

Annex 1 – Template Dissertation Report EPS



Joint Dissertation Review

Name of the student:	Anca-Ştefana Mărginean
Title of the thesis:	Health Security of Refugees and Asylum Seekers during COVID-19: The Role of Cities
Reviewer:	Marcin Zubek

1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

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

The author has embarked on a very up to date and relevant topic, which links two recent crises in Europe and the world, namely the so-called refugee crisis and the COVID-19 crisis. This is ambitious as both those crises are to a degree on-going and highly politicised. The author decided to take a local angle on those issues, and therefore asked an interesting question in her thesis: *how have European cities ensured the health security of refugees and asylum seekers during COVID-19?*

I find this research question relevant, and the author has made a very compelling case regarding the research gap it covers. It is a descriptive question, however the aim of various qualitative analyses proving causality is not the main aim. The main aim is to understand reality around us, and this seems to be what the author is trying to show.

The literature review is nicely done and skillfully leads towards the hypothesis. What could have been perhaps added is perhaps a discussion on some literature connected to governance, and especially bad governance, as it might play a role in the ways the analysed cities dealt with the problem. I also think that perhaps literature on securitization is very much applicable to the topic.

2. ANALYSIS

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

As mentioned above, the aim of the research is ambitious, relevant and creates certain expectations. Methodologically however, I find a number of problems.

- I generally have nothing against selecting Bristol, Frankfurt and Timsoara as cases, however their selection is not justified well enough. The author emphasizes the importance of the “local turn” in research, yet she does not explain in detail, using the local arguments, why those 3 cities are best for the analysis.
- In connection to the point above, the author promises to focus on the vertical and horizontal governance structures, yet these do not seem to be important in justifying the case studies. E.g. it could be nice to take into account political differences in cities v. the state regarding the vertical connection.
- The author includes primary sources in the Annex – this is of course positive. Unfortunately the logic behind data collection is missing. The description of the methods employed is also quite vague (e.g. which discourse analysis is used?), which makes this research impossible to falsify.

3. CONCLUSIONS

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

The research objective is generally achieved. The author managed to explain how the 3 cities were able to manage the COVID-19 pandemic vis-à-vis refugee's health security. The vertical/horizontal relationship are uncovered and the narratives for justification are indicated. The one problem I have is the author's claim about identifying the "North-Western" model. I would say that one would need (a lot) more than 2 cases to justify formation of a new model.

4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

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

No problems here. The thesis is written very nicely. It is clear and reads very well.

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

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

All in all the student has done a good job. The chosen topic is relevant and interesting, the research gap identified in a compelling way, the research objective ambitious yet feasible.

The weakest points of the thesis is the methodology, which generally lacks systematic data collection and analysis. Perhaps it has been performed, but the author failed to explain how she has done this. For this reason I was considering a C grade, however I changed my mind after reading the last paragraph, which clearly shows that the author is very much aware of her limits and proposes very sensible ways forward and possible improvements for the research. This signifies certain maturity and seriousness in approach to the topic, which should be praised.

Grade (A-F)	B/8.0
Date	Signature
26/06/2022	Marcin Zubek