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Dear PhD Review Panel,

Re: Markéta Kocmanová Large Defence

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as external reviewer for Markéta Kocmanová's PhD thesis. Considering the revisions made by the candidate, incorporating feedback from both external reviewers, I strongly endorse the defence of this dissertation. I believe this thesis significantly contributes to the field of terrorism studies and other disciplines more broadly, showcasing originality.

Markéta Kocmanová's dissertation, "Why the Romani Make No Terrorists: Reassessing Contested Factors of Radicalisation," explores the absence of terrorist activities among the Romani, Europe's largest ethnic minority. Using a constructivist grounded theory approach, the study is founded on extensive semi-structured qualitative interviews with 139 participants across various countries and supplemented by questionnaires targeting hard-to-reach participants. This empirical foundation is enriched by ethnographic data, offering a nuanced examination of the risk and resilience factors related to radicalisation—or the lack thereof—within Romani communities. This study is driven by the observation that, despite facing severe discrimination and socio-economic hardships (similar to those experienced by other marginalised groups prone to radicalisation), there is a distinct lack of violent extremism emanating from these communities. This absence of Romani terrorism presents a unique case for understanding resilience against radicalisation. The dissertation concludes that the Romani communities' resilience against radicalisation is multifaceted, rooted in their social structures, cultural practices, and psychological traits.

The initial submission of the thesis highlighted the substantial value and notable research gap regarding these communities and the study of non-radicalisation. As expected with a first submission, several macro and micro-level changes were necessary to meet the PhD standard expected at this level. I am pleased to report that these changes have been implemented, resulting in a significantly strengthened thesis. The quality and extent of the revisions in both structure and content, accomplished in a short time, are impressive and reflect the researcher's capability, aptitude, and intelligence. One of my primary concerns with the thesis was its structure, which previously hindered the flow and made it challenging for readers to follow the intricate and critical arguments and recommendations. The structural changes have markedly improved these aspects.

Much of this stems from the introduction to the thesis which provides a strong foundation to build the rest of the work upon. It outlines the nature of the problem, the distinct value of studying it, and the researcher's journey to studying it. It clearly demonstrates the justification and use of grounded theory, and by extension constructivist grounded theory, to answer some of the critical questions pertaining to the nature of the study. The subsequent section, which meticulously and sensitively outlines the research group, considers various important social, political, cultural, and other factors, and sets the scene for the remainder of the thesis. This was originally placed later in the thesis and moving it to the fore has strengthened the work. This has ensured important changes the narrative of the research, providing the reader with a far better idea about its context and to be able to place the findings within this context.

I was particularly pleased with the additional work in the section exploring the historical and contemporary literature on radicalisation. While the candidate's initial approach aligned with grounded theory recommendations, foregrounding this literature now strengthens the thesis. I believe the candidate has balanced these competing considerations well. For future publication as a manuscript, it would be beneficial to further elaborate on definitional and conceptual discussions, which are touched upon excellently in the current thesis but might need further emphasis for a broader audience. Care should also be taken to define certain terms, such as 'indoctrination,' more precisely. Nevertheless, the changes since the first submission are substantial and highly commendable.

The initial methodological recommendations from both reviewers have also been addressed. Alongside the clear justification for the use of constructivist grounded theory as a vehicle, and particular methods within it, this section is particularly strong in its reflection of accessing hard to reach communities and building and maintaining trust with these communities. The researcher takes the reader on an important and honest journey, reflecting upon some critical considerations that are not only useful for this thesis, but beyond. The subsequent meta-theoretical considerations were, for me, the strongest part of these considerations, where the researcher makes some significant arguments about hard to reach and sensitive samples. The value of this, once again, reaches far beyond this thesis and makes a significant contribution to the field of terrorism studies (and other disciplines more widely), providing important considerations for development. In fact, I have approached Markéta to write up these reflections jointly, alongside similar contemplations I have had throughout my research looking at radicalisation. We are currently co-authoring a chapter for a Routledge edited collection.

What has come so far provides a strong and important framework for the findings sections. These sections present important, interesting, and insightful hard to access data. These sections take the reader on a fascinating (and often hard to read) journey of the perils and plight of being part of these marginalised communities. It must be said that these sections are hard to read due to the often-difficult situation facing individuals within these communities, rather than any shortcomings with the work. The data and subsequent findings provide an important framework for the non-radicalisation of Romani communities, something that will be of much use to other researchers in the field.

Several aspects of the thesis provide a solid foundation for future research, particularly concerning the role of ideology and sociological factors such as frame alignment. The study's insights into how the Romani communities' social structures, cultural practices, and psychological traits contribute to their resilience against radicalisation suggest a fertile ground for further exploration of ideological influences. Understanding how these ideological constructs differ from those in communities more susceptible to radicalisation could offer valuable comparative insights and contribute to the broader theoretical landscape of terrorism studies. Furthermore, the concept of frame alignment—how social movements and groups align their interests, interpretations, and goals with broader societal narratives—could be explored in more

detail. Investigating how Romani communities frame their identity, experiences of discrimination, and socio-political aspirations in ways that eschew radicalisation could reveal critical mechanisms of resilience.

Finally, it has been a real honour to act as one of the external examiners. I strongly believe this thesis to be excellent, one that makes a significant contribution to the field. I commend the researcher for focussing upon communities that are heavily under-researched and providing them with a voice to the world. I am very much looking forward the Large Defence, seeing this work published in the future as academic journals and a manuscript, and witnessing the researcher's promising career develop.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Suraj Lakhani