



## Bachelor's Thesis Evaluation Form

Student's name: Lenka Dvořáčková

Thesis title: **Aspects of Social Integration of Unaccompanied Immigrant Female Minors in Italy: the case of Nigerian Females**

Name of the supervisor: Ludmila Maria Wladyniak, M.A.

Name of the opponent: José Hildo de Oliveira Filho, MSc.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis? Please give your reasons for the suggested grade in detail below.

1. *Does the author show understanding of one or more theories, and use theory to generate a hypothesis or to make the problem area more understandable.*

Comments: Throughout this thesis, the author assumed that the integration of Nigerian refugee minors would eventually happen, despite the fact most of them speak very little Italian and face relative confinement until the age of 18, with limited chances of interacting with the broader society. I maybe missed a deeper problematizing of “childhood” and “underage” categories. “Childhood” is itself a great sociological problem. The author could have made use of Foucault’s “History of Sexuality vol. 1”, and the way he mentions that children were seen as “mini-adults” in the European Middle Ages. People talked openly about sex with children at that time. Or the author could have read the classic study by the French Medievalist Philippe Ariès “Centuries of childhood”. Norbert Elias’s classic study on Mozart. “Mozart: the sociology of a genius” could also be useful to give the author a picture of an 18th-century unconventional “childhood”. I quoted all these works because mass schooling changed the way we see “children” dramatically, and we have grown accustomed to thinking of children and adolescents as beings-in-development, when in fact it hasn’t always been like this. This “historical way of thinking” would allow the author to see social changes and conceptualise “children” and “minors” as socially constructed categories.

2. *Is the research question articulated clearly and properly? Is the research question sufficiently answered in the conclusion?*

Comments: The research questions are well formulated. They are clear; they match the methodological choices of the author. These research questions guide the author’s arguments and conclusions. However, there are many authors discussing children and adolescents in Africa today, and some of these discussions could be useful for this thesis too. Some authors would claim that there is an “intergenerational contract”, especially in Nigeria and neighbouring counties such as Ghana. This “intergenerational contract” is based on the idea that children should “give back” the care that their parents have already given them. One way of doing this is achieving a “respectable” place in society.

So children are encouraged to achievement, while the social means are absent. And migration becomes a way that African adolescents can prove their agency and their capacity of both



taking care of themselves and their families. I will put some references below so the author can take a look at them below if the author will be interested in expanding her research.

3. *Is the thesis based on relevant research and literature and does it accurately summarize and integrate the information?*

Comments: The research does a great deal in summarize and integrate different sources of information. Regarding research literature, I would suggest different readings to this thesis. One of the great specialists in “illegal” migration is missing. Shahram Khosravi. Khosravi was a refugee himself because of war in his native Iran. And now he teaches Social Anthropology at Stockholm University. In his “Ilegal” traveller: an auto-ethnography of borders”, the author can find out not only about Khosravi’s experiences, but details about refugee processes and human trafficking that might be helpful in case the author would like to design an interview or engage in conversation with asylum seekers. Besides that, I would also have recommended the author to read more on the concept of “cultures of migration” and on “children and adolescents in Africa”.

4. *What is the quality of the data or the other sources? Are the sample method, data collection and data analysis appropriate?*

Comments: Concerning the use that the author has made of ethnography, I would like to congratulate her. I know that by now the author will think that I am only here to criticise. One of the challenges of ethnography is to develop grounded theories based on specific contexts. And if the author has not done that, at least the author came very close to it.

For instance, you mention that all the girls are Christian, but they also performed a voodoo ritual so they would keep their ties to the human traffickers, and eventually pay their debts. A great insight that would have allowed the author to go deeper into religious studies.

The diaspora of African religions has proven one of the most flexible and captivating ways of engaging with local/global dynamics, and because of a long-term history of slavery, we can now talk about a “Black Atlantic religion” as J. L. Matory has put it. There are studies on African religious institutions in Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, US, Portugal.

Matory is a professor of religious studies, and he has extensive research in both archival research and ethnography of African religions in Brazil, Haiti, Nigeria and the US. The author could have taken a look at his works.

5. *Are the findings relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions of the thesis based on strong arguments?*

Comments: The most critical part of my comment. The author seems to take the view of the Italian government at some moments of the thesis, and the author even provides reasons how and why policies around the migration of unaccompanied minors. Of course, we all hope that only good things might happen with the people we’ve met on the field. But it’s not the author’s role to assume that the Italian government has only “good intentions”. So I would advise the author to be a bit more careful in her conclusions, and take a look at one Foucauldian concept: governmentality.

