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Czech – Taiwan Bilateral Relations During the Coronavirus Pandemic

The Case of Economic Rapprochement

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Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci „Czech – Taiwan Bilateral Relations During the Coronavirus Pandemic: The Case of Economic Rapprochement“ vypracoval samostatně pod dohledem vedoucího a uvedl jsem všechny podklady a odbornou literaturu.

V…… dne …….. Podpis……

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Note on the Transcription of Chinese Names

Traditional Chinese characters, used in the Republic of China in Taiwan and Hong Kong, are used in this thesis. Terminology written in characters is followed by Pinyin, the Chinese romanization system. However, this thesis uses the transcription commonly used in Taiwan to transcribe names such as Chiang Kai-shek or recognized place names such as Taipei. In such cases, this type of transcription is preferred and used where needed. For citations, the 17th Edition of the Chicago style citations is used throughout the entire text.

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List of Abbreviations

CTBC:	Czech – Taiwanese Business Chamber
CECO:	Czech Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei
CCP:	Chinese Communist Party (中國共產黨)
DPP:	Democratic Progressive Party (民主進步黨)
FDI:	Foreign Direct Investments
KMT:	Kuomintang (中國國民黨)
MOU:	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO:	Non-governmental organization
NTD:	New Taiwanese Dollar
PRC:	People's Republic of China
ROC:	Taiwan (Republic of China)
SOCDEM:	Czech Social Democratic Party (formerly ČSSD)
TECO:	Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Prague
TSMC:	Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company
UN:	United Nations

Glossary of Chinese Names

Chen Shuibian	陳水扁
Chiang Kai-shek	蔣介石
Ke Liang-ruey	柯良叡
Ko Wen-je	柯文哲
Kung Ming-hsin	龔明鑫
Li Teng-hui	李登輝
Lien Chan	連戰
Tsai Ing-wen	蔡英文
Joseph Jaushieh Wu	吳釗燮
Kelly Wu-chiao Hsieh	謝武樵
Tien Chung-kwang	田中光
Remus Li-Kuo Chen	陳立國
Wang Mei-hua	王美花
Ye Jianming	叶簡明
You Si-kun	游錫堃

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1 Introduction

The end of the Chinese Civil War resulted in the winning of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) over the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) in October 1949. With Kuomintang's subsequent retreat to Taiwan, the number of Taiwanese allies has dwindled over the years, and with it Taiwan's influence in international organizations. This has been particularly true since Taiwan's withdrawal from the UN in 1971 and its consequent replacement by the PRC.

The PRC's efforts toward claiming new allies have been thus far successful, leaving Taiwan with 12 diplomatic allies spread worldwide (Wu and Moritsugu 2024). The coronavirus pandemic presented a more assertive approach towards the PRC from the European Union than in previous years (EEAS 2023). While still not as drastic as the United States, this change of dynamic creates an environment that promotes Taiwanese cooperation with the West. The Czech Republic provides an interesting insight into this phenomenon, with the question of the role of the coronavirus pandemic on the bilateral relations of the Czech Republic and Taiwan.

Recently, cooperation between the Czech Republic and Taiwan has deepened and both Taiwan and the Czech Republic can gain from this cooperation. Whether it is the cultural and academic exchange or financial and healthcare aid, Taiwan's investments and economic cooperation connected to its technological know-how is one of the most prominent topics of all talks of this examined period. This thesis focuses on the diplomatic relations during the coronavirus pandemic. During this time there has been an increased activity in academic exchange, meetings of the important representatives of both countries, and economic cooperation and investments. Especially the visits of the Czech political representatives to Taiwan and vice versa were numerous. Starting with the successor of Jaroslav Kubera, the former head of the Czech Senate, Miloš Vystrčil visited the island in early 2020. This was followed by Jiří Drahoš, and concluded with the most recent visit of the head of the Czech Chamber of Deputies, politician Markéta Pekarová Adamová, in June 2023.

This thesis introduces the rapprochement between these two countries on a case study of Czech-Taiwan bilateral diplomatic relations. This is not the first case of the rapprochement, however, since the first case of Czech-Taiwan rapprochement can be traced to the fall of the communist regime in former Czechoslovakia. During the presidency of Václav Havel in the 1990s, foreign investments such as the establishment of the Taiwanese Foxconn factory were some of the most notable achievements of the era. Still, the coronavirus pandemic has reestablished bilateral relations, with both countries experiencing the so-called 'honeymoon' phase.

While it is logical to draw a comparison with the previous era of rapprochement, the current situation is not the same as it was three decades ago. With the common denominator of meetings of important political figures, the current rapprochement is met by the appraisal of the mainstream media of both parties.

2 Methodology

The methodology of this thesis is the following. Firstly, for the theoretical part, the general framework of Czech-Taiwan bilateral relations is introduced, including the overview of diplomacy and economic diplomacy. Taiwan's official and unofficial model of diplomacy is introduced secondly, followed by the historical discourse of Czech–Taiwan bilateral relations. For this part, publicly accessible reports from primary and secondary sources were used, namely official reports of MOFA Czech Republic and MOFA Taiwan, and news articles from various Czech and Taiwanese media. These sources dated during the coronavirus pandemic, namely from 2019 to May 2023, i.e. the official duration of the coronavirus pandemic in the Czech Republic. Usage of various sources from different media decreased the chance of any research and opinion bias. Finally, Hofstede's model of Cultural Dimensions was used to help understand the similarities and differences between both actors. This constituted the theoretical framework of this thesis and was the preliminary condition for understanding the motivation for Czech-Taiwan economic cooperation.

The data for Hofstede's model was taken from the website *www.theculturefactor.com*. This website is connected to the Culture Factor Group and was established by Geert Hofstede himself in 1985 (The Culture Factor, under 'Frequently Asked Questions'). This research worked with the most updated data from October 2023. This is due to the fact that unlike the previous set of data, the most recent version took the development and impact of the coronavirus pandemic of both countries into consideration. The scores of the Czech Republic and Taiwan were then compared side by side and put into a graph. Each of the dimensions was explained through observation and description of the trends typical for each country. The theoretical framework of the Hofstede model was taken from the study of Geert Hofstede *Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context* (2011).

For the first part of this case study, news articles focusing on the meetings of political representatives from both Czech and Taiwanese news media were analysed, which resulted in a summary of the important points of these meetings. The Czech and Taiwanese articles are represented in equal ratios, however the Taiwanese reports were generally more detailed than the Czech ones. These meetings were then classified into three sections according to their order of occurrence during the pandemic. For each important Czech representative to visit Taiwan, its Taiwanese counterpart is introduced. This section of the research set the premise of the

‘pandemic rapprochement’ as presented in the media. Since this section alone was not enough to prove or disprove the research questions, further research had to be conducted.

Secondly, the promises made and the reality of the economic cooperation were summarised and compared to each other in the final section of this thesis, with explanation being the primary research method. Due to the nature of this research, this thesis focused primarily on the economic diplomacy between said actors and the political diplomacy resulting from these meetings. Other forms of cooperation are only mentioned briefly but are further elaborated on in the conclusion. These two sections provided the proof of whether or not the pandemic catalysed the bilateral relations.

In the third part, data were taken from the statistics focusing on the trade between the Czech Republic and Taiwan, i.e. the publicly available SITC (Standard International Trade Classification) statistics for the years 2019 to 2023. Since the publicly accessible SITC statistics from the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic were incomplete, this research heavily relied on the publicly available data from the BusinessINFO website. This thesis used the statistics of the imports and exports throughout the years 2019 to 2023 and compared them with the same type of data from years 2014 to 2018.

For the current account, a formula of Current account = (Exports – Imports) was used. By using this approach, the extent of the impact and the influence of the pandemic trade was deduced. The average of these values was used to calculate the average of the Czech exports in comparison to the total exports and imports, and thus determine the role of the Czech Republic. The trends of the economic exchange were also answered by using this method. The data on the most common items of import and export from BusinessINFO were then collected and compared side-by-side and the current phenomenon was explained including the strengths and weaknesses of both actors. This approach answered the question of the areas of imports and exports of the Czech Republic and Taiwan.

2.1 Research Questions

Before any further research could be conducted, this thesis's aim was threefold: to analyse whether the trend of the investments from 2019 to 2023 was increasing or decreasing in comparison to previous years, what were the commodities of import and export, and the comparison of the tangible results of these talks with the points discussed. The Czech-Taiwan diplomatic relations during the coronavirus pandemic were used to prove or disprove these questions as the coronavirus pandemic was said to be another wave of rapprochement since the Havel presidency of the 1990s and early 2000s. Since economic diplomacy was the most prominent topic of all of the meetings, economic cooperation was the primary interest of this thesis. The analysis was presented on the case study of meetings of prominent political figures of both the Czech Republic and Taiwan.

This thesis's hypothesis stems from the coronavirus pandemic catalysing economic cooperation between said countries. The byproduct to this catalysation is what the author of this thesis calls the 'pandemic rapprochement'. While the Czech Republic relies primarily on bilateral trade and investment strategies of Taiwan, Taiwan strives to gain more allies. This could potentially allow Taiwan to join international organizations such as the UN. Therefore, through engaging in economic diplomacy with the Czech Republic, Taiwan may be closer to achieving this goal.

2.2 Content Analysis

Content analysis is utilized as the primary research method of this thesis. It is a method of researching documents and various types of media, whether written, oral, iconic, musical, or hypertextual, through which the quantity of researched documents is filtered for patterns and their latent meaning. Content analysis entails a thorough reading of text material, which is then labelled to indicate the presence of meaningful pieces of content (Hodder 1994).

Throughout its history, content analysis has been used to analyse linguistic patterns, sociological aspects of the message communicated, and the effect received on the recipient. Yet, White and Marsh argue that the research methodology could be changed based on the latent meaning of patterns analysed within a qualitative analysis. In that case, an inductive approach of open research questions may be used instead of a hypothesis (2006, 22-45). Historically,

content analysis can be traced to the end of the 19th century and its first noted uses include news analysis or analysis of patterns in Shakespeare's literature (Sumpter 2001, 64-72).

Needless to say, content analysis relies on consistency. As noted by Robert Weber: 'To make valid inferences from the text, the classification procedure must be reliable in the sense of being consistent: different people should code the same text in the same way' (Weber 1990, 12). In addition, content analysis is an optimal method for researching the contents of events such as the political meetings and the media referring to them. This includes news articles and official reports. While consistency is key in content analysis, it is not strictly tied to one approach, as stated by Stemler (2001).

Content analysis is used for both the statistical data and news reports. In terms of quantitative research, 17 news articles, 22 official reports from both the Czech and Taiwanese government, and the SITC3 statistics from BusinessINFO for years 2014 to 2023 were used, including statistics for the trade commodities. The content analysis was then applied to this collected material, using the close reading and datamining. The data extracted from the news articles and reports were used to map the major meetings of Czech and Taiwanese political representatives and the outcomes of these meetings. The data collected from the SITC3 statistics were used to monitor the imports, exports, the current account, and the trade commodities of the Czech-Taiwan trade. Therefore, the nature of this research is both quantitative and qualitative, where statistics, data, and official reports were collected and analysed. Descriptive research was also part of content analysis, where the analysed trends were described and explained.

