



## **Supervisor's Evaluation of the M.A. Diploma Thesis of Anna Vymlátílová:**

### **Access to sexual healthcare is a feminist issue: Analysis of queer-friendliness and accessibility of STI testing clinics in Berlin, Germany**

The submitted M.A. thesis of Anna Vymlátílová covers a very important and urgent topic of (equal? any?) access to sexual healthcare, in this case heightened by the fact that in the center of attention is placed one of the most vulnerable and mistreated groups, queer women. The focus group, as well as the use of gender analysis in the empirical part of the thesis, is also most likely the reason why access to sexual healthcare is framed explicitly and directly as a feminist issue and not, as is often the case, as a human rights issue. (Perceiving the topic of access to healthcare, sexual or reproductive, as a human rights issue would result in framing the research project in a different theoretical and conceptual apparatus). I say most likely, because as a thesis supervisor, I actually did not contribute much to the formulation of the research design, articulation of the research questions or selecting the methodology. In fact, I think that the extreme independence of the author, which accompanied the process of researching and writing this diploma thesis from the beginning to the end, is both a virtue and a problem of this project.

The presented thesis is indeed a very ambitious and challenging project, especially because of the methodology the author decided to use – a feminist autoethnography, which the author perceives as the only “ethical method a feminist can employ” in order to carry out research and academic writing (p. 34). I must say that I was quite skeptical about the use of this method, especially when it combined with one of the research questions of whether “the repeated STI testing through blood drawing” would help the author to overcome their fear of blood tests. Paradoxically, I have doubts precisely about the ethicality of the repeated purposeful use and unnecessary burdening of the medical system in this way (even though I do acknowledge and find both interesting and relevant the position of the author as a sex-educator, who is obtaining through this research project important data for her future educational activities). However, a critical review of the diploma thesis is the task of the opponent so in my evaluation, I will focus on the process of preparing and writing the thesis, the strong and positive aspects of the text, and the overall academic contributions of Anna's work.

First, as I already alluded above, I must mention the extraordinary independence, dedication, and stamina with which Anna worked on their thesis throughout the entire process. From coming up with the topic, through studying the relevant scholarship and preparing the research design, the conceptual anchoring and methodological questions, to the analysis of the collected material itself, most of the time Anna was able to work completely independently and responsibly by themselves. Moreover, they researched and wrote their thesis in Berlin, amidst the severe restrictions of the coronavirus pandemic, which significantly affected their ability to carry out the research in the way they envisioned.

Formally, the work is competent, articulate, with adequate and correctly referenced citation apparatus and extensive bibliography. At the same time, the theoretical part is too short and not elaborate enough. Already in the seminar discussions throughout their MA studies, Anna regularly demonstrated their broad theoretical and conceptual anchoring, sharp analytical mind and their impressive argumentative skills. But in the diploma thesis, there is a certain paradox in the obviously and easily visible fact that Anna is a very theoretically equipped, eloquent and analytically talented writer and that, at the same time, these qualities are underutilized in this text. My explanation of this issue is lack of time and subsequent time pressure to finish the work. This understanding is supported by the fact that the thesis is also on the low end of the required length limit, which results in a lack of space to work out the presented concepts and ideas in deeper and more creative ways.

At the same time, Anna was visibly making sure their analysis is reflective, meaningful, and constantly referenced back with the concepts used in the theoretical part. Overall, Anna manages to connect the theoretical and empirical parts in a seamless way, which is very hard to do, especially for students. As the strongest part of the thesis I consider the methodological part of the thesis blended interestingly together with an excellent intersectional analysis, which is quite extensive and offers many insightful observations and arguments. Despite many shortcomings (which I'm sure the opponent will discuss), the presented diploma thesis is in many ways an exceptional piece of mature scholarship, which is passionate, analytically sharp, and offers a convincing understanding of what a feminist project should mean.

I formally recommend the thesis to the defense procedure and suggest to evaluate it with grade 2, "very good".

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doc. Věra Sokolová, Ph.D.  
*Thesis Supervisor*