

Opponent's opinion on the bachelor thesis

Reforming for Abolition:

Insights into New Welfare Activism

Maria Baranichenko

Maria Baranichenko chose for the topic of her bachelor's thesis the research of one of the animal welfare organizations in the Czech Republic, and dealt with the approach of its members to animal advocacy and what influences their approach. To answer the research problem, the author chose a qualitative research strategy. I find the choice of the topic interesting and the chosen research strategy adequate.

The thesis has a classical division. Introduction, literature review, methodology and analysis. In the introduction, the author presents the structure of her thesis well, justifies its relevance, and situates it within the current scholarly debate.

This is then developed further, where the author presents a spectrum of approaches to animal advocacy. In this section, the author shows that she is well versed in the subject and that she understands the theoretical concepts she has chosen for her work. In general, I also appreciate that the author chooses a research perspective that focuses on the heterogeneity of the animal advocacy movement, which is both research-bearing and more in line with the emic perspective of the movement.

In the methodological part, the author describes in a clear and detailed way how she proceeded in her research. Starting with the selection of the organisation, through participant observation and interviews. She reflects well on her position and I appreciate that she mentions some of the obstacles she encountered during the research (e.g. no replies to emails, etc.). She also describes how she analyzed the data. Thus, the author demonstrates that she has mastered the qualitative research method in a solid way.

In the analytical section, she presents her research findings. I appreciate that the work is not strictly descriptive, but that the author really tries to analyze, for which she also uses

theoretical literature. The result is a well-written bachelor thesis. Both in terms of content and form.

I just have a minor comment, and a possible question for discussion. Right at the outset, the author claims that "the number of animals slaughtered for meat worldwide has been steadily increasing ... primarily due to the rapid growth of the human population and the rise of income" (p.6) which contrasts with her research focus on de-commodification of animals. While attention to population growth tends to depoliticize and individualize environmental problems, a focus on commodification and de-commodification turns our attention to a critique of capitalism and therefore a systemic critique and re-politique of the problem.

Question for discussion: Why do critics of commodification and capitalism often question or criticize the excessive attention paid to population growth?

I recommend the thesis for defence, I suggest grade **excellent (1)**.

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