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Olsztyn, 28th October 2017.

The review of Jeroen J.J. van den Bosch PhD dissertation entitled “Personalist Rule in Sub Saharan Africa: The Impact of Personalism on Regime Transitions after the Cold War”, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Vol. 1-2, Poznań 2017, pp. 513 (Supervisor Prof. Andrzej Gałganek, Auxiliary Promoter Dr. Paweł Stachowiak).

The problem of functioning and transition of political regimes in Africa and especially in Sub-Saharan Africa is very complex to investigate. The problem raised by the author, from perspective of personalism, is scientifically very cognitive and represents a significant research challenge. It should be *ad hoc* stated that the PhD dissertation was prepared on the high scientific level, both from content and formal point of view.

The dissertation is a completely successful attempt to comprehensively cover the research problem from original own methodological and theoretical perspectives. It should be added that the PhD dissertation is pioneering not only in the case of Poland but in the world.

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The content of the PhD dissertation corresponds strictly with the title.

The aim of the PhD dissertation was preciously formulated - why personalist dictatorships are usually ousted through violent means and how this affects the process of transitions from such rule? The author’s task was to find the exact connection between the behaviour of such personalist regimes and the impact which they have on transition processes.

The author proposed own and what is the most important an adequate and compact theoretical model to explain the research problem (personalist regime behaviour). The model relies on investigation of the causal links between regime behaviours and various structural

factors. The model was tested through numerous number of case studies (15) which were chosen properly.

The same positive opinion concerns the methodology. The author applied a structuralist perspective in the research process. With success applied a Qualitative Comparative Analysis to test 15 case studies by using global dataset of autocratic regimes.

It is very important to point out that the author in his investigation used broadly the theoretical background of world researches on regime transition, democratization and development studies.

The research questions, which in fact constitute the research problems, possess a high cognitive value and therefore it is worth to cite them:

- What is the impact of personalist dictatorships on regime transitions in Africa? (two detailed research questions - Why do personalist regimes risk more violent transitions than their traditional counterparts?; Do these regimes fundamentally change the structures of state and society over time?).
- What are these regimes' greatest impediments to democratization? (three detailed research questions - Is transitional violence the main obstacle to democratization?; Are these regimes structurally predisposed to autocratic transitions?; Is it the unique combination of both factors that creates a path dependency of authoritarianism?).
- If there exists a path dependency, are its structures self-enforcing? (three detailed research questions - Which factors create cycles of personalist rule?; Which factors create cycles of authoritarianism?; How can regimes break these cycles and democratize?).

According to the research questions and proposed model well-thought working hypothesis were formulated. Their verification was due to confirm the author's theoretical model validity.

The first group of hypothesis (H1) is formulated to verify the impact of personalist rule on civil society (elite infighting, group grievance, isolation of civil society, repression of political and civic rights), development (uneven development, repression of economic rights, unsustainable growth) and state performance (no monopoly on violence, weaken institutions, declining public services)¹. These hypothesis were related to measure the impact of regime behaviour.

¹ H1a. Personalist regimes force discriminated (ethnic) groups in society to pursue their interests *manu militare*.
 H1b. Personalist regimes weaken army structures until the state loses the monopoly on violence.
 H1c. Personalist regimes hollow out government institutions until they cannot mediate conflicts.

The second group of hypothesis (H2) was formulated on the basis of the first group of hypothesis from the perspective of possible democratization of the investigated personalist regimes². These hypothesis were accounted for their self-reproducing capabilities.

Similar to the research questions, all formulated hypothesis were a subject of deeply methodological and theoretical discourse conducted by the author.

A great challenge for the author was to develop his own model of personalist regime behaviour. The author properly identified four behavioural characteristics in which personalist regime type excels at: coup-proofing, gatekeeping, repression and hoarding. These characteristics are widely and deeply analysed (e.g. coup-proofing by using 7 techniques, linkages and corresponding gatekeepers in autocracies, typology of repression and casual paths between repression and mobilization, hoarding as a domination of patronage networks).

