Joint Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations (JMMIR)

The Main Obstacles in the Integration
Process of the Third-Country Nationals in the
Czech Republic – Case Study: České
Budějovice, South Bohemian Region

Appraisal of MA Dissertation

Student's name   Bc. Markéta Benešová

1.   Research question/ Objective

Research project of Laura Tommila *"How are asylum seekers represented in Swiss newspapers"* is an excellent example of an analysis of media representation. Result of her scientific research brings new and much needed original data and thoughts in the current discussion about role of the media in public sphere of debate around asylum (and even immigration in wider context) in Switzerland. Studied newspapers were daily newspapers 20 Minuten, Blick, Tages-Anzeiger and Neue Zürcher Zeitung. Studied period was from October 2012 to February 2013 (sample of 389 analyzed newspaper articles).

2.   Structure

Structure of submitted dissertation is clear, logical and fully corresponding with this type of scientific publication. Introductory part of Tommila´s thesis consists of national (Swiss) and theoretical background information - as author stated. Then author describes Swiss asylum system. After this introduction author continues with part called "Media and representation: theoretical insights". In this chapter author presents terminology and is: *"giving insights in the way media representation of 'Others' works"*. Important is to mention that Laura Tommila uses the state of the art literature of relevant authors in given field. Next chapter is devoted to very clear and comprehensive research design description. After this part Tommila´s dissertation continues with very detailed and well composed chapter of findings. Specific section of this part of Tommila´s dissertation is Chapter 5.8 which consists of description of the visual representation of asylum seekers in press photography in studied newspapers. Important contribution of the work lies in the fact that the last section of submitted thesis is devoted to contextualization of researcher´s findings – in terms of (Swiss) national and academic context. The dissertation ends with conclusion, list of used literature and list of the 389 articles analyzed in the research.

3.   Methodology and Presentation

Methodology is very strong feature of the thesis. It combines qualitative and quantitative research methods in clearly defined and very well explained way. Laura Tommila uses methods invented by respected authorities, but she not only uses them in proper form, but she also generates huge amount of much needed original data, her own thoughts and directions. I very much appreciate that together with „standard" form of using methods within given research in representation she makes good use also of other theories useful in studied subject.

For example she uses concept of immigration as a 'triple danger' - concept developed by Jeff Huysmans. It shows good orientation of Laura Tommila in migration studies and in this particular research the use of mentioned theory is well chosen and helps to clarify the way the Swiss society might consume the phenomenon of asylum as is present in Swiss newspapers. Another very strong feature of submitted thesis is how readable the work is (but without a reduction of standards of objectivity or misappropriation of the methodology). Author presents her very convincing and many times fascinating findings in a very clear way. To clarity and readability of the thesis also positively contribute illustrative graphs and confident handwriting and stylistic abilities of the author. It all determines this research that it could and should be published.

In terms of ambiguities in the thesis I found only these irrelevant details:

Title of 2.1.3 The Characteristics of Migration during the Communistic Regime

Page 31 The only significant minority with its own national consciousness, culture and specific lifestyle were the Roma people. (Quoted from Richtermocová, T. 2010, p. 4.)

Referencing in the text is correct.

4. Examination of research question in terms of the content

I therefore suggest grading A for this well written master thesis.

Overall evaluation **A**

19 August 2013 in České Budějovice
the Czech Republic

PhDr. Salim Murad, PhD.

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Date

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Name/Signature of Teacher