

Joint Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations
(JMMIR)

Appraisal of MA Dissertation

NGO in Ethiopia: The Case of People in Need

Student's name

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1. Research question/ Objective

The author intended to study the functioning of NGO's and their workers by focusing on a specific Czech organization that is active in all parts of the world. For doing that she interviewed both the director of the specific organization –*Clovek v tisni*– and some of the workers who were willing to get interviewed. She wanted to learn about the workers motivation and about the challenges they have to face in their work. She even reports on some collected information about the selection procedure the has been used for choosing the most desirable candidates. This is an important topic in our learning about migration as the NGO's are incredibly influential in all that is happening in migration and conflict and/or disaster relief. Therefore, the research question is well selected.

2. Structure

The structure is satisfactory and adequate for studying the above identified aims of the research. I found the introductory history review of the development of NGO's very interesting and helpful. However, I would have preferred more discussion of the negative aspects of the NGO's as in their interfering with local politics and basically placing themselves above lawfully (and frequently democratically-elected, e.g. in Israel where they line up with the forces of extreme left such as NGO's *Ir Amim*, or *New Israel Fund* who are being financed by foreign governments to undermine Israel's governmental policies) functioning local governments. Specifically, *Clovek v tisni* was in the past discussed in the connection to some controversies involving alleged cooperation with terrorists in Chechnya. Davidova speaks of "common" interest of the NGO's, but the question is "common" to whom? To some extreme organization's radical political interests, to this tribe but not to the other tribe, to the "poor of the world", to the interests of the West, to the humanity, etc...?

3. Methodology and Presentation

The methodology of interviewing and analyzing the interviews appears to be appropriate for the topic in this case. There are, however, inherent pitfalls. As the author herself discusses there might be some more or less latent selfish motivation in the apparent altruism. I could think of some such as clever career moves, excitement and overall thrill-seeking (who wants some boring desk job in a small Czech town where nothing ever happens?), getting feelings of superiority over these ignorant "savages", patronizing or missionary motives, perhaps not such a bad salary (in post-conflict Kosovo that was swarmed by Western NGO's the prices of necessities such as food and housing sky-racketed due to the NGO workers' salaries and as a result the local population was even more pauperized and made dependent on aid from NGO's or from relatives abroad), etc... The interviewing method cannot tap these hidden and perhaps true motives. Social psychology discusses the issues of self-monitoring (i.e.,

adjusting one's openly expressed views to those of a person I am currently with) or of down-right "social desirability", i.e., presenting one's self as I would like to be seen by the interviewer. If I believe that my interviewer is interested in finding whether I have altruistic motives and I believe that being seen as an altruist would in her eyes be considered as something positive then I might have a tendency to express such motives or emphasize them over my other motives.

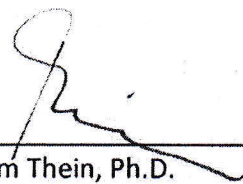
4. Examination of research question in terms of the content

The examination, despite the above mentioned flaw, is appropriate and quite thorough. Overall I liked it and found it very informative. I appreciate the use of my former fellow student's at NYU – Gordon Moskowitz's- text.

Overall evaluation: A - excellent

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Date



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