

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2707361 DCU 21109001 Charles 70802555
Dissertation Title	Grey Geopolitics: Morocco And The Strategic Use Of Hybrid Warfare In Spanish Territories In North Africa

Word Count: 20,527		

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

Final Agreed Mark 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>	Excellent
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Very Good
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Very Good
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Excellent
• <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>	Excellent
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Very Good
• <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>	Excellent
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Very Good
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Good
• <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

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ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

Overall, this is a very strong piece of work and one I thoroughly enjoyed reading. The author identifies original, sound research questions, sticking to the task of answering the central puzzle throughout. The research conducted produces interesting and original contributions (although the robustness of their foundations could have been stronger – see below).

Regarding literature, there is a bit of a mixed tale. On the one hand, the engagement of a plethora of core concepts related to HW and the grey zone is erudite, displaying a sophisticated grasp of the wider field. The engagement of these concepts is intelligent, critical and precise. On the other hand, far more liberal demonstration of engagement with literature is needed – in short, more citations. Throughout the dissertation there are substantial sections which make claims and/or detail facts but contain no references – this is problematic in an academic piece of work as it is unclear where the information is being derived from.

Turning to research design and methodology, again there is a bit of a mixed tale. The overarching theoretical framework and selection of analytical concepts is sound and robust. The clarity over the research process itself, however, could have been stronger. A case study approach is mentioned, but it is not fully clear how research was conducted within this (which data was used, the rationale guiding the search process for data, any particular methods of analysis used [document analysis for example], etc.).

In terms of other key ‘nuts and bolts’ of a dissertation: limitations are acknowledged and defended; interesting further lines of enquiry are well identified; the writing is clear; and the organisation of content is logical, intelligent and well-signposted.

In terms of kicking this up even further, there are a few small notes. Of course, the notes above about the deployment of references and the transparency (and thus robustness) regarding methodological facets of the dissertation are key. Beyond this, on several occasions the centrality of Russia/China to work on HW is mentioned, with widening the lens to look at Moroccan efforts being argued as a key USP. However, a deeper engagement with this previous work (rather than simply mentioning it) would likely have been helpful, whilst more could have been done to show explicitly how the Moroccan case thus contributes to the field. The ‘normative’ debate is hinted at (‘issue brought to light but blurring its perception’); engaging this question in a bit more depth would have enabled another interesting contribution, I think. Last, on to very minor issues, there were some small typos and errors in the piece that hinder sharpness in places.

Overall, this is a very good piece of work. Well done!

Reviewer 2

This dissertation offers a helpful examination of Morocco's strategic use of Hybrid Warfare in its conflict with Spain over the territories of Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa. The author demonstrates originality by applying the concept of Hybrid Warfare to the case of Morocco. Furthermore, the author displays competence in introducing relevant literature and developing an analytical framework.

However, one weakness of the dissertation is the uncritical treatment of the Hybrid Warfare concept. The assumption that Morocco applies Hybrid Warfare against Spain is not convincingly supported, and there is a risk of overstretching the concept. This aligns with a broader trend in

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public discourse where the Hybrid Warfare concept is applied to various unfriendly international relations without careful evaluation.

An area for improvement is the author's refraining from examining more clandestine activities that could strengthen their case. It is laudable that the author prefers writing only about things for which there is hard evidence. However, this significantly restricts the HW concept. By exploring these covert actions, the author could further support their argument and enhance the overall credibility of the dissertation.

Despite my skepticism regarding the utility of the Hybrid Warfare concept in this context, the dissertation effectively utilizes this framework to comprehensively and intelligibly present Morocco's conflict with Spain over the status of Western Sahara. This is the main strength of the dissertation, as it provides a thorough analysis of the topic.