

Statement of the Supervisor on the Doctoral Studies and Dissertation of Daniel Šitera

Vyjádření školitele

Europeanization and the State in Central and Eastern Europe: Political Economy of European Structural Funds

*submitted for defense under the cotutelle agreement between Charles University and
Leipzig University in 2021.*

Evaluation of Doctoral Studies

Daniel Šitera has become a full member of the Czech and international academic field during his studies. He is today a Researcher at the Institute of International Relations (IIR) in Prague. Mr. Šitera regularly attends prestigious international conferences such as the general conferences of the International Studies Association (ISA) and the European International Studies Association (EISA), among others. Most of the chapters of his Dissertation have been already presented to the international audience. He has also published or has forthcoming articles in the Scopus and WoS journals such as *New Perspectives* and *Journal of International Relations and Development*, as well as chapters in the edited volumes to be published by Palgrave and Berghahn Books. Besides this, Daniel Šitera has been co-organizing the Critical Studies Seminar at the IIR which provides a platform for young scholars from all Prague academic institutions to present and discuss their work, and thus proves his organization value for the academic community as well.

During his cotutelle studies, Daniel Šitera had to successfully finish two parallel structured doctoral curricula in Leipzig and Prague. I can evaluate his studies in Prague. Daniel Šitera finished his structural program without any delays. He has actively participated in the research seminars and dutifully fulfilled all other responsibilities required. He was also a visiting researcher at the University of Manchester and the University of Wrocław. Since the academic year 2016/2017, he has been regularly teaching courses on the topics related to his Dissertation at the Department of Political Science: European integration and the political economy of Central Europe. Finally, he served as a researcher in the Faculty project KREAS.

Evaluation of Dissertation

The Dissertation has been properly consulted with me during the writing process. Moreover, I and Frank Hadler organized consultations with the student during my visit in Leipzig and Frank Hadler's visit in Prague.

The Dissertation explores the effects of the EU Cohesion Policy on the state transformations of the so-called "Visegrád states" (p. 38) in Central Europe. More concretely, it uses the case of Central European *dependent market economies* to do this. I appreciate the Dissertation's rich sources of cited literature, primary documents, and statistical data used. This includes documents and data produced by the EU institutions and all four Visegrád – Czech, Hungarian, Polish, and Slovak – governments in the period from the 1960s to the mid-2010s. The Dissertation is also addressing a timely problem of the political struggle over the use of EU structural funding which is shaping the contemporary political and economic landscapes of this region. What is more, this is done from a wider historical and geographical perspective which goes beyond the narrow preoccupation with the region itself to provide us with a bigger picture on the development of European capitalist diversity under the EU integration. This bigger picture allows then to understand how the Central European integrations impacted on the EU project in return rather than monotonously observing how *Europe* shapes *Central Europe* in a one-way direction.

I have two critical points which can be addressed during the defence. The first critical point touches the style of writing. The Dissertation is full of jargon which makes it sometimes hard to grasp. It can thus possibly fail to reach wider audience and to deliver its arguments outside of the scholarly circles of political economy research. Is this redeemable and does the author plan to make this work further accessible by reducing this jargon in the planned book version? The second point is to sympathetically problematize his theoretical framework and orient it at a more open-ended perspective. As the author himself confesses in the conclusion, this Dissertation is being finished in "the late phase of the post-Fordist order" in Europe and globally (p. 198). Yet, the overall argument of the Dissertation proves that the Cohesion Policy has been a "Marshall-plan type arrangement" (p. 5) which led only to the reproduction of *developmentalist illusion* in the region: Central Europe has developed as its effect, yet it remained the very same European semiperiphery. But how can such an interpretation prepare us for the post-neoliberal and new global reordering in and of Central Europe

which is to come in this changing word? None of these two points is however to deny that Daniel Šitera has written a fine piece of work.

Final Evaluation

Therefore, I can recommend this Dissertation to pass at the Final Defense.

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