

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2706896 Trento 233472	Charles 49127492
Dissertation Title	Peace through knowledge: Understanding the last decade of United Nations Peacekeeping Intelligence	

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

<p>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)</p> <p>Word Count: 21,986 Suggested Penalty: no penalty</p>		

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

<p>Final Agreed Mark B2 [16]</p>

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>	Good
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Very 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>	Very 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
• <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

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- *Appropriate word count*

Yes

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

This thesis seeks to answer the following research question: What are the main features of contemporary intelligence processes for UN Peacekeeping Operations? To answer this question, the thesis focused on the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) (Chapter IV), as well as recent UN manuals that provide information about intelligence gathering and dissemination in the context of peacekeeping missions (Chapter V).

I appreciated that the student did not stick to a pre-existing definition of intelligence, but instead tried to understand it as an unfolding "process". As the student notes, this is about considering the very nature of intelligence through its active properties and not a fixed and definable essence (p.6). I also appreciated the logical structure of the thesis, the conceptual elaborations in Chapter II, and the careful analysis developed in the Chapters IV & V. Finally, while a lot has been written on peacekeeping intelligence, I appreciated the effort of the student to situate the thesis in the relevant literature and make his "voice" heard in the relevant scholarly debates.

Notwithstanding these qualities, I want to raise three critical points that the student may want to take into consideration in future research:

- 1) The introduction of the thesis could be much better. Besides the presentation of the research question, I would like to see some background information on the case study, some statements on the theoretical premises of the thesis, as well as an explicit formulation of the central arguments developed (i.e., an answer to the research question).
- 2) Same applies to the concluding section, which appears as just one paragraph. Elements of the "Discussion" chapter could be directly integrated in the conclusion. To make more space for the conclusion, I would also trim down the section VI.b, as it does not add something substantial on the ways that we approach and study peacekeeping intelligence.
- 3) The methodological chapter of the thesis is well written, and the student demonstrates a capacity to reflect on the different problems that may emerge in research on peacekeeping intelligence. The methodology involves mainly document analysis. Considering the topic of the thesis, the research question, and related field access limitations, this was an appropriate choice. What I missed, however, is a discussion on how exactly the documents were analysed (i.e., discourse analysis, thematic analysis, etc.).

Reviewer 2

The reviewed thesis explores a relatively underexplored topic of UN peacekeeping intelligence. Overall, the thesis is well written and structured, albeit some parts are rather descriptive. This is also a consequence of the absence of conceptual or theoretical framework. The objectives are clearly stated and justified, albeit the methods section is underdeveloped when it comes to the specifics of data/documents' analysis.

The author has managed to find, read and incorporate key insights from the still limited literature on UN intelligence. However, the more general literature review does not really do full justice to

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the extant scholarship on UN PKOs, which has long ago expanded beyond mere historical case studies. The author also does not discuss several key features that impact the conduct of UN PKOs in general and, their military and intelligence activities in particular. In particular, this concerns the basic principles of UN PKOs (use of force in self-defense, impartiality, consent), the absence of a genuine military committee/structure within the UN structure, troop contributions, and financing. The discussion of the political explanations for the belated and still nascent, if not often absent, UN intelligence capacity at different levels, is also mostly missing.

Another major concern regards the justification of the selection of the Mali/MINUSMA case study and its larger representativeness in the study (and practice) of UN PKOs is not ideal. While Mali is certainly an interesting case study from the intelligence perspective, it is an outlier case when it comes to UN PKOs, primarily due to the extent of the counter-terrorism/COIN aspects of the mission's mandate, as well as the presence of well-equipped troops from several Western countries, often with substantial combat and intelligence gathering experience from Iraq and Afghanistan. While all UN PKOs are indeed rather unique/ad hoc, the creation of the All-Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU) is arguably a one-off feature of MINUSMA. As interesting as the case study of this UN PKO undoubtedly is, it cannot be generalized to other UN PKOs. Indeed, the MINUSMA case study not only atypically precedes the general UN documents/doctrines revise, it is completely detached from it. The lack of comparative perspective is, however, at least acknowledged in the concluding section. Similarly, the ethical "blind spot" is at least briefly raised.