

Ph.D. Programme of International Relations

Departments of International Relations and Security Studies

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Examiner's Report on PhD Dissertation – comments upon the modifications made in reference to the first report

Summary Statement:

The second version of PhD Dissertation submitted by Aleš Karmazín represents a qualitative upgrade especially in terms of its research design and clarity of the argument although some issues still persist. Below I briefly summarize major findings, both positive and negative, and highlight the most important features of this version of dissertation.

1) In my previous report, I made several critical comments on the methodology in general, and especially on the selection of cases. Consequently, I am pleased to say that the latter has now been much more carefully justified and the author sufficiently explains why the cases and sub-cases have been selected. Also, the introduction of effective reading as an underlying method is presented in an acceptable way. On the other hand, however, even if the methodological background is more robust and generally appropriate, it remains somewhat unclear how specifically the method of effective reading is applied to the selected cases and sub-cases. In other words, while the methodology as such is pertinent, and the research work indicates the author's in-depth knowledge of the subject matter, the link between the method and substance continuous to be relatively weak.

2) The author has substantially modified the theoretical argument while the empirical research has been largely retained. Specifically, he reframed the research by implementing the notions of scaling and temporality through which the sovereignty is presented as gradually transforming space, i.e. as a notion (and at the same time the real-world feature) that can be variously stretched, reconfigured, and distorted, thus allowing for versatile interpretations thereof. I consider this approach as significantly more relevant and telling than the one applied previously, especially since it appears to more closely correspond to political realities of the contemporary international system and the actors analysed in the dissertation. Moreover, the idea of sovereignty as a space that can be variously scaled fits

well with the concepts of zonal sovereignty and regio-sovereignty which now appear more meaningful and better justified.

3) It is also praiseworthy that Aleš Karmazín has decided to largely skip the notion of heteronomy which in the original version was not fully explained and logically incorporated. Even if heteronomy could be a relevant heuristic concept in relation to sovereignty, it would have had to be more thoroughly implemented. Consequently, it is a pity that it remained preserved in the very last part of the dissertation – here, heteronomy enters the text as a brand new concept which is not fully integrated into overall design of the research, and subsequently still appears redundant.

4) Overall, new research framework, building upon the notions of liquidity, scaling, and temporality of sovereignty, can be seen as obvious improvement and relevant step towards more sophisticated and logical interpretation of specific cases of stretched sovereignty. Yes, it is still true that the dissertation claims are often generally disputable; however, this can be said about many research agendas without labelling them as insufficiently scientific, and the claims presented by Aleš Karmazín are very well argued for, thus constituting good ground for further debates.

Final statement: Despite some flaws I had identified in the first version of the dissertation, I had concluded it was very good and could be seen as obvious evidence of research potential possessed by Aleš Karmazín. Unsurprisingly, then, given my opinion that this version of dissertation represents relevant improvement especially regarding the implementation of notions I mentioned under point 4 above, I conclude that although there still are several major points that can be subject to doubts and criticisms, this dissertation represents mature example of scientific work of early-career researcher, and certainly deserves to be approved.