To be more careful in concluding her thesis, I would maybe advise the author to look for International Relations literature on EU migration policies, especially after the “migration crisis”. If I could support the author in more practical terms, I would tell her to pay attention



to the scholarly works by Benjamin Tallis. Tallis is working in Prague at the IRR (Institute of International Relations), and he could be of great help. Tallis has extensive research experience in qualitative work with EU policies, especially FRONTEX. And even though his publications are more focused on Central Europe, he could be a very helpful reader also with your ethnographic methods too.

6. *Are the author's thoughts distinguished unambiguously from the borrowed ideas?*

Comments: The author's thoughts are distinguishable from the borrowed ideas. For instance, I also missed a more critical tune when the author used Goffman's concept of "total institutions". I guess if the author followed to the letter the idea, she would have to emphasise more the relative isolation and institutional control that UASC are submitted, and maybe undermine the girls' agency. This is just one example in which the author positions herself and discusses the concepts elaborated by others.

7. *Is the thesis containing original/innovative research (in terms of topic, approach, and/or findings)?*

Comments: The author can grow this project into a much substantial work. She can make it the work of her life, and transform it into an excellent academic career! She is already on the right track! The issues with access are already "solved", she has already built a contact network. She would need to prepare for more extended periods in the field (as she wrote). But she has done a good job for two-weeks fieldwork!

8. *What is the quality of style and other formal requirements?*

Comments: The style is overall good. There is a logical sequence in presenting the development of the ethnography. At first, we are presented with the statistics about migration, then we "enter" the field with the author. I still have spotted minor grammar mistakes, though

9. *Are there any other strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, which are not included in the previous questions? Please list them if any.*

Comments: I would list a possible additional literature so the author can expand her project:

- Foucault, Michel. *History of sexuality. Vol 1: the will to knowledge*. Penguin, 1998.  
Ariès, Philippe. *Centuries of childhood: a social history of family life*. Vintage, 1965  
Elias, Norbert. *Mozart: the sociology of a genius*. Polity Press, 1993.  
Esson, James. "A body and a dream at a vital juncture: Ghanaian youth, uncertainty and the allure of football." *Geoforum* 47 (2013): 84-92.  
Esson, James. "You have to try your luck: male Ghanaian youth and the uncertainty of football migration." *Environment and Planning A* 47, no. 6 (2015): 1383-1397.  
Ungruhe, Christian, and James Esson. "A Social Negotiation of Hope: Male West African Youth, "Waithood" and the Pursuit of Social Becoming through Football." *Boyhood Studies* 10, no. 1 (2017): 22-43.  
Van der Meij, Nienke, and Paul Darby. "Getting in the game and getting on the move: family, the intergenerational contract and internal migration into football academies in Ghana." *Sport in Society* 20, no. 11 (2017): 1580-1595.



Van Der Meij, Nienke. "Family matters in African football migration: an analysis of the role of family, agency and football academies in the mobility of Ghanaian football players." PhD dissertation, Ulster University, 2015.

Langevang, T., 2008. 'We are managing!' Uncertain paths to respectable adulthoods in Accra, Ghana. *Geoforum*, 39(6), pp.2039-2047.

Sassen, Saskia. *Expulsions: Brutality and complexity in the global economy*. Harvard University Press, 2014.

Fergusson, James. *Global shadows: Africa in the neoliberal world order*. Duke University Press, 2006.

Khosravi, Shahram. *'Illegal' traveller: an auto-ethnography of borders*. Springer, 2010.

Matory, J. Lorand. *Black Atlantic religion: Tradition, transnationalism, and matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

As you can see, some of these works deal with football and sports in Africa, but as they are working with young people in Africa, there are many discussions connected to this thesis. I am sorry, but the works are not quoted in any order, alphabetical or chronological. But the author shouldn't have any problem in finding this bibliography.

10. *What topic do you suggest for the discussion in the thesis defence?*

Comments: The quality of her interaction with the young females in terms of a daily interaction (how was the routine of communication?). If there were young males too on this particular centre. How do they, males and females interact? The question of access to the school. Why wasn't it possible for the author to go and see how are the school routines? If there is something that the author did that she later regretted.

Overall assessment of the thesis:

*I would recommend the thesis to defence. Issues of time and space, language and subjectivity are present in every attempt to do an ethnographic work. And there is no reason to not see the value of this Bachelor thesis.*

Proposed grade: A

*(A- B: excellent, C-D: very good, E: good, F: fail)*

Date: 29/05/2018

Signature: