

## **M.St in International Relations:**

### **Thesis proposal examples**

#### **Can the United Nations effectively implement missions with the dual objective of peace building and strengthening the capacity of a national government, with specific reference to the UN Mission to South Sudan.**

The Republic of South Sudan became independent from Sudan on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011 after decades of conflict. International efforts were key to bringing about the birth of this new nation, most notably in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005, which mandated the referendum on South Sudanese sovereignty. On the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2011 the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1996 establishing the UN Mission to South Sudan (UNMISS); a successor to the UN Mission to Sudan which was to be dissolved following independence.

That Resolution states that 'the mandate of UNMISS shall be to consolidate peace and security, and to help establish the conditions for development in the Republic of South Sudan, with a view to strengthening the capacity of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan to govern effectively and democratically'. It goes on to list specific tasks including 'fostering longer-term state-building'. The mandate also includes responsibilities for 'conflict prevention', 'Monitoring, investigating, verifying, and reporting regularly on human rights' and supporting the Government to 'provide security, to establish rule of law, and to strengthen the security and justice sectors'. The UN has often been criticised in the media and by international commentators<sup>1</sup> for its lack of effectiveness and inability to act, especially in peacekeeping missions. I want to analyse whether the broad and varied scope of these UN Missions hampers their efficacy, or whether the challenges arise from the way in which the Resolutions are applied and implemented at a local level by examining the specific case of South Sudan.

I will start by considering the breadth of UNMISS' mandate, and whether on a theoretical level the concept of Government capacity building and strengthening institutions is compatible with peace building and guaranteeing civil protection. Is this only effective in cases where the threats to peace and the population are external, and therefore become a shared opponent that the UN and host Government can jointly combat? In situations where those threats are internal – either ethnic, political or caused by the very instruments of state the UN is working to support is there a possibility of meeting such a mandate without compromising on one area or other? I will also consider whether UNMISS is an exceptional case; that the very existence of such a mission from the date of a country gaining statehood is different from other UN missions, and therefore the mandate was an attempt to cover all ambitions of the UN in an unstable and new Country. This will include comparative analysis of other UN Missions in similarly conflict affected and unstable states such as the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

I propose to consider specific examples from South Sudan to analyse where UNMISS' wide ranging objectives have led to a conflict of interest and therefore an alleged failure to act, and situations where the Mission's work on capacity building with the Government of South Sudan has enabled it to be more effective than it may have been as solely a peace building force.

<sup>1</sup> UN peacekeeping 'failures' have been highlighted in articles such as 'Paving the Road to Hell: The Failure of U.N. Peacekeeping', *Boot, M., Foreign Affairs, 2000*; 'UN Peacekeeping: Few Successes, Many Failures', Jacobson, T., 2010 and specific examples such as 'Peacemaking in Rwanda: The Dynamics of Failure', *Jones, B., 2001* and 'The Fall of Srebrenica and the Failure of UN Peacekeeping', *Human Rights Watch, 1995*.

Key examples of conflicts of interest include the UN's perceived lack of action on human rights abuses by the South Sudan Armed Forces/ Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), such as those

reported in Jonglei State in 2011 by International NGOs and independent commentators including Pact and Human Rights Watch. Similarly UNMISS is perceived to have been ineffective and passive on tackling issues of corruption within the new Government. I want to research these examples and assess whether UNMISS failed in delivering its anti corruption mandate, or whether due to the Mission's responsibility for strengthening institutions and capacity building within the instruments of state a less public approach has been required. Does the Mission's work with the Government of South Sudan mean that it cannot publicly pursue the perpetrators of corruption, but instead works behind the scenes to achieve change? This research will be qualitative and use both articles and reports from commentators and stakeholders, as well as official UNMISS statements and reports. This thesis will also consider one of UNMISS most wide ranging civilian protection interventions – in Pibor, Jonglei state in December 2011. In a situation where UNMISS early warning systems<sup>2</sup> raised the alarm of an impending attack by Lou Nuer tribesmen on Murle people in the area. The UN was uniquely placed, because of its knowledge of the country and the relationship it had to Government, to respond and established a combat ready force of over 1,200 to work with the SPLA to protect the civilian population. This action, including the sheltering of 3,500 civilians in UNMISS compounds and the evacuation of over 180 wounded civilians for emergency medical aid, was enabled by the relationship UNMISS had developed with the Government. This cooperation meant that when the Government was unable to fulfil its duties to protect its own people, UNMISS could work in collaboration with the SPLA to ensure required numbers of peace keeping forces were on the ground to reduce the casualties and harm caused<sup>3</sup>.

