

# Assessment of Master Thesis – Opponent



Study programme: **International Economic Relations**

Field of study: **International and Diplomatic Studies**

Academic year: **2014/2015**

Master Thesis Topic: **Religious Pluralism in Sub-Saharan Africa: Political Implications**

Author's name: **Eva Lackovičová**

Ac. Consultant's Name: **prof. PhDr. Zuzana Lehmannová, CSc.**

Opponent: **Ing. Jan Kochan**

	Criterion	Mark (1–4)
1.	Overall objective achievement	<b>1</b>
2.	Logical structure	<b>1</b>
3.	Using of literature, citations	<b>1</b>
4.	Adequacy of methods used	<b>2</b>
5.	Depth of analysis	<b>1</b>
6.	Self-reliance of author	<b>2</b>
7.	Formal requirements: text, graphs, tables	<b>1</b>
8.	Language and stylistics	<b>1</b>

## Comments and Questions:

The presented master's thesis deals with very topical problem of the role of religion in politics of Sub-Saharan African countries, mainly in the most populated one (Nigeria). The author demonstrated both very good knowledge of the analyzed topic and the ability to work with relevant sources of information adequately.

According to the author the main aim of the master's thesis is " ...to find out what role religion and religious pluralism play in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically in the selected country and its politics." (p. 5). This aim has been achieved sufficiently, however, the merit of the thesis could be better if more appropriate methods were used. The author tries to find out the answer to the question about the role of religion in politics of Sub-Saharan countries mainly on the ground of secondary literature. What I miss a bit is the lack of the author's own analysis and deduction of own conclusions. The conclusions in the thesis to a certain extent just summarize the structured overview of a discourse described in the text. The main aim of the thesis may be a bit too wide – it deals with the role of religion in politics generally. To reflect this complex relationship properly it would be probably necessary to define the terms "religion" and "politics" and then from these definitions to deduce a method or design of a research in particular case (of Nigeria or some other country). I am not sure if there is such a systematically elaborated theoretical and methodological framework in the thesis. The thesis makes a good overview of approaches of other authors to the topic but is not so active in defining its own methodology. It pays special attention to the relation between religion and social conflicts. To explore this more concrete relation could probably represent a better and narrower aim of the presented thesis. In this case it would be necessary to aim the theoretical and methodological framework at this direction and then to conduct an analysis of data related to conflicts, to compare the role of religion to the roles of other causes or factors of social conflicts etc., which is not in presented thesis systematically elaborated. Instead the author tries to conduct a more qualitative analysis of the situation and developments in selected Nigerian cities that are plagued by religiously motivated violence.

It is clear that this geographically distant and complex topic is methodically difficult, and thus the aforementioned comments are considered with regard to the demands placed on master's theses to be more just suggestions for the author's future research activity than a critique. The thesis is based of logical structure and the author refers to the information resources adequately. Formal requirements are met and the language and stylistics are also excellent. There are only few inaccuracies or typing errors in the text (e.g. p. 8: the world's Christian population represents now not 33,9 % but 33,39%; p. 18: "Both Athens are

Rome“ – “Both Athens and Rome“; p. 35: “the Organization of Islamic Council“ – “the Organization of Islamic Conference“). Overall I appraise the thesis positively. I recommend this final thesis for defence and according to its course I preliminarily suggest to grade it as “excellent”.

Questions for the defence: What are the basic features of religiously motivated violence in Sub-Saharan Africa in terms of intensity, numbers of victims, weapons usually used and frequency? In which Sub-Saharan African countries is the religiously motivated violence mostly present? What is the role of religion in comparison with other factors of social conflicts in Nigeria?

**Conclusion: The Master Thesis is recommended for the defence.**

Suggested Grade:      **1**

Date: 24. 05. 2015

**Ing. Jan Kochan**  
Opponent