

## HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

**Masaryk University**

**Faculty**

**Procedure field**

**Applicant**

**Applicant's home unit,**

**institution**

**Habilitation thesis**

**Reviewer**

**Reviewer's home unit,**

**institution**

Faculty of Social Studies  
Social Policy and Social Work  
Mgr. Ondřej Hora, Ph.D.  
Faculty of Social Studies

„Youth, labour market insecurity and institutions“  
doc. RNDr. Milan Šimek Ph.D., MBA  
Faculty of Economics, VSB Technical University of  
Ostrava

The submitted habilitation thesis is focused on the issues of young people's entry and employment in the labour market.

The reviewed habilitation thesis offers a comprehensive study on a highly relevant and recent topic which has not been yet comprehensively treated in the Czech Republic. I am also convinced that the facts presented in the habilitation thesis can be a good starting point for further follow-up works of a research nature and can also significantly support the decision-making processes of public policy makers.

The aim of the habilitation thesis is "to gain insight into critical moments and places in young people's lives by following their stories and understanding how their behaviour interacts with structural conditions to enable them to lead their preferred way of life".

The work is focused on finding answers to three questions:

- What strategies do young people use to address their situation?
- What key aspects are relevant to their situation in specific cases?
- What key aspects play a role in young people's life situation?

From a methodological point of view, it can be concluded that the solution has been approached in the correct way. The thesis includes a specific methodological section (Chapter 1) in which the methodological aspects of the research are carried out. Their results that are presented in the book under review are discussed in detail. This part is very well and comprehensively elaborated.

In order to fulfil the main objective of the thesis and to find answers to the research questions, the author uses the results of two international projects, CITISPYCE and NEGOTIATE, in which he has actively participated. In both projects, interviews were conducted to map the lives of young people, including past events, their future wishes and expectations. This methodology chapter also defines the key and thematic categories that had been considered within the research. An overview of the interviewees, including their selected personal characteristics, is provided in the Appendix of the thesis. The respondents had been specifically selected for both projects and consisted mainly of young people (a sample group living on the margins of society, often in excluded localities). Some of them were Roma. It is stated in the text that the respondents were from the Czech Republic. In the case of the



CITISPYCE project, these were the people living in two disadvantaged localities in the same city.

In this context, I have two questions for the author to address in his defence:

- I would like to know in which city the disadvantaged groups are located (if the author can provide this information).
- Imagine a group of young people aged 15-24 in the whole of the Czech Republic (in a specific year or a specific period). Please estimate what percentage of this group may have problems in the transition from education to work. I am aware of the difficulty of this question as the estimate may be influenced by many factors, both macroeconomic, microeconomic, regional and institutional.

In my opinion, the main objective of the habilitation thesis has been appropriately stated, and its solution has been satisfactorily fulfilled.

In terms of structure, the habilitation thesis is divided into 9 parts, where the first one is the Introduction, a commentary on the submitted habilitation thesis. In Chapter 1, the author defines the aim, research questions and methods used. What I appreciate about this part is its precision and excellent narrative implementation. In all of the following chapters I highly appreciate the sub-sections (conclusions) entitled: My reflection on.....in which the author summarizes the most important of the issues presented in relation to the thesis objective and research questions.

In Chapter 2, entitled "Transitions and the labour market position of young people", the author presents theoretical concepts that are relevant to the research problem. This entire chapter (as well as all the others) contains both a theoretical background, a discussion of relevant empirical studies on the topic described and selected passages of the respondents' answers concerning the issues addressed.

The thesis has a very well-organized order of the remaining chapters, with Chapter 3 devoted to strategies for dealing with insecurity, Chapter 4 to determinants of labour market insecurity, Chapter 5 to personal consequences of labour market transition strategies and Chapter 6 to institutional determinants of job insecurity.

In the Conclusion of the thesis, the author summarizes the results obtained and answers the research questions. In my opinion, this whole section is very convincing and becomes an integral part of the whole habilitation thesis. The conclusion also includes suggestions and recommendations in four areas of social (economic) policy of the state. Their implementation could facilitate the transition of young people to the labour market. This part of the thesis is very much appreciated, including 9 specific suggestions for policy making. In this context, it would have been good for the author to elaborate on them in more detail or to make them more specific.

What I appreciate about the thesis is the author's work with the literature and the necessary data sources, including a thorough search of the already published literature on the topic. The list of references is proof of this. The thesis is supplemented by an appendix section.

I see the contribution of the research topic to scientific knowledge not only in the results of the research carried out, but also in the part that suggests ways to facilitate the transition to the labour market for certain groups of vulnerable young people.

The thesis is written clearly and comprehensibly. The academic language used is appropriate to the needs of the text. All appendices are relevant to the textual part of the thesis.

From a formal point of view, I have one comment regarding the thesis. I miss a more distinct division of the chapters into sub-chapters in numerical terms. Although the author divides the text by differently highlighted headings of individual sub-sections at several levels, the submitted text seems to be more difficult to follow for the reader.

### **Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence**

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2. Imagine a group of young people aged 15-24 in the whole of the Czech Republic (in a specific year or a specific period). Please estimate what percentage of this group may have problems in the transition from education to work. I am aware of the difficulty of this question as the estimate may be influenced by many factors, both macroeconomic, microeconomic, regional and institutional.
3. The conclusion includes suggestions and recommendations in four areas of social (economic) policy of the state. Their implementation could facilitate the transition of young people to the labour market. This part of the thesis is very much appreciated, including 9 specific suggestions for policy making. In this context, it would have been good for the author to elaborate on them in more detail or to make them more specific.

### **Conclusion**

The habilitation thesis entitled "Youth, labour market insecurity and institutions" by Ondřej Hora **fulfils** requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Social policy and Social Work.

Date: August 31, 2021

Signature:

