and to develop a critical analysis of the existing body of academic work relating to their topic of choice. Students taking this course will be prepared for further research, study or professional careers through the development of their skills in data collection and analysis, use of original and secondary sources and the conducting and writing up of a detailed research project.

Intended Learning outcomes: By the end of the dissertation, students will be able to:
> Devise a realistic programme of research on a topic reflecting the main themes of the programme;
> Collect, select and critically analyse relevant background literature and arguments of a range of scholars;
> Understand and select the appropriate methodology for dealing with information sources and data;
> Apply these methods to gather and interrogate data in an open-minded, rigorous and undogmatic manner;
> Be able to critically evaluate competing theories and apply relevant theoretical frameworks to guide the study
> Organise the data collected and analyse the findings in a competent manner that allows for a fluid and logical argument to be presented;
> Be reflexive and self-critical about findings and the limitations of analysis;
> Work independently, organising and maintaining own programme of study to meet academic deadlines so as to produce work containing a substantial element of originality.

Word Count:
Dissertations should be 20,000 words in length for students undertaking work-placement as part of the independent study portfolio and 22,000 words in length for standard dissertation students. Word counts exclude the title page, abstract, contents, bibliography and appendices). All dissertations must display an accurate word-count including the citations, footnotes/endnotes and chapter/section titles.

Language:
The dissertation **must** be written in British English. A Czech Language cover page / abstract may be included

Late Submission Penalty:
Dissertations that do not have an extension or are submitted after an extension deadline are subject to a penalty of 2 secondary bands per day (this includes weekends and holidays) on the Glasgow grading Scale.

Plagiarism:
Dissertations which suffer from excessive (e.g. serious and/or deliberate) plagiarism will be subject to a grade of 0/Fail and be referred to the appropriate authorities at both universities. Dissertations that contain some elements of plagiarism, but which are deemed not to be excessive (e.g. minor instances that are not considered deliberate) based on consultation of both internal markers, should be graded accordingly and will be subject to scrutiny from the external examiner and could still result in a mark of 0 as well as referral to appropriate authorities for disciplinary action.

Consultation prior to final grading:
First marking by both institutions should be completed blind with no prior consultation. Once both markers have graded the dissertation and provided written comments, they should consult on the grading and come to a joint final grade, taking into consideration any late submission or excessive word count penalty. It is the responsibility of the Glasgow marker to oversee this. Where markers cannot come to a joint agreement then the dissertation should be referred to the Programme Convenors at Glasgow and Charles (Dr. Eamonn Butler & Dr Vít Střítecký). The external examiner will be used to moderate any dissertation in this position and the comments referred back to the internal markers for confirmation.