

## Thesis opponent's review

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Name of the thesis: *Toward better times: Transition to democracy in the Czech Republic*

The author has set out an uneasy task: to provide a reader with more holistic and comprehensive view on all factors of democratizations in the Czech Republic. Such an objective, which appears almost exceedingly ambitious for a bachelor's thesis, is actually narrowed down to the analysis of Czech democratic consolidation, which seems as a reasonable choice. Specifically, the author is asking the question whether the democracy in the Czech Republic is "the only game in town". And the hypothesis articulated in the Introduction provides a preliminary answer: yes, it is. The text to follow brings various illustrations to support this hypothesis.

The thesis covers the period between 1989 and 2004, the latter marking the Czech Republic's EU entry. Within this period, the author further distinguishes the Czechoslovak period of transition and early consolidation (1989-93) and the period of the independent Czech Republic.

The text itself is not structured chronologically, though, which seems a fortunate choice. It is organized, instead, correspondingly to the theory framework, which is Linz's and Stepan's five arenas consolidated democracy.

Analytically, the core of the text is chapter 3 which explores the degree of consolidation of Czech democracy by individual Linz's and Stepan's arenas. What precedes this is a broad theoretical-empirical chapter 2 in which the reader is, first, very basically introduced to several concepts of democracy, then, in a similarly elementary way, to Huntington's third wave of democratization and, finally, guided very superficially through the story of Czechoslovak communism, transition ("Velvet Revolution") and early consolidation up to the Czechoslovakia's partition ("Velvet Divorce"). Chapter 2 seems not to match the following chapter's quality as the analysis lacks the necessary depth – price being paid for the broad scope here. Also in chapter 3 some incompact sections are to be found. It is a pity, e.g., that the author does not work with Linz's and Stepan's distinction between behavioural, attitudinal and constitutional levels of democratic consolidation, even though she indicates

to do so both in the introduction and in the conclusion. Applying these conceptual tools in the text itself would have definitely provided it with a more robust framework.

From the language point of view, this English-written thesis is of good quality. Also formally, it meets all the requirements. A minor defect is that the item "Conclusion" (p. 69) is missing in the Table of Contents.

I recommend the thesis to be accepted for the defence **proposing the evaluation "very good" (2)**.

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