

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

**PROTOCOL ON BACHELOR THESIS ASSESSMENT**  
**(Reviewer)**

Name of the student: Yiju Chen

Title: Comparative Analysis of Transformational Leadership: Václav Havel and Lee Teng-hui

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Reviewer: Jan Hornát

1. TOPIC AND OBJECTIVE (short information on the thesis, research objective):

The submitted thesis deals with the timeless topic of two political figures, who played significant roles in the democratization of their respective countries. Václav Havel in the Czech Republic and Lee Teng-hui in Taiwan, are both considered the leaders of movements that helped their societies transition from authoritarianism to democracy – in this sense, Yiju Chen asks in her thesis, what *type* of leaders were they?

Her question, however, is not purely normative, but attempts to categorize the two as “transformational” leaders, a term coined and defined by Bass (1985). In her own words, Ms. Chen “seeks to explore the similarities and differences between the two leaders, particularly in the context of Transformational Leadership” (p. 13). To do so, she first discusses the concept of transformational leadership and provides a list of four categories along which a leader is evaluated – these four criteria entail “idealized influence”, “inspirational motivation”, “intellectual stimulation”, and “individual consideration”. The rest of the thesis is hence structured around these four categories, where Ms. Chen presents empirical examples of the two leaders’ activities and intellectual thoughts that fit into the transformational leader framework. The thesis concludes with stating that “Through the analysis of texts, including autobiographies, interviews, and third-party narratives, we can find that both Havel and Lee Teng-hui generally meet the four requirements of transformational leadership” (p. 42).

2. CONTENT (complexity, original approach, argument, structure, theoretical and methodological backing, work with sources, appropriateness of annexes etc.):

Juxtaposing the two leaders and evaluating them based on the framework of transformational leadership is a fairly original endeavor. Moreover, placing their career paths and contributions to the political transitions in their countries in a comparative perspective can unearth interesting parallels in the historical developments of both states. The methodological approach of assessing the “transformational” aspects of a leader is clearly put and formulated – however, the execution of the evaluation is somewhat problematic and rather inconclusive and shallow.

I would appreciate a more thorough theoretical discussion of the concept of transformational leadership and a debate about its limits or possible caveats. Also, Ms. Chen could have delved more in her literature review into other publications that have employed the framework of transformational leadership to evaluate other political or business figures and assessed their contributions. A more systematic inquiry within the four categories would also be warranted. Ms. Chen would need to include more empirical examples of their leadership styles – that is, provide more practical instances of policy steps and decision-making. The second part of the thesis, which is designed to evaluate the two leaders builds mostly on their own writings – these provide Havel’s and Lee Teng-hui’s personal philosophies (and personal assessments of their leadership), but do not show the reader how these were manifested in political life.

I would appreciate the use of a wider array of sources and a deeper dive into all four categories (for instance, chapter 3.2 consists of just one page and as such can barely demonstrate the “inspirational motivation” of the respective leaders). The thesis is very short when compared to others, so there was certainly space to elaborate and extend the analytical part of the paper.

### 3. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE (quality of language, citation style, graphics, formal aspects etc.):

Formally, the thesis meets all the necessary requirements. The citation style is consistent throughout the paper. The “Terminology” chapter placed before the introduction seems a bit odd – I would suggest to simply put it as a footnote when the term Kuomintang is first used.

### 4. STATEMENT ON THE ORIGINALITY OF THE THESIS

The thesis was checked by the URKUND anti-plagiarism software and did not show signs of any wrongdoing.

### 5. SHORT COMMENTS BY THE REVIEWER (overall impression, strengths and weaknesses, originality of ideas, achievement of the research objective etc.):

The submitted thesis has an original topic with a clear and useful theoretical framework. However, it does not meet its full potential.

First, the concept of transformational leadership should have been discussed in more detail and its limitations should have been mentioned. Also, examples of its application would have given the reader a more nuanced picture of what to look for when reading the analytical part of the thesis.

Second, the analytical part is very shallow and rather than looking at the impact of leadership of the two figures, it focuses a lot on their own writings and assessments. The thesis is very short, so there was still space for the author to conduct a more thorough analysis.

Third, the conclusion is somewhat disappointing. As I mentioned earlier, the piece had potential to make interesting parallels and theoretical observations, but its concluding remarks provide no deeper insights or discussion of the analysis’ results.

### 6. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DURING THE DEFENCE:

1. How useful is the transformational leadership framework when assessing other leaders, such as Donald Trump? Would he also meet the definition?
2. Would you say that the legacy of Havel and Lee Teng-hui in their respective societies is the same? Havel, for instance, seems to be a somewhat polarizing figure in the Czech Republic. Is that also a trait of transformational leadership?

### 7. (NON-)RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE: (A-F):

I suggest the commission to consider the grade **C** or **D**, based on the proceedings of the defence.

Date: 22.8.2023

Signature: Jan Hornát