

SECINTEL Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2218436	Charles 63122895
Dissertation Title	The Science of the Indirect Approach in Modern War. Resurrection of an Art forgotten?	

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Glasgow Marker <i>Office Use</i>	Charles Marker <i>Office Use</i>	Grade Conversion <i>UoG-CU CU-UoG</i>	Charles Additional Info <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 C2 [13] 3 [Satisfactory]

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>	Satisfactory
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Satisfactory
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Satisfactory
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>	Good
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	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

Glasgow Marker

This dissertation focuses on the ways in which chaos theory, OODA loop theory, and reflexive control theory might enhance our understanding of Liddell Hart's indirect approach to war. It does so by focusing on two case studies: TE Lawrence and the Arab Revolt during WWI, and O Wingate's expeditions in Sudan, Palestine, Ethiopia and Burma before and during WWII. The topic and approach are to my mind original.

The introduction (chapter 1) sets out research aims and intentions reasonably well, and lays out the conceptual approach and methodology the student aims to apply, namely, that of the 'comparative historical research method'. The historical case studies are meant to serve as a way to test the extent to which Lawrence and Wingate knowingly/unknowingly applied axioms of Liddell Hart's Indirect Approach as well as elements of chaos, OODA, and/or reflexive control theory. Two hypotheses are put forward here of which one can say that the first ('are the principles of dislocation and exploitation yielded by the synergy of chaos, OODA, and reflexive control theory?') is indeed dealt with consistently throughout the dissertation and in the case studies. The second hypothesis - 'can the idea of victory be fractal to the concept of the state of equilibrium' (very awkward phrasing) - really doesn't get discussed until the epilogue. The introduction ends with a section entitled 'Thesis organization and outline' which is written as a table of contents and doesn't really explain how chosen structure will help address set hypotheses.

Chapter 2, the literature review, aims to outline the 'indirect approach' to war as well as the three other theories in greater detail. In my view the chapter would have been improved had it included more in depth analysis of Liddell Hart's writings on the indirect approach as well as a more systematic analysis still of the substantial body of literature that has examined Liddell Hart's writings. More attention needed to be paid also on the influences on Liddell Hart's writings (which included Lawrence's 'Seven Pillars') as well as his intentions. Clarity, too, was needed on the kind of warfare Hart sought to address with his writings and how his ideas on the indirect approach have then been applied to different types of warfare, whether asymmetric and unconventional, hybrid, or 'fourth dimension'. This is important because in this marker's view the student has a tendency to conflate various types of conflict and armed action, even in the case studies, which is confusing. Moreover, Hart originally at least wrote with the types of wars as fought on the Western front in WWI in mind, which have very little to do with the types of campaigns fought by Lawrence or Wingate in the chosen case studies. The section on chaos theory remains thin and the theory itself is dealt with superficially. The link to the 'indirect approach' needed to be brought out more strongly here. The section on OODA loop theory is more effective in this regard. On p.32, the student claims that reflexive control theory is the cornerstone of indirect approach theory - but how?

In the two case studies that follow, the student then makes a concerted effort to relate historical events to the theories discussed in chapter 2. This is done reasonably effectively, though superficially, for chaos, OODA loop and reflexive control theory. It is done less consistently for the indirect approach itself. My main criticism here is that the analysis remains shallow and abstract. It does not engage deeply enough with the actual campaigns that were waged and might have benefited from better contextualisation. Methodologically, moreover, there is very little analysis of primary source materials here - the only primary source being Lawrence's 'Seven Pillars'. As such, analysis of Lawrence and especially Wingate's military thinking remains derivative.

Chapter 5 then seeks to compare the two case studies in search of synergies that might help in

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answering the first hypothesis posed in the introduction. The chapter takes too sweeping an approach, however. The first sections on Hart's inception of the Indirect Approach and economy of force really belonged in an earlier chapter, for instance, as did earlier historical examples.

Overall, this is competent work based on considerable and wide reading. The student does demonstrate an understanding of a wide range of military thought. Unfortunately that knowledge and understanding does not always shine though as effectively as it needed to, perhaps because the student is trying to do too much. As a result, the argumentation lacks clarity and focus. There are good ideas here, but they are often poorly articulated (perhaps because the student's first language is not English) and insufficiently explained and backed up with evidence and the scholarly apparatus.

