

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences**  
**Institute of International Studies**

**PROTOCOL ON DIPLOMA THESIS ASSESSMENT**  
**(Supervisor)**

Name of the student: Šárka Janáková

Title: Attitudes Towards Free Movement of Workers from the Perspective of Welfare Regimes

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Supervisor: Mitchell Young

**1. TOPIC AND OBJECTIVE (short information on the thesis, research objective):**

The thesis brings the theory of comparative capitalism to bear on the highly relevant issue of internal EU migration. The stated objective of the research is to analyze “whether welfare regime clusters can serve as a useful tool for understanding the cross-national differences in public opinion on intra-EU labour migrants”.

**2. CONTENT (complexity, original approach, argument, structure, theoretical and methodological backing, work with sources, appropriateness of annexes etc.):**

The thesis makes an interesting and original argument which attempts to combine comparative capitalism with public attitudes towards migration. The argument is well justified and is a logical outcome of the expectations of the literature. In particular, the author attempts to extend the work of Larsen (2008) which addresses perceptions of deservingness from the perspective of welfare regimes. The fundamental question of whether there is a relationship between attitudes and welfare regimes that can be extended beyond the characteristics of the regimes themselves, is an interesting one, and if it could be demonstrated that they do, would have a high level of explanatory value. The challenge is that, Larsen aside, most of the attempts (which the author mentions in the literature review) are not successful in proving a connection. This should not, however, close off research on the topic. Hence the work of this thesis provides a new attempt with slightly adjusted parameters.

The author does a nice job of extending Larsen’s framework by adding an additional welfare regime, the southern one. This has been well documented in the literature (as the author shows) but was not used by Larsen. She has also expanded Larsen’s defining aspects of the welfare regimes from three to four, each of which is identified through a well-established indicator. The resulting 4x4 framework allows her to locate the welfare regime types according to the strength of each indicator.

Methodologically, the approach is logical. As studying all the EU MS would have been too much for a master’s thesis, a representative case for each welfare regime type was initially selected based on other past studies that had characterized it that way. This raised a question as to whether these country cases were truly representative of the type, especially in the case of the UK, for which Brexit (even though it officially happened after the date of the data selected) could potentially cloud the data. As a compromise, it was decided to examine two countries of each type, and to identify the relative degree to which each element was at a consistent level. For the most part, the countries did match, but it was interesting to see the ways in which they did not. To what extent these differences might have affected differences in the attitudes went beyond this study, but could be interesting to explore in the future.

**3. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE (quality of language, citation style, graphics, formal aspects etc.):**

The thesis is well written and structured, and the citation style is appropriate, though accessed dates are not needed on articles. The thesis makes extensive use of tables to present quantitative and comparative data, which is good, though it can be hard at time to compare so many numbers at once.

#### **4. STATEMENT ON THE ORIGINALITY OF THE THESIS**

The thesis was checked by the Turnitin/URKUND/Theses anti-plagiarism software and is original.

#### **5. SHORT COMMENTS BY THE REVIEWER (overall impression, strengths and weaknesses, originality of ideas, achievement of the research objective etc.):**

Overall the thesis makes a good impression and has a number of strengths. The literature review on comparative capitalism, welfare regimes, and other researchers' attempts to connect these with attitudes, is well done. As well, the expansion of Larsen's framework is thoughtfully and beneficially constructed, and provides the author with a solid structure from which to explore the research question she is interested in. The cases are reasonably selected, and the use of pairs, rather than single cases, to at least partially triangulate data is advantageous.

The process of connecting this with data on attitudes was more challenging, as the data available did not always cover the exact topic and/or all the countries. The author does explain these challenges in the text and offers a justification for how she gets around these issues. Using a single year rather than several, was discussed between us at length, but practical considerations limited the research to one temporal data point. Again, this is justified, but results in some limitations.

Coming back to the objective, which in its broadest sense asked, "whether welfare regime clusters can serve as a useful tool for understanding the cross-national differences in public opinion on intra-EU labour migrants", the resulting answer seems to be that they can't, at least not with the sort of linear correlations that the author tests. However, in the process of uncovering this, the author has gone on a rich academic journey which clearly demonstrates her understanding of the subject and the process of academic methodology and research on a master's level. This is a fully acceptable result, and her taking on a challenging topic should be appreciated and valued.

#### **6. COOPERATION WITH THE SUPERVISOR (communication with the supervisor, ability to reflect comments, shift from the original intention, etc.)**

The author was in regular communication with me and was able to reflect comments and implement suggested changes in the text. As mentioned above, there were quite a number of topics that we discussed, and the author made numerous changes to the cases and data after our discussions to reflect those.

#### **7. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DURING THE DEFENCE:**

Given what you have learned, is it worth continuing to search for a direct correlation between welfare regimes and attitudes towards migration? If you think it is, hypothetically (and knowing that it might not exist or be available) what exact data would you need? If not, why?

Do some welfare regime types work better than others? Was there anything that surprised you in terms of the consistency or lack thereof of the regimes?

**8. (NON-)RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE:**

**YES – B** (on A-F scale)

Date: 1.6.2022

Signature: