

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2486123R DCU Charles 67751598 Trento 225139
Dissertation Title	The Architecture of Peace: A Discourse Analysis of NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Reviewer 1 Initial Grade	Reviewer 2 Initial Grade	Late Submission Penalty Select from drop down list
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) Word Count: 22780 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: B3 **After Penalty:** B3

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>	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>	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>	Very Good
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Good
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Good
• <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

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• <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

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

This dissertation makes a good attempt at applying a fairly sophisticated method of text analysis to reveal the complex make-up of the concept of 'peace' applied during the NATO mission in Afghanistan under discussion. Nevertheless there are a few missing parts in the work, and on occasion the writing is rather confused. This begins in the introduction, which should have introduced the discussions around the concept of peace, which would avoid the circular logic apparent in naming peace as the objective of the dissertation as well as naming it as a constructed concept. The literature review in chapter two however does do a good job of this, though based on a rather limited number of sources. The chapter on the history of recent conflict and intervention in Afghanistan is not well written and not well linked in with the rest of the dissertation, though clearly it needs to be in the work it should be situated and its information used in the analysis.

The most important part of the work is of course the text analysis, and the student describes this in quite minute detail. What is missing however is more reflection on why the choices described were taken: why, what the drawbacks and advantages are, how the source texts were chosen, how the ideas of peace theory were operationalised etc. Without clear information on how and why the codes were applied to the source material, and what exactly the source material is argued to display in terms of discourses of peace, the findings are difficult to judge. How should we interpret the present of discourses directly opposed to one another according to the literature review – what does this mean? The discussion of the analysis gives a great overview of the content of the discourse, but does not do so much to open up into what it means. This would require more thought/explanation of both the theoretical significance tied into the method, and linking into the history of the case. There is a little of this right at the end of the work in the observation the small spaces opened for peace for the purpose of propagating further peace is interesting, but left hanging rather than discussed in depth and in connection with other literature, e.g. Mary Kaldor's work.

Overall while I appreciate a very good effort and a well -developed method, there are some gaps in the work that leave it open to critique.

Reviewer 2

I think this is an interesting dissertation. It takes inspiration from critical peace studies and tries to analyze NATO's Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan through the theoretical lenses of critical peace studies. I applaud this dissertation for its analytical ambitions. While I applaud the analytical ambitions of this dissertation, I am afraid it would benefit from several critical improvements.

Most importantly, the dissertation would benefit from providing more rationale for itself and for its theoretical and methodological choices. The dissertation usually describes what it does (and often in excruciating detail) but does not provide the rationale for it. So having read it, I was often wondering "so what" and "why is this being done".

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The problem is most concerning in the introduction and in the methodological part. The introduction could articulate more clearly what contributions the dissertation makes and what can the readers take from reading it. The methodology should then justify the choices made.

Second, I was not really convinced by the combination of critical theory and positivist (and I think quite mechanical) textual analysis. I think how these two could work together could be better explained. Last, I was often unsure how familiar is the dissertation with the empirics. It appeared to me that the Resolute Support mission (or more specifically the texts which are analyzed) is seen as a separate case (not as a successor of ISAF and OEF as if the mission parachuted to Afghanistan when ISAF and OEF ended) and a vital empirical context is omitted. The analyzed texts then (and their analysis) appeared to be detached from the situation on the ground.

Having said that, I must note that the dissertation needs to be recognized more for the effort than for the results. It was refreshing to read an analytical dissertation and not just a descriptive one.