Using these examples to frame this analysis, especially those where UNMISS' approach has been criticised, I will consider whether in these situations what impacted UNMISS' response and actions was the need to adhere to its mandate and any conflicts arising therein, or whether the challenges have come from the implementation and interpretation of UNMISS' responsibilities by its leadership. I will also explore if there were other responses that were possible that could have fully protected human rights, civilian protection and the accountability of the Government to its people. The research will also consider whether there can be an agreed standard for 'acceptable' collateral damage in the pursuit of a strengthened and civilian protecting government given that this end will necessarily take time to achieve.

One element of this analysis will also be to consider whether UNMISS' rhetoric has been more aligned with its capacity building objective than the objectives of neutrality, peace building and upholding human rights; and whether the Mission's public comments have been used as a positioning tool, or have genuinely reflected the direction and priorities of the mission. The examples referred to above and documented in press and NGO reports are all in their nature short term or immediate responses to both what UNMISS has said, or failed to say. UNMISS itself has only been operational for less than two years since the Republic of South Sudan formed. Is this time frame too short to judge the success of the Mission's responsibilities to build the capacity of the

2 Information and figures from 'UNMISS: One Year Later' report, 2012

3 Mr Stephen O'Brien British MP, DFID Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, said that UNMISS had played an "important role in reducing casualties" in Jonglei on this occasion. 'South Sudan: Prospects for Peace and Development', *International Development Committee Report, 2012*

Government to lead and manage its country? Could the perceived failures of the mission actually be reflective of an approach taken by UMISS leadership to position itself as a reliable partner and ally to the Government of South Sudan enabling longer term, lasting development in the Government's ability to govern and protect its population in accordance with international law and standards of accountability.

Finally I will consider whether UN Security Council missions should in future have such a broad mandate – does this enable the organisation to develop and adapt to the needs on the ground, or

can it compromise its own ethics and humanitarian mission for protection of civilians by incorporating host Government capacity building? Is the example of UNMISS different because it is a new state born out of decades of civil war? If so are there lessons which can be applied to any future missions to newly recognised States?

## Research Proposal:

### Globalization and the balance of linguistic power: a threat to English?

#### Context

Britain and the United States are countries with a long history of global activity. As the military, commercial, and political influence of Britain expanded globally in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, and America in the 20<sup>th</sup>, so too the English language was established as the *lingua franca* of international affairs (Crystal 2003; 2005). Moreover, the process of globalization, driven by these two nations in particular, has led to deepening political, economic, and cultural interconnectedness of individuals and states (McGrew 2008).

Different peoples and languages have been brought into ever closer contact both temporally and physically by advances in communications technology and transport infrastructure that have gone hand-in-hand with globalization in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries (McGrew 2008). Language, including that which is used in online communication, plays an important role in individuals' conception of personal and political identity (Everard 2000; Hobsbawm 1996) which, in turn, also defines the identity of a society through "the self-conception of communities and of individuals identifying themselves as members of a community" (Buzan et al 1998, 119). In light of this, Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde of the Copenhagen School propose that "traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and national identity and custom" (Buzan 1991, 19-20) should be considered as factors relevant to national security. The "securitization" theory posited by Buzan et al forms part of a widening of security concepts that has taken place, particularly since the end of the Cold War, to include factors beyond the militaristic. While academic discussion of this theory tends to focus on general discussions of culture, and the use of language in securitizing concepts, this thesis will focus on language itself as the object of securitization.

This paper will test the role of language in "societal security" in conjunction with the view that competing identities brought about by globalization are undermining the traditional concept of the nation state (Breuilly 2008, 404). As part of this, it will address an increasing trend in British and American political and media discourse towards asserting the role of English in social and political life. Commentators and politicians in both countries have advocated imposing stricter requirements and testing of prospective immigrants' English language ability for the purpose of "protecting" tax payers from the cost of translating services (May 2010, Green 2011); warned of divided communities (Mason 2012); and even a "divided nation" (Montopoli, 2011).

#### Structure

This paper will first consider the recent historical relationship between the English language and globalization, and explore the connection between the spread of the English language and Western cultural identity in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Particular attention will be given to the agency of the internet in "deepening enmeshment of the local and global" by increasing the "*extensity, intensity, and velocity* of global interactions" (McGrew 2008, 18).

The paper will then consider how state-level political responses to English language are related to the role of the nation and national identity in the context of the "de-territorialization" (Scholte 2000, 46) brought about by globalization. Are concerns over national identity prompting political responses by politicians and attempts to protect the English language as a component of "societal security" in Britain and the United States? What role does a global language have as an identifier of national identity?

