

A Review of Ms. Büşra Eti's Diploma Thesis "*Leave No One Behind:*" The Rhetoric of Equality in the Sustainable Development Goals for Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights for Undocumented Migrants

Büşra Eti's aim is to pose challenge to the rhetoric employed in selected documents relevant to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* with regards to the limitations and/or opportunities set out discursively to address reproductive health and reproductive health rights in undocumented/irregular migrants in the EU. Eti's focus is presented rather radically in the introductory part by posing critical reservations about the *Agenda's* attempt to „leave no one behind“.

While one would expect that the criticism would target the failures by EU member states to secure migrants' reproductive health and reproductive health rights in practice, the student's focus is thoroughly elsewhere. Büşra Eti posits that the „over-inclusive discourse“ of the *2030 Agenda* is actually responsible for furthering and invisibilizing inequalities for migrants on multiple, intersectional levels. Thus, the thesis' research question(s) ask(s), based on the author's perusal of critical discourse analysis, in what ways do the sources analyzed – i.e. action plans, policy frameworks, and reports – reproduce inequalities in undocumented migrants' entitlement to sexual and reproductive health, what discursive elements are employed in the process and how do the terms of sexual/reproductive health situate undocumented migrants? (pgs. 4, 9). While the counterintuitive focus of the thesis is certainly to be lauded, I believe the text fails to produce a well-organized, comprehensive and compelling academic argument, that the said *Agenda* action plans and reports actually make the improvement of migrants' reproductive health conditions difficult, because they construct a discourse that cannot account for the multifaceted realities of migrants' lives.

I thoroughly acknowledge the indispensable role of language in producing (or failing to produce) subjects that can be spoken about (or thought about, cared about, accounted for etc.). I believe, drawing of the cited CDA theoretician Norman Fairclough, that a text cannot be studied without its social (or political) context. In other words, are not individual EU member states' domestic laws and/or policies that privilege certain forms of citizenship or their regulatory institutions operative in healthcare economics at the very core of migrants' lack of access to reproductive health rights? The student does mention that different states treat migrants' reproductive health differently, but such contextualization – especially if not discussed in relation to concrete parts of the analyzed texts and the texts' specific translation into social/political reality – is critically lacking.

Eti's literature review while acknowledging the relevance of legal sources heavily relies on cited medical research to detail which specific problems undocumented migrants, particularly women, face either *en route* to or in Europe. Yet, these realities are not read against the analyzed material. It is extremely difficult throughout Eti's text to grasp the main message, for the author does not provide a sufficient number of examples that would serve as evidence supporting her overconfident arguments about the textual material. If overt inclusivity in language is counterproductive and threatens migrants' sexual and reproductive wellbeing, than what kind of modifications or changes would the student suggest be adopted in order to meet the sustainable development goals set by *2030 Agenda*? I am not undermining the generally undisputed claim that language constructs reality, but fails to produce it flawlessly (whatever that means in terms of power relations), yet I believe that criticism warrants

proposals for better practices. Would the changes in the analyzed materials be merely linguistic and discursive, or would they merit some other methods?

Indeed, the major challenge I encountered while reading Ms. Eti's thesis is, ironically, constituted by language and its use. The text is abundant in repetition (eg. pg. 18, 23), broken syntax (eg. pg. 16, 22) and paragraphs that do not develop presented argument further, but repeatedly read as introductions to phenomena that are later dropped and not elaborated on. There is an unfinished paragraph (pg. 39), terminological dissonance (Is rhetoric synonymous with discourse? Are linguistic elements the same as linguistic units? What is the difference between method and methodology?), terms that are left undefined (What is development discourse? What is migration discourse? What is the difference between / relationship between discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, and feminist critical discourse analysis? Is content analysis always only qualitative?) as well as references that cannot be located in the bibliography (eg. Mottier, pg. 14).

Of the same significance is the challenge that Ms. Eti's distribution of methodology and analysis poses. The analytical part of the thesis is too short in comparison to the repetitive introduction and methodology. Ms. Eti uses the terms method and methodology almost interchangeably, but they mean different things that have very specific effects for the research. The student uses quite well van Dijk's, Wodak's and partially Fairclough's theories of CDA, but towards the end of the thesis highlights the benefits of (not-defined) feminist CDA. Why not use this method throughout the thesis if it addresses the topic at hand better? Ms. Eti claims that linguistic units per se are not of interest to CDA (pg. 45), but proceeds to analyze some of them while at the same time holding CDA as her major method. How can such contradiction be explained? I appreciate that the student integrates Fraser's notion of recognition into the theoretical framework of the thesis, but feel that the theoretical potential of the term has not been utilized fully. The connection between theory and analysis remains very vague as the arguments are not conveyed clearly. In other words, the thesis does not culminate, it is difficult to pick the message it wants its readers to muster.

While I appreciate the dedication to the topic and the inventive approach to questioning the discursive qualities of policy materials, action plans and reports carried out by transnational/multinational organizations, I think the student has not explored fully the analytical and argumentative potential of the chosen issue. I suggest she addresses the question posed throughout this review at the thesis defense.

Although my critical comments still hold, the thesis does meet – albeit with reservations – the requirements for a Master's degree. **I recommend the thesis for defense with the preliminary grade "GOOD".**

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Tereza Jiroutová Kynčlová, Ph.D.