REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

MISS – Master in International Security Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Title of the thesis:	Causes of Civil Wars: The Influence of Natural Resources Extractive Technologies on Civil War Outbreak
Author of the thesis:	**Kamil Klosek**
Referee *(incl. titles)*:	**Doc. PhDr. Běla Plechanovová, CSc.**

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED *(for details, see below):*

CATEGORY	POINTS
Theoretical background (max. 20)	18
Contribution (max. 20)	15
Methods (max. 20)	15
Literature (max. 20)	20
Manuscript form (max. 20)	18
TOTAL POINTS *(max. 100)*	**86**
The proposed grade (1-2-3-4)	**1**

You can even use a decimal point (e.g. giving the grade of 2.5 for 60 points).

Comments of the referee on the thesis highlights and shortcomings (following the 5 numbered aspects of your assessment indicated below).

1) Theoretical background:

The thesis builds on the literature dealing with role of natural resources in unleashing civil wars, namely Collier et al. (2009). The author aims to follow their hypothesis of feasibility by focusing on financial dimension of the natural resources as an instigator of rebellion sparking the civil war. He introduces a new variable of extraction feasibility as a composite measure of ease of extraction of the resource and ease of transformation into financial resource to the dataset of Colliet et al. The research design is well structured and supported with good arguments.

2) Contribution:

The idea to test a new variable that captures a more nuanced potential indicator of motivation for outset of conflict is by all means sound. This area of quantitative research, bringing a number of interesting hypotheses but so far no definite conclusions, invites for further explorations. In this regard I appreciate the contribution of the thesis as it brings in relevant and potentially important factors. Nevertheless, the discussion of the construction of the variable is underdeveloped in the thesis, particularly the solution that adds values of basically dummy variables is from my perspective questionable without clearly and thoroughly describing the assumptions behind the direction of coding of individual variables that go into the composite variable of extraction feasibility.
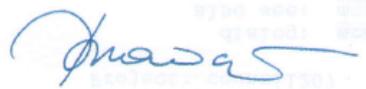
3) Methods:

Methodology of the thesis is well described as well as applied. But even here I miss a broader discussion about the choice of particular method. Part of the problem is a choice of logistic regression with dichotomous dependent variable. The method does not work very well in analysis of complex issues where the influence of the independent variables is rather weak or is dependent

on parallel function of other factors/variables. I, of course, understand that the choice of the method was dependent on the methodology of research to which the thesis aims to contribute. Nevertheless, a discussion of these limitations/choices would be most welcome. To add my opinion on the construction of the composite independent variable: I would advise to run a series of tests controlling for the factor effect of those seven components of the of extraction feasibility variable before taking the final decision on the construction of the independent variable.
I miss explicit reference to the datasets used in the list of references.

4) Literature:
Both the literature review and the referencing through the text of the thesis prove that the author has a deep knowledge of the research he builds on.

5) Manuscript form: The manuscript is presented in good form, with only small number of typos.

DATE OF EVALUATION: 31 August 2015

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Referee Signature

The referee should give comments to the following requirements:

1) THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: *Can you recognize that the thesis was guided by some **theoretical fundamentals** relevant for this thesis topic? Were some important theoretical concepts omitted? Was the theory used in the thesis consistently incorporated with the topic and hypotheses tested?*

Strong	*Average*	*Weak*
20	*10*	*0*	*points*

2) CONTRIBUTION: *Evaluate if the author presents **original ideas** on the topic and aims at demonstrating **critical thinking** and ability to draw conclusions based on the knowledge of relevant theory and relevant empirical material. Is there a distinct **value added** of the thesis (relative to knowledge of a university-educated person interested in given topic)? Did the author explain **why** the observed phenomena occurred? Were the policy implications well founded?*

Strong	*Average*	*Weak*
20	*10*	*0*	*points*

3) METHODS: *Are the **hypotheses** for this study clearly stated, allowing their further verification and testing? Are the theoretical explanations, empirical material and **analytical tools** used in the thesis relevant to the research question being investigated, and adequate to the aspiration level of the study? Is the thesis **topic comprehensively analyzed** and does the thesis not make trivial or irrelevant detours off the main body stated in the thesis proposal? More than 10 points signal an exceptional work, **which requires your explanation "why" it is so***).

Strong	*Average*	*Weak*
20	*10*	*0*	*points*

4) LITERATURE REVIEW: *The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and **command of recent literature**. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way and disposes with a representative bibliography. (Remark: references to Wikipedia, websites and newspaper articles are a sign of **poor research**). If they dominate you cannot give more than 8 points. References to books published by prestigious publishers and articles in renowned journals give much better impression.*

Strong	*Average*	*Weak*
20	*10*	*0*	*points*

5) MANUSCRIPT FORM: *The thesis is **clear and well structured**. The author uses appropriate language and style, including academic **format** for quotations, graphs and tables. The text effectively refers to graphs and tables, is easily readable and **stimulates thinking**.*

Strong	*Average*	*Weak*
20	*10*	*0*	*points*

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Czech grading	US grading
81 – 100	1	= excellent	= A
61 – 80	2	= good	= B
51 – 60	3	= satisfactory	= C
41 – 50	3	= satisfactory	= D
0 – 40	4	= fail	= not recommended for defence