

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Title of the thesis:	South Korea's challenge: Low fertility rate and Government's policies to enhance fertility rate.
Author of the thesis:	Bc. David Shin
Referee (incl. titles):	Mgr. Ing. Olga Angelovská, Ph.D.

Comments of the referee on the thesis highlights and shortcomings (following the five numbered aspects of your assessment indicated below).

1) Theoretical background:

The author's choice of theories corresponds to using a multidisciplinary approach. I appreciate that the author tried to capture the issue from different perspectives and thus offer a comprehensive picture. He chose Gary Becker's economic approach on fertility, Sigrid Leitner's typology based on comparative social policy and Birgit Pfau-Effinger's sociological approach taking into account culture and welfare state role in fertility trends. In his work, the author offered a clear connection between the selected theories and the topic of low fertility.

Moreover, the author proved his ability to cope with relevant literature within the theoretical part. Next, he linked the theory to his research theme and findings. It is visible in the work structure, research questions and the analytical part.

2) Contribution:

I consider the chosen topic worthy of attention. Low fertility is a problem many authors have addressed in the European area in the last decades. I see the first contribution of the presented work in a currency of a problem, which low fertility undoubtedly is. Moreover, as the author points out in his thesis, this is a global problem and South Korea, which is the focus of the author's work, is currently dealing with an even more crucial issue than European countries.

The second contribution lies in using a multidisciplinary approach (see above).

I see a potential for improvement in emphasising the practical implication of the author's findings.

3) Methods:

Regarding the topic, the author appropriately chose a mixed approach. As I mentioned earlier, the author's whole work is based on three selected theoretical concepts, which the author followed up by operationalizing the monitored indicators. He then works with these further in the thesis. I also consider the sources of secondary data and their timeliness to be relevant. Personally, I would have welcomed primary data, e.g. in this case, obtained from interviews. Still, such a research method would be difficult due to the chosen topic (politics in South Korea) and the current (covid) period. I see a weaker point in the hypothesis. While the author well stated research questions and answered them satisfactorily in the following text, I find the hypotheses too ambitious for a master's thesis.

For example, the confirmation or refusal of the hypothesis of a negative effect of Confucianism on fertility would merit extensive research, which the Master's thesis does not allow. Although the author answers the research questions, the conclusion lacks a more evident confirmation or refusal of the hypotheses.

In the chapter devoted to methodology, I would have welcomed a mention of the limitations of the research used. From consultations with the author, I know that the author took them into account, but I did not find them in the text.

4) Literature:

The author has worked with relevant academic literature in his work. I also appreciate the choice of sources for the theoretical part. He did not limit his attention to the basic literature but also discussed the approaches with actual sources. The author quotes correctly, including references given for diagrams and tables.

5) Manuscript form:

The structure of the whole thesis is clear and logical. A weakness in the formatting is the incorrect numbering of chapters. The author uses appropriate language and quotes properly according to the academic standards.

Box for the thesis supervisor only. Please characterize the progress in the working out of thesis (e.g., steady and gradual versus discontinuous and abrupt) and the level (intensity) of communication/cooperation with the author:

I appreciate the overall author's diligent approach. The author consulted regularly and came to the consultation prepared with his ideas for solving the topic.

Suggested questions for the defence are:

How does the author see the application of his findings in practice? How could they help, for example, policymakers?

What other ways would the author suggest for further research on declining fertility in South Korea?

I recommend the thesis for final defence.

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED (for details, see below):

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20 points)</i>	18
<i>Contribution (max. 20 points)</i>	16
<i>Methods (max. 20 points)</i>	12
<i>Literature (max. 20 points)</i>	20
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20 points)</i>	16
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	82
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	B

DATE OF EVALUATION: 20.1.2022

Referee Signature