

HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Masaryk University
Faculty of Social studies

Applicant

Dr. rer. pol. Tomáš Imrich Profant

Habilitation thesis

Development and Development Cooperation:
Historical, Theoretical and Empirical Studies

Reviewer

doc. Mgr. et Mgr. Oldřich Krpec, Ph.D.

**Reviewer's home unit,
institution**

Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University

The habilitation thesis presented by Dr. rer. pol. Tomáš Imrich Profant at Masaryk University, titled "Development and Development Cooperation: Historical, Theoretical, and Empirical Studies," comprises a collection of published scholarly papers authored by Dr. Profant. These papers collectively address complex issues surrounding the themes of development and international cooperation from historical, theoretical, and empirical viewpoints.

Dr. Profant's academic work is seeking to bridge diverse aspects of development studies through a compilation of works that each address different facets of the discipline. The intent to create a comprehensive academic dialogue within this field is commendable and indicative of a serious scholarly pursuit. This review, therefore, assesses the submitted work against three critical criteria essential for the award of habilitation at Masaryk University: coherence across the compilation of articles, originality of the scholarly contribution, and impact of the work within the broader academic community.

The thesis spans a broad spectrum of topics and employs a variety of methodological approaches, reflecting the dynamic and interdisciplinary nature of development studies. However, a critical evaluation is necessary to determine if these individual pieces, when taken together, form a cohesive scholarly project that advances the field. Moreover, considering the rapid evolution in the theoretical frameworks that underpin development studies, this review also focuses on how Dr. Profant's work engages with contemporary debates and whether it has sufficiently contributed to ongoing scholarly discussions and practices in an impactful way. The following sections will provide discussion of the thesis's coherence, relevance, theoretical advancement, and scholarly impact.

The thesis comprises a series of articles that, while thematically aligned to the broader topic of development, diverge significantly in their specific subjects, methodologies, and analytical depth. Such diversity, although enriching, poses a substantial challenge to the unity of the thesis as a holistic research endeavor. The individual articles, albeit insightful in isolation, do not appear to be interconnected strongly enough to constitute a cohesive research project. This fragmentation raises questions about the added value and originality of the compilation as a unified scholarly contribution to the field of development studies.

The thesis includes two theoretically oriented papers that were written more than a decade ago. The fields of poststructuralism and postcolonial studies, central to these articles, have evolved significantly, with new research continually emerging that challenges and refines existing paradigms. However, the commentary provided in the thesis does not substantially update or extend these theoretical discussions to engage with recent advancements in the

field. As such, the articles risk being perceived as historical accounts of past academic debates rather than as active contributions to ongoing scholarly discussions. This gap is particularly evident in the lack of significant engagement with contemporary critiques or developments that could have positioned the thesis as a critical, up-to-date intervention in development studies. The thesis also includes empirical studies focused on Slovak development practices. While these studies provide valuable insights into the local context, their scope and the recency of data limit their applicability and relevance to broader debates in international development. Moreover, the commentary does not adequately synthesize these findings into the wider theoretical or empirical frameworks discussed in the thesis, missing an opportunity to draw more generalized conclusions or to highlight their implications for global development policies. The choice to publish primarily in Czech and Slovak journals, while supporting the local academic ecosystem, may limit the wider dissemination and impact of the research findings. The international reach of scholarship in development studies predominantly relies on engagement through widely accessible and frequently cited international journals. The limited citation of the presented articles suggests a constrained impact on the global academic community, which is a significant consideration for a habilitation thesis aimed at making a substantial contribution to the field.

Reviewer's Questions for the Habilitation Thesis Defence:

Considering the rapid evolution of theoretical frameworks in development studies, how does the applicant account for integrating recent scholarly debates into the theoretical underpinnings of his thesis?

Given the empirical focus on Slovak development cooperation, what measures could enhance the broader applicability of these findings to global development contexts?

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled "Development and Development Cooperation: Historical, Theoretical, and Empirical Studies" by Dr. rer. pol. Tomáš Imrich Profant represents a commendable academic effort with rigorous research and substantial engagement with critical issues in development studies. However, the thesis, in its current form, falls short of fulfilling the expectations for a habilitation at the Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University. The primary concerns are the lack of cohesion among the collection of articles, the limited engagement with current theoretical debates, and the restricted international impact of the research. Therefore, while recognizing the individual strengths of the articles, the collective body of work does not, regrettably, meet the criteria for a habilitation in terms of forming a coherent, original, and impactful contribution to the field.

Despite the solid individual merits of the work presented, the thesis does not sufficiently fulfill the requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in Development Studies, particularly concerning the coherence and impact of the research. It is with regret that I conclude the thesis **does not fulfill** the requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Political Science at Masaryk University.

Date: May 5th, 2024

Signature

