



Habilitation thesis reviewer's report

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| Masaryk University | |
| Faculty | Faculty of Economics and Administration |
| Field of study | Public Economy |
| Applicant | <i>Ing. Gabriela Vaceková, PhD.</i> |
| Unit | Department of Public Economics Faculty of Economics and Administration Masaryk University |
| Habilitation thesis (title) | <i>The Nonprofit Sector in Economic Theory: Beyond Mainstream Explanations</i> |
| Reviewer | Prof. Dr. Giuseppe Grossi |
| Unit | Department of Business administration and Work science Kristianstad University |

Reviewer's report (extent of text up to the reviewer)

Gabriela Vakecova is internationally recognized and outstanding scholar in Public Economy with a focus on Nonprofit Sector Organizations.

The habilitation thesis written by Gabriela Vakecova is related to the subject of Public Economy is based on five parts: the introduction, 1. the historical, conceptual and theoretical foundations, 2. the empirical part that tests the economic theories in a post-transitional context, 3. the re-conceptualization of the third sector, and 5. the conclusions.

The introduction provide a good overview of the topic (non profit sector in a transitional economy), the structure of the habilitation thesis, the research aim and the five research questions. The research aim and questions are critical and very ambitious.

The first part of the habilitation thesis presents historical, theoretical, and conceptual foundations of the research subject and broadly discusses the civil society in transition (historical framework) in the Czech Republic and the definitions and functions of the nonprofit sector according to the international literature, and offers a comprehensive overview of theories of the third sector (Failure-based theories, trust theories, Supply-side theories, Supply-side theories, and rurality theory). The candidate provides an interesting critical assessment of the current theoretical approaches.

The second part of the thesis is an empirical inquiry that provides an analysis of the economic determinants of the nonprofit sector in Slovakia through theory testing, examines the commercial transformation of the nonprofit sector in the Czech Republic, and investigates the issue of nonprofit sustainability in the Czech rural context. The analysis builds on the institutionalist framework that draws attention to the shortcomings of the dominant institutional structures of the private for-profit and public sectors. Table 2 presents an interesting and broad overview of the key theoretical approaches (Heterogeneity theory, supply-side Theory, Stakeholder Theory, Trust Theory, Interdependence Theory and social origins) with a summary, key terms, key strengths, and key weaknesses. This chapter also examines the commercial transformation of the nonprofit sector in the (post-) transitional



Czech context with interesting empirical data by Regions, Municipalities, legal forms, age of organizations, areas of operations, reasons for establishment/creation, size, etc..

It also deserve attention the analyses of the Basic characteristics (goal, equity, business activities, tax exemptions, duration, registration and registration fees) of commercial and nonprofit entrepreneurship. This chapter provides an interesting overview of the the Czech nonprofit sector in term key indicators (Table10), commercial revenues (Table 11), types and souces of funding (Table 12). This chapter also investigates the issue of nonprofit sustainability that is a key concern for contemporary nonprofit scholars and practitioners. The candidate in used qualitative and quantitative methods for primary and secondary data collection and analysis (see Valentinov & Vaceková, 2015). The study introduces the distinction between the demand-side and supply-side determinants of nonprofit sustainability and makes the case for the discrepancy between them.

The third section of the habilitation thesis is devoted to the re-conceptualization of the third sector and the drivers of the re-conceptualization based on the article "Beyond Nonprofits: Re-conceptualizing the Third Sector," Salamon and Sokolowski (2016). This part also presents the new semantics including social entrepreneurship, social enterprises, and social innovations. The candidate presents an interesting comparison of the key characteristics (goal, institutions, autonomy, non-distribution constraint, voluntarism, civic initiatives, business activities, funding, management, etc.) social economy/social enterprises and nongovernmental nonprofit sector (see Vaceková & Murray Svidroňová, 2016).

They describe the key events in the field of social enterprises in the Czech Republic (Table 17 and 18), and a classification according to their legal form (Figure 10).

In the conclusions, Gabriela Vacekova explained how she was able to reach the initial research aim to critically reflect on the current scientific discourse in economic studies focused on researching nonprofit organizations. She was also able to test nonprofit theories in the (post-) transitional context of Czech Republic and develop a re-conceptualization of the third sector using a new paradigm for researching nonprofit organizations under new conditions.

The habilitation thesis provides clear answers to the five research questions and widely contributes to nonprofit theory and practice in the (post-) transitional context and in other contexts, suggests policy implications for nonprofit organizations resulting from real-world challenges, and opens space for further research on the topic.

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence...

- 1) Could the results of your habilitation thesis be extended also to non profit organizations operating in other transitional economy?
- 2) What the main limitations of the habilitation thesis?
- 3) Are you planning to conduct further research on the issue of non profit organizations, social enterprises, etc.? If YES, what are the theories and research methods that you are planning to use?
- 4) Are you planning to connect the issue of social enterprises with the current research trends on hybridity? If YES, how?



- 5) Are you planning to conduct further comparative studies between Czech Republic and other Central-Eastern European countries?

Conclusion

The overall impression of Gabriela Vacekova's habilitation thesis is very positive, because it is an ambitious and meritorious work as it presents a strong theoretical and empirical contribution to the study using an eclectic theoretical approach and a variety of research methods. The thesis reaches high international standards in its research field because some papers were already published in good international journal (as VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, Lex Localis - Journal of Local Self-Government, etc.). The whole thesis already showed that Gabriela Vacekova has a strong research attitude, and ability. I hope that in the next future she will be also able to write independently and also publish as single author a good publication in her research topics. The thesis contains new and scientific findings that are interesting and relevant for scholars, practitioners, politicians, and public managers in Czech Republic and internationally.

She is an active and bright scholar in several scientific networks (such as IRSPM, EGPA, etc.), reviewers international journals and she is also involved in several research projects with national and international scholars that are in some cases external funded by national and international organizations.

In conclusion, Gabriela Vacekova is a widely recognised scholar with a strong research, teaching, supervising and administrative experiences. She is also excellent in activating strong and fruitful relations with other scholars from different universities and countries and collaborating widely with surrounding communities. Summing up, I strongly support her application for the Habilitation in Public Economy with a focus on non-profit organizations and I think that could enormously benefit in investing in a brilliant outstanding scholar like Gabriela Vacekova.

The habilitation thesis submitted by Gabriela Vacekova entitled "*The Nonprofit Sector in Economic Theory: Beyond Mainstream Explanations*" meets the requirements applicable to habilitation theses in the field of Public Economy.

In Brno on 25 April 2017