



Ústav světových dějin FFUK

Master's Thesis Review

Student's name and surname: **Anna Pestova**

Title of the thesis: **Uzupis (Vilnius) and Kalamaja (Tallinn): Cultural quarters and the post-Soviet urban space transformation in Baltic states, Prague – Budapest 2017, 87 p. (139 332 signs without spaces)**

Reviewer's name and surname: Prof. Luďa Klusáková, in the role of supervisor

1. Heuristic (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged to to formulate critical points)

1.1 Evaluation of the selection of literature and sources	1
1.2 Complexity of used sources from the perspective of the state of the art	2

Short evaluation:

Anna has made a thorough enquiry and her corpus of secondary sources is as complete as possible. Concerning primary sources, she has been very active in search of sources – written and pictorial, of various genres. Not excluding fiction. She has also produced her own set of documentary photos and carried a number of interviews.

2. Research problem and its solution (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged to to formulate critical points)

2.1 Choice of the formulation of the research issue respects the task given to the student	1
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Ústav světových dějin FFUK

2.2 The relevance of the goal from the perspective of research area methodology	1
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Short evaluation:

The cultural quarters and gentrification of urban districts are issues discussed in the main stream research. Užupis and Kalamaja however are under researched, making the theme of the master's thesis quite a challenge. Anna is well prepared to work with sources in Lithuanian, however for Estonian case she had to rely on translations.

3. Thesis' structure evaluation (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged to formulate critical points)

3.1 Is the structure of the thesis logical?	1
3.2 Does the thesis' structure work along the methodology and methods declared in the introduction	1

Short evaluation:

The thesis was conceived as two parallel case studies, which suggest to go further in comparison. The two cases are studied through the optics of two concepts - cultural quarter and gentrification. The task declared in the introduction is fulfilled in the chapters, although the author is more comfortable in description, not performing her best in analysis.

4. Quality of analysis and interpretation (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged to formulate critical points)

4.1 Analysis of sources and literature	2
4.2 Interpretation of sources and literature in their interaction	2,5

Short evaluation:

Since I know how the text was written, I see a haste in the writing process, and lack of reflection about what should the analysis be about, replacing it by comparison of descriptions.



Ústav světových dějin FFUK

5. Quality of the text (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged to formulate critical points)

5.1 Style and grammar	2,5
5.2 Use of terminology	1

Short evaluation:

The student has written the thesis in English, which is her second language, but did not organize her work well enough to save the time for copy editing by a native speaker, I appreciate that she worked on her own in English, but there are mistakes which might have been avoided.

The terminology is used correctly.

6. Synthetic evaluation (minimum 500 signs):

The thesis is exploring urban changes in Post – Soviet Baltic countries which emerged after the collapse of USSR in 1991 in case studies. Author has chosen to study cultural quarters in Vilnius and Tallinn (Užupis and Kalamaja) which are currently ranked among the most interesting and trendy places in global comparison. Since it is a very recent development, it has not been very much researched. This makes it on one hand challenging possibility to achieve original contribution, and on the other hand more complicated to work without backing of substantial research. The thesis wishes to question the transformation of suburb into a cultural quarter and representations and usage of cultural heritage of the two suburban districts. These two cases are in the situation when they are confronted with the city core of the two Capitals registered on UNESCO World heritage list and both Užupis and Kalamaja became part of the protected area. I have appreciated the creative approach to the heuristic stage of the work. Anna succeeded to find a large variety of texts and images related to the issue, and she has also found a number of people willing to talk to her about the transformation proces.



Ústav světových dějin FFUK

The step from description to analysis of the corpus of texts was difficult for her, and often she replaced it by comparison of description of the situation in the two cities. I think that she would need to re-read her text, and re- think the hypothesis, and follow the criteria of analysis as criteria of comparison.

Despite my criticism, I am convinced that the text meets the requirements for Master's thesis. It is an interesting piece of work, even the description is valuable in its own way which even brings in new knowledge. I recommend the thesis for successful defense.

7. Questions and comments which should the candidate answer and discuss during the defense:

You use two concepts – cultural quarter and gentrification. Was in the studied cases the transformation of the suburb into a cultural quarter a stimulus for inevitable gentrification? Does the gentrification of Užupis and Kalamaja built on the valorisation of historical or cultural heritage?

Suggested grade: very good

Date: 1.9. 2017

Signature:  Prof. PhDr. Luďa Klusáková, CSc.