

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2338123 DCU 17116350 Charles 73993807
Dissertation Title	Between exploitation and benefit: International and nongovernmental organisations in intelligence operations

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Reviewer 1 Initial Grade <i>For internal use only</i>	Reviewer 2 Initial Grade <i>For internal use only</i>	Late Submission Penalty <i>no penalty</i>
Word Count Penalty (1 UofG grade point per 500 words below/above the min/max word limit +/- 10%)		
Word Count: 22,268 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: C1 [14] After Penalty: C1 [14]

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>	Satisfactory
• <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>	Good
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Satisfactory
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Satisfactory
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Good
C. Academic Style	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Very Good
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Good
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Very 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

This dissertation discusses the involvement of INGOs in intelligence operations -- an important yet under-researched phenomenon in security policy. While identifying some reasons for such collaborations -- through an examination of organizational self-interests of these actors that are embedded in a socio-political environment that articulates certain demands to them -- the thesis mainly focuses on the moral dilemmas that such collaboration can entail and the consequences that it may have if related operations get publicized.

The dissertation engages with relevant literature, which it summarizes well and upon which it critically reflects. The range of topics covered is impressive, especially when considering that the thesis demonstrates familiarity with both rationalist arguments (for why these two actors collaborate) and political theory to develop moral arguments, along with the underlying context in International Law. It is this breadth of topics covered that gives the impression, though, that this dissertation is more of a literature review rather than a piece of original research. For it to be the latter, it would need significant restructuring, along with signposting on the unique contributions to the related literature. I was unclear about the novel argument that the dissertation seeks to make. Is it about whether or not to publicize INGO involvement in intelligence operations? Is it about whether to undertake these joint operations at all? This could easily be fixed without changing the substance significantly. The introduction would be the right place to do so. While it is well written and covers the key elements, it could have emphasized more the relevance of the phenomenon (How important is it?) and its importance (Why should we care?), along with a claim to novelty to clarify the contribution.

To that effect, I would restructure the thesis to cover legal issues first, followed by political considerations of both actors, and then develop the theoretical argument. I would then summarize the empirical literature that exists precisely on this specific topic, before presenting one case coherently, in a separate section, rather than spreading out the examples. This is merely suggestive and -- again -- I have nothing to add on the substance, which is clearly explained and makes intuitive sense. Perhaps, for an academic thesis, I would have preferred a greater emphasis on academic literature, rather than news reports, but the novelty of the topic might avert that. Overall, this is a very good dissertation which displays solid understanding and critical engagement with the subject matter, as well as awareness of the limitations that this kind of research faces. My comments above should be read in this light and hopefully would help to turn this thesis into a coarser article that could be published in a relevant security journal.

Reviewer 2

This is a very interesting dissertation, which explores an original topic with possible practical and theoretical relevance. This broad topic of the interplay between intelligence agencies and INGOs is a promising one and you demonstrate good knowledge of the peculiarities of the INGOs work.

Having said that, I think the dissertation would benefit from some changes. First, I think it would have been beneficial to narrow the topic down. Unfortunately, the dissertation stays with a broad topic and does not have clear analytical objectives. Most of the introduction explains what the dissertation does not explore. I believe this space could have been better spent explaining what the dissertation explores, why it is important to explore, and what the research strategy is. I think this

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is what your readers really need to learn in the introduction.

Second, I think the analysis could be deeper. The dissertation provides numerous good arguments about the relationship of intelligence agencies and INGOs. These arguments, however, are ‘might be’ arguments (e.g. ‘INGO might lose the access to the population... if it is perceived as affiliated with one or the other government’). Such arguments should be confronted with empirical evidence. The dissertation refers to empirical evidence but rather sparingly and not in a systematic way.

I think it is a pity you have not taken your analysis one step further. At this stage, the dissertation presents a lot of notes and ideas (good ones though) about the topic. Had the dissertation taken the various ideas into a single argument and supported that argument systematically with empirical evidence, this could have been an excellent dissertation.