

SECINTEL Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

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| Student Matriculation No. | Glasgow 2226254 | Charles 54676577 |
| Dissertation Title | Adaptive Structuration Theory and The Role of Social Computing Sites in the Biafran Struggle | |

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

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| Glasgow Marker <i>Office Use</i> | Charles Marker <i>Office Use</i> | Grade Conversion UoG-CU CU-UoG | 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)

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| Final Agreed Mark D3 [9] 3 [Satisfactory] |
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DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

| Assessment Criteria | Rating |
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| 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> | 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> | Poor |
| • <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i> | Poor |
| 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> | Satisfactory |
| • <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i> | Satisfactory |
| • <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i> | Poor |
| • <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> | No (Minor) |
| • <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i> | No |
| • <i>Appropriate word count</i> | Yes |

SECINTEL Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Glasgow Marker

This dissertation examines the role of social computing sites (SCSs) in facilitating online mobilisation around the Biafran self-determination struggle (Nigeria). The project addresses an important topic and engages with a series of works from the literature on mobilisation and social computing. Despite the relevance of the topic addressed, the dissertation suffers from serious shortcomings. First, the research questions are not clearly stated. For instance, one of the questions is formulated as follows (page 6): "the first question is, can there be (in the case that there is not) such mechanism(s) that organises digital interactions from the use of these social computing sites (input) to its consequences (output)? Second, the practical implications of the study are treated rather cursorily. Third, the student mentions several social computing concepts but they are not clearly defined and their analytical usefulness is not explained. Fourth, the overall structure lacks cohesion: the chapters (and sections within chapters) are not thematically linked to one another. Fifth, the student claims that the Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST) is better equipped than alternative frameworks at explaining the phenomenon of interest. However, the explanatory leverage of AST as applied to the topic under inquiry is not clear; furthermore, the student does not discuss which alternative theoretical frameworks are inferior to AST. Sixth, the main arguments advanced are vague and poorly linked to existing theories. Seventh, it is unclear how the description of the Biafra-related Twitter accounts connects to the research questions and the theory. Finally, there are several sections (see, for instance, pages 5, 21-22, 27-28, 31, and 59) in the dissertation that seem to be taken from other sources without proper attribution.

Charles Marker

Major criteria:

The thesis intends to investigate the utilisation of the social media (Twitter) in the case of Biafran separatism. Apart from the general tendency of focusing on the virtual realm the case is also interesting since Nigeria belongs among the countries with the most widespread usage of Twitter. Unfortunately, the thesis provides only a very limited contribution due to several factors. First, it lacks a clear research design, including the argument that would ensure a cohesiveness and coherency of the thesis. Second, some parts of the thesis are clearly redundant (CSC vocabulary), other essential parts are missing. Namely, a clear theoretical discussion about the role of social media in political mobilisation/radicalisation. For obvious reasons, this literature has recently been growing and there are many cases (e.g. Arab Spring) that have been discussed and investigated from this perspective. Third, the utilisation of AST appears a bit problematic. The theory itself essentially precedes the existence of social media (it might not be a critical hurdle but it is good to reflect it). I originally thought some of the elements could be linked with the discussion of NodeXL's metrics/algorithms (especially the debase on mechanisms). It would have been challenging but potentially really interesting. However, the thesis only offers a sketchy description of one of the STS theories and does not link it properly with the methodology/method. Therefore, the gap between theory and methodology is quite substantial. The topology provided by the software tool apparently offers some ground for interpretation but it remains distant from the theoretical points outlined earlier in the thesis.

Minor criteria:

The thesis seems to be a bit harshly written – it includes typos, repeating words, irregular referencing etc. The resource base could be improved by adding disciplinary literature on social media-radicalisation.

Overall evaluation:

This could be potentially sound thesis focusing on interesting empirical issue. However, the thesis lacks a coherent theoretical framework and fails in connecting the theoretical and methodological parts. Despite all shortcomings I would still recommend it for defence.

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.

SECINTEL Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

The Czech State Exam/Oral Defense may make a difference to the final grade for the Charles University degree.

SECINTEL Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

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.