2.3 Literature Review

The academic discourse is particularly rich in the field of Taiwan's diplomacy per se, as well as in the field of Taiwan-US diplomatic relations. This is to be expected as the US still plays a major role in Taiwanese development and support. While Taiwan's relationship with Europe has been described in Gary D. Rawnsley's *Taiwan's Informal Diplomacy and Propaganda*, the publication focuses dominantly on Taiwan's relations with the United Kingdom. Besides, during its publication date, Taiwan still utilized the so-called 'dollar diplomacy', which ceded with former Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou (Rich 2009). Finally, Taiwan's 'buying of allies' is also discussed by Timothy S. Rich in article 'Status for Sale: Taiwan and the Competition for Diplomatic Recognition' (2009).

Czeslaw Tubilewicz's case study on Taiwanese diplomacy in countries of the former Soviet Union titled *Taiwan and Post-Communist Europe: Shopping for Allies* further demonstrates Taiwan's tactics of 'dollar diplomacy'. Covering states such as the former Czechoslovakia, the Baltic states, post-Soviet Russia, and Hungary, this case study served as the inspiration for this thesis. Tubilewicz claims that the former Czechoslovakia was one of the most fruitful allies during this period, if not the most successful of the region (Tubilewicz 2007). Yet, despite Taiwan's efforts, the number of Taiwan's allies has been diminishing since the loss of its seat in the United Nations in 1971 in favour of the PRC. An insight into this phenomenon of the PRC's 'poaching' of Taiwan's allies is offered by Thomas J. Shattuck, naming it the 'Race to Zero' (Shattuck 2022).

Taiwanese diplomacy is also a topic researched by academics from the People's Republic of China. Zou et al., while explaining mainly the PRC's motivations and diplomatic goals, also dedicates a chapter to Taiwanese relations in general, but also the PRC-Taiwan's relations from the prism of the PRC (2000). Hu Shaohua's *Small State Policy: Diplomatic Recognition of Taiwan* then further researches the nature of Taiwan's allies and the factors affecting their relationship with the island (2015).

The Czech-Taiwan bilateral relations, or even the Europe-Taiwan bilateral relations are also an attractive topic for international relations and diplomacy studies researchers. For example, Turcsányi et al. discuss the public relations of Taiwan with the countries of the Visegrad Group, i.e.V4. This report serves as an important source analysing the current sentiments towards Taiwan and said countries (Turcsányi et al. 2023). In addition to this, it also focuses on the sociological analysis of the subjects' social background in relation to the sentiment towards Taiwan and vice versa. This includes their political party preference or allegiance; education level; and general perceptions. This is where the Czech-Taiwan bilateral relations during the coronavirus pandemic come into question, since the Czech-Taiwan relations during this era create a gap in research. Needless to say, the topic of Czech-Taiwan bilateral relations during the coronavirus pandemic is topical and could offer an interesting insight into the influence of the pandemic on bilateral relations of Taiwan.

2.4 Thesis Structure

Chapter 2 introduces the primary research method and methodology, thesis structure, literature review, and research questions. From the sample of relevant literature and statistics within the range of the coronavirus pandemic in the Czech Republic, patterns and trends are deduced by using the content analysis. Close reading of the official MOFA reports are complemented by news articles and the official SITC3 statistics on bilateral trade.

Chapter 3 focuses on the theoretical framework of diplomacy. This includes the general overview of diplomacy, its typology, and the changes, but also the theoretical framework of economic diplomacy, soft power, and small-state diplomacy, which is relevant to both the Czech Republic and Taiwan.

Chapter 4 introduces the overall model of Taiwanese foreign diplomacy including the official and the unofficial models. The PRC policy named 'One China Policy' is also included in this chapter.

A brief historical overview of the Czech-Taiwan bilateral relations starting from the fall of the communist regime until the present is the main topic of chapter 5. The Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office Prague and its Czech counterpart, the Czech Economic and Cultural Representative Office Taipei are also introduced in this chapter. Finally, Hofstede's 6D Model of National Culture offers an insight into the cultural similarities and differences of the both countries and the motivation behind the cooperation.

Chapter 6 then serves as a case study of the bilateral relations between the two countries and simultaneously as the basis of this thesis. The answer to the research questions introduced in the methodology chapter is provided through thorough analysis. This chapter is divided into three subsections: the first part introduces the general discourse and overview of the major political meetings. The second part of this thesis provides the results of the talks summarised in terms of economic and diplomatic cooperation, and in terms of other areas of cooperation. Finally, the statistics focused on Czech imports, exports, and the current account with Taiwan are evaluated. This way, the research questions are answered effectively.

3 Diplomacy – Theoretical Framework

The following chapter serves as a theoretical framework for Taiwan's official and unofficial diplomacy. Firstly, the general diplomatic overview is introduced, including the typology of diplomacy present in the case of the Czech Republic and Taiwan. These include Taiwan's official and unofficial models of diplomacy, small state diplomacy, political diplomacy, economic diplomacy, and soft power.

3.1 Diplomacy

Diplomacy aims to manage relations between states, as well as relations between states and other actors (Barston, 2006, 1). The actors of diplomacy then influence events in the international system (Trager 2016, 206). The main method by which diplomacy achieves its goals is either through spoken or written communication conducted by diplomats, i.e. state representatives. The communication methods include agreements, memoranda, negotiations, treaties, pacts, and other forms of diplomatic activity. The act of diplomacy is, however, not exclusive to diplomats, as politicians or the head of state can also act as a diplomat.

The etymology of the term 'diplomacy' is derived from 18th century France, where sovereigns in possession of a document granting them certain kind of privilege were called 'diplomate'. This term, when thoroughly analysed, is derived from the ancient Greek *diploma*, consisting of the prefix *diplo,* meaning 'folded in two', and the suffix *-ma* marking an object (Britannica 2024). It is no coincidence that the first 'diplomates' were serving their state and helped achieve its interests. The sources of early diplomacy from the Middle East, the Mediterranean, China, and India have been numerous, and provide an insight into the earliest forms of diplomacy. For instance, the records of diplomacy of China and India date back to the 1st millennium BCE, with the advice to the diplomats provided by the famous Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi (ibid.).

While diplomacy is an important instrument of foreign policy, the two terms are not alike, and using them interchangeably would be erroneous. The main difference is that foreign policy is announced publicly by political leaders, whereas acts of diplomacy need not be announced beforehand. The progress and the results of these diplomatic meetings are, however, publicly announced (ibid.).

3.2 Types of Diplomacy

In the case of Czech-Taiwan bilateral relations during the coronavirus pandemic, several types of diplomacy were present during the diplomatic exchange. In order to understand the phenomenon of this pandemic rapprochement, this chapter introduces the most prominent types of diplomacy relevant to the Czech-Taiwanese situation. Except for the unofficial diplomacy, other types of diplomacy present include the small state diplomacy, political diplomacy, and economic diplomacy. In addition, just as important as the economic diplomacy and political diplomacy, soft power in the form of cultural, economic, and political exchange was also commonly utilized by both countries. These constitute parts of a larger whole, bilateral diplomacy.

Mattelaer states that bilateral diplomacy is currently in its resurgence due to being more effective than the multilateralism such as that of the EU (2019a). Due to this observation, he considers embassies to be the hallmark of bilateral diplomacy (2019b). While Mattelaer focuses primarily on bilateral diplomacy of EU countries, the same principle applies to the case of the Czech Republic and Taiwan. The only difference is the use of the unofficial Economic and Cultural Offices instead of embassies.

3.2.1 Small State Diplomacy

The conduction of diplomacy by small states is known as the small-state diplomacy. For such states, diplomacy ensures the achievement of goals on a global scale. However, for these small states, limited resources hinder the effectiveness of their diplomacy. In the case of Taiwan, the main objective of its diplomacy is the gaining of allies. These allies, provided they are members of international organisations, in return vote for Taiwan's inclusion within these organisations. This diplomatic recognition is of utmost importance as the PRC has been making claims on the island. This problem is further elaborated upon in section 4.1.2 One China Policy and the 'Race to Zero'.

In the case of the Czech Republic and Taiwan, political diplomacy, economic diplomacy, and soft power are all utilized. In addition, the increasing investments from Taiwan in the Czech Republic are then classified as economic diplomacy. The favour of the population can also be an important indicator of whether or not the diplomacy between two actors is successful. For

example, The Czech sentiment towards Taiwan remains mixed, with the slight majority of 34% viewing Taiwan positively while 30% does so with a negative view (Turcsányi et al., 2023). Out of this group, the Polish and Czech sentiments were higher than those of Slovakia and Hungary (ibid.).

In regards to the traditional sense of diplomacy, both Czech and Taiwanese representatives conducted meetings, most notable being the meetings of the Czech head of the Senate Miloš Vystrčil in 2020, the delegation of Jiří Drahoš, and the head of the Chamber of Deputies Markéta Pekarová Adamová. These meetings were a combination of traditional diplomacy merged with economic diplomacy, as the topics of discussion mainly revolved around investments and economic cooperation between the two actors.

3.2.2 Soft Power

Soft power is yet another part of the equation of the pandemic rapprochement of the Czech Republic and Taiwan. Joseph Nye, who popularised the term, defines it as 'the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment (2008, 94).' To conduct soft power successfully, three conditions need to be met: the propagation of culture, political values, and foreign policies (ibid.).

According to Nye, soft power is conducted through the use of public diplomacy. Public diplomacy then achieves its goals by the implementation of news media, cultural exchange, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and economic cooperation (ibid.). The common means of soft power are also present in the Czech-Taiwan bilateral relations. Whether it is the Taiwanese investments and economic cooperation, the reinforcement of mutual political values through the political meetings and signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), and the medialization of the rapprochement between both countries, these are all examples of the soft power diplomacy.

3.2.3 Economic Diplomacy

Economic diplomacy, as the name implies, is a type of diplomacy where national interests are achieved through a variety of economic tools (Chohan 2021). Economic diplomacy is successful provided that both the sending and receiving states agree upon the forms of

cooperation. These tools of cooperation include technology and the environment, but also the more traditional field of trade and finance, namely exports, imports, investments, lending, aid, and free trade agreements (Moons et al. 2009).

The traditional sense of economic diplomacy constitutes the use of economic resources, most commonly rewards and sanctions in order to achieve a particular objective (Berridge and James 2003). Chohan, however, works with an alternative definition to the traditional sense of economic diplomacy, defining it as the 'multi-stakeholder process of deploying economic means towards diplomatic ends, and vice-versa; in a manner that creates value between and across publics through a co-creative process involving of international public managers and other important stakeholders' (2021, 3). The byproduct of the economic diplomacy is the involvement in the national and global economy. It is also responsible for economic globalisation in the form of helping investors and economic subjects in order to enter international trade (Šťouračová 2008).

The important actors of economic diplomacy are not limited to state and non-state actors only, as businesses and investors play an important part in economic diplomacy as well (Bayne and Woolcock 2017). This is the case of the Czech-Taiwanese rapprochement, where part of the Czech delegation often consisted of investors and businessmen. According to Van Bergeijk, the reason for establishing communication between two actors on a diplomatic level includes communication with international organizations (2009).