Charles Marker

Significant progress has been made since the first draft of a dissertation proposal, yet there remain major issues unsolved. Most importantly, the dissertation remains quite confusing. It is difficult to see the main argument of this thesis. Numerous interesting ideas emerge throughout the text. Yet, many appear unrelated to the thesis' stated aims.

The thesis claims that "the central aim of this research divides in two parts. The first part is devoted in showing that the IA [indirect approach] theory's two basic maxims, dislocation and exploitation are attained through the practice of Chaos theory, OODA theory and Reflexive Control theory. The second part is devoted to showing that the IA theory is the most appropriate method in reaching equilibrium of force, a state that guarantees the non-continuation of war between conflicting parties". A rationale for the aims is, however, a bit unclear.

I believe it would be beneficial to make a more straightforward explanation of the research focus and thesis' rationale. How does it relate to the existing literature? You have covered some of this literature in the appropriate sections. But you can expand literature review and should relate your research to the existing literature more explicitly.

The clarity of the dissertation's message needs to be improved. You mention indirect approach, chaos theory, OODA loop theory, reflexive control theory, but it is hard to see what these really are. I miss true conceptual delimitations of these. What are indirect approach, OODA loop, chaos theory... and how they differ? I assume there must be reason for incorporation them into your text. Why? How are these related to the indirect approach?

It seems that you suggest that OODA loop, chaos theory, and reflexive control theory are part of indirect approach. But I am not sure, whether this is what you mean. That I can't tell is deeply problematic.

Furthermore, if you argue that OODA loop, chaos theory, and reflexive control theory are part of indirect approach you need to specify what part. Is a behavior consistent with prescriptions of OODA loop, chaos theory, and reflexive control theory necessary or sufficient for indirect approach to be effective? This needs to be specified.

Next, what behavior in the real world deserves to be described as being the behavior consistent with prescriptions of the indirect approach, chaos theory, OODA loop theory, reflexive control theory? Yet again, this need ex ante specification. Otherwise, you cannot say something happening in case studies deserves to be described as the indirect approach.

Dislocation and exploitation should play important part in this thesis, at least according to the chapter 1.2. Research Aims and Intentions and chapter 1.3. Theoretical Hypotheses. Yet throughout the text, there is no substantive elaboration on what the dislocation or exploitations is. Furthermore, the text only sparingly refers to the dislocation and exploitation.

Your reader has little idea about what behavior corresponds to the chaos theory, OODA theory, and reflective control theory in the real world. The reader knows even less as to what is (or is not) dislocation and exploitation. It is then difficult to answer your research question ("are the

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principles of dislocation and exploitation yielded by the synergy of Chaos theory, OODA theory and Reflexive Control theory?”).

Chapters on Lawrence and Wingate are interesting, but it is difficult to see the purpose of having these particular case studies. The rationale for the case selection stated in the chapter 1.6.

Methodological Approach is a bit unconvincing both methodologically and empirically. The thesis states that “the actual reason that these case studies were chosen was because of the leading figures, Lawrence of Arabia and Orde Wingate. Both characters were inspirers of the IA theory”.

Methodologically, I see this rather as an argument against selecting the two cases. Both inspired the indirect approach theory, but then other cases when indirect approach was employed in the real world should be used to test whether something unique in indirect approach (as the thesis suggests) helps those who employ indirect approach win their wars. Empirically, both Lawrence and Wingate’s campaign were only episodes of much greater (and very much direct approach) wars. The thesis puts too much emphasis to the importance of Lawrence and Wingate’s campaigns to the entire war.

I expected that Chapter 5 and epilogue should have drawn inferences from your case studies, make synthesis and conclusions. Instead, a number of new information is presented throughout the two chapters. It is often unclear why subchapters like those on economy of force, Roman and Byzantine generals, Ardant Du Picq, Mao tse-Tung, or priming emerge in the dissertations’ synthesis. More space should have been devoted instead to explicitly answering the research questions.

Overall this dissertation suggests many interesting points but it is much weaker in its attempt to analytically pursue a single research objective. The effort author put into its writing should be, however, appreciated.

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.