REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Title of the thesis:	EFFECTIVENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION: CASE STUDY OF ROMA POPULATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC
Author of the thesis:	**Aidai Idinova**
Referee *(incl. titles)*:	**Professor Eva Eckertová, PhD**

Remark: *It is a standard at the FSV UK that the Referee's Report is at least 400 words. In case you will assess the thesis as "non-defendable", please explain the concrete reasons for that in detail.*

Comments of the referee on the thesis highlights and shortcomings (following the 5 numbered aspects of your assessment indicated below).

The thesis of Miss Idinova aims at assessing the problem of ethnic minority discrimination by means of deriving quantified generalizations from a public opinion survey conducted by Eurobarometer. To my knowledge this is one of the rare inductive testing of quantifiable hypotheses about the perception of ethnic differences, human prejudices and stereotypes in a post-Communist country.

1) Theoretical background:

I would expect that Miss Idinova would dedicate much larger part of the thesis to the assessment of theoretical foundations related to prejudices and stereotypes in human conduct. I would recommend to include such topics and references as Barša, P.'s *Politická teorie multikulturalismu* [Political theory of multiculturalism] 2003; Bittnerová, D., Doubek, D. & Levínská, M.'s *Funkce kulturních modelů ve vzdělávání [Functions of cultural models in education]* 2012; Blommaert, J.'s *Different approaches to intercultural communication* 1998; Delgado, R.& J. Stefancic's *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction,* 2001 and its application in Cashman*,* L.'s *New Label no progress: Institutional Racism …in the Czech Republic, in* Race, Ethnicity and Education 2016.

2) Contribution:

Despite a certain weakness in interlinking the theory and practice, Idinova's research is innovative and informative. It gathers relevant data, tackles a difficult social issue and seeks to reveal specific reasons behind pejorative attitudes and anti-Roma discourse.

Hypothesis 3 on p. 21 was tested via highly heterogeneous subsets of data in lines. Instead of 9 subgroups there could be used mere 3-4 more statistically coherent groups. The ensuing results (regularities) are then difficult to analyze objectively. Thus most probably the crucial test (i.e. the test of age and education) was conducted by statistics of a weak credibility.

The conclusions of ch. 2 (Anti-Roma attitudes) lack generalization and thus a proper conclusion, e.g. on which theoretical grounds the empirical conclusions could be explained. Were there no relevant generalizations (regularities or causalities)?

The weakness of ch. 3 (Roma education) rests in the fact that it is actually difficult to separate the data for Roma from the rest of Czech population. Relying on a narrow subpopulation of data with "declared Roma ethnicity" could be thus biased (see the footnotes on p. 32). On the other hand, Miss Idinova took advantage of her field-work in Amnesty International and used their own data, which is quite unique. However, the argument is purely descriptive in form of a narrative, missing again the generalized conclusions about the "effectiveness" of Czech policies.

Section IV on access to university education is more systematically written than the previous one. Ch. 4 on Czech legal system touches finally with the main topic of the thesis: the effectiveness of human rights protection and concludes the previous text. It shows how slow was the reform aiming at the minorities inclusion that was launched in 2007. The government was yielding to the public prejudices (as quantified in ch. 2, IV), falling behind the legal models of minority inclusions in the US or France. Nevertheless, there has been certain institutional progress recently and the prospects for deeper social inclusion of Roma are gradually improving. Ch. 4 is the best part of the thesis where the author partially succeeded to incorporate the previous analytical sections with the policies.

3) Methods:

The author claims to use the SPSS programme – however, it is not explained which statistical routines were used from that sociological statistical package. What concerns the revealed statistics, the methodology of studying percentage structures in various cross-sections is a technically less demanding methodology. This is the weakest side of the analysis.

In contrast to that the work with hypothesis testing is the strong side of the analysis since the reader is well instructed which objective is currently scrutinized.

I disagree with the statement on pp. 14-15 claiming that „Communism was not kind to socially disadvantaged groups such as Roma". This leads to a methodological misunderstanding in the thesis about the roots of present Roma discrimination: it is a new dynamic phenomenon as the rise of democracy and market values brought new criteria to the perception of Roma in the society. This aspect of analysis was omitted.

Definitely the author should explain which model of data distribution was used for estimating the "expected count". Was it her own estimation?