The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports, protects, and promotes the economic diplomacy of the Czech Republic and plays a key role together with the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic. With their wide range of services and their subsidiary offices, state-funded organizations such as CzechTrade, CzechInvest, and Czech Center also play a major role (MZV n.d. a). The most common forms of projects of Czech economic diplomacy include 'presentations, business forums, seminars, expo participation, round tables, business missions and others' (MZV 2016). The Czech business missions to Taiwan are therefore nothing new. In fact, they are the continuation of the official Czech economic diplomacy.

In conclusion, economic diplomacy uses economic resources as a means of achieving its goal. In addition to the more traditional use of sanctions and rewards, economic diplomacy may also utilize investments, business and job opportunities, and other decisions influencing imports, exports, foreign direct investments, which is also what this thesis focuses on.

4 The Case of Taiwan

4.1 Taiwan's Official Diplomatic Model

The official Taiwanese diplomatic model, including the Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (中華民國外交部, *Zhonghua minguo waijiao bu*, MOFA), and One China Policy (一個中國政策 *Yi ge Zhongguo zhengce*), are discussed in this chapter. Even though Taiwan's unofficial model of diplomacy comprises the majority of Taiwan's diplomatic actions, official diplomacy should not be neglected, as successful cases of unofficial relations can result in establishment of the official relations and therefore aid Taiwan in its cause.

Since the majority of the countries within the international system do not accept the legitimacy and sovereignty of the ROC, its allies are slowly switching their formal diplomatic relations from Taiwan towards the PRC. Because of this, the number of Taiwan's allies has been slowly dwindling since the 1970s, with the only time Taipei managed to gain allies being under the presidency of Lee Teng-hui (Tubilewicz 2007, 11). Taiwan currently has formal relations with 11 of the 193 UN member states, including the Holy See (MOFA n.d. a).

The primary cause of this change of dynamics was the Sino-American rapprochement of the early 1970s when Henry Kissinger, an American diplomat, politician, and former US minister of foreign affairs, visited the People's Republic of China in the middle of the Cultural Revolution. Kissinger's negotiations laid the ground for former president Nixon's visit to the country. This resulted in the PRC becoming a member state of the United Nations, replacing ROC in the process. 'One China Policy' also plays a role in the diminishing number of Taiwan's allies who change their stance, accepting the PRC instead of the ROC. This is due to the fact that the sole representative of China is the unnegotiable condition for establishing relations with the PRC (Zou 2000). Despite Taiwan being offered to remain part of the UN, it backed out of the organisation (Tubilewicz 2007). Taiwan's wish to not be a part of the organisation alongside the until-then not recognised PRC is the reason for this. The US, however, did not forsake Taiwan completely as both sides have maintained unofficial relations based on the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 until the present.

The nature of the countries keeping formal relations with Taiwan provides an interesting insight into the nature of its allies. According to Hu Shaohua, the reliance on financial aid is one of the characteristics of conducting diplomacy with these countries (2015, 12), as the donations are

often with ‘no strings attached’ (ibid., 13). While nowadays it is rather rare, it could be said that Taiwan used to be ‘buying’ their allies, however this strategy ceded with former Taiwanese president Ma Ying-jeou (Shattuck 2022, 335). Instead, Taiwan slowly moved towards a more subtle variant of foreign investments and soft power.

The second factor is the considerable distance from mainland China. Simply put, the PRC’s power wanes with increasing distance and vice versa. Therefore, the further Taiwan’s allies are, the greater the probability for being immune towards China’s poaching. Lastly, countries that have recently gained independence or are simply in need of financial aid were more willing to enter official diplomatic relations with Taiwan as these newly independent countries sympathise with the current situation or simply like receiving financial donations from Taiwan (Hu 2015, 23; Rich 2009, 161).

4.1.1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is a subsidiary part of the government of Taiwan and is divided into cabinets. The official website states that MOFA helps promote FDIs, as well as helping generate new business opportunities. The current head of MOFA, Taiwanese politician Joseph Wu, has served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan (ROC) since February 26, 2018. Kelly Wu-Chiao Hsieh and Tien Chung-kwang both serve as the Deputy Ministers, while Remus Li-Kuo Chen serves as the Vice Minister (MOFA n.d. b). The department structure is varied, consisting of the Secretariat at the top of the hierarchy, regional sectors, and various other departments (MOFA n.d. c).

MOFA also provides scholarships to foreign students, making Taiwan an attractive location for studying abroad. Countries conducting any form of diplomacy (whether official or unofficial) are eligible for application. Other conditions include not being a citizen of the Republic of China, having never attended the same level degree institution in Taiwan as applying to, or having not received MOFA scholarship before (MOFA n.d. d).

4.1.2 One China Policy and the 'Race to Zero'[1]

With the exile of the Republic of China's dominant party Kuomintang to Taiwan in 1949, it was Chiang Kai-shek himself who first put forward the concept of the controversial 'One China Policy'. With Chiang, 1,5 to 2 million Chinese refugees who disagreed with the development on the mainland sailed to Taiwan. KMT was also met with disillusionment from the Taiwanese, who only knew how to speak Japanese due to Japanese colonisation, or the Taiwanese Hokkien (Bakešová et al. 2004, 99). While the Republic of China was accepted as the only representative of China during the pre-Sino-American rapprochement era, the PRC replaced the ROC in the early 1970s, dealing KMT another blow.

The 'One China Policy', as the name suggests, is a Chinese policy that explicitly states that there is only one definite representative of China in the world. Considering the time frame of the policy's origin, the Cold War, the two contestants at that time were Chiang Kai-shek's Republic of China and Mao Zedong's People's Republic of China, respectively. At that time, 'Chiang Kai-shek adamantly asserted that he would not "coexist with bandits," meaning Mao Zedong's China… As a result, no country has formal relations with China and Taiwan simultaneously (Shattuck 2022, 335)'. Yet, the United States policy of the same name relies on hedging and strategic ambiguity of the 'One China Policy', as can be seen in the 1972 Joint Communiqué between the US and the PRC. In it, the US 'acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China' and the US 'does not challenge its position' (digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org, archived). Nowadays, however, Taiwan has adopted a 'pragmatic diplomacy' (務實外交; *Wushi waijiao*). This means that Taiwan no longer insists on being the only representative of China, but wishes to coexist while not demanding its supporters to cut ties with Beijing (Zou 2000).

One of the byproducts of the 'One China Policy' is the isolation of Taiwan as mainland China slowly but surely gains its allies. To further isolate Taiwan, the PRC's long-term strategy has been to 'poach' Taiwan's allies (Shattuck 2022, 334), i.e. gaining all of Taiwan's allies until its count reaches zero. This 'anaconda' strategy (Dreyer 2018), aims to slowly 'swallow up' Taiwan's remaining allies by competing with Taiwan's economic aid offers. However, Hu stresses that '[I]t is axiomatic that distance decreases power. Although China possesses intercontinental missiles and an ocean-going navy, it has little reason to threaten or use force

[1] A term used by Thomas J. Shattuck to illustrate Taiwan's dwindling number of allies since ROC's withdrawal from the UN.

against Taiwan's allies (2018, 14).' This creates opportunities for Taiwan to avert China's strategy of poaching its allies.

As long as the DPP is in power, the PRC will continue poaching Taiwan's allies. This can be demonstrated in the period of former KMT President Ma Ying-jeou's policy of 'diplomatic truce' starting from 2008 until 2016. During this time, no allies were poached and both parties reached an agreement as the President also explicitly accepted the '1992 Consensus' (Shattuck 2022, 335, 337). This consensus is largely disputed between KMT, DPP, and CCP. While DPP denies its existence, KMT and CCP's interpretations differ with KMT stating that there is 'one China with each side with its interpretation' (ibid., 336). According to Shattuck, the PRC's 'poaching' of Taiwanese allies may also be the PRC's method of coercing Tsai's government into accepting the '1992 Consensus' (ibid.).

The One China Policy has had many implications in the field of not only international relations. For instance, the One China Policy is also the reason why Taiwan is represented in international organizations such as the Olympic Games under the name 'Chinese Taipei'. With the PRC being part of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), The ROC has been represented as the 'Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee' since 1981 while the PRC was admitted as the 'Chinese Olympic Committee' (Oyen 2022).

4.2 Taiwan's Unofficial Diplomacy

Despite the dwindling amount of Taiwan's allies since the Sino-American rapprochement of 1972, Taiwan maintains unofficial diplomatic relations with the majority of the member states of the UN. Taiwan's bilateral relations with the Czech Republic are no exception. To adhere to the One-China policy and sustain relations with the PRC and ROC, Taiwan is represented under the Taipei Cultural and Economic (Representative) Office (TECO). TECO is directly affiliated with the Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). The case of Taipei and Beijing's scramble for allies can be demonstrated by Gary D. Rawnsley's statement that 'Governments that are required to engage in informal relations tend to be in political competition with other powers for recognition and legitimacy within the international arena (Rawnsley 2000, 136).' Since Taiwan is a de facto working democratic country, but not de jure, it is left to engage primarily in unofficial diplomacy.

The following part focuses on the representative offices of both Taiwan and the Czech Republic, namely the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Prague (TECO) and the Czech Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei (CECO). The former not only represents a textbook example of Taipei's unofficial relations in the form of representative offices but, as with other TECOs within the region, a potential kickstart towards Taipei's influence in Central Europe and subsequent advocacy for Taiwan's cause into international organizations such as the UN. This is presented on a case study of historical relations between the Czech Republic and Taiwan.

Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (臺北經濟文化辦事處, *Taibei jingji wenhua banshichu*, TECO)'s roots can be traced to the beginning of Taiwan's isolation within the international system caused by the shift and inclusion of the PRC into the UN in 1971. TECOs are established in countries maintaining official relations with the PRC. 'Non-recognition of the Taiwanese government is a prerequisite for conducting formal diplomatic relations with the PRC—in effect forcing other governments to choose between Beijing and Taipei (Erikson and Chen 2007).' No office was allowed to change its name from 'Taipei' to 'Taiwan' since doing so would strictly contradict the One-China policy and would imply the acceptance of the possibility of 'Two Chinas'. This is no longer true, however, since Somaliland and Lithuania both adopted the name 'Taiwanese' into the name of their representative office in 2020 and 2021, respectively (ROC Taiwan n.d. a, b).

5 The Case of the Czech Republic

The former Czechoslovakia had maintained formal diplomatic relations with the Republic of China from 1918 until 1948. For the next 50 years, neither Czechoslovakia nor Taiwan maintained diplomatic relations as the Taiwanese regime under KMT was dependent on the support of the US (Bakešová et al. 2004, 153), an enemy of the countries of the so-called Soviet sphere.

The era after the year 1989 has been a crucial step towards Taipei's further development of bilateral relations. With many Central European countries switching from communist authoritative regimes towards democratic rule, it was an obvious choice for Taipei to gain allies in this region (Tubilewicz 2007, 54). Because of the communist regime, Taipei did not keep any relations with these now post-communist countries until 1989. With the increasing isolation imposed upon Taiwan since the 1970s and its former allies now switching ties to the PRC, Taipei would have been able to avert China's plans by gaining allies in this region. This would have caused international organisations to reconsider Taiwan's inclusion within these organisations (Tubilewicz 2007, 74), with the most important actor being the Czech Republic during President Havel (ibid., 59).

