CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE
Faculty of Social Sciences
Institute of International Studies

M. A. DISSERTATION MARK SHEET
(Opponent's Review)

Student: **Brianna Tichy**
Program: Balkan, Eurasian and Central European Studies
Title: ***Symbolic Ethnicity and Identity in Wilber, Nebraska; America's Czech Capital****, Prague 2014, 70 pp. typescript, plus 65 pp. appendices and interview transcripts (319 960 characters)

Reviewed by:
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1. CONTENT AND AIM OF THE THESIS: Brianna Tichy's M.A. Dissertation focuses upon the life of the Czech ethnic community in Wilber, a small town in Nebraska. It examines how the Czech community in this town keeps its ethnicity alive as a community of late (third-fourth) generation ethnics and whether such ethnicity is sustainable or not. It also deals with the authenticity of this community's ethnic identity and with questions whether or not this identity is nowadays completely symbolic. The main aim of the Dissertation is an examination whether the Czech community of Wilber is able to make a compromise between Czech and American identity and keep its ethnicity sustainable. The thesis also questions the theory of the United States as melting pot and sees it rather as a "cultural mosaic" than a multiethnic "salad bowl."

2. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: Brianna Tichy has carefully studied sufficient amount of relevant secondary literature, and interviewed vast number of Czech community members in Wilber of various age (15 to 79). The thesis is well structured, clearly defines its aims and fulfils all the requirements for a M.A. Dissertation. Brianna has applied Herbert J. Gans' theory of symbolic ethnicity from 1970s, which states that the late-generation European ethnicity is disappearing and is rather nostalgic, ethnicity that uses symbols and icons to create ethnic identity while sensing to belong to the United States. She agrees with Gans that Wilber is a community of late generation ethnics, but states (unlike Gans) that the technology and globalization actually makes the Czech ethnicity stronger.

3. PRESENTATION AND STYLE: Style of the text is clear, the thesis is readable and footnotes are used correctly, however sometimes without pagination.

4. COMMENTS: I appreciate that Brianna Tichy has performed an original research and done immense work in interviewing members of the Czech community in Wilber, which also contains vast amount of information not known to general Czech public, therefore I would recommend that the substance of the Dissertation is published.

5. QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS: How the current Czech community in Wilber reacts to increasing Hispanic immigration to the United States? Does this constitute a "danger" to the homogeneity of the Czech community?

6. RECOMMENDATIONS: I recommend Brianna Tichy's MA Dissertation "Symbolic Ethnicity and Identity in Wilber, Nebraska; America's Czech Capital" to oral defense with proposed assessment excellent (výborně, 1).

Date: Prague, June 18, 2014   Signature: Vít Fojtek