

BACHELOR THESIS REVIEW

Type of review: *thesis supervisor, opponent*

Author: Polina Nikolaeva

Title: **Cultural Gender Constructions Through Bodily Experiences in the Udmurt Republic of the Russian Federation: Embodiment of Masculinity and Femininity in Various Ethnicities**

Supervisor: Barbora Spalová

Reviewer: Andrea Průchová Hružová

Please explain the reasons for your evaluation (especially reservations and criticisms) according to the criteria listed below.

1. Is the aim of the thesis (research question) clearly stated and do the conclusions correspond to it? Is the thesis appropriately structured?

Comments:

The aim of the research is formulated repeatedly, not always in the same way. So, we can read that: *“The research aims to investigate how individuals residing in the Udmurt Republic perceive the concept of gender construction*, but few paragraphs later the aim is formulated with quite different emphasis: *„The main research question of this study is: “How do middle-class Russian men and women reflect on their gendered embodied experience of being brought up as a man or woman in the Udmurt Republic, considering their cultural upbringing?”*. Reading the text, I was wondering what the created data allow the researcher to state. It seems to me that the data could be considered as reflections about the different, experienced or not, gender roles across the time and „cultures”. I would like to question the „cultures” more than the author does. How does it come (what is the purpose and context) that people (or the author?) relate their experience to the „cultures”? They have all experienced the Soviet program of equality of genders. I would love to know more about their reflection of the role of cultures in this program and after its dismantlement. Also, the embodiment part of the research question falls short.

2. Is the thesis based on relevant research and literature and does it accurately summarize and integrate the information?

Comments:

The theoretical parts seemed to be combining lot of sources without a catchable criterion. Some parts of the theoretical framing are deploying very essentialist framing of cultures which is in a

sharp contrast with cited works of Butler or Foucault on gender. It is contradictory to research the construction of gender without deconstruct the idea of “culture” which is describe us actually produce the gender roles which can than be embodied by the cultural members. The agency of members to shift the roles is theoretically possible but the description of it is very scarcity. Some of the quotations of the literature sounds obscure:

„The Russian language, literature, and religion are essential to Russian identity. Since fluency in Russian is regarded as a symbol of racial harmony, it is crucial to identify as a Russian person.”
(Davis, 2002) p. 15

The quoted Davis remains unknown as he*she*they don't appear in the list of references.

3. What is the quality of the data or the other sources? Are the sample method, data collection and data analysis appropriate?

Comments:

I do appreciate the sample and generally I think that the interviews should be an equivalent source of data for this research question. I would love to read more direct quotations and to see more nuanced analysis of it. The takeaways are very general, and I think the material would allow the author to bring more interesting results. The part named Data Analysis does not show the analysis.

4. Are the findings relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions of the thesis based on strong arguments?

Comments:

It is hard for the reader to follow the argumentation as data and analysis are not presented in an accountable way. There for I feel lack of evidence for some conclusions.

5. Are the author's thoughts distinguished unambiguously from the borrowed ideas?

Comments:

Yes.

6. What is the quality of style and other formal requirements?

Comments:

Adequate to the bachelor thesis.

7. Are there any other strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, which are not included in the previous questions? Please list them if any.

8. What topic do you suggest for the discussion in the thesis defence?

As mentioned above I would like to suggest the question of contradiction between essentialist perspective on cultures and constructivist perspective on gender. For me the question would be also

how are the “cultures” constructed today and how these practises and ideologies of cultures developed from Soviet times. What is the relation of cultural politics and the perceived influence of the globalised contemporary mediascape?

9. I declare that I have checked the result of the originality check of the thesis:

Theses Turnitin Ouriginal (Urkund)

Comment on the result of the check:

The text is the original work of the author.

Overall evaluation of the thesis:

I recommend the thesis for a defence and I propose to grade it as C – D according to the discussion.

Date:

06/10/2023 Stanford

Signature: Spalová