

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2596907 DCU Charles 79096207 Trento 225149
Dissertation Title	The Environmental Aspect of Peacekeeping Missions. The Cases of MONUSCO and UNMISS

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: 21,372 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: C2 **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>	Good
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Good
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	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>	Very Good
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Good
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Very Good
C. Academic Style	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Excellent

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>	Not required
• <i>Appropriate word count</i>	Yes

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

This dissertation addresses a key contemporary security issue regarding the environmental impact of UN peacekeeping operations. Given the acknowledged strong polluting impact of military apparatuses on the environment, the dissertation intends to analyse the ways in which military security intersects with environmental security. It does so by looking at two specific UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan respectively. The student analysed several documents addressing the missions, their scope and implementation to understand to what extent environmental aspects are included in the planning, operating and post-deployment of the missions.

The theoretical background of the dissertation could have covered a broader range of scholarship dealing with the relationship between the military and the environment. The main shortcoming of this work is the assumption of a direct correlation between environmental problems and conflict, and the idea that, by including environmental concern in their operations, UN peacekeeping missions will have a more efficient outcome in terms of conflict resolution. This assumption overlooks at the sources of environmental/climate insecurity and other vulnerabilities that can fuel tensions and conflict. In relation to that, the presentation of critical scholarship putting into discussion this direct relation is not effectively used to open up new ways to analyse the case studies chosen for the research.

The research design is clear but the thesis end up being very descriptive, also given the difficulties inherent to a study of ongoing missions and based only on document analysis. However, the methodology is presented in detail and the construction of the analytical model is well done.

The student was able to work independently and the style and structure of the thesis are flawless. Despite the conceptual constrains of the interpretation, the dissertation provides interesting insights with regard to the consideration of environmental issues by UN peacekeepers and to the articulated and multifaceted concept of security.

Reviewer 2

This dissertation uses some evidence from the UN to look at its sustainable practices in relation to its peace support operations. The two case studies are relevant. The history and background of peacekeeping missions is patchy, incomplete, and does not point to a good understanding of the area. One factual error, for example, is the statement that the UN never related its efforts in the area of peace to the term "peacekeeping" until 1992 (p 17). This is simply not true and it is hard to understand how such a statement could be made in a dissertation involving peacekeeping. The classification of UNMISS and MONUSCO as second generation missions is also highly questionable, as they are much more like the third generation (at least). The section providing context of growing environmental awareness in the UN and its plans to reduce the impact of peacekeeping missions is however much better.

There is a good description of measures taken by MONUSCO to address sustainability. These however rely heavily on the UN's description of its activities, which tend to present a very positive image. While reliance on this source is understandable, the researcher should note that these accounts may be biased.

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In terms of its argument, the main body of the thesis simply states that the sustainable approach of the missions has helped to reduce violence and with implementation of the mandate. This is restated in an appendix. This is a very ambitious claim to make without further evidence, especially given the very high levels of casualties and human insecurity, and difficulties the missions have had in implementing their mandate. There is little mention of the many other factors at work besides sustainability. To claim that sustainability promotes a better distribution of resources and building a shared identity in South Sudan (without any reference to oil or ethnically-based killings which have been widespread) suggests a lack of familiarity with the context.

Throughout most of the dissertation, there is insufficient recognition of the operating environment in DRC and S Sudan. This includes state fragility, corruption and state capture, conflict with significant civilian casualties, mass displacement (over a third of the population in S Sudan), and hostility and even armed attacks on the UN from the government. The challenges facing missions are finally mentioned for the first time in the second last chapter, but without reference to these issues.

In general, the dissertation deals with an interesting and important topic, but makes very ambitious claims, proposes rather oversimplified causal relationships, and does not link its evidence properly to the context of peacekeeping in general or case the study countries.