

IEPS MASTER THESIS ADVISOR REVIEW FORM

STUDENT NAME: Alina Isakova

THESIS TITLE: **Knowledge for Inclusion: Strategies and Implementation of Social and Structural Integration of Refugees in the European Union through Multifaceted Orientation, Education, and Training Programmes**

ADVISOR NAME: Petra Levrincová

ADVISOR GRADE: 2

REVIEW

Unquestionably, the author has chosen a very interesting and attractive research topic - strategies and implementation of social and structural integration of refugees in the European Union through multifaceted orientation, education, and training programmes. It needs to be mentioned, however, that the task the author had intended to undertake was quite ambitious as many governments in the European Union were not even there yet. It would definitely help if the topic had been narrowed down (as recommended), perhaps focusing on a comparison between policies in the Czech Republic and another country that is deemed to have good integration practices.

Such a broad approach makes it almost impossible for a researcher to concentrate on clearly predefined objectives/hypotheses, thus inevitably leading to inconsistencies in the “objectives” set up in the Master Thesis Proposal, thesis Introduction and Conclusion; compare for example:

- Master Thesis Proposal: *“The main objective of the work is aimed to trace the presence of OETPs in theoretical framework, political discourse, and practical implementation of integration policies on different levels of the EU realm”* (+ 5 additional hypotheses);
- Introduction (p.12): *“This work is an attempt to outline prospects of theoretically and practically justified refugees’ integration in its initial levels through orientation and education programmes using previous and present positive experience, but also taking into consideration the letter of International Law and Human Rights, moral and ethical perspective, so direct and prospective benefits for all the parties concerned, i.e. the EU, nation-states, communities, citizens, newcomers. The main focus is on multifaceted Orientation, Education, and Training Programmes (OETPs) that are presented*

- as one of the most significant tools of social and structural integration into state 's and public spheres“; and*
- **Conclusion** (p.92): *„This paper presents an attempt to attract attention and explain importance of refugees' integration in the European Union mainly through qualitative research methods as for bringing an additional insight into this complicated issue, in particular structural and social integration of refugees. The work is focusing on so-called OETPs - denomination suggested by the author in order to define programmes of Orientation, Education, and Training that stand as one of the most influential tool of newcomers' integration into receiving society“.*

Being unclear in terms of objectives - tracing the presence of OETPs? (maybe closest to what could have been achieved in any master thesis), or outlining prospects of integration? (too ambitious, see the first paragraph), or explaining the importance of OETPs? (as what has been elaborated upon in the conclusion) makes it difficult to judge the content itself. *During the defence, the author may wish to clarify her research objectives/hypotheses.*

Without clear objectives, it is also difficult to decide on appropriate research methods and resources to be used. *The author may wish to elaborate on the appropriateness of selected methodology vis a vis clarified objectives.* E.g. if the research question is: What are the best strategies towards social integration of refugees in the European Union, including considerations of educational approaches? then perhaps both qualitative and quantitative analysis should have been used, incl. a comparative study (see the recommendation above).

Long complicated sentences, sometimes with mistakes, do not add to the clarity and style. E.g. *„The pressure of integration demands varies among member-states as to the final resettlement policies...“* (p. 76). Moreover, what is meant by „resettlement“ in this context? Does the author refer to a durable solution for refugees (alongside voluntary return and integration)? If yes, what is the nexus to the thesis? Carefulness should be applied when referring to the special terminology. Another example: *Common Refugee Asylum System* (p. 12) instead of *Common European Asylum System*. I understand that a general difficulty to introduce meaning into a lot of sentences may have been caused by English not being the researcher's native language. Having the thesis edited, however, may have solved the problem.

To help with conceptualisation, I would also recommend having the concept of integration explained - mainly as understood in the European Union and by the UNHCR - at the very outset of the thesis. Though, the EU definition can be traced for the first time on the page 73 (sic), UNHCR perception is missing altogether, which is even more surprising if this Refugee Agency is mentioned on several occasions in the thesis as one the most prominent players in the field of refugee protection and having „a strong connection with EU and its

member-states“ (p.89). It may also add to the clarity, if the author explains what she herself understands as successful integration.

I highly value introducing practical examples of local integration into the thesis. In light of what has been said above, however, they only remain as fragments of a huge and complicated mosaic.

During the defence, the author may also wish to shed more light on how to measure „successful integration“. There is a lot of debate out there what that is exactly. She may also want to elaborate on some of the tools that have already been developed in this regard, such as the IET - Integration Evaluation Tool. And finally, what according to the author constitutes evidence of successful integration of refugees? Refugee stories? Research conducted by the states?

The thesis is recommended for the defence. In light of the above-described shortcomings, the recommended grade is 2.

Petra Levrincová