In his study, Czeslaw Tubilewicz explains how despite both Taipei and Budapest being open to cooperation, Taipei forfeited its pursues in Hungary, losing due to the unfavourable conditions towards issuing visas for the Taiwanese and unsatisfactory working opportunities and conditions for Hungarian workers looking for jobs abroad. Therefore, Taipei focused its efforts on Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Russia, instead (Tubilewicz 2007, 54). Out of Taipei's efforts in the region, the Czech Republic has been the most successful thus far. This is due to former Czech president Václav Havel's 'ideological diplomacy' model of the early 90s. The result of this was the establishment of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Prague in 1991. The 'first lady' diplomacy (夫人外交, *Furen waijiao*) model and Taiwanese foreign aid are just a few of the examples of the Czech-Taiwanese rapprochement of the 90s. The first sitting government minister to visit Taiwan was Karel Dyba in 1994 (iDnes.cz 2024).

Despite being a success, Tubilewicz concludes, 'This model of diplomacy however did not survive after Havel's presidency (2007, 178).' Czech-Taiwan diplomacy, however, flourished with Havel and his wife Dagmar visiting the island in 2004 after his presidency ended, meeting with President Chen Shui-bian (Asiedu 2004). This resulted in the establishment of the Annual

Meeting of the Czech-Taiwanese Business Council for Economic Cooperation (MOEA 2023b). Even though Havel's successor, Václav Klaus, preferred a more pragmatic approach of conducting bilateral relations with both the PRC and Taiwan, Havel still kept visiting the island after his mandate.

What is important to say is that Taiwan has been a frequent investor in the Czech Republic. The most notable example of these investments is Foxconn, operating in Pardubice, Kutná Hora, and Prague. Others include Inventec, SMS, ASUS, and PEGATRON (Liu 2023). Other Taiwanese investments in the Czech Republic include FIC (First International Computer) in Rudná, the manufacture of small planes in cooperation of the Aerospace Industrial Development Corporation with Czech Aero Vodochody, and textile manufacturing plant Hualon in Červený Kostelec (Bakešová 2004, 251).

One of the more evident reasons for the pandemic rapprochement of the Czech Republic and Taiwan is also the decline in Czech-PRC bilateral relations. While only a handful of subjects such as the pro-communist news periodical *Haló Noviny* or a part of the Social Democratic Party (ČSSD, nowadays SOCDEM) kept the warm sentiment towards PRC, the common reason for the Sino-Czech dispute is the authoritarian regime of the PRC (Fürst 2021). According to Fürst, the other factors include controversies surrounding the PRC-owned football club Slavia Praha or the questionable ethics of former president Miloš Zeman's financial advisor Ye Jianming, which renders the PRC unattractive, especially for the younger generation (Fürst 2021, 22).

Shortly before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, Prague government had rejected the contract of cooperation between sister cities of Prague and Beijing, demanding the removal of the 'One China Policy' clause, which only worsened the relations between the two countries (ibid., 24). While it is true that Jaroslav Kubera, the former head of the Senate, planned visit to Taiwan before the pandemic, it was not until the outbreak that we saw more intensive cooperation between the two countries.

In terms of investments, Miloš Vystrčil made a trip to Taiwan with Czech businessmen planning to invest in Taiwan. During this time, Czech-Taiwanese Business Chamber (CTBC) and Taiwan (R.O.C) Chamber of Commerce in the Czech Republic (TCCCZ) activity has risen and reached an all-time high. Despite both of these chambers being established before the pandemic, the pandemic was responsible for the current 'honeymoon' phase, reminiscent of the Havel era.

5.1 Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office

TECO Prague was established in 1991 after the meetings of President Havel and Taiwanese politician Lien Chan. TECO Prague offers full consular services, with the current head of the office, Ke Liang-Ruey, who has been the head of TECO Prague since January 18, 2020 (ROC Taiwan 2024). According to the official TECO website, the main purpose of the office is to 'promote bilateral relations between the Czech Republic and Taiwan through cultural exchange, academic cooperation, tourism, trade activities, and investments (ibid.).' TECO comprises the consular and visa department, economic department, and science and technology department. Except for visa application and consular services, TECO Prague provides information for the Czech media, deepening mutual relations between the two countries; and academic, scientific, and cultural exchange, while serving as a representative office for Taiwanese science parks at the same time (ROC Taiwan 2024).

The Czech counterpart to TECO is the Czech Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei (CECO). CECO also promotes economic, cultural, and academic exchange between the two countries. CECO serves as a quasi-embassy of the Czech Republic in Taiwan and mirrors its structure and services from TECO. The current head of CECO is David Steinke. The office includes the Secretariat; Visa, Cultural, Education and Consular Sections; Economic and Trade Section, and Science & Technology Section (MZV n.d. b). CECO organizes events in Taipei promoting Czech culture as well as meetings with Czech exchange students currently studying in Taiwan. CECO's role during the pandemic included the organization of meetings of Czech political actors with their Taiwanese counterparts and vice versa.

5.2 Hofstede's 6D Model of National Culture

One of the methods to understand why the cooperation between the Czech Republic and Taiwan is successful can be demonstrated by using the 6D Model of National Culture developed by the Dutch professor Geert Hofstede. This model is a framework for cross-cultural psychology, often used to understand the society's culture and its effect on the values of its members, deriving its structure from factor analysis (Adeoye and Tomei 2014, 6). Hofstede's model has various uses including cross-cultural communication, conducting international business, and intercultural management. After all, Hofstede's model started from a need to quantify the cultural differences of the IBM employees in the early 1970s (Hofstede 2011, 6). Hofstede's model can also be used

to understand the similarities and differences between actors and promote better communication and cooperation, including diplomatic cooperation. In addition to this, it can also help understand the motivation for Czech-Taiwan cooperation. Since cultural differences are still relevant in this day and age, the awareness of them enables respectful cross-cultural cooperation.

While Hofstede's model initially consisted of only the first 4 dimensions, the current model uses 6 dimensions, where the last two dimensions, Long-term Orientation and Indulgence, were introduced based on research by Hofstede and Michael Minkov in their publication *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind Revised and Expanded* (Hofstede et al. 2010). These dimensions are power distance, individualism, motivation towards achievement and success, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence (Hofstede 2011).

The dimensions model of the Czech Republic and Taiwan was taken from the scores of a study by The Culture Factor Group Oy, and was supervised by Michael Minkov (The Culture Factor, under 'Frequently Asked Questions'). This research opted for the most updated scores from October 2023 (ibid.). The reason for this is because, unlike the previous legacy versions of the data, the scores from October 2023 reflect the pandemic development of both countries. The methodology used for collecting the scores involved use of questionnaires, literature review, identification of the dimensions through factor analysis, normalization of the score to fit previous research, and validation of the data (The Culture Factor, under 'Frequently Asked Questions').

Even though both countries share similarities in areas such as power distance, motivation towards achievement and success, and uncertainty avoidance, the other dimensions reveal the different sides of both of the actors. The six dimensions are as follows:

Power distance

Power distance is defined as the extent to which the unequal distribution of power is both expected and accepted by less powerful organizations and institutions (such as the family) (Hofstede 2011, 9). Countries with high power distance accept a benevolent authoritarian as a leader. Corruptions also tend to be frequent in high power distance countries. In comparison, low power distance countries prefer egalitarian distribution of power and therefore will prefer pluralist government (ibid.). In short, both Taiwan and the Czech Republic possess a slightly above-average rate of power distance, thus adhering to the principle of unequal distribution of

power and social hierarchy. This metric is also affected by the historical development of these countries, i.e. the communist rule in the Czech Republic and the dictatorial regime of KMT in Taiwan.

Individualism

Countries with high individuality emphasize taking care of oneself and their close family whereas low individuality countries (collectivist countries) take distant relatives into consideration. Individualist cultures are therefore described as having the 'I' mentality whereas collectivist countries possess the 'We' mentality (Hofstede 2011, 11). The Czech Republic is considered more individualistic than Taiwan. The explanation for this phenomenon is that Taiwan honours distant relatives, especially grandparents, who are included in the celebrations of the festivals such as the Lunar New Year. In Taiwan, society generally aims towards preserving harmony within the society, whereas the Czech Republic emphasises 'freely expressing one's mind'.

Motivation towards achievement and success

This dimension is measured according to whether or not cultures are motivated toward achievement and success. In addition, cultures with traditional gender roles and emphasis on acts of bravery, heroism, and strong male figures score high on this dimension. That is why previously, this dimension was named 'Masculinity vs. Femininity' (Hofstede 2011). The trends in the workplace also affect this dimension. For instance, working for a company and climbing the career ladder as opposed to being self-employed is said to be more masculine and thus considered to be a higher motivation towards achievement and success. Feminine cultures strive for work-life balance and their governments provide social benefits for their inhabitants. In this aspect, the Czech Republic is considered slightly masculine whereas Taiwan is considered to be a slightly feminine culture.

Uncertainty avoidance

According to Hofstede, 'Uncertainty-avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such [unexpected, novel] situations by strict behavioural codes, laws and rules, disapproval of deviant opinions, and a belief in absolute Truth; i.e. "There can only be one Truth and we have it"' (Hofstede 2011, 10). Law and order is the default preferred system of justice in both cultures. In this regard, The Czech Republic (74) is 5 points higher than Taiwan (69).

Long-term orientation

Cultures scoring high on Long-term orientation tend to be characterized by adaptable traditions, thrift and perseverance, learning from other countries, fast economic growth, and focus on the future (ibid.: 15). Taiwan scores the highest measure in this metric (89), reflecting its fast growth and the fact it is one of the 'Asian Tiger' economies. Taiwan's perseverance and know-how in the field of technology is one of its primary means of conducting economic diplomacy with its allies. Technological advancements are also the key points of the talks between the Czech Republic and Taiwan.

Indulgence

The sixth and final dimension added is the indulgence. Indulgence-driven cultures promote free gratification of one's needs, have a higher percentage of people declaring themselves happy, consider leisure as an important need, are more likely to remember positive emotions, and have more lenient sexual norms to name a few. Restraint cultures, on the other hand, are in binary opposition to indulgent cultures (ibid., 16). The Czech Republic, unlike Taiwan, is more restrained in this regard, scoring 29 points whereas Taiwan has 49 points.

