

Opponent report on the master thesis „Central European Identity from Central European Perspective“ by Marcela Jindrová

Marcela Jindrová addresses an important theme of the Central European Identity. This used to be quite a popular topic in the early 1990s. However, since then the identity research in the region has tended to focus on European, national and subnational identities. In this respect, Jindrová provides us with a useful reminder of the existence of identity which is constructed at the level between nation and Europe.

The thesis is based on a broad literature concerning both the concept of identity and Central European history. The third chapter dealing with a variety of plans for Central European integration is especially valuable. Also, I find thought-provoking the author's claim that the main contribution of Central Europe to European integration consists in a lesson from the failures of Habsburg monarchy (p. 70) and it would be worthwhile if she could elaborate on it more deeply.

I also have a couple of critical remarks. Firstly, the structure of the work as well as research methodology should be better outlined. Secondly, the thesis is rather unfocused dealing with history, current politics and culture. It would be more appropriate to stick to one concept of identity only and to focus on realities which are relevant to that concept. Thirdly, the choice of historical personalities in the third chapter is rather based in favor of Czechs and Slovaks. Fourthly, one would appreciate author's own empirical research on the issue, no matter how small-scale it would, which would complement or challenge the findings from the existing literature.

All in all, the work fulfills the criteria required for master thesis and I recommend it for defending. I suggest that the grade be either „very good“ or „good“ depending on the presentation and on the defence.

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