The author's skill in using scientific categories and concepts should be assessed highly. It refers to basic categories of the PhD dissertation as "personalism" and "personalist regime/rule" and to many others secondary terms as for example: "political regime", "authoritarian regime", "one-man rule", "winning coalition", "selectorate", "informal rule", "capacity gap", "legitimacy gap", "security gap". In relations to the basic categories the author, defining them rightly paid attention for their limitations (e.g. "political regimes" and their horizontal and vertical limitations).

The author is able to see distinction between synonymic terms, e.g. "personalism" and "(neo)patrimonialism". In this case cites J. Linz and his explanation of personal rulership and historical types of patrimonial rule (p. 36) and B. Geddes's approach to personalism and neopatrimonialism (pp. 36-37) as well as D.C. Bach's dissociation between patrimonialism and neopatrimonialism (pp. 44-45).

The subject of the study is limited to Sub-Saharan Africa what was justified. The time-frame of the research was properly determined. It was the post-Cold War period (1986-2010) with special emphasis for the actual validity. Even the author covered an area of the research period ending in this year – testing case of the Gambia and the regime of Yahya Jammeh (years 1994-2017). This is another positive side of the PhD dissertation.

H1d. Personalist regimes are incapable to assure sustainable growth and foster inequality.

H1e. Hypotheses a, b, c, d are mutually reinforcing and grow in proportion to the duration of the personalist spell.

² H2a. In addition to a legitimacy gap personalist regimes create a capacity gap. This capacity gap keeps personalist regimes in power.

H2b. In personalist regimes the legitimacy gap in combination with a capacity gap lead to a security gap over time.

H2c. After regime breakdown, successors use the capacity gap and security gap to create a new legitimacy gap, usually in the form of a new personalist regime.

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The structure of the PhD dissertation is a little bit unconventional but is coherent and a well thought-out. The structure has been adapted to the research goals and procedures set.

The dissertation is composed from two volumes. The first volume consists of: Acknowledgements, Introduction and two parts logically related to each other. The Part I entitled “Concepts, Research Design and Methods” is divided into two chapters. On the other hand, Part II entitled “Testing the Model” is divided into four sections. The second volume, pertain strictly to the results of the research and is only composed of one part (Part III, entitled “Results”) which is divided into two groups of findings (Findings A and Findings B). In the structure of the PhD dissertation, after Conclusion, Appendices and Bibliography are placed.

The Introduction is preceded by well-aimed four quotes which are the essence of this dissertation. There are more such very well-chosen quotes and metaphors which contains all needed elements of this part of the PhD dissertation.

The Introduction is short and in synthetic way describes the main objectives and goals of the PhD dissertation. It contains all needed elements.

In the Part I, Chapter 1, entitled “Definitions & Typologies of Political Regimes”, played introductory role as a competent study of the nature of political regimes (definitions – accurate distinction between authoritarianism and totalitarianism and typologies). Then the concept of personalism was deeply analysed (with providing a working definition), e.g. conception of personalism by Charles T. Call.

Definition of regimes, especially by classifying concepts of political regimes, were presented and scientifically discussed with a great knowledge. It was necessary and worthy to make distinction in defining authoritarianism and totalitarianism in contradiction to democracy.

Analysing typologies of authoritarian regimes the author not only presents existing typologies but also compares them with polychotomous typologies. The dichotomous, trichotomous and polychotomous analyses of the political regimes were considered from their advantages and disadvantages to solving the research problem.

The author properly used authoritarian regime typologies of Barbara Geddes, Axel Hadenius, Jan Teorell and others to make research assumptions to the analysis of the personalist rules. To show the nature of the authoritarian regimes in the context of

personalism he also rightly used the achievements of Robert Dahl and Juan Linz works. He made clear and convinced distinction between traditional and personalist regimes.

The main object of analysis, concerning the profile of personalist regimes, was precisely drawn. Extremely important for solving the basic research problem was to justify personalism as a regime characteristic.

The author's assertions on the regime's selectorate and network through of patronage and clientelism are valuable.

The same high-quality evaluation as the Chapter 1 concerns the Chapter 2 entitled "Research Design & Methodology". The chapter could be a pattern, how methodological and theoretical background of the scientific thesis should be prepared (among others: formulation of the research questions and working hypothesis, theoretical basis to create the proposed model, elaboration of the methodology of research). The author was aware of limits of methodological and theoretical approach what should be assessed positively.

