

ADVISOR REPORT FOR ANNA (PHUONG) MAI NGUYEN'S MASTER'S THESIS IN GENDER STUDIES AT CHARLES UNIVERSITY, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC.

I am writing as the advisor of Anna (Phuong) Nguyen's thesis. I would like to begin by letting the committee know that I only read the first 4 chapters. I was sent those four chapters on July 14th. Before that, I had last talked to Anna mid-May. Before mid-May, I had only read her questionnaire and about 10-15 pages of her thesis, mostly about the history of the arrival of the Vietnamese community to the Czech Republic. With that in mind, there was not a lot of time for me to help her organize and think through her thesis, but she was determined to finish by the July 31st deadline. Also, given how late (14th of July) she sent me those four chapters, I did not have an opportunity to advise her on how to integrate methodology and content. I never read the parts of her thesis that contained the description and analysis of her participant interviews.

Her topic is extremely interesting: exploring how young people with Vietnamese heritage living in the Czech Republic negotiate and form their ethnic identities and what role gender plays. Anna clearly did a lot of research given how long her thesis is and the extensive bibliography. However, the thesis is too long. It is 1.5 spaced and 113 pages. There are about 40 pages of appendices and bibliography. I advised her multiple times on the length of Master's Theses.

In that regard, in an attempt to help her focus her thesis (and make it shorter), I advised that some sections were extraneous. However, I still see many of those sections in this final version. One example is the discussion of discrimination against Chinese people because of COVID-19. While it is an awful example of how far some individuals use ethnicity against others, and it was occurring as she was writing, it is not relevant to the thesis topic. Also, it is not clear why she spent so many pages on ethnicity but, then, wants her participants to define ethnicity for themselves. Likewise, she does not return to her discussion of ethnicity when she analyzes her results. Why? At the beginning of the thesis, it seemed so theoretically important. The same can be said about race.

What I found interesting and engaging about her thesis was the actual voices of her interviewees and survey participants. It would have been great if the thesis had been more extensively built on the data she collected, than on the copious amounts of literature she explained, sometimes not that well. Likewise, her treatment of her participants' responses was too quick, and, especially for the non-binary interviewee, she concluded too much from just one participant. I would have liked a little more hesitancy in her conclusions given her respondents numbered about 50.

She found, through her research, just how important families were to her respondents. Yet, in the section before this she describes how many of her participants had argued with them and/or did not talk to them. That part seemed contradictory, and I wanted more explanation. I also yearned to read more about just how complicated family life was for Vietnamese immigrants in the Czech Republic as they attempted to negotiate their identities. Here, especially when it comes to families, her work could have contributed more to the existing research.

Finally, it is not clear how her methodology influenced her thesis. Her methodological section on intersectionality and transnational feminism begins on page 44. Why did she wait so long? Multiple times she says there are connections between these theories and the content of the questionnaires and its

subsequent analysis, but those connections are not well-explained. For example, how do intersectionality and transnational feminism influence chapter 2 of her thesis? Or, how can Erikson's work from 1968 (on page 22) be used in light of intersectionality or, for that matter, transnational feminism? How does she account for the concerns of globalization and the critiques of capitalism by transnational feminism into her thesis? What role do those play in ethnic and gender identities for young Vietnamese immigrants living in the Czech Republic? This needs to be better explained, and, when the theoretical perspective does not work in a given case, this too needs to be mentioned. Finally, how do these theoretical perspectives shape the questions in her survey? I would like a better explanation, since I know that she put the questionnaire together before she chose transnational feminism and intersectionality as her feminist methodological perspectives.

All-in-all, I think this is a really solid, compelling topic, but the thesis needs more work. She should have given more space for the participants' voices to be heard. The length of the literature review really distracts from this goal. Likewise, there is not a clear connection between methodology and the set-up of the research; transnational feminism and intersectionality do not feel integral enough to the research or the analysis. That being said, I am not sure they are the right choice for the topic given her concern with ethnic identity construction and the way in which her participants discussed family pressures. This might be why she struggles so much with integrating them. Her goal was not analyzing the effects of globalization, capitalism or intersectional oppression on these immigrants. Rather, she tries to capture young Vietnamese immigrants' explanations of their in-between experiences, familial pressures tied to competing cultural and gendered norms, shifting identities depending on context, and, how, in light of these factors but not necessarily dependent on them, immigrants construct their own identities.

Anna is a hard-working, dedicated student. Had she taken more time, revised broadly, and submitted at the winter deadline, much of what is problematic about her thesis could have been resolved. As the thesis now stands, I recommend a grade of 3.

Submitted by Ivy Helman, Ph.D.

On 8 September 2020.