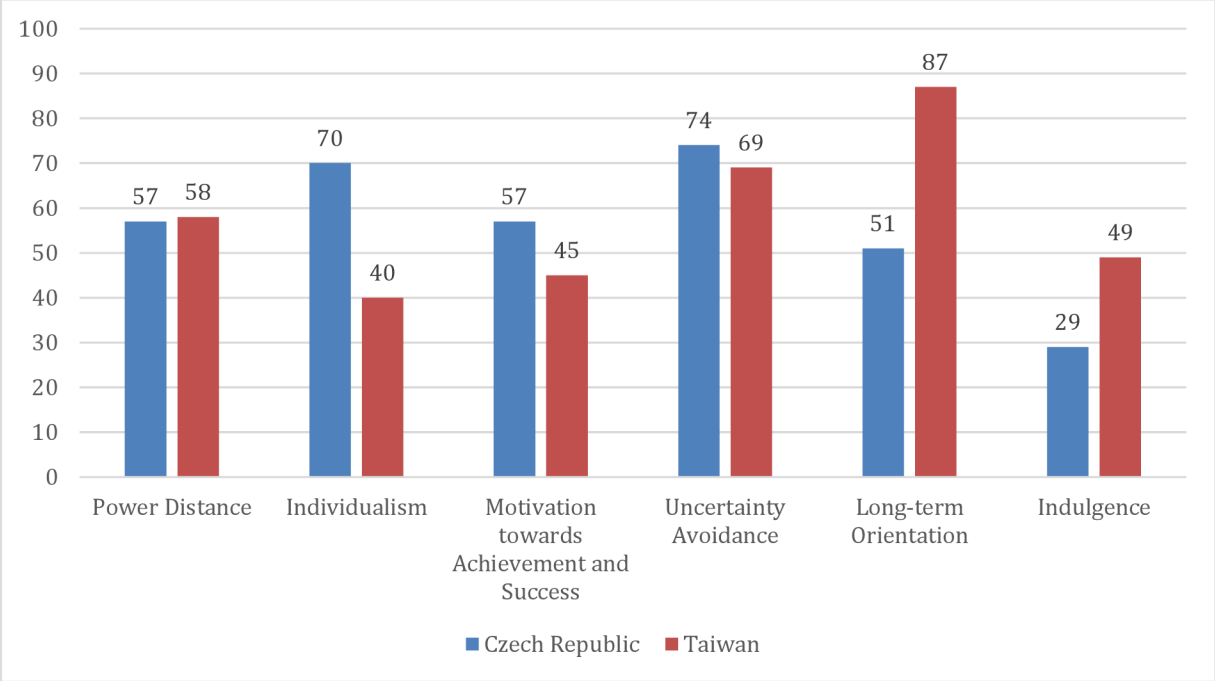

Fig. 1: Comparison of the Czech Republic and Taiwan based on Hofstede's 6D Model of National Culture. Source: https://www.theculturefactor.com/country-comparison-tool, created by the author.

With that said, the common narrative used throughout media is that the common denominator of both the Czech Republic and Taiwan is their history. While the former used to be a communist country, the latter was ruled under a dictatorial regime of Kuomintang with a long period of martial law. This enshrouded both countries in a reign of terror, oppression, and uncertainty. Both countries put emphasis on democracy and use it as a common ground for their rapprochement.

In comparison, the areas where both the Czech Republic and Taiwan converge, are individualism, long-term orientation, and indulgence. This means that the Czech Republic is a more individualist society whereas Taiwan is a more collectivist society. In the case of Taiwan, this may stem from the Confucian tradition. In addition, Taiwan is adapting more quickly and has a faster-growing economy, mainly due to its know-how in the semiconductor industry and its perseverance in the field of diplomacy. Finally, Taiwan promotes a leisure-driven lifestyle, promoting free gratification of one's needs and thus reporting a higher percentage of happy people.

The strength of the Czech Republic lies in the automotive industry, machinery, electrical equipment, and nanometre and precision technology. The Czech Republic also has ample resources including coal deposits or deposits of lithium ore. On the other hand, the Czech Republic suffers, like many European countries, from inflation. The economy is in decline and according to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) is considered to be a European country with the most rapid decline in living standards (Klímová and Pokorný 2022). Taiwan's weakness, on the other hand, lies in its reliance on its allies, who in return help the island maintain its status quo.

In conclusion, both the Czech Republic and Taiwan share similarities in terms of power distance, motivation towards achievement and success, and uncertainty avoidance. That means that both countries lean towards the acceptance of traditional societal roles, both countries are democracies with set orders and laws, and finally, both countries lean towards hard work. Taiwan, unlike the Czech Republic, is a more collectivist, indulgent, and long-term-oriented culture. In this regard, Taiwan's economy is growing more rapidly. Democracy plays an important role for both the Czech Republic and Taiwan, with both countries using it as a common ground for their talks.

6 Analysis: The Case of Economic Rapprochement

This part serves as the case study focusing on the analysis of representative meetings of prominent Czech and Taiwanese political figures. The first section contains a brief overview of each meeting including its actors, topics discussed, and areas of cooperation agreed upon. Secondly, the results of these meetings are introduced and compared with the points discussed at the political meetings. The final part of this analysis lists the areas of cooperation, as well as whether or not the trends such as imports, exports, or the current account are increasing or decreasing.

6.1 Political Representative Meetings

Political meetings got the attention of the public through mass media and were presented as the symbol of the 'pandemic rapprochement' of the Czech Republic and Taiwan. This section introduces the discourse and overview of the main political meetings. These sections correlate with the order of meetings and the phases of the coronavirus pandemic.

6.1.1 Miloš Vystrčil, Zdeněk Hřib, and Kung Ming-hsin

The first of the meetings that caught the attention of the media was the meeting of Miloš Vystrčil, head of the Senate, and Zdeněk Hřib, now former mayor of Prague. While Hřib visited the island once during the coronavirus pandemic as the mayor of Prague, he had previously visited the island in March 2019 as a politician. Hřib also spend one year on Taiwan as an exchange student during his studies in 2005 (Deník 2020). Vystrčil, on the other hand, visited Taiwan following the wish of the former head of the Senate Jaroslav Kubera. In January 2020, Vystrčil announced he would visit Taiwan later that year, not without a reaction from the PRC. He eventually visited the island at the end of August with a delegation of 90 people (Trachtová 2020).

During his visit, Vystrčil gave a speech at the Taiwan–Czech Economic, Trade, and Business Forum (Zong 2020). There he met with the head of the National Development Council Kung Ming-hsin and the head of the Economic Department Wang Mei-hua. Together they witnessed the creation of the Asian Silicon Valley Plan and Czech Science and Technology Advanced Region (STAR). Finally, the Czech-Taiwanese Business Chamber, Digital Age Media Group,

and the Center for Research and Development of Precision Machinery each signed three MOUs. In these MOUs they agreed upon cooperation in fields such as AIoT (Artificial Intelligence of Things), Smart City technology, Smart Machinery, smart technology, and startup communities. In addition to this, over 100 Czech and Taiwanese companies joined the expo, discussing mutual business opportunities (Zong 2020).

Vystrčil's trip to Taiwan served dominantly as a diplomatic gesture, with Vystrčil stating that: 'We will either keep with our values and principles or count coins. If I travel to Taiwan, then I will incline towards keeping those principles and stop counting coins, because we could find out one day we do not have any (ibid.).' Vystrčil made his speech, concluding with a sentence in Chinese: '我是台灣人, *Wo shi Taiwan ren,* i.e. I am Taiwanese' (iDnes 2020). Hřib, on the other hand, delegated the cooperation between Taipei and Prague, inviting Ko Wen-je, then mayor of Taipei, to Prague. Through this delegation, Prague Zoo and Taipei Zoo agreed that Taiwanese pangolins would be sent to Prague. Hřib also invited Joseph Wu, the Taiwanese minister of foreign affairs, to Prague, to discuss the establishment of a direct flight from Taipei to Prague (Seznam Zprávy 2021). From the Taiwanese point of view, the first notable delegation was led by Taiwanese politician Kung Ming-hsin. Kung and his delegation of 66 members visited Prague in October 2021, which resulted in the signing of 5 Memoranda of Understanding between Taipei and Prague (Liu 2023).

In conclusion, the first phase of the pandemic rapprochement was in the spirit of diplomatic gestures of both parties. Whether it is Vystrčil's speech at the Taiwanese parliament or Hřib's negotiations for Taiwanese pangolin and direct flight from Taipei to Prague, these meetings were the precursors to consequent meetings, creating a suitable atmosphere for further rapprochement.

6.1.2 Jiří Drahoš and You Si-kun

The envoy of Dr. Jiří Drahoš comprised a delegation of Czech investors and focused on creating opportunities for new foreign investments. Drahoš visited Taiwan in September 2022. During Drahoš's visit to Taiwan, 6 MOUs were signed in total, of which 1 MOU focused on semiconductor cooperation, 3 on academic exchange, and 2 between the Taiwanese National Palace Museum and National Museum in Prague (Yang 2022). Drahoš says that having the opportunity to join the meeting with experts in different fields was just as important (ibid.).

Meanwhile, You Si-kun, the head of the Taiwanese parliament, visited Taiwan two months before Drahoš, in July 2022, and gave a speech at the parliament of the Czech Republic (Liu 2023).

Despite the lesser attention from the media than the meetings of Miloš Vystrčil and Markéta Pekarová Adamová, the visit of Drahoš should not be neglected. Drahoš, being a chemist and former head of the Czech Academy of Science, reflected his specialisation in the meetings in the form of semiconductor cooperation between the Czech Republic and Taiwan. This is an important point of discussion, since talks of the semiconductor cooperation are, by the time of writing this thesis, still in progress, with the notable example being the recent Forum 2000 Expo in October 2024. Drahoš visited Taiwan once again, post-covid, in June 2024 (Senát Parlamentu ČR 2024).

6.1.3 Markéta Pekarová Adamová and Kung Ming-hsin

The largest delegation of over 160 members (CIECA 2023) was the delegation of the head of the Chamber of Deputies, Markéta Pekarová Adamová, in March 2023. This meeting resulted in the signing of 11 MOUs in total (Liu 2023). Just like Vystrčil's first trip to Taiwan, Pekarová's trip served as a diplomatic gesture, further deepening the diplomatic cooperation. Both parties discussed the possibility of Taiwan investing in the Czech Republic, including semiconductors, smart cities, E-bikes, green energy, and other forms of investments (TSIDA 2024) at The 18th Session of the Taiwan-Czech Joint Business Council Meeting (MOEA 2023a).

Adamová met with Joseph Wu as well as You Si-kun, with whom she signed 4 MOUs in total. Her visit resulted in signing the virtual reality cooperation programme known as VRgineers. Finally, 7 MOUs of academic cooperation were signed as well (ROC Taiwan 2023). In addition, the Director of the National Taiwan Museum Hung Shih-you, and the Director of the National Czech Museum Michal Lukeš signed the Letter of Intent on Exhibition Cooperation (ibid.). Kung Ming-hsin stated that Taiwan allocated up to USD 200 million into its 'Central and East Europe Investment Capital', with the maximum amount of money allocated into a single investment being USD 500,000 (ibid.). Following Vystrčil's 'I am Taiwanese' speech, Adamová declared that 'We [the Czech Republic] stand with you'.

Mirroring Adamová's visit to Taiwan at the end of March, Kung Ming-hsin visited Miloš Vystrčil in July 2023 with his envoy of 28 people. The topic of the talks included cooperation in the field of telecommunication with Chunghwa Telecom, The International Semiconductor Association SEMI Taiwan, economy, and academic cooperation (Zong 2023). With that said, Kung Ming-hsin's delegation to Taiwan concluded the Czech-Taiwanese political meetings during the coronavirus pandemic.

6.2 Results of the Meetings

All of the achievements and successes of the above-mentioned political meetings are summarised and listed in this section. These include economic cooperation, political cooperation, and other fields of cooperation including healthcare cooperation, military cooperation, and more. Needless to say, while the coronavirus talks sparked further cooperation in the following areas, its impact permeates into the post-COVID era and future may hold more tangible results.

6.2.1 Economic Cooperation

As noted in the previous sections, economic cooperation was the most prominent form of diplomacy between the Czech Republic and Taiwan. From the data collected from the years 2019 to 2023, the rate of both Czech and Taiwanese exports increased. This trend of rising was halted in year 2023, where one can observe a decrease of Taiwanese imports.