It was fundamental to specify personalist regime behaviour and formulate research questions as well as propose a theoretical model and related with its formulate hypothesis. I fully agree with the author with his concept of model of personalist regime behaviour – four main factors: coup-proofing, gatekeeping, repression and hoarding. The same opinion is related to the finding the vicious circle.

The Part II of the PhD dissertation, entitled "Testing the model", is fully empirical one with deep theoretical background.

In Section 1. the salience of ethnicity for regime contestation is investigated. This part of the PhD dissertation is preceded by the necessary divagations on relational aspects of the proposed theoretical model in general and particular perspectives.

The process of selection of case studies in all sections is fully convincing. In the Section 1. it was four cases: Burkina Faso: the regime of Blaise Compaoré (1987-2014); The Gambia: the regime of Yahya Jammeh (1994-2017); Somalia: the regime of Mohamed Siad Barre (1969-1991) and Madagascar: the regime of Didier Ratsiraka (1975-1993). Those regimes are characterised by no trace of ethnic politics in their personalist legacy.

The Section 2. is devoted to the diverging sources of organizational power where institutional aspects of the model are underlined. The six testing cases were in interests of the research (firstly, three civilian regimes and then military regimes) - Malawi: the regime of Hastings Kazumu Banda (1964-1994); Guinea-Bissau: the regime of Gen. João Bernardo 'Nino' Vieira (1980-1998); Ivory Coast: the regime of Laurent Gbagbo (2000-2011); Nigeria:

the regime of Gen. Sani Abacha (1993-1998); Central African Republic: the regime of François Bozizé (2003-2013) and Burundi: the regime of Pierre Buyoya (1996-2003). The deep analyses were based on relations between dictators and other political actors from the perspective of institutional connections. The conclusions of the analyses are very cautious from politics and scientific point of view (among others: creation of effective security system against a potential coup and resistance against international actors influence or reasons of the collapse of the regimes).

On the other hand, in Section 3. the impact of inclusive state institutions with attention to dysfunctional aspects of the model were under considerations. Properly, three testing cases were chosen - Liberia: the regime of Charles McArthur Ghankay Taylor (1997-2003); Ghana: the regime of Jerry John Rawlings (1981-2001) and Guinea: the regime of Lansana Conté (1984-2008). It was also proper to include political parties to the state institutions because they play the same role as e.g. legislature in such non-democratic regimes.

The last topic in the Part II of the PhD dissertation was the impact of resources curses in the functional aspects of the model (Section 4.) by analysing two quite different cases - barely known case of Niger: the regime of Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara (1996-1999) and well-known case of Zaire: the regime of Joseph Désiré Mobutu (1965-1996).

It should be appreciated that in every section testing the cases ends with a worthy presentation and an explanation of the summary results.

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The second volume of the PhD dissertation includes the results of the research (Part III) containing two aspects of explaining the research problem: Findings A: Transitions from personalist rule in Sub-Saharan Africa (comparison the tested hypotheses and account for their variation) and Findings B: Legacies of personalist spells in Sub-Saharan Africa (presentation of predictive model of transitions from personalist rule and apply the model to the remaining cases of Sub-Saharan Africa).

In the Findings A there were following research procedures: explaining the variation of violent anti-regime contestation; loss of the state's monopoly on violence and its impact on transitions; the impact of regime and state institutions on transitions; the impact of 'resource curses' on the model; the legacy of personalist spells.

Whereas in the Findings B the answer for following topics and questions were submitted: how do capacity gaps keep personalist regimes in power?; personalist legacies and

security gaps; variations of regime breakdown and subsequent legitimacy gaps; disentangling vicious circles; applying the predictive model to all personalist cases in Sub-Saharan Africa (1970-2010); breaking the mold, democratization after personal rule.

As in previous sections of the PhD dissertation, each of the Findings ends with a valuable summary (conclusion), which should be regarded as another positive element of this dissertation.

The Conclusion of the PhD dissertation is quite extensive (pp. 373-380) and contains many own apt opinions. In the Conclusion, as in the previous fragments of the PhD dissertation, the author demonstrated synthesizing skills. The content of the Appendices should be considered as a continuation of the Conclusion, where the author makes a scrupulous coding details of every Sections (1-4) and Findings (A-B) and then overview of tested hypothesis and variables.

The Appendices (7) shows a great and hard job which made the author coding the details from Section 1-4 and Findings A-B (research material covers as many as 45 pages). The complement of the Appendices is very reliable overview of tested hypotheses and variables. All data are presented with relevant comments. Concerning overview of export-dependencies for personalist regimes (many compared figures among others with using IndexMundi) it is stated that export was relevant to the research framework of Section 4.

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The evaluation of the formal side of the PhD dissertation is high and this applies to all its elements. It is very rare when the PhD dissertation is so editorially good prepare for printout. The author uses the scientific apparatus in accordance with the rules (a lot of different kind of footnotes). With success, he retains the original record of the used names, e.g. Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara.

The high mark should be given for Bibliography. The Bibliography was divided in alphabetical and subject order (the last one into two parts: Theoretical frameworks and Case studies)³. Such division and proposed subdivision makes Bibliography very much useful for readers.

³ According to the topics and structure of the PhD dissertation Part 1 of Thematic Bibliography entitled “Theoretical frameworks” was subdivided into 12 detailed and at the same very useful topics: 1. Political Regime Typologies; 2. Authoritarian Behavior & Internal Dynamics of Dictatorships; 3. Personalist Rule & Neopatrimonialism; 4. Conflict, Civil War & Peace-building; 5. Repression under Dictatorship; 6. Fragile States, Uneven Development & Corruption; 7. Resource curses; 8. Coup d’état & Coup-proofing; 9. Ethnicity, Nationalism & Identity; 10. Democratization & Democratic Consolidation; 11. Political Science & Methodology; 12. General Works on African Politics & African History.

The authors used a lot of different kinds of primary and secondary sources in the absolute majority in English, sporadically in French and Polish (total – as much as 771 in number). The selection of the sources was made properly. The Bibliography contains current and valuable scientific studies from theory and certain case studies, state and international documents, reports, legal acts and press articles. An overview of different sources on the subject of the research issues is the next positive of this dissertation.

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The author showed independence in the research process. The PhD dissertation contains a lot of tables and figures (in form of diagrams and graphs) which are author's own work. There are plenty of other author's own work based on own findings and outcomes of other researchers.

The author showed great explanatory skills. He was very reliable as well as very inquisitive in its research. The research process was carried out reliably and in an objective manner. The author was aware of the research limitations.

The author has a very good understanding of the studied issues. He based on the scientific achievements of world-leading researchers. Apart from that he was not only a good attentive reader of their works but also he was engaged in controversy over their opinions. In many cases he is able to formulate his own conclusions based on literature and own empirical experiences.

The author set his analysis deeply on thorough and proven methodological and theoretical foundations. The conceptual framework of the research could be treated as a sample or model for other PhD students who prepare their dissertations.

The PhD dissertation is characterized by high cognitive value as well as practical values. The author was succeeded in testing theoretical model from the perspective of their practical submissions. The testing was also made not only to explain the research problem but also from the perspective of possible democratization processes.

The author with success solved problems that arose from personal rule in Sub-Saharan Africa. He constructed his own original model of political behaviour analysis characterizing authoritarian personalism based on structural features of personalist rules. The author developed his own theoretical model to analyse the consequences of the specific behaviour of

On the other hand the Part 2 of the Thematic Bibliography entitled "Case studies" was subdivided into 16 topics: 1. Burkina Faso; 2. Burundi; 3. Central African Republic; 4. Democratic Republic of Congo/Zaire; 5. Gambia, The; 6. Ghana; 7. Guinea; 8. Guinea-Bissau; 9. Ivory Coast; 10. Liberia; 11. Madagascar; 12. Malawi; 13. Niger; 14. Nigeria; 15. Somalia; 16. Other Case Studies.

personalist regimes and the risks which they create. The explanation of the emergence of violent conflict in states under personalist rule was fully succeeded.

