

IMESS DISSERTATION



Note: Please email the completed mark sheet to Year 2 coordinator

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Please note that IMESS students are not required to use a particular set of methods (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, or comparative) in their dissertation.

Student:	BA Lidwina Gundacker
Dissertation title:	Same but different? A comparison of the integration experiences of refugees and guest worker migrants in Germany

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Poor
Knowledge <i>Knowledge of problems involved, e.g. historical and social context, specialist literature on the topic. Evidence of capacity to gather information through a wide and appropriate range of reading, and to digest and process knowledge.</i>	X		
Analysis & Interpretation <i>Demonstrates a clear grasp of concepts. Application of appropriate methodology and understanding; willingness to apply an independent approach or interpretation recognition of alternative interpretations; Use of precise terminology and avoidance of ambiguity; avoidance of excessive generalisations or gross oversimplifications.</i>		x	
Structure & Argument <i>Demonstrates ability to structure work with clarity, relevance and coherence. Ability to argue a case; clear evidence of analysis and logical thought; recognition of an arguments limitation or alternative views; Ability to use other evidence to support arguments and structure appropriately.</i>	x		
Presentation & Documentation <i>Accurate and consistently presented footnotes and bibliographic references; accuracy of grammar and spelling; correct and clear presentation of charts/graphs/tables or other data. Appropriate and correct referencing throughout. Correct and contextually correct handling of quotations.</i>		x	

ECTS Mark:	A	UCL Mark:	A (90)	Marker:	Dr. Lucia Najslova
<i>Deducted for late submission:</i>		-		Signed:	
<i>Deducted for inadequate referencing:</i>		-		Date:	June 11, 2018

MARKING GUIDELINES

A (UCL mark 70+): Note: marks of over 80 are given rarely and only for truly exceptional pieces of work.

Distinctively sophisticated and focused analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.

B/C (UCL mark 60-69):

A high level of analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Good understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research. 65 or over equates to a B grade.

D/E (UCL mark 50-59):

Demonstration of a critical use of sources and ability to engage in systematic inquiry. An ability to engage in sustained research work, demonstrating methodological awareness. 55 or over equates to a D grade.

F (UCL mark less than 50):

Demonstrates failure to use sources and an inadequate ability to engage in systematic inquiry. Inadequate evidence of ability to engage in sustained research work and poor understanding of appropriate research techniques.

Comments, explaining strengths and weaknesses (*at least 300 words*):

This dissertation addresses a very important topic, a one that is likely to have a decisive impact on European politics in the years to come. The tension between building cohesive societies and responding to needs of others (and, international obligations) is not a novelty in European arena, but it is certainly becoming a more prominent concern. The case of Germany is particularly important – both from the perspective of its role in European integration and in relation to its unique experience with (non)integration of third country nationals. The author explores lessons that can be drawn from post-WW2 guest worker experience for economic integration of recent migrant cohorts. Her main argument, highlighting issues of legal status and perspectives of future stay is convincingly supported by evidence from mixed methods research. Insecurity regarding the length of stay and related limited investment in qualifications and building of new future have shaped the gastarbeiter experience and are likely to be a significant obstacle for newly arrived migrants. As the author concludes, ‘denial of legal security delays investments that would be crucial for an effective economic integration’ and ‘refusal of societal membership endangers social cohesion’ (p. 58).

While there are obvious limits to comparison of guest worker and recent arrivals’ experience (data availability, different backgrounds/countries of origin, etc.), the merits of this approach are significant. The attention to historical experience opens possibilities not provided by narrow focus on recent cohorts and I am glad that the author followed the recommendation to pursue this path. Given the abundance of inter-related variables (political context in the host country, country of origin, cultural/economic factors), migration, though a fascinating subject of public conversation, is notoriously difficult to research. The author has shown a deep understanding of this complexity. Her insight into the gastarbeiter experience, and paying closer attention to lines along which post-WW2 Germany shaped its national belonging and criteria of permission to enter (ethnicity, contribution of newcomers) presents valuable contribution to current debate.

The breadth of literature and research avenues pursued in this thesis, while major strength, is also a source of some weaknesses. Some sub-sections seem inconclusive or they would need more attention to detail, yet, in overall picture, these weaknesses are minor. It is my understanding that the econometric analysis will be marked and commented upon by the UCL supervisor, with whom this part of work was consulted.

The author demonstrated competence in engaging literatures from several disciplines and I consider it particularly important that she has understood and internalised the paradox of scientific categories. Categories, of course, help us think and compare, but lack of acknowledgement of their fluidity and of the porousness of boundaries between ‘types of migrants’ all too often produces works of fiction, rather than a scientific inquiry. The author has done very well in avoiding such trap.

The author has approached her work with great commitment. It is very rare to see a student so curious, so committed and so clear on her motivations. I do hope Lidwina will continue polishing her research skills and continue her project. She has a strong potential to make a significant contribution to both intellectual and policy-oriented conversations.

Specific questions you would like addressing at the oral defence (at least 2 questions):

- 1) Some evidence presented in the dissertation suggests that skills acquired in the host country are more important than skills acquired in the country of origin. At the same time, it would be hard to argue that migrants' previous experience is negligible – after all, different 'background' or 'culture' is often suggested as *the* reason why migrants do not (cannot, should not) belong. The author should elaborate further on this paradox.
- 2) The author has explained the opportunities and limits offered by the survey method of learning about experience of recent cohorts of migrants in Germany. At her oral defence, she should show demonstrate familiarity with other methods of inquiry researchers use to understand the migrant experience.
- 3) The author's findings point out an important contradiction in German approach to third-country nationals – on the one hand, German society seems to be more welcoming to migrants who 'can contribute to society', on the other, there are limits of Germany's preparedness to give migrants an opportunity to make a contribution. As her work has a strong policy-oriented focus, what would be the first measure she would adopt to address this contradiction?