

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE
Fakulta sociálních věd
Institut mezinárodních studií

PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE
(Posudek oponenta)

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): Barbora Chaloupková

Název práce: Globalization: From Unknown to Known? An Analysis of the Academic Debate about the Concept

Oponoval (u externích oponentů uveďte též adresu a funkci v rámci instituce):

Jan Hornát

1. OBSAH A CÍL PRÁCE (stručná informace o práci, formulace cíle):

As is already clear from the title itself, the thesis aims to provide a summary and development of the concept of *globalization* in academic discourse. Barbora Chaloupková first proceeds with an extensive state of the art essay and the varying academic interpretations of globalization and its effects and then moves to her original research framework. Based on a content analysis of four academic journals (Review of International Political Economy (RIPE), the Annual Review of Sociology (ARS), the Annual Review of Political Science (ARPS) and Daedalus), she tracks down the usage and context of the term “globalization” in the journals’ articles in the period of 1990-2012. The content analysis has a quantitative facet, where Barbora maps the sheer number of terms used in the articles associated with globalization. The terms – identified by the author – are assembled in thematic clusters which allude to the context in which they were used, thus providing room for interpretation as the usage of the terms in this “dictionary” shifted throughout the years.

The quantitative analysis mainly serves as a backup argument for the ensuing qualitative analysis (chapter 5). This chapter is the core of the thesis and is divided into two temporally distinguished parts (analysis of the period 1990-2000 and 2001-2012). Essentially, the given chapter’s aim is to provide answers to the two hypotheses formulated at the outset: “The first hypothesis assumes that while in the 1990s the debate would focus on questions of nature of globalization and its key characteristics, in the second analyzed period of time it would broaden its scope and move to issues that stayed largely outside academic attention in the 1990s. The second hypothesis then assumes that as the debate on the nature of globalization partially settles by the end of the 1990s, we would see a growth of normative contestation of globalization in the second period.” (p. 7).

As the author claims in the final conclusion, these assumptions were generally validated by empirical findings: “Therefore, as my first hypothesis put forward, in the 1990s, the debate revolved mostly around issues of nature of the globalization phenomenon, its conceptualization and impacts that were at that time seen as the most fundamental ones. My hypothesis also presumed that in the second period, the debate would broaden its scope and start covering novel areas. As my qualitative analysis showed, there was indeed a growing recognition that not only in the economics with the case of markets but in other disciplines too globalization was a force reshaping structures and boundaries social science used to take as given.” (p. 68-69).

2. VĚCNÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (náročnost, tvůrčí přístup, argumentace, logická struktura, teoretické a metodologické ukotvení, práce s prameny a literaturou, vhodnost příloh apod.):

Globalization is without a doubt an “essentially contested concept” – like democracy, security or art – as W. B. Gallie used the term. It lacks clear structure, authoritative interpretations and definitions, but overall consensual readings of its effects. Working with such topics in an MA thesis is thus always a challenge – more so, if the entire thesis revolves around an “essentially contested concept”. In such cases, students must make their way through many theoretical and semantic explanations to facilitate the readers’ understanding of the submitted piece. I am positive that Barbora has done a very good job in tackling these challenges and pointing to all the possible caveats in her work. She has very rightly chosen the path of genealogical research (deriving from Nietzsche and Foucault), which is a fitting theoretical framework for the aims she wishes to accomplish.

I do have a few remarks regarding the methodology, though. The choice of the four specific journals, the decision to draw a dividing line between two epochs (i.e. 1990-2000 and 2001-2012) and the end year of the analysis all seem quite arbitrary and at the same time could skew the results of the empirical analysis. As Barbora claims, some of these decisions were rather technical (i.e. lack of access to the journals after 2012), but I hardly understand the decision to include RIPE and ARPS as these journals were founded in 1994 and 1998

respectively. This also led to the fact that only 67 articles were included for the first period while 122 were analyzed for the second period. In this sense, I believe it would have been possible to find similarly impacted journals that covered the entire period (and even beyond 2012 – it would be more intuitive to choose 2016 as the final year of the analysis as that was perhaps the year that globalization received two ideological blows from democratic electorates in Britain and the US). I understand that the quantitative analysis is rather heuristic, but the sample is so small (in terms of the overall global debate about globalization) and the real changes in the use of language so nuanced and marginal, that it is difficult to accept the findings even as only indicative. Nonetheless, the author is aware of these shortcomings as she rightly points them out throughout the text.

