



## Master's Thesis Evaluation Form

Student's name: Elima Ashiralieva

Thesis title: Choice and its absence: bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan

Name of the supervisor: Mgr. Ema Hrešanová, Ph.D.

Name of the opponent: PhDr. Jaroslava Hasmanová Marhánková, 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.*

The employment of a relevant theoretical framework represents one of the weaknesses of the thesis. The student submitted an interesting thesis full of fascinating testimonies. However, the thesis is not successfully integrated into the sociological discussions. The theoretical framework focuses mainly on the description of the phenomenon without sufficient attempts to employ any theoretical concepts. This weakness, unfortunately, impacts also the analytical part. I really enjoyed reading the thesis since it presents an important and fascinating, yet largely ignored topic. The thesis shows students' passionate engagement in the subject. The thesis provides a detailed description of the bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan. However, the thesis resigns to the identification of relevant sociological/anthropological perspectives that could be employed not to describe the phenomenon but also to integrate it into broader sociological discussions.

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

The purpose of the research is articulated at pp. 21 in the methodology section as "To learn about the the current ala-kachuu even in the urban and rural areas of Kyrgyzstan, the experience of being kidnapped and the nature of their social world." The research question is further formulated as "What it is like to be stolen, and how will ala-kachuu affect the life of girls." I don't think it is appropriate to formulate the research question in terms of expectation of future impact (since this will obviously result in speculation). I believe that the thesis generally lacks a more precise articulation of the specific aim of the research question and focuses more on a detailed description of various aspects of bride-kidnapping.

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

The thesis provides a good review of the existing literature regarding ala-kachuu. However, an integration of more sociological literature regarding for example gender or social norms would help to strengthen the theoretical background.



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

Elima Ashiralieva conducted a mixed method research combining survey and in-depth interviews with women who were kidnapped. I really appreciate that the thesis focuses on the testimonies of women who actually experience alu-kachuu. However, there are crucial information missing in the thesis regarding the methodology. I understand that the student conducted the survey primarily as a tool for identifying women who would be willing to undergo interviews. However, the survey is also part of the data analysis and therefore it is necessary to provide key information before presenting the result (how many people filled the questionnaire? How were they contacted? I got an impression that only women participated in the survey, however, this information is not clearly stated in the thesis). The author presents the results using percentages of particular answer. However, the results may be misleading without the information regarding the number of questionnaires. I would also appreciate a more detailed description of the qualitative part of the research – especially regarding the structure of the interviews, participants characteristics, ethical aspects and process of data analysis (how were the topic for analysis identified?)

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

I have to repeat that I consider this thesis to be a very interesting study of the phenomenon. It really provides a detailed understanding of bride-kidnapping. However, in the conclusions of the thesis and the empirical part, I was constantly missing a clearer outline of what kind of information is really grounded in the data and what represents a summary of already known evidence or the author's reflections. There is just a sporadic illustration of the argument using data from the interviews. It is a pity that the author does not employ such fascinating data material more thoroughly.

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

As I pointed out before, it is not clear which of the interpretations are based on the data analysis and which are inspired by previous knowledge. There are often claims that should be supported by some evidence (e.g., "*consumption of alcoholic beverages has increase, especially among young people, and the criminogenic situation in the villages and cities of the republic has worsened*", pp. 43). Nevertheless, the author clearly distinguished when using ideas from other studies.

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

I consider the thesis original in the topic selection. The methodological design using the interviews with victims of bride-kidnapping is excellently chosen and I'm glad that Elima Ashiralieva choose to give voice to those women. The readers learn a lot about the topic from



the thesis. However, I was missing a clearer anchoring of the work in the sociological debate and better methodological and interpretative skills.

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

The quality of writing style is very good, and the thesis meets standard formal requirements.

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

I have to admit that I'm a little bit torn in my evaluation of the thesis. On the one hand, Elima Ashiralieva submitted a very interesting work full of fascinating testimonies. Her engagement in the topic is obvious and I'm really glad for the possibility to review the thesis. However, the thesis lacks some of the requirements that define sociological work (such as employment of theoretical concepts, methodological skill and emphasis on data interpretation).

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

Comments:

Please, clarify in more details how your research was conducted. What would you consider the main findings (and findings that may contribute to the existing knowledge of ala-kachuu?

You constantly point out that one of the reasons why bride-kidnapping sustains is because it is by a significant part of the population considered a form of tradition? How would you explain how the idea of "tradition" is constructed and maintained?

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: I **recommend the thesis for a defence** and suggest the grade **E** (good)

*(Please, state clearly whether the thesis is or is not recommended for a defense and write the main reasons for the recommendation).*

Proposed grade: E

*(A- B: excellent, C-D: very good, E: good, F: fail)*

Date: 31.5.2022

Signature: