

Thesis Evaluation Form

Name:

Meng Xianje

Title of Thesis:

Cultural integration or emphasizing differences? Reflections on China's history (1949-1976) in the mirror of British and American historiography

Number of pages

91

| Evaluation Criteria | Grades |
|---|--|
| Problem definition <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ relevant▪ clearly phrased▪ testable | 1 3 3 |
| Research design <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ theoretical framework▪ research methods | 2 2 |
| Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ scholarly level▪ level of innovation | 2 3 |
| Research results <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ description▪ analysis | 2 2 |
| Analysis, interpretation, conclusions | 1 1 4 |
| Justification of the sources and literature used | 2 |
| Clearly phrased reporting | 2 |
| Structure of the thesis | 2 |
| Further comments | 1 |
| Language | 1 |
| Formal level | |
| Grade | 3 in case of successful defence 2 |

Comments:

1. I appreciate good English grammar and stylistics and generally very high level of formal aspects of the master thesis.
2. Subtitle of the thesis is extremely exaggerated, the student compares **three** books and cites **seven** additional books. From this sample is difficult to draw any conclusion about general trends in British and American historiography. Moreover the book *China 1900-76* was only edited by Geoff Stewart. The authors of the chapters are not mentioned. In the third book Roberts *History of China* only one chapter is devoted to the period 1949 -76.
3. According to my understanding the main objective of the thesis is to analyse the way how the three British historians interpreted the role of Mao Zedong. This implies the research question, whether they interpreted his policies from universalistic view (cultural integration) or from particularistic view (differences). Universalistic view sees China in the context of global development, particularistic view tries to isolate it.
4. The methodology of the thesis is, according to my view, interpretative. The student is good in paraphrasing the author's arguments and putting them in general philosophical context. It seems to me that the intention of the student was to explain Mao Zedong's policies by putting them in the context of global development and China's political development. So in this sense the students position leans towards universalistic (cultural integrative) point of view.
5. My main objection against this thesis is that uses philosophical not social scientific methodology, theoretical framework is not connected with empirical data (paraphrases of author's arguments) in persuasive way. So the conclusions are only implicit.

The questions

1. I do not understand what do you mean by *interactive research, interactive comparative research* (p. 8.)
2. Where in your thesis do you apply discourse analysis?
3. Why do not you use more resources? Some American historians (for example Fairbank).
4. How is this period interpreted in contemporary Chinese historiography?

I recommend the master thesis to the defence and propose the grade good (3) (perhaps very good (2) is also possible in case of excellent defence).

Prague 30. August 2017

Mgr. Marek Německý, Ph.D.