

6 January 2022

The Habilitation Committee
Masarykova univerzita | Fakulta sociálních studií
Děkanát
Joštova 10 | 602 00 Brno

Report on the Habilitation thesis of dr. Brusenbauch Maeislová.

This is a report on the Habilitation thesis submitted by Mrs Brusenbauch Meislová. The thesis is in the form of previously published work with a narrative connecting the various chapters and explaining the overall vision of her project.

The focus of the thesis is the elite-level discourse on Brexit, explored through five original studies – plus a chapter dedicated to the introduction and one on the conclusions. All five studies are single-authored and follow a natural progression in the narrative presented by the candidate. The fact that the original chapters have gone through peer review is already an indicator of the quality of this work.

Taken together, the five original chapters and supporting conclusions present a comprehensive, high-quality thesis on Brexit-as-discourse. Methodologically, the studies are informed by critical discourse analysis. The candidate shows her intimate familiarity with critical discourse analysis, but she also shows her skills in the fields of populism, technocracy, British politics, European integration, communication studies and the broader methodological and substantive field concerned with the relationships between language and politics.

Given her data pre-date the post-referendum season in British politics, I wish to observe that the candidate's insights seem corroborated by what we have seen in recent years, that is a transformation or even mutation from Brexit discourse into British identities. Being a Brexiter is today a strong predictor of attitudes towards macroeconomic performance and other outcome indicators of the political system. This cannot be demonstrated with data taken from the world of elites (and the thesis is uniquely concerned with elite-level data) but the public

opinion data presented by Sarah Hobolt and other researchers on Brexit-as-identity seem to strongly confirm the findings and intuitions of this Habilitation thesis. In other words, the value of this thesis is significantly augmented by its connection with what we have learned from mass-level data on the British public in the last five year or so.

Finally, the thesis is well-written and meets standards of clarity in the communication of empirical findings. The candidate has already made her name known among the scholars who work in the domain of European politics, discourse analysis, and of course British politics. She has animated an important network of the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES) – yet another indicator that corroborates my belief that, with this thesis and beyond this thesis, she is a formidable presence in the networks of European Union social scientists and scholars of comparative European politics.

In conclusion, the Habilitation fulfils the requirements of a thesis in the field of political science, often going beyond these requirements.

Thank you for considering my opinion in your process of evaluation.

Claudio Radaelli
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