

Name of the student:	Samia Binte Alamgir
Title of the thesis:	WHAT IS THE WORTH OF HIGHLY EDUCATED FEMALE MIGRANTS IN THE LABOR MARKET OF BARCELONA?
Reviewer:	Dr María Gabriela Palacio

## 1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

Is the choice of 'pink collar jobs' simply driven by lower barriers to arguably less educated migrants? Women tend to be represented in the care economy, mainly women migrants, even after controlling for education. This is due to social structures and processes of labour market segregation that transcend the 'low skilled' argument.

The main research question does not derive from an engagement with academic literature or a practical social problem. Though the introduction somewhat makes a case for studying migration patterns from Latin America to Spain, education—central to the question, is not sufficiently discussed. The author then reformulates the question regarding the labour market (not white-collar jobs as stated in the abstract) and related this to gender roles (and not education as per the original question).

The author seems to equate race with 'darker skin' or 'skin tone' and lacks a more nuanced approach to race as a socially constructed hierarchy system. This is highly problematic.

## 2. ANALYSIS

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

Insufficient theoretical backing: a limited number of authors is cited in the literature review. Further, there is no critical engagement with the literature but rather a descriptive collection of reading summaries. There is no clear conceptualisation of 'migrant population' nor a discussion of push and pull factor or any other framework to explain migration outflows and inflows. The literature review then moves to present migration trends specific to Spain, again without deepening the causes of changes in migration trends, despite suggesting reasons related to 'historical ties', colonialism and changes in immigration legislation.

The discussion on 'cultural distance' is approached from an angle unaware of colonial legacies and thus leading to the questionable argument that Latinx migrants share 'common origins and ethnic affinity'. The author further makes some highly stigmatising claims, e.g., 'since women are often in a position of marginality and vulnerability in some Latin American countries, Spaniards often perceive Latin American women as "being affectionate, kind ..." [and] associated with lack of studies and education'. Such claims reproduce discriminatory speech.

In terms of methodology, it is unclear why the group under study is 'a new generation of migrants from Latin America'. The author does not present a change in the migration trend to substantiate that the current generation of migrants is better educated than previous ones and

has different expectations regarding labour market integration. It is not fully clear how the author collected the sample, the response rate, and why criteria such as 'darker skin' are relevant to the study—and if this is the understanding of 'race' it is rather essentialist and simplistic. How did the participant get access to the employee list of the top companies mentioned in the methodology?

The empirical core of the thesis is a series of interviews with women migrant. Though the author makes an effort to create a narrative through the 'lived experiences' of the interviewees, there is no sufficient discussion on the background of the respondents. The interviews are presented in a vacuum. There are some insights regarding the obstacles women face in the labour market, but they are not sufficient to fully answer the research question. The discussion on racial segregation remains problematic, first for the emphasis on skin colour and second, for the very thin qualitative data used to back up this argument. The discussion on gender roles is somewhat interesting but was not sufficiently presented in the literature review and thus lacks theoretical grounding. Furthermore, the discussion on care issues seems relevant to the female labour force, not only migrant women. Other elements, such as family constraints, which should instead be approached as unpaid care work, and pay gap, offer a few interesting insights but again without sufficient engagement with literature on these themes.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

It is not fully clear the contribution of the thesis: is it about the role of education or whether migrant women face discrimination in the labour market. Both elements have been sufficiently studied in specialised literature, but the author does not seem to engage with these debates nor bring their findings in conversation with relevant literature. The conclusion section attempts to return to the initial research question, but both the theoretical components and findings are not sufficient to fully answer it. Some claims are somewhat contradictory: if migrant women face social stigma and discrimination, how can an argument of cultural affinity be made or even 'opening a door' to Latin American women as stated in conclusion?

### 4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

The title is slightly odd: what is the worth of migrants does not seem like the appropriate way to refer to a specific social group. Why is female migrant integration a 'thorny' issue, as stated in the abstract? Ineffective abstract.

Many claims remain unsubstantiated, e.g., 'migration from Latin America has been impressive, and read inflated and/or normative.

With 56% of women migrants, can we talk about a 'feminisation trend', as the author argues? The author presents some national figures but fails to explain how gendered migration patterns can be explained by gender relations (reads tautological) and cultural patterns.


Unfortunate choice of words: 'so-called Latino populations' is a category that misses more recent debates on gender and race issues, which has pushed for different use of semantics and naming.

In-text citations look messy and disorganised, often lacking space between words.

Overall, the thesis reads disorganised and descriptive.

## 5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

<b>Grade (1-5):</b>	6.0 (in Leiden's grading), E 5.0 (in Barcelona's grading, 1-10)
Date:	Signature:
24 June 2021	

"Sehr Gut" (1.0) = Very Good

"Gut" (2.0) = Good

"Befriedigend" (3.0) = Satisfactory

"Ausreichend" (4.0) = Sufficient

"Nicht ausreichend" (5.0) = Non-Sufficient/Fail.

The minimum passing grade is "Ausreichend" (4.0).

Intermediate grades are possible: 1.3; 1.7; 2.3; 2.7; 3.3; 3.7