



## Habilitation Thesis Reviewer's Report

<b>Masaryk University</b>	
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculty of Social Studies
<b>Procedure field</b>	Sociology
<b>Applicant</b>	Mgr. Pavel Pospěch, Ph.D.
<b>Applicant's home unit, institution</b>	Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University
<b>Habilitation thesis</b>	<b>Uncivil groups and the regulation of public space</b>
<b>Reviewer</b>	Yuri Kazepov, Professor of International Urban Sociology
<b>Reviewer's home unit, institution</b>	Department of Sociology, University of Vienna

### Review

The habilitation thesis presented by Dr. Pospěch is an original theoretical and empirical work, addressing an important and often neglected topic in urban studies.

Despite the increasing attention that scholars devote to public space and despite a growing body of literature on incivility, the unique combination of the two issues in the frame of the post-socialist transition after 1989 in the Czech Republic gives the manuscript – which is particularly well written – an added value.

Dr. Pospěch, has been able to convey a complex issue with a clear rhetoric by making difficult logical connections intelligible. I particularly appreciated the way in which he used the concept of frame, by allowing a deeper understanding of the processes of re-framing and of media discourses in the construction of incivility and otherness.

The analytical frame used to portray the process clarifies not only the importance of distinguishing between personal and categorical knowledge of others but also the crucial role of media for producing and reproducing discursive realities. Moreover, by understanding their dynamic and relational dimension we are able to grasp the fault lines of exclusionary processes that consolidate in society.

Without quoting Durkheim's quest for solidarity or Berger-Luckmann's more recent classic on the social construction of reality, Dr. Pospěch shows the processes behind the dichotomy sameness-otherness and its implications or "the social construction of incivility in public space" and the role of regulation. By doing so, in reality, he addresses the classical sociological question about order and disorder that attracted so much attention within the social sciences,

since its development in the XIX century, in recent years and surely after 1989 in post-socialist countries.

The attribution of causes (e.g. of homelessness) is not addressed directly but through the mirror of discourses and the sameness-otherness lenses. It is a peculiar view, with a high internal coherence in the approach presented, highlighting the relevance of different frames. It hints – mostly implicitly – to the deserving-undeservingness debate, which is extremely relevant in the debate over welfare policies, their reforms and the myth of welfare abuse, which “stigmatises those who carry out uncivil acts”. It even essentialises “the other”.

It might have been interesting going beyond discourse and frames investigating the structural conditions favouring processes of stigmatisation of the three target groups addressed in the habilitation thesis. However, these aspects have not been addressed explicitly or at length. Probably, they would have added a relevant analytical layer to the arguments put forward by Dr. Pospěch and might be a fruitful avenue for future work.

All in all the habilitation thesis presented by Dr. Pospěch is a convincing and original – sociologically convincing – piece of work.

#### **Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence (up to the reviewer)**

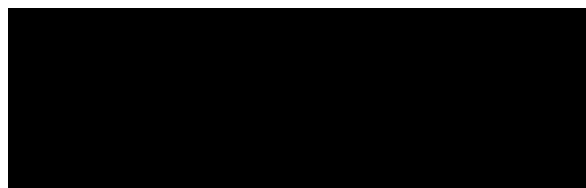
Dr. Pospěch does not dig deep into the causes of the three examples he provides. It would be interesting if he could put them into perspective, trying to understand what the causal links are. For instance, how is homelessness produced after 1989 and how is it possible to explain its subsequent growth? Does the “type” of incivility affect its dynamic? Or does it potentially affect different discourses?

The issue of social change hasn't been addressed so explicitly, while it has a specific role within the overall explanation of incivility in public space. In particular, I would ask to disentangle the different roles that *space* and *time* might play. Geo-political/cultural contexts (where), historical contexts (when), density, but also an increased pace of change, would require further analytical refinement of the approach proposed. Could Dr. Pospěch imagine to further elaborate his approach and in which direction?

#### **Conclusion**

The habilitation thesis entitled “Uncivil groups and the regulation of public space” by Pavel Pospěch *fulfils* requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Sociology.

In Vienna on, February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019



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