

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE
Faculty of Social Sciences Institute of International Studies
Supervisor's Review

Student: Anna Wielander

Program: Balkan, Eurasian and Central European Studies

Title: *A Tale of Two Europes. How the refugee crisis reopened the dichotomies of "East" vs. "West"*.

Reviewed by: Doc. PhDr. Jiří Vykoukal, CSc. (Institute of International Studies)

CONTENT AND AIM OF THE THESIS:

Dissertation studies the consequences of the refugee crisis for the re-emergence of the East-West dichotomy vis a vis the split between Visegrad group and some older members of the EU. The text illustrates this split with the use of the analysis of conflicting rhetoric between Germany and Hungary. The author tries to show and explain the causes, essence and functions of these splits within the context of the rise illiberal and populist policy as well as to define the line dividing rightful critique of the V-4 approaches from rather misunderstanding that a part of the problem rests in a troublesome development of the EU itself.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Dissertation clearly defines research questions and put them in a properly constructed structure. The author sufficiently explains theoretical options (neorealist, neoliberal, constructivist) related to the "East-West discourse", migration and the V-4 position in current European affairs and frames them in a well prepared methodology with focus on geopolitics, political struggles between political parties inside the country and norm production and distribution. It should be appreciated that the author put the topic of illiberal and populist attitudes into a broader European context showing they can have a lot of local varieties.

On the other hand I would welcome more sophisticated work with very heterogeneous source base (plenty of genres, articles, comments), distance toward sources (sometimes the language of dissertation repeats language of sources), better use of polls (the fact that East Europeans do not hate Jews does not mean they love e.g. Roma – there is a still remarkable space for xenophobia), and also better proofreading.

PRESENTATION AND STYLE:

Both, presentation and style are rather clear and make the text easy to understand.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

1. Does the EU reflect the cases of migrants who do not want to stay in the V-4 group?
2. Has the Brexit issue influenced the debate on acceptance of refugees?

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Dissertation definitely meets formal demands for an M.A. dissertation. Beyond mentioned critical remarks, with respect to the complexity of the topic and due to the outcome of the defence I propose assessment excellent (1) – very good (2).

Date: Prague, September 1, 2017

Signature