

Oponent's report on the PhD thesis *National Identity and Social Integration of Overseas Chinese in the Czech Republic: An Empirical and Comparative Study* by Hu Liyan

The submitted thesis provides an important contribution to the research area which has been neglected by the Czech political science so far. The Chinese presence has been growing in recent years in Czech Republic which raises new questions about the integration of Chinese into the Czech society as well as about the relations between Czech Chinese and the Chinese homeland. Hu Liyan addresses these issues by comparing Czech Chinese with Czech Vietnamese who come from a similar cultural and political background but whose presence in Czech Republic is more robust and has deeper historical roots than that of Chinese. To make these comparisons she makes distinction between the immigrants of the first generation and of the second generation and she uses both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The main conclusion of the thesis is that the Chinese immigrants differ from the Vietnamese immigrants. In the Chinese case, there is no significant distinction between the two generations as both can be categorised as "high cultural identity and low social integration". On the other hand, the first generation Vietnamese can be categorised as "low cultural identity and high social integration", while the second generation as "high cultural identity and high social integration". Hu Liyan argues that this discrepancy can be at least partly explained by the rise of China and an enhanced Chinese nationalism which strengthens the links of Czech Chinese with their homeland at the expenses of their integration into the Czech society. She also offers a useful typology of the Chinese nationalism which shows that this phenomenon should be neither underestimated nor overestimated.

The thesis has several strengths which I would like to underline. First, it reflects on three bodies of scholarly literature which are relevant to the research questions: Western literature, Czech literature and Chinese literature. This provides the author with a unique and well-informed theoretical and cultural background. Second, the author raises clear research questions and answers them by a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Even though this approach is quite common in the Western political science, it is still rare in the

Czech political science. Third, the author offers a clear and defensible conclusion on the basis of a serious examination of the data.

However, the thesis also has several weaknesses. First, one would expect a better introduction which would summarize the main questions, give the answers, explain the structure of the thesis and defend the methodological choices. Second, the explanation of the discrepancy between Chinese and Vietnamese by the rise of China should be more systematically tested against other possible explanations (i.e. control variables). Third, a brief summary of the main empirical findings, preferably by a single table, would help, currently, there are too many tables in the text and the main message gets diluted.

In this respect, I raise two questions for defense. First, what are other possible explanations for the differences between Chinese and Vietnamese in the Czech Republic and how would you control for these? Second, does the method of the logistic regression add anything to your argument?

To conclude, I recommend the thesis for defense and I believe that if the above weaknesses are addressed, the thesis can be published as a highly interesting and useful scholarly book.

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