SECINTEL Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2224901 Charles 34746078
Dissertation Title	Terrorism: Difficulties in Countering U.S. Phenomenon of Self-radicalisation in the Digital Era

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*	Very Good
• *Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified*	Very Good
• *Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work*	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*	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)*	Excellent
• *Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?*	Yes
• *Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)*	Not Required
• *Appropriate word count*	Yes

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Glasgow Marker

This dissertation examines the phenomenon of online self-radicalisation. Overall, the study is well written, well situated in the relevant literature, and engages with a logical set of arguments. The paper makes an important conceptual and theoretical contribution to existing works on self-radicalisation. I particularly liked the section that lays out the online self-radicalisation model advanced by the author. At the same time, there are several aspects that require attention. First, the introduction needs to provide a discussion of the theoretical and practical importance of the research question addressed and an overview of the key arguments advanced by the author. Second, the overall structure lacks cohesion: the chapters are not thematically linked to one another; important theoretical arguments are introduced in the case study analyses without having been thoroughly explored in the theory chapter; the first two case studies are not clearly linked to the proposed online self-radicalisation model. Third, the author displays a tendency to equate radicalisation with Islamic extremism, while generally ignoring that rightwing and leftwing extremism has also been quite common in the 20th and 21st centuries. The author also tends to conflate radicalisation with terrorism (terrorism is only one type of outcome that radicalisation may produce). Fourth, the model advanced by the author does not elucidate the conditions under which individuals are more likely to pursue a trajectory of radicalisation into violent extremism (RVE) rather than radicalisation into (nonviolent) extremism (RE). Fifth, some ideas are repetitive. Finallly, some paragraphs are unclear (see, for instance, bottom of page 10). These shortcomings notwithstanding, the student has produced a very good dissertation.

Charles Marker

This thesis analyses one of the most important issues of today's security, i.e. online self-radicalization. The piece geographically focuses on the U.S. where this process has been especially noteworthy when it comes to the phenomenon of Islamic Jihadism and religiously motivated terrorism. Paul Angelini chose an original, yet still very fresh and highly topical subject and has successfully attempted to analyse it. After he theoretically and conceptually reviewed existing literature on (self-)radicalization, he put forward his own model of online self-radicalization. He used social-psychological background to understand the path to self-radicalization. Part of this analysis contains the discussion of environmental characteristics by which online vs offline self-radicalization were compared and contrasted. While his interest was conceptual and empirical, Paul turned his attention to empirical part, in which this phenomenon was studied. His analysis of the security, business and legal aspects of the San Bernardino terrorism case stood out in terms of analytical depth. When it comes to shortcomings of the thesis, I would like to highlight three: 1. Lack of coherence of the piece as such – some chapters and their sections lack the logical sequencing and sometimes the reader is left wondering about the flow. 2. It is not easy to find out whether the primary focus of the work has been the analysis of online self-radicalization, or ways in which it could be countered and prevented. 3. And finally, while the work contains an outline of research design, it could have been more developed, especially in relation to methodology and data collection.

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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.