The essay will then question the relationship between language and changing global power balances. As the emerging economies of Asia and Latin America exert themselves politically,

financially, and militarily what might the impact be on global English? The technical infrastructure of globalization is already witnessing a shift in language demographics: the growth of users of English online increased by 301% between 2000 and 2010, while Chinese increased by 1,479%<sup>1</sup>. If this trend continues, Chinese is set to overtake English as the language used by the largest proportion of internet users. Will changing global language trends challenge the how individuals and states identify with English? As internet users around the world increasingly choose to express themselves in their own language, will monoglot English speakers have to adapt in order to engage internationally? What does this mean for how British and America identity is constructed and expressed in a globalized society?

This piece of research will address these questions and others with the aim of building on existing academic studies to explore in greater depth the relationship between language and national identity in an increasingly globalized world. It will offer a timely evaluation of current and contentious political debates surrounding national identity in Britain and America and seek to elucidate and contextualise them historically and theoretically.

## Sources

Research for this paper will involve a qualitative analysis of political and sociolinguistic academic literature, journalistic reporting, as well as a review of official political discourse including policies, legislation, and speeches. The paper is also likely to draw on statistical research published by international organisations into global language and migration trends, and English usage online.

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## **The role of States and international organisations in state-building and democratisation post 1990, with particular reference to the holding of elections.**

### **Background**

Since 1990 there have been several examples where the international community has taken on the role of state building: these include East Timor, Kosovo, Cambodia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

These countries can be grouped into two broad categories, a 'self determinative' model and a 'transformative' model in relation to how state-building through international intervention came about and the processes that were applied. In both categories, these processes had a common objective: democratisation.

In terms of the self determinative model in East Timor, Kosovo and Cambodia, international intervention was predicated on a period of internal violence or occupation by other states followed by the emergence of national entities (following an expression of self determination by their respective populations) or resulted directly from an expression of self determination by a particular population within an existing state's territory. The transition of these subject territories or occupied territory to full independence was overseen by the United Nations Security Council which took on the responsibility for maintaining peace and security while overseeing their transformation into fully sovereign independent states with democratic and sovereign governments.

The second category, which can be described as transformative, includes Iraq and Afghanistan. Both countries were independent states which experienced international armed conflict followed by transformative military occupations where the indigenous government institutions were dismantled and new systems established by the occupiers. In both cases, the United Nations Security Council deployed political missions to implement the civilian objectives of the transformative occupation, while international forces were also sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council to ensure security and stability for the transformations in the post occupation phase. Simultaneously, in both cases leading states who had participated in the armed conflict/occupation, maintained their separate but parallel policies in relation to facilitating the transformation during the post occupation phase.

In both Afghanistan and Iraq the state building agenda was defined by the United Nations Security Council through the mandates of the peace keeping and political missions it established. In turn, the United Nations Security Council was directly influenced in its approach to state building by the policies of key states which constitute some of its permanent members and who themselves had been allies in the international armed conflict and occupation phases in both countries.

In all countries mentioned, general elections and referenda have played a key role in the transformative processes.

While the first category (East Timor etc) fits comfortably within the accepted framework of international law and international relations norms, the second (Iraq and Afghanistan) raises interesting questions about the use of armed conflict, military occupation, and the United Nations as tools of international relations, by facilitating regime change and transformation of those states based on systems of governance acceptable to key states in the international community. These issues are particularly relevant as geo political realities are changing quickly, with both Libya and Syria on the cusp of having similar transformative processes applied to them.

## **Field of Research**

In my thesis I wish to explore the international relations dynamic within this paradigm, the conferral of legitimacy on the processes of state transformation by the United Nations in furtherance of state policies, with particular reference to the use of electoral processes as a key element for the implementation of democratisation. Specifically I wish to address the following questions:

- 1) How do the key theories of international relations (i.e., neo-liberal and neo-realist models) explain the role of the United Nations Security Council and key member states in relation to overseeing and implementing regime change and state transformation?
- 2) How are established norms of international relations theory, diplomatic practice and international laws, especially rules of international humanitarian law prohibiting transformative occupation and the principles of the sovereign equality of states and non interference in the internal affairs of states as embodied in the UN Charter, affected by the implementation and acceptance of transformative occupations through the United Nations Security Council?
- 3) In whose interest is democratisation and does the holding of elections, as a tangible expression of a norm, bestow legitimacy on the transformation process or achieve the goals of the transformation as intended?

In answering these questions, I will rely on a mixture of secondary sources, including published journals and reports, and empiric evidence based on case studies to analyse these issues through by



comparing and contrasting the two main categories of state transformation described above. I will particularly focus on East Timor's initial phase of state building, Iraq's recently concluded government formation process, and Afghanistan's elections in the post Taliban era –I have had the privilege of working with the United Nations in all these States, which has given me first hand experience in the democratic transformations underway and the role of the United Nations in relation to it. I would also like to incorporate experiences arising from the 'Arab spring' should they prove relevant.