The areas of cooperation, i.e. the items of trade, correlate with the points discussed at the political meetings. What is interesting is that the media neglected the long-term staples of trade such as Taiwanese motorbikes, bicycles, and wheelchairs, which constituted 20% of the overall Czech imports from years 2019 to 2023. The same can be said of the Czech automotive industry, namely Škoda Auto and ČSA, which made the overwhelming majority (85%) of the trade.

Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) of Taiwan and the PRC in the Czech Republic have been one of the primary means of cooperation with the Czech Republic. While investments from Taiwan in the Czech Republic reach up to 18 billion CZK, these investments are long-term, from 1993 to 2021 (Nozar 2023). Nozar argues that while PRC investments outweigh Taiwanese

investments, it is the Taiwanese investments that have created three times more workplaces than those of the PRC (ibid.). Yet, one of the major obstacles to new investments is the slow bureaucratic process of building permits, where the Czech Republic stands at 150th place globally (ibid.).

If anything, Czech–Taiwanese bilateral relations far succeeded the goals of the meetings. Taiwan spent over EUR 1 billion on FDIs (Hsiao 2023). In addition, Taiwan has created more job opportunities than in other European countries. The Czech Republic is, however, not the only attractive Taiwanese location. Taiwan currently also has warm bilateral relations with Slovakia and Lithuania (Hsiao 2023).

The number of foreign investments, contrary to popular belief, was not as numerous as expected. According to the data of the Czech–Taiwan Business Chamber (CTBC), most of the foreign investments, if any, started surging after the coronavirus pandemic and many of the investments are simply expansions of the already existing investments (Rezková 2024)[2], such as the Foxconn or ASUSTech. Therefore, the coronavirus pandemic did not create new investment opportunities but instead helped the expansion of already established players such as Foxconn or ASUSTech. It is important to state, however, that while the results of these talks did not have an immediate effect, it is possible that the future may hold more tangible results. In addition, the decreased purchasing power caused by the inflation resulted in the lower rates of exports and imports in year 2023 than in previous years.

6.2.2 Political Cooperation

Political cooperation was the second outcome of the political meetings. The greatest achievement in terms of political outcomes is the establishment of a direct flight from Taipei to Prague. These direct flights, operating twice weekly by China Airlines, are in effect from July 18, 2023, flying from Taoyuan International Airport to Václav Havel Airport Prague. According to Jan Herget, Director of CzechTourism, a total of 191,336 Taiwanese tourists came to the Czech Republic in 2019, compared to a drastic decline to only 13,791 in 2022, which means a drop of almost 93%. He adds that ‘A direct flight between Prague and Taipei could

[2] Based on the email correspondence with Ms. Alice Rezková, co-founder of the Czech – Taiwanese Business Chamber.

change that' (Prague Airport 2023). The direct flight is a product of Zdeněk Hřib, former mayor of Prague, and the cancellation of Prague-Beijing and Prague-Shanghai sister cities agreements, opting for the Prague-Taipei agreement, instead. This point was further solidified during the first major pandemic meetings of Vystrčil and Hřib. The direct flight from Taipei to Prague mirrors the efforts of former President Miloš Zeman and the establishment of a direct flight from Prague to Beijing. In return, Ko Wen-je was invited to Prague by Hřib.

The political meetings of Miloš Vystrčil and Markéta Pekarová Adamová also belong to this category. Vystrčil's 'I am Taiwanese' speech, in particular, was a gesture further contributing to the distancing from the PRC while cementing the relationship between the Czech Republic and Taiwan. This was then followed by Adamová's 'We stand with you' speech.

Finally, while not a direct meeting, President Pavel's phone call to President Tsai in January 2023 is an important political milestone since the Czech Republic is the first European country to have a phone call with President Tsai, with Pavel being the second statesman after former American President Donald Trump (Václavíková 2023).

6.2.3 Other Forms of Cooperation

The aforementioned forms of cooperation, while being the most prominent, were not the only means of cooperation between the Czech Republic and Taiwan. Other forms of cooperation include healthcare cooperation, military cooperation, academic exchange, and other forms of financial aid. This research does not take other forms of cooperation as its primary objective, and therefore, they are left open to discussion.

A noticeable part of this 'rapprochement' is the donation of Taiwanese respirator and cloth mask assembly lines in 2021 donated by the Taiwanese Autoland Technology as a welcoming gesture and the consequence of Miloš Vystrčil's visit to the island in August 2020 (Řeháková 2021). From the start, both parties did not have a contract and therefore the Czech Republic could not accept the gift. Despite the initial complications, a Prague subsidiary of Autoland Technology was given the assembly lines in February 2021 (Novinky 2021). Speaking of healthcare cooperation, the Czech Republic donated 30,000 doses of Moderna vaccines to Taiwan in July 2021. President Tsai stated that this gesture further cemented Czech's closeness to Taiwan and further distancing from the PRC (iDnes.cz 2021).

In terms of military cooperation, the TaiwanCZ HighTech LevelUP 2021 resulted in the Taiwan Defense Industry Development Association (TW-DIDA) and the Czech-Taiwan Business Chamber signing the Memorandum of Understanding (Czech-Taiwan Business Chamber n.d.). The Taiwanese delegation met with Czech Deputy Defense Minister Tomáš Kopečný and Czech Senator Pavel Fischer. At the same time, 'more than 40 Czech companies participated in the B2B Matchmaking we [Czech-Taiwan Business Chamber] organized, with over 100 sessions taking place' (ibid.). Czech-Taiwan military cooperation also plummeted in 2020, when Czech Company Excalibur Army gave a briefing on self-propelled artillery and 6-wheel and 8-wheel military-standard wheel vehicle chassis, but stopped due to leaks of the information and pressure from China' (Hsu, 2022).

Finally, as far as academic exchange is concerned, the meetings of Jiří Drahoš were led in the spirit of academic exchange and the exchange of Taiwanese know-how. Besides the traditional exchange programs for both Czech and Taiwanese students, the talks have broadened the opportunities for students in the field of semiconductor research. The need for semiconductor researchers led Taiwan to create specialised institutes residing alongside Taiwanese universities such as National Taiwan University (NTU) and National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University (NYCU) (Vědavýzkum.cz 2023). The attractiveness of this lies not only in the grants offered by the Taiwanese government but also in the employability of the absolvents. For instance, NYCU is in partnership with TSMC, the current leader in the semiconductor field (ibid). In addition, during this time, the National Science and Technology Council and Grant Agency of the Czech Republic solicited the Taiwan-Czech Plan for Bilateral Help and International Cooperation for the year 2024 known as NSTC-GACR (NSYSU n.d.).

In conclusion, the areas of cooperation were not limited only to economic and political diplomacy. In terms of economic and political diplomacy, the primary focus of this thesis, it can be concluded that the media only took the new possibilities for cooperation into consideration while neglecting the trade staples such as the Czech and Taiwanese automotive industries. As far as political cooperation is concerned, the most notable achievements are the establishment of the direct flight Taipei-Prague, and the donation of Pangolin to the Prague Zoo. The other areas of cooperation include healthcare cooperation, military cooperation, and academic exchange. While these were not as prominent as the aforementioned economic and political cooperation, they still left an imprint on the further rapprochement of the Czech-Taiwan bilateral relations.

6.3 Statistics of Economic Cooperation

The following part comprises the statistics of economic cooperation. This includes the section on Czech-Taiwan imports, exports, and the current account in relation to the total trade between the Czech Republic and Taiwan; the 5 most prominent items exported from the Czech Republic to Taiwan and vice versa. Finally, a summary of the data collected is introduced.

6.3.1 Czech – Taiwan Import, Export, and the Current Account

Czech and Taiwanese trade was the primary research objective of this thesis. While the author's initial hypothesis considered the coronavirus pandemic as the catalyst of not only economic cooperation between the two actors, the results were more complex than expected. The following graph represents Czech–Taiwanese trade during the pandemic, with the blue section representing the exports from the Czech Republic to Taiwan, the red representing Taiwanese exports to the Czech Republic, and the green line the resulting Czech current account of the net trade between the two countries.

The current account is an important indicator of the country's economy. It can be either positive or negative. In the case of the former, the exports surpass the imports, and a country is said to be in surplus. In other words, a country is gaining financially, which is the case of Taiwan. The Czech Republic is the exact opposite. Since the imports from Taiwan far exceed Czech exports, this results in the Czech current account being negative. Countries with negative current account are said to be in deficit, and are therefore losing financially.

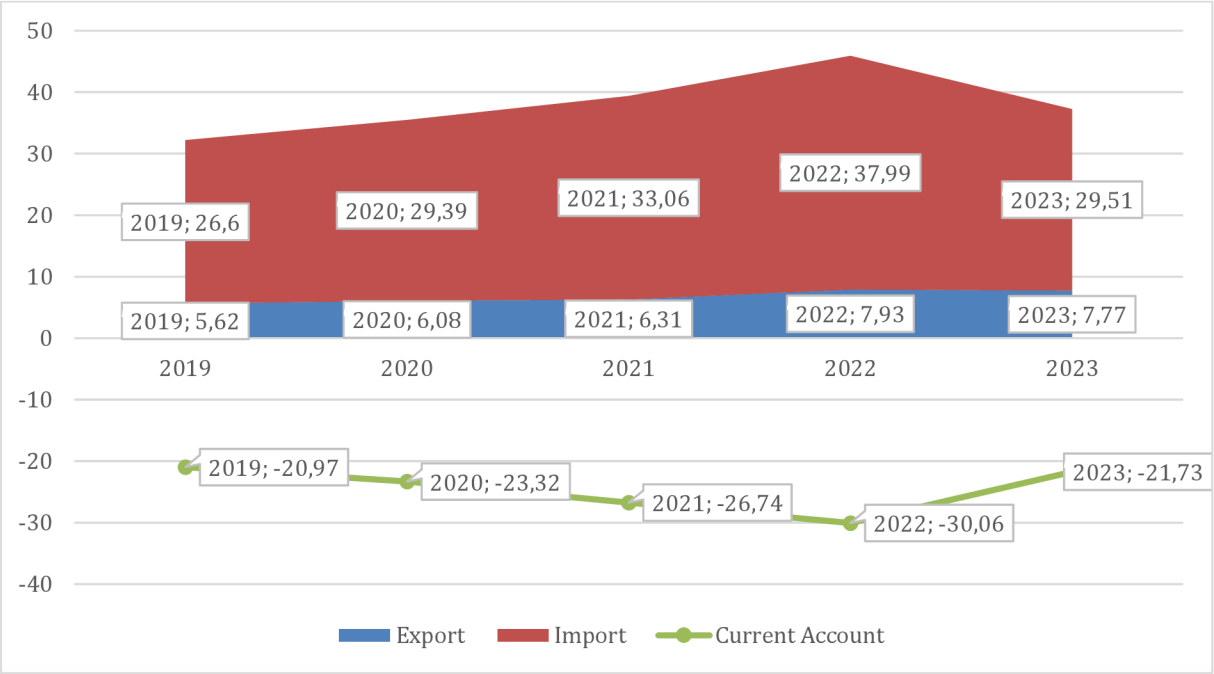

Fig. 2: Taiwan's imports, Czech exports, and Czech current account (in bil. CZK).
Source: BusinessINFO.cz. Created by the author.

