

## **Evaluation of Bachelor Thesis**

### **Peer Review**

**Name of author:** Thi Van Anh Nguyen

**Name of bachelor thesis:** Vietnamese Women in Korean Families: The clash between two Confucian – dominated culture

**Opponent of bachelor thesis:** Mgr. Luděk Jirka, Ph.D.

**Aim:** Bachelor thesis deals with mixed marriage among Korean men and Vietnamese women. Highlighted are cultural differences and abilities of Vietnamese women to be integrated into Korean culture. Focusing on religion, author recognized Korean-Vietnamese relationship as full of sorrow and problems.

**Focus:** Mixed marriage, Vietnamese women, migration, South Korea

**Stylistical and grammatical level of bachelor thesis:** Work is written in good linguistical and stylistical form.

**Scope of bachelor thesis:** Lower scope, 40 pages including bibliography.

**Bibliography:** Adequacy of some references couldn't be well evaluated by opponent. Author also used websites. Work is based on 30 references including 2 references from internet.

**Formal part of bachelor thesis:** Thesis is processed in required manners.

**Evaluation and Critical Remarks:** Bachelor thesis „Vietnamese Women in Korean Families: The clash between two Confucian – dominated culture“ followed topic of transnational marriage known from Middle East (wives from Africa), from China (brides from Kazakhstan), but also from Europe (wives from Ukraine/Russia). In all of these respected transnational marriages are many problems. Whether are these marriages arranged commercially, by emails or by dating sites, many wives are objects of threatening, beating and even torturing. Bachelor thesis of Thi Van Anh Nguyen shed new light, at least empirically, on transnational marriages among Vietnamese wives and

Korean men. Author stated that gendered construction among men and women is more equal in Vietnam and more patriarchal in South Korea which brings different gender expectations and unpleasant conditions for Vietnamese women as of its consequence.

This kind of mixed marriage is called transnational marriage or cross-border marriage, however author didn't analytically define these terms. It is sometimes confusing because commercially-based transnational marriage is for sure different than mail-order bride. Additionally, author could explain how she understands "human trafficking" and "arranged marriages."

Author also provides controversial statements in the text, e.g. on page 7 when she interpreted asymmetrical sex ratio. Author rightly stated asymmetrical sex ratio (based on statistics) but it seems to me that author fails to interpret it fruitfully. I don't understand the reasons why discrepancy between number of men and women took place in South Korea and which are structural, economic or social causes (see also p. 10).

I would also recommend to author to write her work in more chronological way. Author describes transnational marriage among Vietnamese women and Korean men on page 13-14 and, after that, author explains the possible reasons (drivers) why these marriages occur (p. 14-18). This part (as well as other parts) in bachelor thesis should be more chronological – author should firstly describe the reasons (drivers) and then mixed marriage itself. There are also some additional problems in bachelor thesis – sentences used in p. 6-7 (*„The lives of these women in the series are filled with sorrow. They were tortured, beaten and treated like servants by their mothers-in-law and husbands“*) are in the same state as in abstract; cultural drivers (p. 16-17) are rather socio-cultural drivers; using term patriarchal system is highly problematic (e.g. p. 28) because even in matrilineal societies are men holders of the economic and political functions. I would also recommend analysis of idealization of Korean men and Korea (see p. 18) which is in my point of view crucial reason of out-migration of women to Korea.

According to methodology, analyzing mixed marriages among Vietnamese women and Korean men thanks to TV series called „Vietnamese brides in South Korea“ is hopelessly insufficient. TV series could be used as a non-crucial reference but in the text is used as a "core" reference for bachelor thesis. Using TV series as reference could be undesired even for seminar works. The reasons are simply - documents are often simply arranged; only some speeches of participants are used, others speeches and acts

of participants are cut off; there is also problem of „keeping the watchers shocking“ etc. Documentary series couldn't replace fieldwork or field diary. Additionally, TV series is missing as reference in bibliography.

I'm not expert on Korean and Vietnamese cultures and on Confucianism and I could only entrust to many statements written on pages 20-33. Indeed, I suppose that many rules from Confucianism are not fully or un-critically accepted by inhabitants. There should be also some other social, economic or political explanation why Korean men are so patriarchal.

I could recommend real fieldwork to author then analyzing TV series. This is from my point of view the weakest part of bachelor thesis. Analyzing problem just thanks to TV series + talking about traditions and religions as explanation why people behave in certain way is not therefore accurate.

**Final evaluation:** Bachelor thesis fulfills requirements. Weakness of thesis is in using TV series as crucial reference + highlighting religion as the most explainable part of the problem without reconsidering other options. I'm pretty persuaded that fieldwork could bring different results. I recommend bachelor thesis for defense.

**Questions of opponent:**

- Wasn't it possible to find more accurate references for the case of Vietnamese-Korean mixed marriage?
- Your explanation seems to me like Durkheimian explanation. How could you understand micropositionality when talking about norms, values and rules of Confucianism as the most explanative sources? How do they interact to each other?
- How do you understand transcultural position in your work?

Date: 3. 1. 2020

Mgr. Luděk Jirka, Ph.D.