The structure of the paper and the overall argumentation is logical and demonstrates the student's ability to be articulate and critical when writing and thinking about complex issues and concepts.

3. FORMÁLNÍ A JAZYKOVÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (jazykový projev, správnost citace a odkazů na literaturu, grafická úprava, formální náležitosti práce apod.):

The thesis meets all the formal criteria of a master's degree final paper. The language is nearly flawless with only a few minor typos (e.g. p. 6: "My goal is to analyze the debate prior [to] Donald Trump's victory..."; p. 29: "The altered position and role of the nation-state **withinth**e international system..." etc.). The thesis is well-researched and builds on the most relevant literature available. The writing-style is clear and concise, yet capable of dealing eloquently with complexity. A summary of the thesis in a different language than the thesis itself should be included in the final document (the summary here is in English as the thesis is).

4. STRUČNÝ KOMENTÁŘ HODNOTITELE (celkový dojem z diplomové práce, silné a slabé stránky, originalita myšlenek, naplnění cíle apod.):

Given the very eloquent writing style, the ability to grasp and interpret fairly difficult readings and concepts, I consider the thesis to be among the 10% of the best MA theses I have read. The text itself shows the personal interest of the author and the thorough research Barbora has made to arrive at the final product.

I commend the genealogical approach, but at least the Foucauldian version expects some examination of power dynamics and "hidden" expressions of power in discourse, which was not the case in this thesis. Building on A. Gramsci's "organic intellectuals" (as the academics presented in the analyzed journal articles are) and his cultural hegemony, the thesis could make clearer suggestions about the underlying power structures of the varying (and shifting) interpretations of globalization as these are often laden with normative and ideological baggage and serve (geo)political purposes.

The two hypotheses identified to outline the research of the paper are to me somewhat banal and even self-fulfilling (i.e. almost non-falsifiable) – we can relate the general idea behind these two hypotheses basically to any concept or phenomenon in human history, even the COVID-19 pandemic. By cherry-picking arguments and examples that suit us, the two hypotheses can always be somehow vindicated. In addition, by not applying a tone or sentiment analysis to the quantitative research, it seems quite difficult to fully answer the second hypothesis (p. 33: "Hypothesis 2: A partial settlement of the debate about the nature of globalization in the first decade opened up a space for normative contestation of the phenomenon; therefore, the number of occurrences of the terms rejecting or contesting globalization rose in the second period.").

My expectations were placed quite high reading through the thesis and I expected some unique and insightful conclusions, but my expectations were unfortunately not met as the two final summarizing chapters (5.3 and Conclusion) offered rather broader outlooks and less specific explanations for the observed empirical trends. I thus see the final parts as the weaker points of the thesis.

5. OTÁZKY A PŘIPOMÍNKY DOPORUČENÉ K BLIŽŠÍMU VYSVĚTLENÍ PŘI OBHAJOBĚ (jedna až tři):

1. You claim that the globalization literature has in the examined period mostly focused on the relationship of the "market" and the "state". The individual is thus somewhat lost in this relationship. Do you see a growing emphasis on examining the individual (in terms of his/her identity) in relation to globalization in the last few years?
2. What do you mean by "legal globalization"? The reader is left without an explicit explanation and understands the term only intuitively (even though you conflate normative convergence, with regulatory and political).

6. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA
(A-F):

With regards to the minor shortcomings listed above, I suggest the panel to decide between grade **A or B**.

Datum: 8. 6. 2020

Podpis: Jan Hornát v.r.