Very fruitful are the results of research, especially it was very worthy find what factors cause the personalist regimes impossible to democratise. It was proved that the combined effects of personalist behaviour (coup-proofing, gatekeeping, repression and hoarding) are not only more favourable to violent transitions, but they fundamentally alter the structures of state and society over time as well. The author proved that the mode of transition and its outcome are very much dependent on what stage the personalist regimes lose their authoritarian control. Also findings concerning authoritarian vicious circles and their subset of personalist vicious circles are author's contribution to the political science.

The model highlighted the structural impact of personalist regime behaviour on society, state institutions and development. The author not only broadly cross-case tested and evaluated the model but also proposed a predictive model of personalist regimes transitions.

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There are only some comments to the content of the PhD dissertation which have much more the character of facultative suggestions than obligatory remarks.

Concerning the impact of personalism on regime transition in Sub-Saharan Africa it would be worthy to use the achievements of the French personalism, especially works of Emmanuel Mounier and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin which deeply impacted not only on African socialism regimes (Léopold Sédar Senghor and other leaders) but also on transition processes in the region.

The author, among so many and worthy case studies, did not analyse very clearly examples of personalist rule in Sub-Saharan Africa and attempts to transition of the rules, it concerns the case of Idi Amin in Uganda (the author mentioned this case only on p. 362)⁴.

The author with great competence defined main terms of the PhD dissertation but not explicitly defined the term "transition" (quite a lot was written about different characters of the transitions). In some cases the author used alternately both terms "authoritarian" and "autocratic" regime but there are differences between them.

⁴ E.g. see chapter "Sanctions and the Amin's personalist rule in Uganda" in work of Abel Escrivà-Folch and Joseph Wright entitled "Foreign Pressure and the Politics of Autocratic Survival" (Oxford 2015, pp. 144-153).

Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell added monarchies to Barbara Geddes's typology, as author previously stated, but removed the personalist rule from classification what was not underlined⁵.

Underlining once more very rich bibliographical sources, the author could used in much extent also the works of native African researches and Polish scholars who investigate African problems (many field research directly in Africa)⁶. But it is necessary to underline that the author used Polish scientific achievements on political system theory (p. 99 and others).

There are only few comments related to the formal aspects of the PhD dissertation. The terms "Fascism" and "Communism" should be written with a capital not small letter (p. 3).

A minor note concerns the preparation of footnotes. If you recall the same item in the next footnote, you do not have to repeat it anymore but use the Latin term "Ibidem", e.g. footnote 9 - not "Skaaning 2006: 15" but just "Ibidem: 15".

After very careful reading of the PhD dissertation only several printing errors were found (e.g. is 'thee' instead of "three", p. 5).

Due to the Polish reader, my suggestion is to prepare a summary in Polish in the PhD dissertation.

Summing up, the mentioned above comments are marginal and their aim was to improve mostly editorial aspects of this very solid scientific work.

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I find that the Ph.D. dissertation of Jeroen J. J. van den Bosch entitled "Personalist Rule in Sub Saharan Africa: The Impact of Personalism on Regime Transitions after the Cold War" fulfils the requirements of the Act of 14 March 2003 on the title of science and scientific degrees and degrees and titles in the field of art (Journal of Laws of 2003 No. 65,

⁵ A. Croissant, S. Kailitz, P. Koellner, S. Wurster (eds.), *Comparing Autocracies in the Early Twenty-first Century*, Vol 2: *The Performance and Persistence of Autocracies*, Abingdon - New York 2015, p. 83.

⁶ The author only mentioned, very generally, two volumes of "Political Science Forum" on African topics (2008 and 2011) without particular references (until now 14 volumes of "Political Science Forum" on Africa topics were issued).

On the political regimes and democratization in Africa see: K. Trzcinski, *Demokratyzacja w Afryce Subsaharyjskiej. Perspektywa zachodnioafrykańskiej myśli politycznej*, Warszawa 2013.

Concerning the problem of resource curse and political regimes see: K. Czernichowski, D. Kopiński, A. Polus, *Klątwa surowcowa w Afryce? Przypadek Zambii i Botswany*, Warszawa 2012; A. Polus, *Relacje pomiędzy rządami a NGOs w afrykańskich państwach surowcowych*, Wrocław 2013.

item 595 and 2005, No. 164, item 1365) and may be allowed to continue the procedure in this respect.

According to me this Ph.D. dissertation deserves the distinction and is worth to publish.