

**MASTER'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT**  
*IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies*  
**Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University**

<b>Thesis title:</b>	<b>Gender Inequality in China Today</b>		
<b>Student's name:</b>	<b>Zhaohui Deng</b>		
<b>Referee's name:</b>	<b>Janusz Salamon</b>		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	<b>50</b>	42
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	<b>15</b>	13
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	<b>15</b>	13
<b>Total</b>		<b>80</b>	68
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources, literature	<b>10</b>	9
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	<b>5</b>	4
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	<b>5</b>	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>	17
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	85

**Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score:** The thesis seems original.

*[NB:] If the plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score is above 15%, the reviewer has to include his/her assessment of the originality of the reviewed thesis in his/her review.*

**Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria:**

Deng Zhaohui wrote a good thesis on a very important topic. Indeed, given that the Chinese government has confirmed just days ago China is pass its population peak (having been overtaken by India as the most populous nation on the Planet), and the demographic downward spiral that is likely to impact in a dramatic fashion every aspect of social life in China in the coming decades, few research issues concerning China are more topical than the position of women in the Chinese society. While reading Zhaohui's thesis, one is under impression that many of her observations regarding the current situation of Chinese women sheds light not just on the current demographic, but also the current economic trends that are a cause for concern. Negotiating the interplay between the public and private spheres, as well as between the three areas of women's activity on which the thesis focuses (employment, education, family life) is one of the more impressive features of the thesis. Narrowing the literature review to the last three years and supplementing the literature review with interviews is praiseworthy and confirms that Zhaohui strived to do her best, instead of making her life easier. There are minor linguistic and editorial infelicities but the formal aspects of the thesis are better than most. What, in my opinion, limits the achievement of the thesis is that ultimately its main hypotheses are derived from the work of other others. While the interviews with Chinese women contain some fascinating insights, at the end of the day they appear to serve to confirm the main hypotheses drawn from other authors

rather than provide a basis for some original explanations of the social phenomena under consideration. So at the end, the thesis appears to aim at presenting the state of the art of the current research in the field, instead of putting forward and defending an original thesis (which sometimes is attempted in a Master's thesis, hence a comparative approach to assessment is in place here). Consequently, the methodology (interpretive and qualitative, rather than positivistic and quantitative) appears to be tailored appropriately to the goal of presenting the tendencies and the explanation of these tendencies that have already been identified by other authors. As such, the methodology adopted by Zhaohui is not out of place here, it is just that other methods might perhaps yield additional, more original, explanatory insights.

**Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): B**

**Suggested questions for the defence are:**

- (1) One of the factors that features in your explanation of the still prevailing gender inequality in China is the Confucian social culture. Given the aggressively anti-traditionalist vector of the Maoist Communism, and the reformist and modernising direction of the state policies under Deng Xiaoping and his successors, how would you describe and explain the vitality of the patriarchal aspects of the Chinese social mores? Are we witnessing a conservative revival (so that the current tendencies are a regression compared with previous decades) or are we talking about a long-term and more or less stable presence of the Confucian cultures which Chairman Mao failed to suppress? Does your research suggest that Chinese patriarchalism is, after all, gradually on the wane?
- (2) Does your research shed any light on the question how a dramatic demographic downturn may affect the overall picture of women in China you are painting in your thesis? Perhaps the worse the demographic situation will become, the better is it going to be for women (women will have a kind of bargaining chip by becoming more indispensable, not only as child bearers but as employees)?

**I do recommend the thesis for final defence.**

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***Referee Signature***

TOTAL	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	<b>A</b>	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	<b>B</b>	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	<b>C</b>	= good
61 – 70	<b>D</b>	= satisfactory
51 – 60	<b>E</b>	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	<b>F</b>	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.