



### Master's Thesis Evaluation Form

Student's name: Bc. Kristina Švábová

Thesis title: "Vítání občánků": Social Analysis of a Czech Baby-Welcoming Ceremony

Name of the supervisor: Doc. Alessandro Testa, Ph.D.

Name of the opponent: Mgr. Jitka Wirthová, Ph.D.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis? Please give your reasons for the suggested grade in detail below.

1. *Does the author show understanding of one or more theories, and use theory to generate a hypothesis or to make the problem area more understandable.*

Comments:

The author has very well considered the theories to support the research problem. The object of the study – Vítání občánků – is grasped as a cultural object of a rite of passage, which is scrutinised sociologically in its transition through significant social change from communism to democracy. Drawing on relevant theories, the object is delimited in such a way that it is applicable for study and brings new and interesting findings.

2. *Is the research question articulated clearly and properly? Is the research question sufficiently answered in the conclusion?*

Comments:

The research question is multidimensional, as the title suggests – it is a social study of a complex cultural object:

- *What is "Vítání občánků", when and why was it established?*
- *What transformations has "Vítání občánků" undergone during the transition to democracy?*

*o How is "Vítání občánků" performed nowadays and are there any local differences?*

*o How and why do municipalities organize the event nowadays?*

*o In which aspects does it retain its Communist legacy?*

*o Which trends have shaped the way "Vítání občánků" is performed and perceived nowadays?*

- *What role does "Vítání občánků" play in the parents' transition to parenthood?*

*o Why do parents attend the ceremony?*

*o How do the parents experience the ceremony? (p.36)*

All the questions are properly answered.

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



Comments:

Literature is extraordinary in quality and number. The summarisation of relevant research is very good as well as the justification of conceptual choices. Especially I appreciate the discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of Hobsbawm and constructivist approaches and the justification of the choice for Hobsbawm's understanding of invented traditions during significant societal changes. This is complemented by relevant literature on "re-invented traditions" to capture the current state of VO.

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

Comments:

The quality of the data is high. To understand thoroughly her cultural object (Vítání občánků) the author gathered sound material following very aptly chosen grounded theory. The dataset is rich (observations, interviews, formal documentation, and media content). This method she accompanied by GRISWOLD, Wendy, 1987, *A Methodological Framework for the Sociology of Culture*, which provides her with a useful tool for bringing non-banal and deep insight and it also partly forms a structure for the findings section. However, I miss the date indicators of the conducted interviews.

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

Comments:

All arguments are backed by sound analysis of multiple historical and contemporary materials and discussed with current research.

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

Comments: Yes!

7. *Is the thesis containing original/innovative research (in terms of topic, approach, and/or findings)?*

Comments:

Since the topic was not covered by scholarly literature in such a scope, the research is very innovative.

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

Comments:

All the formal requirements are fulfilled very well. The structure of the thesis is comprehensible and the findings are structured alongside the chosen methodology. However, I have a minor note: The title of section 8. Analysis is a bit confusing since it explicitly contains discussion: „*In the following sub-chapters I will discuss the fundamental findings of the study in relation to relevant theories.*“ (p.79). The difference to the Uzbek case should be then placed in this discussion (section 8), not in Conclusions.



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

Comments:

For the high quality of the thesis, I would recommend turning it into a paper and submitting it to a peer-reviewed journal.

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

Comments:

11. *Declaration that the supervisor has read the result of the originality check in the system:* [ ] *Theses* [ ] *Turnitin* [ ] *Original (Urkund)*

Supervisor's comment on the originality check result:

Overall assessment of the thesis:

Despite several minor flaws, the quality of the thesis is excellent. It brings missing information and understanding of *Vítání občánků* as a rite of passage which although experienced a decline, "*eventually managed to re-invent itself successfully and persist*". (p.95). Therefore, I am happy to recommend the thesis for a defence with a proposed grade of A.

Proposed grade:

A

Date: 4.9.2023, Praha

Signature: