



REVIEW OF DIPLOMA THESIS

Review type: Opponent's Review

Author of the diploma thesis: Aysu Melis Gündüz

Title: A Comparative Analysis of Labour Market Integration of Ukrainian Forced Migrants in the Czech Republic and Poland

Author of the review: Mirna Jusić, M.A., Ph.D.

Evaluate the diploma thesis based on the following considerations (not necessarily in this order):

1) *Factual benefits of work and its added value;*

The student has chosen to study the integration of Ukrainian forced migrants in the labor markets of Poland and the Czech Republic (p. 6). As pointed out by the author, “the significance of this study lies in understanding and comparing the integration of Ukrainian forced migrants into the labour markets of Poland and Czechia,” given that background research done by the author identified problems in this realm. (p.11). The added value of the analysis is that it “delves deeper into identifying the underlying causes, potential shortcomings, and areas for improvement in integrating Ukrainian forced migrants into the labour markets of Poland and the Czech Republic.” (p.11)

The author provides an overview of existing labor market programs and other support mechanisms ensured by policies in Poland and the Czech Republic to facilitate the integration of Ukrainian forced migrants into labor markets of these countries, analyzed from the perspective of the framework on migrant integration developed by Ager and Strang (2004, 2008, 2010) and through the conceptual framework on integration and labor market integration.

Moreover, the author has conducted interviews and surveys with Ukrainian forced migrants in both countries to shed a light on their experiences in making use of support mechanisms as well as the barriers they face in integration in these two countries.

2) *Setting and answering research questions;*

The author poses the following research questions:

1. "What kind of labor market programs are currently implemented for Ukrainian forced migrants in Poland and the Czech Republic?"
2. [main question] “What are the underlying factors hindering the integration of Ukrainian forced migrants into the labor markets of Poland and the Czech Republic?”
3. “How do the barriers to the labor market integration experienced by Ukrainian forced migrants in Poland and the Czech Republic impact their employment status, income levels, and overall socio-economic well-being?”



Moreover, an additional aim of the thesis is to formulate policy recommendations based on the findings to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of government support for labor market integration among Ukrainian forced migrants in the two countries.

To do so, the author takes as the focal points of her study the concepts of integration, labor market integration, and precariat. These concepts are used to analyze the impact of labor market programs on Ukrainian forced migrants, focusing on the underlying factors hindering the integration of Ukrainian forced migrants in the labor markets of the two countries. Moreover, Ager and Strang's conceptual framework (2004, 2008, 2010) on migrant integration, which includes social, economic, and cultural aspects, highlighting the significance of implementing different types of support measures, is used in analysis. (pp. 63-64)

The author has answered her research questions in a convincing way. She has provided a thorough overview of the support measures provided in the two countries; she has identified some of the underlying factors hindering integration in the two countries; and has also provided some recommendations on how the situation could be ameliorated.

Some of the core findings include the confirmation of informants facing language barriers and the role of social capital (rather than official government support) in accessing information about employment and employment opportunities in general. The author finds that “Ukrainian forced migrants' labour market experiences in the Czech Republic and Poland demonstrate the complex interaction of structural barriers, socio-cultural dynamics, and individual agency. Though resilient, migrants face systemic barriers like language, discrimination, and bureaucracy that prevent them from integrating into the labour market.” (p. 69).

In the discussion, the author discusses the findings in relation to the findings in relation to the conceptual framework by Ager and Strang and makes references to other studies on the subject.

However, a more substantial, direct discussion of the findings in relation to the three concepts of integration, labor market integration and the precariat would have been beneficial.

3) *Structure of work;*

The structure of the work is clear and contains all important elements of an academic text. The author starts with an introduction, which includes the main research question, and continues with a historical overview of the current situation in Poland and the Czech Republic in relation to migration governance. She then introduces the conceptual framework of the study. This is followed by a comprehensive methodology chapter (research design, methods, data collection and analysis), the findings, a discussion and conclusion, containing recommendations.

4) *The factual accuracy and convincing of the argumentation;*

The argumentation flows well, and the author's arguments are backed by evidence throughout her work. The background on migration governance in both countries and the in-depth overview of policies concerning support to Ukrainian forced migrants in both countries is very detailed. The author's discussion seamlessly brings the results into connection with the core concepts applied in the work.

A few minor points can be added here:



- It would have been beneficial to elaborate on the shift in migration governance in the Czech Republic from multi-culturalism to a 'civic integration model' and its implications, as mentioned by Drbohlav (2011) (p.16);
- The collaboration and respective roles of regional integration centers and CSOs in providing support to migrants in the Czech Republic could have been explained more directly (on p. 19).

5) *Sophistication and application of theoretical approaches;*

The author lays out the conceptual framework in a convincing way and justifies its use. She makes use of Ager and Strang (2004) conceptual framework on migrant integration. Moreover, she makes use of the concepts of market integration, integration and the precariat, elaborating their meaning. The framework is well-suited for her research questions.

One comment is that, while the study does include a chapter on the operationalization of these concepts (4.4.), which was to define how abstract concepts and variables are measured or observed, this could have been elaborated on in a more detailed way in relation to the types of analytical categories that the author makes use of later on (in surveys, interviews)

6) *Methodological approach and application of particular methods and approaches;*

The methodological approach of the thesis is clear. The thesis makes use of a comparative case study design, looking at two similar countries (Poland and the Czech Republic) and their approaches to supporting the integration of Ukrainian forced migrants.

The author justifies her choice comparative analysis, data collection and data analysis well, and lays out in detail the limitations of the study. The approach is rather ambitious, with the author combining in-depth interviews with surveys filled by Ukrainian forced migrants in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Some comments:

- It could have been explained why interviews were combined with surveys.
- The introduction mentions the application of critical content analysis of political and legal documents, but how this was done is not elaborated on in the methodology section.

7) *Use of literature and data;*

The author relies on an extensive number of relevant scientific sources. The literature review, as well as the section outlining policies in the two countries, is comprehensive and well-written.

Turnitin shows a 24% similarity score. The text shows similarity of one source to the extent of 3% and all other sources to the extent of less than 1%. After carefully reviewing the Turnitin report for the thesis, it is clear that the similarity score can be attributed to the use of quotes and a great number of concepts. Some more careful paraphrasing for could have been beneficial on pages 16, 17, 20, 31 and 33, but this only relates to a few sentence fragments. The source stated 3% (another thesis by a student from Charles University) could have been included in the list of references, given that a few interview questions from the interview guide in the annex that the author has used in her thesis contain similar wording as an interview guide included in the other student's thesis.

8) *Stylistic and text editing (quote, text layout, etc.).*



Very well-written academic text with no stylistic or text editing issues. A few minor points:

The section 1.1., providing an overview of main mechanisms for Ukrainian forced migrants at EU level, would be better suited somewhere else other than the Introduction (maybe in the literature review).

In-text references are at times combined with some footnotes which contain references; it may be better to use either or, for the sake of consistency in citation style.

9) *Question for defense (not obligatory)*

I do not have specific questions. However, I would like the author to reflect upon some of the comments I have made in this review.

For the above reasons, I recommend the diploma thesis for the defense.

My grading is "A".

Date: 4 June 2024

Signature: