

## SECINTEL Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

<b>Student Matriculation No.</b>	Glasgow 2220239	Charles 31859471
<b>Dissertation Title</b>	The Hybrid Nature of Jabhat Al-Nusra through the lens of its magazine Al-Risalah	

### INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

<b>Glasgow Marker</b> <i>Office Use</i>	<b>Charles Marker</b> <i>Office Use</i>	<b>Grade Conversion</b> <i>UoG-CU      CU-UoG</i>	<b>Charles Additional Info</b> <i>Please advise ranking</i>
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### JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

**Final Agreed Mark**

A5 [18]      1 [Excellent]

### DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

Assessment Criteria	Rating
<b>A. Structure and Development of Answer</b>	
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>	Excellent
• <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>	Excellent
<b>B. Use of Source Material</b>	
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>	Excellent
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Very Good
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Excellent
<b>C. Academic Style</b>	
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>	Excellent
• <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>	Yes
• <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i>	No
• <i>Appropriate word count</i>	Yes

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### ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

#### **Glasgow Marker**

The introduction sets out a critical goal of the analysis of these jihadist propoganda instruments, to tackle the threat of terrorism at home and abroad. It presents analyses of Jabhat Al-Nusra's English language magazine, Al-Risalah. The writing flows well, and the tools used for the analysis are appropriate. The dissertation would have been strengthened by drawing from a larger literature on propoganda, grounding the theory section in research that goes beyond the context of this particular project. This in turn would have helped in the intpretation of the findings and the discussion as well. This issue is my most central concern. Beyond that, the author demonstrates strong critical analysis skills and applies sophisticated qualitative methodological tools to the project, including pertinent categories selected for coding as described early in chapter 3. Thus the project warrants the combined A5 mark for the University of Glasgow and the excellent mark for Charles University.

#### **Charles Marker**

Major criteria:

The thesis intends to analyse Jabhat Al-Nusra's English language magazine Al-Risalah to asses its approximation either to AQ or to IS jihadi pathway. The main topic of the research is indeed relevant and interesting as there has been little attention devoted to the English propaganda production coming from the local groups in the Middle East. Not only it is valuable to look at this specific source in a context of growing literature focusing on Dabiq and Inspire but it is also pertinent to investigate which of the streams appears to be more appealing. That said, it is also relevant to capture the main differences in propagandas of the two streams.

The literature review is very well done and, in fact, covers all works I am aware that analyse various aspects of the jihadi magazines. The next part covers the main goals of the jihadi "international/English" magazines. This section touches a wider radicalisation debates while I think some of the resources from the radicalisation literature could solidify the argument. The empirical contextualisation is interesting and offers some less-known/expected insights. To my knowledge the empirical description is accurate.

The core of the thesis lies in methodologically-driven analysis based on qualitative content analysis. Before getting to the method itself I appreciate that Nicola explained its utility against the quantitative approaches whose utilisation has been growing. The method builds on a combination of inductive step preceding the coding that is followed by deductive search and categorisation. This approach is quite well-established in QCA and is also very well explained. The research is then complemented by intensity and sentiment analysis that finally allows to asses the proximity towards one of the jihadi brands.

My review is quite descriptive since I find the thesis very well-thought and elaborated. The categories seem to cover all essential structural elements of magazine propagandas and the coding allows for effective evaluation. Although the thesis is quite rich on resources (particularly give the topic) I could imagine the categories being a bit more grounded in/legitimised by the existing research. Generally, the methodological operation is above-standard. That all combined with a very interesting and under-research topic creates an excellent thesis built around the analysis of the primary data. Due to the sharp methodology and quality interpretation the thesis actually adds to the professional debates o jihadi propaganda.

Minor criteria:

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I have no critical comments as regards the minor criteria despite some minor language deficiencies.

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Please note that this grade is recorded as the provisional final grade for the University of Glasgow 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.