

BACHELOR'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT
PPE – Bachelor's in Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	"Come War or High Water": Investigating the Weaponization of Water through Manipulation of Dams in the Russia-Ukraine War (2014-2023)
Student's name:	Mariami Gavasheli
Referee's name:	Mgr. Eliška Pohnerová

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	50	50
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	15	12
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	15	10
<i>Total</i>		80	72
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	10	10
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	5	5
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	5	3
<i>Total</i>		20	18
TOTAL		100	90

Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score:

Although Turnitin finds 26% of overall similarity, the similarity is evenly distributed across dozens of sources, with the similarity here always being less than one per cent. The text itself indicates a thorough work with sources that are well-cited and listed among references.

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria:

I was very happy to assist Ms Mariami Gavasheli with her bachelor's thesis. The student proved well-organised, hard-working and punctual, as well as reflective of the conversation we had had. I can see a great improvement in the thesis, such as the research question articulation and thoughts given to the idea of 'acceleration' (although room for improvement of operationalisation and consequent measurement remains).

I highly appreciate the student's intention to combine the diversity of her studies and bring a complex picture, capturing the moral, environmental as well as strategic aspects of water weaponisation. At the same time, this might pose a problem of too many optics, which may lead to confusing and inconclusive research. This was not necessarily the case, but I would

recommend that the student not get overwhelmed by the plurality of possibilities and narrow her focus down, especially in her future studies.

Although the literature review and theorisation stemming from it are done thoroughly, it could be cut shorter for the purpose of precision. Although providing a good introduction to the water weaponisation field, not all reviewed scholars and their research are reflected in the analysis; thus, it is redundant. The IHL (and this relates to my previous point of too many optics at play) is beneficial in judging the legality of the given water weaponisation event but is inconclusive when it comes to military advancement gained by the act. With the possibility of revoking the necessity principle, it is even more complicated.

The manuscript form is acceptable but would benefit from some last-minute touches, such as aligning text into blocks, customising multi-level content and cutting out non-essential or repetitive sections of the text (for example, water weaponisation by the Soviet Union and general war introduction).

However, overall, I consider this to be an important contribution to the under-researched field of states' water weaponisation that benefits from water weaponisation prohibitory norm advocacy, which is justified not only morally but also through the argument of non-strategicness articulated in the here-presented piece.

Proposed grade: B

Suggested questions for the defence are:

Given the analysed empirical cases of water weaponisation, what is the value of IHL prohibiting such behaviour if it is not adhered to?

In the case of the Irpin breach, you mention the ambiguity between the long-term cost of reconstruction after water is deployed and the imminent threat of a defeat that requires such deployment. Could you elaborate on the pushes and pulls at play?

Do you draw any links between water weaponisation by the USSR and modern Russia? Do you thus assume water weaponisation is not an immediate tactical decision but a component of the national military playbook?

03.05.2024

X 

Mgr. Eliška Pohnerová
referee

Podepsal(a): Mgr. Eliška Pohnerová

I recommend the thesis for the final defence.

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	C	= good
61 – 70	D	= satisfactory
51 – 60	E	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	F	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.