4) Literature:

The seminal study by Loveland and Popescu, 2015, serving as the theoretical backdrop, was well chosen. The references are rich in titles where the official publications of international institutions dominate. The number of analytical papers could have been widened by including e.g. Cviklová, L.'s *Social closure and discriminatory practices related to the Roma minority in the Czech Republic through the perspective of national and European institutions*, in *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology,* 2/1, 2011; Eckert E.'s *Romani in the Czech Sociolinguistic Space*, in the International Journal of the Sociology of Language; Hancock I.'s *The Consequences of Anti-Roma Racism in Europe* 1994; Hoskins, B. & Momodou S.'s *Developing intercultural competence in Europe: the challenges,*in *Language and Intercultural Communication* 11(2), 2011; Koutouki, K. & Farget, D.'s *The participation of European minority peoples in public policy decision-making: A national and supranational legal perspective.* Montreal: Center to International Sustainable Development Law 2012; Lucero, F. & Collum, J.'s *The Roma: During and after communism. Human rights and human welfare* 2012; Smith, P.'s The Roma in Europe, *Harvard International Review* 2011; or Vermeersch, P.'s *Ethnic Minority Identity and Movement Politics: The Case of the Roma in the Czech Republic and Slovakia* (in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 26/5, 2003.

5) Manuscript form:

The thesis reads well, its organization is easy to follow and the content is delivered in an appropriate English style and register, with very few typos.

Suggested questions for the defence:

   a. *Please explain the methodology and the role of "expected count" in your tables.*

b. *How the policies of the government can overarch the prejudices and stereotypes deeply present in the Czech society?*
c. *Why did you not include an analysis of prejudices of other countries than Czech Republic, once you had the data?*
d. *The majority society is blatantly unaware of its racial bias that stems from the persuasion that inhabiting a culturally homogeneous space is normal and neutral. Using your data and experience, can you explain for what reasons may this bias be difficult to remove, despite efforts to raise public awareness?*

6) **Conclusion of the review**
The main weakness of this thesis is inadequate integration of chapters 2 and 3 with the theoretical underpinnings of the concepts of „discrimination" and „segregation" (ch. 1). The empirical (statistical) part could be improved by applying additional methods of analysis such as correlations, regressions and statistical significances. The policy implications are clear and helpful but weakly related to theories of social governance.

I recommend the thesis for final defence. I recommend the following grade: "2" (good), though in its weaker form.

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED (for details, see below):

CATEGORY	POINTS	
Theoretical background (max. 20)	8	
Contribution *(max. 20)*	12	
Methods *(max. 20)*	10	
Literature *(max. 20)*	14	
Manuscript form *(max. 20)*	17	
TOTAL POINTS *(max. 100)*	**61**	
The proposed grade (1-2-3-4)	**2-**	Actually my exact grade is 2.45.

DATE OF EVALUATION: **12 Sept. 2016**   *Eva Eckertová*

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                                       Referee Signature

The referee should give comments to the following requirements:

1) THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: *Can you recognize that the thesis was guided by some **theoretical fundamentals** relevant for this thesis topic? Were some important theoretical concepts **omitted**? Was the theory used in the thesis consistently **incorporated with the topic** and hypotheses tested? Has the author demonstrated a genuine **understanding** of the theories addressed?*

Strong   Average   Weak
20   10   0   points

2) CONTRIBUTION: *Evaluate if the author presents **original ideas** on the topic and aims at demonstrating **critical thinking** and ability to draw **conclusions** based on the knowledge of relevant theory and relevant empirical material. Is there a distinct **value added** of the thesis (relative to knowledge of a university-educated person interested in given topic)? Did the author explain **why** the observed phenomena occurred? Were the **policy implications** well founded?*

Strong   Average   Weak
20   10   0   points

3) METHODS: *Are the **hypotheses** for this study clearly stated, allowing their further **verification and testing**? Are the theoretical explanations, empirical material and **analytical tools** used in the thesis relevant to the research question being investigated, and adequate to the aspiration level of the study? Is the thesis **topic comprehensively analyzed** and does the thesis not make trivial or **irrelevant detours** off the main body stated in the thesis proposal? More than 12 points signal an exceptional work, **which requires your explanation "why" it is so**).*

Strong   Average   Weak
20   10   0   points

4) LITERATURE REVIEW: *The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and **command of recent literature**. The author **quotes** relevant literature in a **proper way** and disposes with a **representative bibliography**. (Remarks: references to Wikipedia, websites and newspaper articles are a sign of **poor research**. If they dominate you cannot give more than 8 points. References to books published by prestigious publishers and articles in renowned journals give much better impression. Any sort of **plagiarism** disqualifies the thesis from admission to defence.)*

Strong   Average   Weak
20   10   0   points

5) MANUSCRIPT FORM: *The thesis is **clear and well structured**. The author uses appropriate **language and style**, including the academic **format for quotations**, graphs and tables. The text effectively refers to graphs and tables, is easily readable and **stimulates thinking.** The text is free from typos and easy to comprehend.*

Strong   Average   Weak
20   10   0   points

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Czech grading	US grading
81 – 100	**1**	= excellent	= A
61 – 80	**2**	= good	= B
51 – 60	**3**	= satisfactory	= C
41 – 50	**3**	= satisfactory	= D with a warning of failing
0 – 40	**4**	= fail	= not recommended for defence