From the graph, it can be observed that the total amount of trade between both actors increased. This, however, changed in the year 2023, the final year of the pandemic, where both the Czech exports to Taiwan and Taiwanese imports to the Czech Republic dropped slightly. For the sake of better understanding, Czech exports mean the exports of the Czech Republic to Taiwan. When Taiwanese imports are mentioned, Taiwanese imports to the Czech Republic are meant.

Two important trends can be observed here: while Taiwan's imports to the Czech Republic dropped slightly in 2023, so did the exports from the Czech Republic to Taiwan. Czech exports to Taiwan rose only marginally throughout the years 2019 to 2021. The highest amount of Czech exports was then in 2022, with the total amount of 7,93 billion. The rising trend stopped in the year 2023, where a declining trend can be observed. However, while the Taiwanese imports dropped slightly in the year 2023, so did the current account. This means that the Czech Republic started playing a bigger role in trade with Taiwan.

(bil. CZK)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Export	5,62	6,08	6,31	7,93	7,77
Import	26,60	29,39	33,06	37,99	29,51
Current Account	-20,97	-23,32	-26,74	-30,06	-21,73
Export %	17,44	17,14	16,03	16,55	20,84

Fig. 3: Data of exports, imports, and the current account of the Czech Republic with Taiwan from 2019 to 2023. Source: BusinessINFO.cz. Edited by the author.

When statistics from the years 2014 to 2018 are taken into consideration, one can observe that both the Czech exports to Taiwan and Taiwanese imports follow a growing trend, with the Taiwanese side outweighing the Czech one. Nonetheless, the trend of the trade during this time period follows a similar trajectory, where the Czech export drops slightly in year 2018. This phenomenon shows that the imports and exports during the coronavirus pandemic did follow a rising trend, but so did the negative current account, following a year where the exports decreased. The same trend can be observed with the pre-pandemic development of years 2014 to 2018. The hard data partially disproved the initial hypothesis of pandemic rapprochement in the economic sector. This means that while the amount of Czech exports and Taiwanese imports increased substantially, they eventually dropped in year 2023. However, since it takes time for the talks to go into effect, post-COVID years will need to be researched as well to clarify these claims.

(bil. CZK)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Export	3,76	5,09	4,73	5,46	4,60
Import	22,28	22,47	23,31	24,01	26,71
Current Account	-18,52	-17,38	-18,58	-18,55	-22,11
Export %	14,44	18,47	16,87	18,53	14,69

Fig. 4: Data on exports, imports, and the current account of the Czech Republic with Taiwan from 2014 to 2018. Source: BusinessINFO.cz. Created by the author.

In conclusion, from the statistics of Czech–Taiwan economic cooperation, several phenomena can be observed. Firstly, the amount of annual trade between the Czech Republic and Taiwan during the coronavirus pandemic was greater than during the years 2014 to 2018. This is the proof of the coronavirus pandemic catalysing the bilateral relations not only from the point of political diplomacy, but also economic diplomacy. Yet, both eras, i.e. 2014 to 2018 and 2019 to 2023, followed a similar trajectory of rising throughout the years followed by a year of decrease. This observation of the hard data partially disproves the initial hypothesis. Yet, the analysis of the post-COVID years will need to be researched as well in order to clarify this claim.

6.3.2 Top 5 Economic Commodities of the Czech Republic and Taiwan

The most important commodities of both Czech exports and Taiwanese imports are listed in this section. Following the naming convention introduced in this thesis, the Czech Republic is introduced first, followed by that of Taiwan.

6.3.2.1 Czech Export Commodities

Czech exports constitute only a minor part (17,74%[3]) of the net trade between the Czech Republic and Taiwan. However, as noted in the previous section, an increase in the role of the Czech Republic can be observed in 2023, with the export percentage ratio rising to 20,84%.

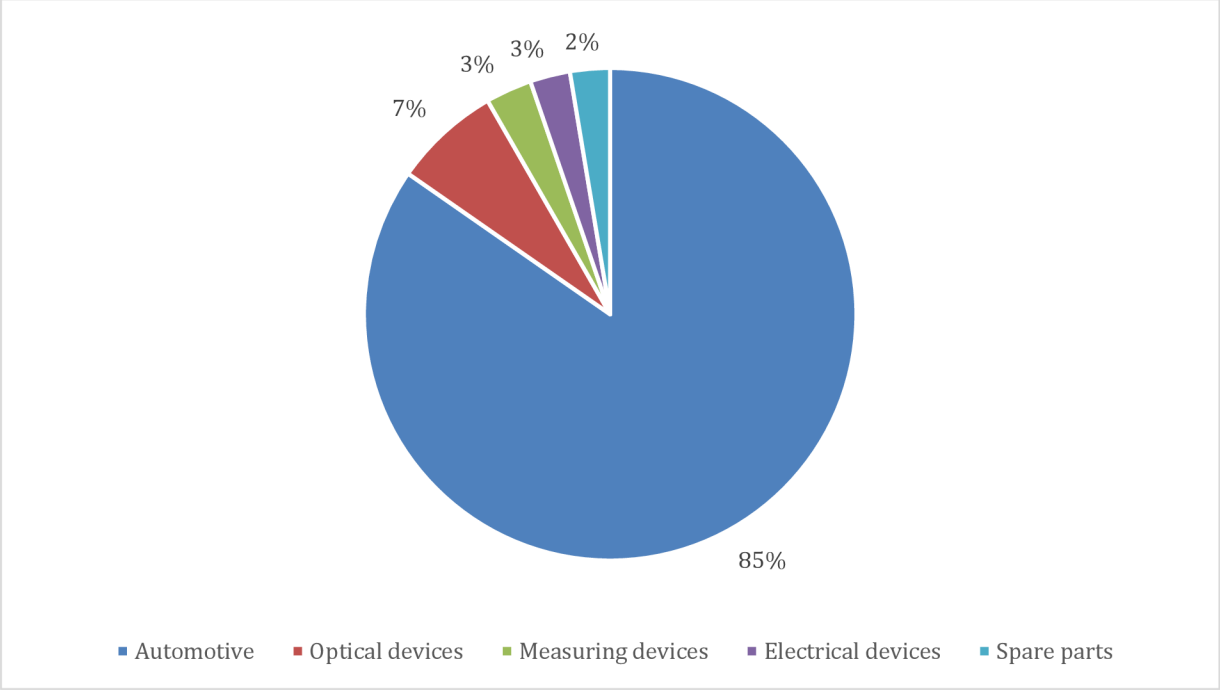

Fig. 5: 5 most prominent export items from the Czech Republic to Taiwan. Data: BusinessINFO.cz. Created by the author.

[3] Based on the average export percentage from years 2019 to 2023.

The following chart shows the most prominent trade commodities exported to Taiwan. The majority of the exports (85%) constitute the automotive industry, namely Škoda Auto a. s, followed by the export of optical devices (7%). These mainly include the scientific microscopes. Finally, measuring and electrical devices are followed by the export of spare parts, having 3% each.

All in all, Czech exports to Taiwan are more streamlined, with the overwhelming majority being the automotive industry. The leader of the Czech automotive industry is Škoda Auto, having its subsidiary headquarters in Hsinchu, Taiwan.

The second on the list are the optical devices. These mainly include the scientific microscopes from Czech company AŽD Prague. Developed in Brno, these microscopes are then exported to 50 countries around the world (Dlabaja n.d.). Lastly, measuring devices, electrical devices, and spare parts, all constitute 3% each.

SITC 3	Trade commodity	Value (mil. CZK)
781	Automotive	5 091,93
871	Optical devices	422,75
874	Measuring devices	182,76
772	Electrical devices	158,11
759	Spare parts	157,82

Fig. 6: Table of 5 most prominent export items of the Czech Republic. Source: BusinessINFO.cz.

However, the economy of the Czech Republic also has other strengths. Except for the automotive industry represented by Škoda Auto and Czech flight company ČSA, particularly strong areas also include the industry of machines, electrical equipment, nanometre technology, and precision instruments (Liu 2023). Besides, Taiwan is directly responsible for the Czech Republic's rise in the computer manufacturing industry since companies such as ASUS were established during the presidency of Václav Havel.

In conclusion, Czech export is more streamlined than that of Taiwan, with the automotive industry being the most prominent, with Škoda Auto being the most dominant actor. This is then followed by optical devices, represented by the electronic microscopes from AŽD Prague. Finally, the smallest part of the exports is equally distributed between measuring devices, electrical devices, and spare parts for office devices such as printers.

6.3.2.2 Taiwan Export Commodities

Taiwan's exports to the Czech Republic are, undeniably, more varied than the exports of the Czech Republic. This is in part because Taiwan is a technological and economic superpower of East Asia, a member of the so-called 'Four Asian Tigers, 亞洲四小龍, *Yazhou si xiao long*' alongside Hong Kong, South Korea and Singapore. Taiwan's industry started developing rapidly under the Japanese occupation and also after Kuomintang resided on the island after 1949.

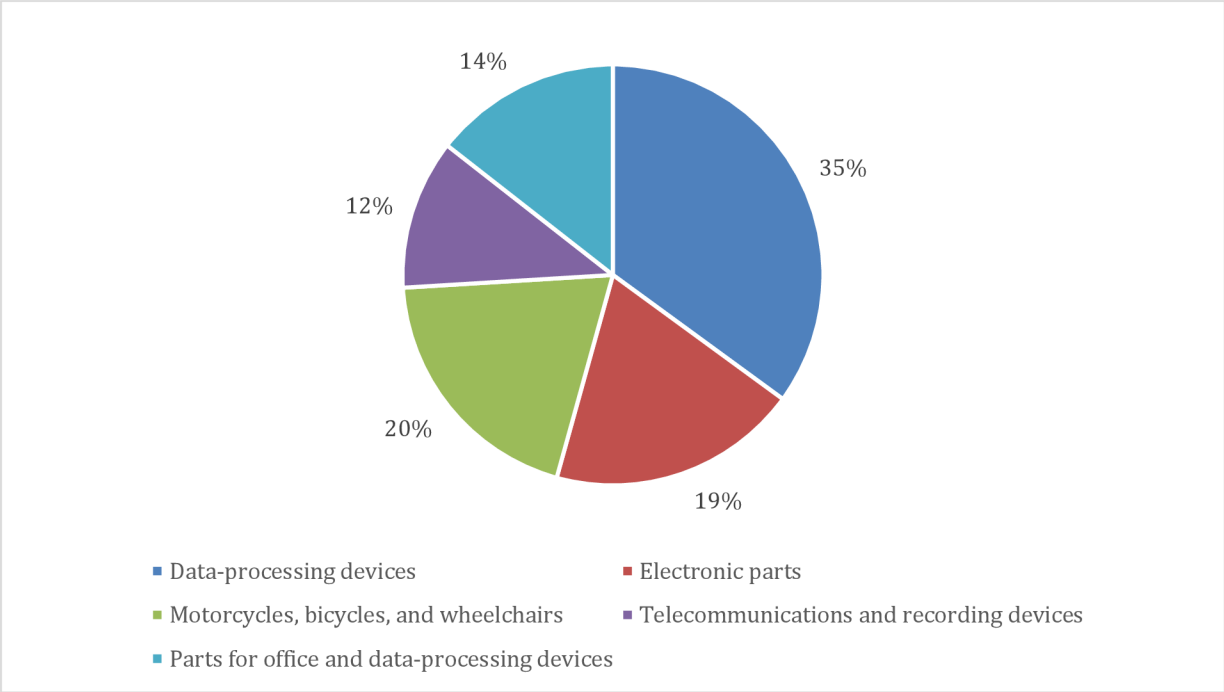

Fig. 7: 5 most prominent items of Taiwanese imports to the Czech Republic.
Data: BusinessINFO.cz. Created by the author.

The chart introduces the most prominent items of Taiwanese imports to the Czech Republic. As noted, the largest portion consists of data-processing devices (35%). These are followed by electronic parts (20%); telecommunications (19%); motorcycles, bicycles, and wheelchairs (14%); and spare parts for office and data-processing devices (12%).

As noted in the previous section, Taiwanese imports increased substantially during the coronavirus pandemic. In comparison, however, Czech exports increased more rapidly during the coronavirus pandemic than in the earlier years, even though the rate of growth was not as large as that of Taiwan. Nonetheless, this point also implies that the pandemic improved the relations between both actors, at least from the point of economic cooperation.

SITC 3	Trade commodity	Value (mil. CZK)
752	Data-processing devices	5 565,96
764	Electronic parts	3 060,45
776	Motorcycles, bicycles, and wheelchairs	3 133,38
759	Telecommunications and recording devices	1 831,22
785	Parts for office and data-processing devices	2 293,94

Fig. 8: Table of 5 most prominent items of Taiwanese imports.

In conclusion, Taiwan is a more rapidly growing economy than that of the Czech Republic, relying heavily on its de-facto monopoly on the know-how in the semiconductor industry. The most prominent actors in the industry are TSMC, MediaTek, and Realtek. Taiwanese imports correlate with the points discussed in the meetings from 2020 to 2023. This mainly includes the cooperation with data-processing devices, and telecommunications and recording devices provided by Chunghwa Telecom. The staples of the bilateral trade, such as the automotive industry of both the Czech Republic and Taiwan, were omitted as in the case of Czech export staples. This is however to be expected, as they were not part of the political meetings. Lastly, while the hard statistical data of economic cooperation shows a drop in the amount of trade in year 2023, the trade during the coronavirus pandemic increased in comparison to the years 2014 to 2018.

7 Conclusion

This thesis has introduced the general discourse of diplomacy, economic diplomacy, Taiwanese official and unofficial models of diplomacy together with soft power, as well as Hofstede's 6D Model of National Culture. This comprised the theoretical part, which was necessary for further understanding the context of this research. Hofstede's Model stands on the edge between the theoretical and practical part of this thesis, and using it can help us understand the similarities and differences between the Czech Republic and Taiwan, while also helping understand the motivations for these two actors to engage in diplomacy. It is by no means the definitive indicator of successful diplomacy but instead can be utilised as one of the indicators. It was concluded that the Czech Republic and Taiwan are cultures with similar and diverging values, and establish a common ground for cooperation through their shared value of democracy and similar development in history, with the former being a former Soviet satellite state while the latter was ruled under dictatorial regime of Kuomintang.

By analysing the bilateral relations of the Czech Republic and Taiwan during the coronavirus pandemic, this thesis has shown how the coronavirus pandemic has improved the bilateral relations of said countries through political and economic cooperation. As far as the analysis is concerned, by summarising the important meetings of political representatives, a general overview of the situation was introduced. The results of the meetings correlate with the points discussed at these meetings and partially proved the hypothesis of the pandemic rapprochement. This is especially true in the area of economic diplomacy, where the trade commodities correlate to the promises and points discussed at these political meetings.

Secondly, the results of the meetings were summarized. Finally, the SITC3 statistics of trade were analysed, resulting in the mapping of the Czech-Taiwanese trade in years 2019 to 2023 and the most prominent trade commodities. It can be concluded that while the hard data showed a drop in the Czech and Taiwanese trade, the trade during the coronavirus pandemic was rising and was higher than in years 2014 to 2018. This drop can, however, mean that the results of the meetings are still not in effect and the future may hold more tangible results. This observation paired with the points discussed at the meetings and their results therefore proved that the coronavirus pandemic catalysed the bilateral relations of the Czech Republic and Taiwan.

The implications of this research answer the motivations for Taiwan's cooperation with Europe. This is in part due to Hu's observation that China's power wanes with distance. In addition, Taiwan's cause to join international organizations such as WHO or UN also plays a major role. Simply put, should Taiwan gain allies in this region, it would be able to pursue this cause. This is where Hofstede's Model could fill this need for indicating potential allies. The author of this research believes that this, paired with the analysis of sentiment used by Turcsányi et al. could potentially further benefit this area of research.

With that said, several research questions surfaced while doing this research. Namely, the questions of the pandemic rapprochement in other areas of cooperation, as noted in the section of the same name, i.e. healthcare cooperation, military cooperation, and academic exchange. Other questions include the implications of the 'pandemic rapprochement' on the future cooperation, i.e. years 2024 onwards; or the post-pandemic bilateral relations of the Czech Republic and Taiwan to name a few.

While the approach of this thesis in handling the research questions has its limits, it allows us to understand the trends and phenomena of the economic diplomacy between the Czech Republic and Taiwan. Needless to say, this research uses only sources publicly available. Therefore, gaining access to better sources would solve this issue. This thesis focused primarily on political and economic cooperation. The author of this thesis, however, encourages further research in other areas of diplomacy during the coronavirus pandemic, as well as the research on post-pandemic Czech-Taiwan bilateral relations. Due to the nature of this research, the author of this thesis did not venture far into these territories. These areas include diplomatic cooperation, healthcare cooperation, military cooperation, and others as noted in chapter 6.2.3 Other Forms of Cooperation. As observed, the coronavirus pandemic, besides resulting in an increase in economic activity between these two countries, did have a lasting impact on political and economic cooperation between both actors. This cooperation is still active, with the most recent example being the ongoing discussions of establishing a semiconductor factory in the Czech Republic.

Resumé

Tato práce je příkladovou studií o česko-taiwanských vztazích, které se prohloubily během pandemie koronaviru COVID-19. Přestože obnovení kontaktů lze datovat již po pádu komunistického režimu v bývalém Československu, v období od března 2020 do května 2023 došlo k výraznému zintenzivnění medializace spolupráce mezi oběma zeměmi nejen v oblasti zahraničního obchodu, ale i na vrcholné politické úrovni. V rámci geopolitické situace je otázka úrovně bilaterálních vztahů mezi ČR a Taiwanem velmi aktuální a pochopení dynamiky těchto vztahů může přiblížit fungování taiwanského modelu neoficiální diplomacie. Diplomová práce ve své teoretické části nejdříve představí model neoficiální diplomacie Taiwanu, který následně v praktické části aplikuje na současný stav vztahů Taiwanu s Českou republikou z hlediska meetingů vysokých politických představitelů, ale i z hlediska ekonomické diplomacie. Informace k první části vychází z rešerše dostupné sekundární literatury doplněné o relevantní primární prameny – statistické údaje, oficiální dokumenty, atp. Praktická část práce je založena na obsahové analýze statistických údajů a informací, mapujících vzájemný obchod, ale i politickou spolupráci v rámci zkoumaného období s cílem zjistit, zda je trend Česko – taiwanského zahraničního obchodu rostoucí, v jakých oblastech došlo k rozvoji spolupráce, a do jaké míry měla pandemie vliv na rozvoj a prohloubení spolupráce mezi Českou republikou a Taiwanem.

Tato práce prokázala prohlubování bilaterálních vztahů mezi Českou republikou a Taiwanem během období koronavirové pandemie na úrovní politické a ekonomické diplomacie. Došel jsem k závěru, že za pandemie koronaviru došlo ke zintenzivnění spolupráce mezi těmito zeměmi jak po stránce ekonomické, tak stránce politické. Zatímco byl trend ekonomické spolupráce během pandemie koronaviru stoupající, tento trend začal klesat v roce 2023. V neposlední řadě však obchod mezi Českou republikou a Taiwanem odpovídá výsledkům jednání vrcholných představitelů obou států.

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Anotace

Název: Czech – Taiwan Bilateral Relations During the Coronavirus Pandemic: The Case of Economic Rapprochement

Jméno a příjmení: Bc. Ondřej Pavlík

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Abstrakt:

Tato práce je příkladovou studií o česko-taiwanských vztazích, které se prohloubily během pandemie koronaviru COVID-19. Přestože obnovení kontaktů lze datovat již po pádu komunistického režimu v bývalém Československu, v období od března 2020 do května 2023, tj. období oficiálního průběhu pandemie, došlo k výraznému zintenzivnění spolupráce mezi oběma zeměmi nejen na vrcholné politické úrovni a ekonomické diplomacii, ale i zdravotnické pomoci, akademické výměně či vojenské spolupráci. V rámci geopolitické situace je otázka úrovně bilaterálních vztahů mezi ČR a Taiwanem velmi aktuální a pochopení dynamiky těchto vztahů může přiblížit fungování taiwanského modelu neoficiální diplomacie.

Diplomová práce ve své teoretické části nejdříve představí model neoficiální diplomacie Taiwanu spolu s Hofstedovým modelem kulturních dimenzí a obsahovou analýzou, hlavní výzkumnou metodou této práce. Tyto poznatky následně v praktické části aplikuje na současný stav vztahů České republiky a Taiwanu. Informace k první části vychází z rešerše dostupné sekundární literatury doplněné o relevantní primární prameny – statistické údaje, oficiální dokumenty, atp. Praktická část práce je založena na obsahové analýze statistických údajů a informací, mapujících vzájemný obchod, ale i politickou výměnu v rámci zkoumaného období s cílem zjistit, jak se vyvíjel obchod mezi Českou republikou a Taiwanem, komodity ekonomické spolupráce a srovnání s realitou a obrazem médií.

Klíčová slova: diplomacie, ekonomická diplomacie, bilaterální vztahy, Česká republika, Taiwan, pandemie koronaviru

Annotation

Title: Czech – Taiwan Bilateral Relations During the Coronavirus Pandemic: The Case of Economic Rapprochement

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Abstract:

This thesis introduced a case study of the Czech-Taiwan bilateral relations, which have deepened during the coronavirus pandemic. While the first case of the diplomatic rapprochement between said countries can be traced to the fall of the communist regime in former Czechoslovakia, the period from March 2020 till May 2023, i.e. the official duration of the coronavirus pandemic in the Czech Republic, has been an indicator of increased diplomatic activity between the two countries in terms of political representation, economic cooperation, healthcare, academic exchange, and others. As far as the geopolitical situation is concerned, the question of bilateral relations between the Czech Republic and Taiwan is topical, and understanding the delicate dynamic of these bilateral relations can help us analyse the results of unofficial Taiwanese diplomacy.

The theoretical part of this thesis introduces the unofficial model of Taiwanese foreign diplomacy, Hofstede's Model of Cultural Dimensions, as well as the primary research method: content analysis. The analysis of current Czech-Taiwan diplomatic relations are the product of the practical part. The data acquired comes from relevant primary and secondary literature, and SITC statistics of the imports and exports. The byproduct of this approach is the mapping of economic diplomacy between the two actors, the commodities of economic cooperation, and the comparison of this image with the reality.

Keywords: diplomacy, economic diplomacy, bilateral relations, Czech Republic, Taiwan, coronavirus pandemic