

HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Masaryk University

Faculty

Procedure field

Applicant

Applicant's home unit, institution

Habilitation thesis

Reviewer

Reviewer's home unit, institution

Faculty of Social Studies

Political Science

PhDr. Ondřej Ditrych, Ph.D.

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Critical Investigations of the Global

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University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science

The author shows interest in wider concepts of IR, security, and geopolitics (although he calls it power and/or power politics) and includes both classical theorists and critical theoretical views in his analysis. He managed to provide a set of studies including both classical and critical perspective in IR. The value is evident from author's ability to pinpoint dialogical nature evident in classical/critical encounters and both time and space dimensions while rethinking international politics. Presented studies are geographically oriented towards Caucasus and Middle East but in their merits, they are oriented much wider – they are presenting global perspective through analysis and discussion about power as well as power distribution in international community. In selection of presented work author is obviously inspired and driven with the ambition to achieve theoretical pluralism, in his own words – “these studies seek to embody the generally critical ethos characteristic of the otherwise remarkably diverse perspectives encompassed there” – what is encompassed in habilitation thesis.

First two paper focuses on Caucasus, more particularly Georgia, and shows author's geographical interest in wider region along with paper focused on Afghanistan – more precisely wider European neighborhood is clearly geographical frame for author's work. Along with interest in multiethnic societies, potential pluralism, and frozen conflicts; author shows clear interest towards global perspective in drug regulation through international prohibition as well as interest for theoretical matrix in his debate over non-Hobbesian perspective in international relations.

First paper named “Georgia's Frosts: Ethnopolitical Conflict as Assemblage”, gives new definitions for frozen conflicts particularly in the area of material and non-material influences on subjects involved. Author recognizes and defines influences onto conflict even in non-violent times, and thus generators for the conflict itself in a form of perpetuating its existence although in a form of frozen conflicts. He finds the sources and consequences of the conflict in phenomenon he calls “Georgia's society *bricolage*” – and follows that through historical transformations with an emphasis on the era of Mikheil Saakashvili. Author finds Mikheil Saakashvili's role in the state-making processes, along with separatist movements crucial ones. Visible (material) violence is for author only one of the elements of action in frozen conflicts, accompanied by different forms of violence – political and criminal ones – evidenced through deconstruction processes in society. Such changes are evident through “contracting or expanding of heterogeneous, hybrid *governscapes* including virtual ones, but always with very real political effects”, which makes the most important conclusion of this paper.

The second paper author has given is his earlier work named "Georgia: A State of Flux". This paper approaches Georgia's politics and realism from a different theoretical perspective – critical political ontology of Carl Schmitt, Walter Benjamin and Giorgio Agamben. Through abovementioned perspective author analyses political development in Georgia following the restoration of independence (1991), and defends a thesis that Georgia has been "in a permanent state of exception" from that moment onward. The common characteristics of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Eduard Shevardnadze and Mikheil Saakashvili regimes author finds in their type of rule along with ruling goals – activating a new political order – hidden in the restoration of territorial sovereignty, overcoming of internal stasis and the imitation of the Western liberal state model. Author concludes that tragic reality of Georgia's contemporary politics is limbo evident in state of exception.

Third paper "Afghanistan Now: A Study of the Microcosmos of Global Disorder" stays in the similar theoretical format of previous papers. Balancing between chaos and The Global War on Terror (GWOT) defining them as two poles of a same body author defines situation emerged around Afghanistan as a global. It is interesting to read and analyze author's thesis in current situation as a way to predict future outcomes.

Fourth paper "The International Drug Prohibition Regime as Security Regulation", is based on previous paper and project that author was previously involved in named *Global Prohibition Regimes: Theoretical Refinement and Empirical Analysis* (2013-2016), financed by Czech Science Foundation. Author investigates the operation of various types of power in the international drug control regime conceived as an advanced form of global security regulation. The key stress in the paper is given to institutional patterns and processes in particular related to cultural and economic ones. The author calls the system Regime with capital R due to the fact that he relates it with rationalist generation of the international regimes theory. He takes perspectives of securitization, universalization, and materialization – securitization which effects might be seen in erosion of social bonds and threats to capitalist economy; universalization with power-politics games and geopolitical dependencies; and materialization in a form of the productive effects of the related practices for the constitution stereotypical subjects. The key in this research is power-shifts that author points towards, from regular and established power paths towards new Regime's power-relations.

Final paper "Forget Hobbes" is a critique of the dominant patterns of knowledge in international relations and covers the issue of potential instrumentalization of intellectual history. Author focused his critique on Thomas Hobbes and various analysis of Hobbes thesis – as constructed and deconstructed in international relations theory. In his focus lays security continuum as a state of relations found in political theory. Author successfully debates with Hobbes readings and concludes that "the field would benefit from a cure of the 'Hobsession' from which it appears to suffer, and *forgetting* Hobbes that would expand the space for rethinking international politics".

Presented papers/chapters/readings present author's opus in the areas of IR, security, and geopolitics and includes both classical theorists and critical theoretical views. Author successfully managed to provide various studies including both classical and critical perspectives. This habilitation thesis provides insight in author's interest and qualifications in political science, namely international relations thus it is recommended to be continued with following official procedure for habilitation.

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence (number of questions up to the reviewer)

1. Due to the conclusion in third paper/chapter how do You explain current state of power relations in Afghanistan. Balancing between chaos and The Global War on Terror (GWOT) You defined them as two poles of a same body. Please explain how that reflects on current situation in Afghanistan. Moreover, You named this local conflict as global problem which is clearly accurate. Please explain power balance, disbalance or vacuum potentially emerging from withdrawal of western military presence?
2. Global fight against drugs should be recognized and followed by internationally unified laws as suggested by numerous institutions. What are the potential steps towards such efforts and how does one break the vicious circle of negative effects of securitization process?

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled "Critical Investigations of the Global" by PhDr. Ondřej Ditryc **fulfils** requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Political Science.

Date: 1.9.2021.

Signature:

