

## **Ph.D. Programme of International Relations**

Departments of International Relations and Security Studies  
Institute of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague

Examiner's 2nd Report on PhD Dissertation: Global Elite and its Clubs: The Case of Bilderberg Group

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In my previous report I raised a few critical issues that I found necessary to be addressed, so that the dissertation could be successfully defended. Having in mind that the dissertation is specific in several respects, my main points were theoretical. I thought the dissertation should fundamentally strengthen her theoretical dimension. I suggested a potential enrichment that would encompass a synthesis with some constructivist devices. Here, the idea was to provide some potential for operationalisation that was largely missing in the dissertation. But more importantly, I advised the author to work properly with two prominent Marxist theoretical categories - power and capital. First, this could potentially increase the coherence of the paper, as the notions of power and capital permeate all chapters. Second, a proper treatment of power and capital would essentially increase the explanatory power of the chapters that remained largely empirical. Last but not least, as pointed out during the viva, being submitted in the IR program the dissertation did not seem to offer enough "discipline" in the area of her interest. In other words, while I saw certain value in the empirical parts, I thought the paper should show more in terms of value and utilisation of Neomarxist (broadly speaking) theoretical perspective. Needless to say, my points were made in a constructive and encouraging fashion.

Though I understand that there are time constraints, it is hard to take them into account when judging the final product. Reflecting my theoretical suggestions, the author added short (1-1,5 page long) conclusions discussing different forms of power and capital resonating in the chapters. Unfortunately, these concluding commentaries are yet again only empirical and quite openly normative in a sense of promoting the main perspective on the BG. As such, they do not contribute to the theoretical/disciplinary debates as well as do not increase coherence of the paper. In my first report and during the viva I suggested theoretically-oriented conclusions/commentaries, but they would only make sense if accompanied by other relevant entries. All in all, unfortunately, I do not think the changes and additions improved the paper to the extent that it would be linked to the main disciplinary debates with the Neomarxist tradition.

The other changes provided in the final version of the paper should reflect mainly the comments raised by the other reviewer that I found very relevant as well. Even if I focused particularly on my theoretical/disciplinary agenda, I do not find the new intermezzo, first as

an appropriate form to address the comments, and second as adequately responding to the mainly methodologically-oriented critique.

I appreciate the author addressing some disturbing language elements and extending the conclusion. Concerning the latter, it only underlines my impression of the "mosaic" approach the author chose at the beginning of his research as well as during the post-viva phase. I am afraid this strategy fundamentally crippled the analytical potential and disciplinary dimension of the dissertation. The paper definitely has some value that, however, stays largely on an empirical level. And it does not seem to be enough to recommend it for defence in the IR PhD program.

V Hradci Králové dne 5. 3 .2022

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