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Review

of the Doctoral Dissertation by Vladyslav Myroniuk, M.A., entitled “Consolidation of the Independent Ukrainian State,” Lublin, 2024, 223 pages.

**(Recenzja rozprawy doktorskiej mgra Vladyslava Myroniuka pt.
„Consolidation of Independent Ukrainian State”, Lublin 2024, 223 ss.)**

1. Assessment of the Selection of the Dissertation Issues and the Significance of the Research

The doctoral dissertation of Vladyslav Myroniuk, M.A., prepared in the Department of International Security at the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, under the supervision of Dr. hab. Katarzyna Marzęda-Młynarska, is well-aligned with the field of political science, particularly concerning the situation of Central and Eastern European countries. The study of Ukraine’s political situation holds not only scientific importance but also practical and educational value. Firstly, among the Central and Eastern European nations, Ukraine, along with Poland, is of crucial importance for the current and future balance of power

in this region. Secondly, a comprehensive analysis of Ukraine's state consolidation is lacking in both Polish and Ukrainian literature. Thirdly, following the European Union's enlargement in 2004, a new emphasis on Eastern European studies emerged, necessitating an analysis of Ukraine's internal situation with a focus on economic and political issues. Understanding Eastern European affairs is essential for shaping a "realistic" foreign policy for Poland as an EU member and for developing a mature vision of Poland's role within the Union. The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine (since 2014) further underscores the need for an in-depth analysis of the phenomena and processes occurring beyond Poland's (and the EU's) eastern borders to inform proactive measures. A lack of understanding of the current political and economic situation in Ukraine (and more broadly, the post-Soviet space) could have adverse consequences for Poland and the entire European Union.

In conclusion, the choice of the dissertation topic is both accurate and timely, making a significant contribution to research on the situation of Central and Eastern European countries. On one hand, the topic enriches the existing body of knowledge in the field, while on the other, it holds substantial practical value for political practice. The author's ability to effectively combine a critical and contemporary research problem with practical applications is commendable. This aspect should be recognized as a significant strength of the dissertation under review.

2. Content Evaluation and Methodological Comments

The dissertation under review is structured into an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, and a list of tables, figures, and maps. Upon evaluating the dissertation's objectives, research questions, and hypotheses, it is evident that they are appropriately formulated and well-aligned with the topics addressed.

The analysis skillfully integrates constructivism and structuration theory to address the complex process of state consolidation, emphasizing the creation and transformation of social constructs like political identity. The use of these theories provides a comprehensive framework to assess both the role of traditional elements of statehood and the impact of authorities' actions on societal dynamics. This theoretical

approach not only aids in identifying challenges within state consolidation but also suggests potential solutions, offering a robust tool for understanding and addressing issues related to civic engagement and state cohesion.

The first chapter of the dissertation, titled “Concept of State Consolidation,” lays a strong theoretical foundation for the analysis of state consolidation. It adeptly synthesizes various theoretical perspectives to unpack the nature and origins of the state, providing a comprehensive definition of state consolidation and its constituent elements. This chapter is notable for its detailed exploration of the concept through the lenses of constructivist and structuration theories, which enhances the understanding of how state consolidation processes operate within both national and international contexts.

In this chapter, the author effectively constructs a theoretical model for state consolidation, which is pivotal for navigating the complexities of the state-building process. By incorporating insights from scholars such as K. Pawłowski, G. Jellinek, A. Giddens, and others, the chapter develops a well-rounded framework that addresses various facets of state consolidation, including democratic transformation. This model serves as an essential tool for dissecting the dynamic interactions and influences that shape the consolidation of statehood.

The chapter stands out for its comprehensive literature review, which reveals that while existing approaches to state consolidation often focus on specific aspects—such as national, ethnic, or democratic consolidation—the author presents a more holistic approach. By integrating theories from constructivist thought and the work of prominent theorists like A. Giddens, the chapter offers a nuanced perspective that bridges gaps between different approaches and provides a robust basis for subsequent analysis in the dissertation.

