

Session Details

Friday, September 8th, 11:15 - 13:00, Room H04



Session code: FB-S17

Session title: Studying 21st Century Classified Security Documents from within

Session type: Panel

Section: S17 - The documents of security

Intro:

Scholars do not only get the chance to study classified security documents once they are leaked. In many cases, scholars receive access to these documents as members of official research institutes or ad hoc bodies like official commissions of inquiry, or as contract researchers commissioned to produce official studies and histories. Studies resulting from such arrangements often offer timely, well-founded critical accounts of events. Ideally, they can help to contrast and re-interpret publicly released documents and information gathered from interviews. However, researchers working with classified documents in official capacities face specific challenges that merit discussion. The way state knowledge is stored and organized carries implications for its use as some information is excluded from or hidden in archives. Since researchers rarely receive access to all relevant documents, classification rules tend to selectively disclose some and hide other information. Working with classified documents from international organisations (IO) brings particular challenges as no single member state “owns” them. Usually, consent by all member states is required and IO secretariats obtain a gate keeper function in the process. Finally, researchers with official access to classified documents often face dilemmas resulting from their position as members of the organization under scrutiny and academic ethos. As official researchers they are bound by loyalties to “their” organization, they pay attention to security considerations, and they are careful to preserve future access. This panel gathers researchers who have been working in an official capacity with classified 21st century security documents. It will discuss the possibilities and limitations of researching these sources.

Chair



 Kerrin Langer, Germany



★ ***Addressing the Academic Limits and Explanatory Power of Classified Security Documents from an Epistemological and Methodological Point of View***

 J. Barbin¹.

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★ ***Being a ‘Trust-Worthy’ Researcher: Balancing Measured Criticism against Future Access to Classified Sources***

 T. Haaland¹.

¹Norwegian Armed Forces University College, Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, Oslo, Norway.



★ **Overcoming the Filters of NATO Declassification**

👤 [P. Münch](#)¹.

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★ **The Use and Abuse of Classification and Declassification: The Case of the Netherlands Independent Historical Inquiry on Afghanistan**

👤 A. ten Cate¹, [A.J.H. Takken](#)².

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★ **Researching the Bundeswehr in Iraq from within**

👤 [S.L. Nicola](#)¹.

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Discussant



👤 Sophia Hoffmann, Germany