The second chapter, titled “Civic Consolidation in Ukraine,” provides a thorough examination of various factors influencing the civic and state consolidation process in Ukraine. It addresses critical aspects such as the political and ethnic dimensions of the Ukrainian nation, the political culture, and the role of political myths. This chapter effectively explores how these elements impact both civic and state consolidation, emphasizing the need for a unified political nation while maintaining Ukraine’s territorial integrity, national identity, and cultural uniqueness.

A significant contribution of this chapter is its analysis of the effectiveness of ethnic politics and the process of forming a cohesive Ukrainian political nation. The chapter argues that achieving successful state consolidation requires not only defending national sovereignty and resisting external threats but also fostering a hierarchy of social identities where civic identity takes precedence over ethnic-cultural affiliations. The discussion highlights the essential role of political culture in shaping the political regime and reinforcing national unity.

The chapter's strength lies in its comprehensive review of relevant literature, drawing from the works of notable scholars such as P. Brass, R. Barthes, and C. Lévi-Strauss. This scholarly foundation enriches the analysis and supports the chapter's argument that a robust political culture and the effective management of political myths are crucial for civic consolidation. By integrating these theoretical insights, the chapter provides a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between ethnicity, political culture, and national identity in the context of Ukraine's state consolidation efforts.

The third chapter, titled "Territorial Consolidation in Ukraine," provides an in-depth analysis of the processes and challenges associated with shaping Ukraine's borders and regional governance. This chapter delves into the impact of bilateral agreements and treaties of friendship and partnership between Ukraine and its neighboring countries, highlighting their role in influencing Ukraine's territorial consolidation. It offers a detailed examination of the regional division of Ukraine, assessing how interregional relations contribute to or hinder the process of consolidating territorial integrity.

A key focus of this chapter is the analysis of Ukraine's governance model and its effectiveness in achieving territorial consolidation. By exploring the regional division of the country and evaluating the interactions between different regions, the chapter sheds light on how governance structures can support or obstruct the consolidation process. It also investigates the various instruments available to Ukrainian authorities for managing and strengthening territorial cohesion, providing valuable insights into the practical aspects of state consolidation.

The chapter's analysis is supported by a comprehensive review of both legal documents and scholarly literature. Notable contributions from authors such as R.

Zrayko, L. Kalachnikova, O. Kushnirenko, O. Kosmina, and K. Loboda are referenced to bolster the discussion. This integration of legal and academic sources enriches the chapter's examination of territorial consolidation, offering a well-rounded perspective on the factors influencing Ukraine's regional and national integration.

Overall, the third chapter presents a thorough and methodical approach to understanding the complexities of territorial consolidation in Ukraine. By combining legal analyses with scholarly insights, it provides a nuanced understanding of how governance models, regional relations, and international agreements interact to shape the territorial integrity of the state. The chapter effectively highlights the importance of these elements in the broader context of Ukraine's state consolidation efforts.

The fourth chapter, titled "Authority Consolidation in Ukraine," provides a critical examination of the role played by elites in the state consolidation process. This chapter explores how these elites have influenced the development of state authority, both by advancing and obstructing consolidation efforts. It assesses the impact of elite actions on policy formation, national narratives, and the overall stability of Ukrainian statehood, offering a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics between authority and elite power.

The chapter also delves into the historical context of Ukrainian statehood, emphasizing the significance of trust in political elites and the mechanisms employed to consolidate authority. By analyzing different types and typologies of elites, the chapter presents a detailed overview of the characteristics and roles of Ukrainian elites within the broader framework of state consolidation. This historical and analytical foundation is crucial for understanding the emergence and development of Ukrainian statehood, setting the stage for subsequent discussions in the dissertation.

Drawing heavily on the works of esteemed scholars such as O. Subtelnyi, Ya. Hrytsak, and P. R. Magocsi, the chapter is well-supported by scholarly research and statistical data. The integration of these sources with official documents enriches the analysis, providing a comprehensive view of the instruments available to authorities for consolidating their power and the state itself. Overall, this chapter effectively contextualizes the role of elites in the state consolidation process, offering valuable insights into their influence on Ukrainian governance and state formation.

The fifth chapter, titled “Assessment of Consolidation of the Ukrainian State,” provides a comprehensive evaluation of the current status and future prospects of state consolidation in Ukraine. By leveraging a range of statistical data from reputable non-governmental organizations, such as Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit, the chapter offers an empirical analysis of Ukraine’s consolidation efforts. It effectively summarizes the issues explored in the preceding chapters, integrating these findings to present a clear picture of the state’s progress and ongoing challenges.

In the concluding section of the dissertation, the main findings are synthesized, emphasizing the significance of the research and its contributions to the broader academic discourse. This section highlights the critical insights gained through the study and their implications for understanding the state consolidation process. Additionally, it outlines recommendations for future research and suggests potential avenues for further exploration, thereby providing a roadmap for continuing scholarly inquiry into the subject.

The final part of the dissertation includes a thorough list of sources, including literary works, scientific publications, and other relevant materials that underpin the research’s scientific credibility. It also features detailed lists of tables, figures, and maps, which enhance the reader’s understanding of the data presented. Overall, the fifth chapter and conclusions effectively encapsulate the research findings and offer valuable directions for future studies, reinforcing the dissertation's contribution to the field of state consolidation.

In summary, the thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of Ukraine’s state consolidation, offering critical insights into the challenges and opportunities the country faces in the wake of the ongoing Russian invasion. The author identifies several key areas of concern, including the need for a shared political identity rooted in a common vision for the future, the weaknesses in territorial and civic consolidation, and the complex dynamics of authority consolidation under martial law. The thesis highlights the significant impact of the war on Ukrainian political culture, noting a pivotal shift in citizens’ willingness to engage both militarily and politically to defend their country. The author also underscores the importance of strengthening Ukraine’s geopolitical position through economic reforms and leveraging post-war reconstruction efforts to

boost civic consciousness and national pride. However, the thesis also points to significant challenges, such as the problem of human resource depletion due to emigration and an aging population, as well as the erosion of public trust in political elites. The analysis concludes that the path to successful state consolidation in Ukraine lies in building integrity, accountability, and effective communication between the state and its citizens, while addressing the deconsolidating factors that threaten the social contract.

Based on the above-mentioned problems and challenges, there are some questions:

- 1. How does the thesis propose balancing the need for strong leadership with the preservation of democratic principles during martial law and ongoing conflict?**
- 2. In what ways can the Ukrainian government effectively rebuild public trust in political elites, particularly in the face of widespread populism and inconsistent communication?**
- 3. What specific economic reforms does the thesis suggest to counteract the challenges of emigration and an aging population, and how can these reforms be aligned with Ukraine's broader geopolitical strategy?**

3. Conclusions

In conclusion, the reviewed doctoral dissertation is an insightful study on the consolidation of the independent Ukrainian state over the last quarter of a century. The author demonstrates a strong command of the subject matter, showcasing the ability to conduct independent research and engage in critical analysis. The dissertation provides sufficient evidence to support the theses and hypotheses presented. Additionally, the author's use of numerous Ukrainian-language publications significantly enhances the work's scholarly value.

In summary, I believe that the doctoral dissertation of Vladyslav Myroniuk, M.A., submitted for my evaluation, meets the conditions specified by law. Therefore, I recommend that Vladyslav Myroniuk, M.A., be admitted to the subsequent stages of the doctoral process, including the public defense.

(Reasumując, uważam, że przedstawiona mi do oceny rozprawa doktorska mgr Vladyslav Myroniuk spełnia warunki określone w art. 13 ust. 1 ustawy z dnia 14 marca 2003 r. o stopniach naukowych i tytule naukowym oraz o stopniach i tytule w zakresie sztuki (Dz. U. Nr 65, poz. 595 z późn. zm.). Wnoszę o dopuszczenie mgra Vladyslava Myroniuka do dalszych etapów przewodu doktorskiego i publicznej obrony).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tomasz Gryniewicz', is written in a cursive style.