

HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Masaryk University

Applicant	Mgr. Kateřina Zábrodská, Ph.D.
Habilitation thesis	Occupational well-being among Czech university faculty in the context of market-oriented reforms
Reviewer	Loraleigh Keashly, Ph.D; Professor; Distinguished Service Professor
Reviewer's home unit, institution	Department of Communication, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, USA.

Review:

Let me start with my conclusion. This thesis provides a detailed, thoughtful, creative, conceptually sound, methodologically rich, program of research, which is clearly connected to a broader beautifully articulated framework utilizing the JDR theory that is grounded in a deep understanding of macro (HE governance systems; national HE systems), Meso (institutional and department culture; policies practices and procedures) and Micro (group, interpersonal and personal elements of experience). I came away from reading these studies and this thesis with some new perspectives theoretically and methodologically (e.g., collective biography and what it reveals). Further in my current position as an academic administrator who has responsibilities for the climate and culture of my institution and my own specific work group, the thinking, findings, and recommendations provide me with a framework of how to think about our current status and ways to enhance the quality of the work environment and well-being for our faculty as well as our staff. To advance both science and theoretical thinking and provide specific concrete recommendations for on the ground practice, grounded in this excellent and thoughtful science and research, is an amazing accomplishment. And this is just a subset of Dr. Zábrodská's work! I am eager to dig into more and look at ways to weave in this knowledge to work on workplace bullying broadly and in academe, occupational wellbeing of academics, as well as the discourse of HE governance and models. Another vital feature of this work has been positioning of the Czech Republic and other Eastern European countries as critical contexts for exploring and challenging what are considered hard truths in occupational well being and in workplace bullying and harassment, but are revealed to be not so clear cut. Dr. Zábrodská's positioning of Czech academia and higher education as an environment that has had experience in the three HE models at different times in its history, and how at least in the moment of the data collection 2014-2016, demonstrated a hybrid model revealing some strengths in the academic self-governance model and some value in the market model for example, is a much needed challenge to the extant literature and thinking. This thesis has helped me recognize some of the implicit assumptions we (Anglo Americans) have made in these areas and the need to challenge our ethnocentricity if we are fully committed to really understanding the experience of people and their systems more broadly. Bravo!

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence (number of questions up to the reviewer)

My questions are ones not so much of critique but rather being curious to learn more about Dr. Zábrodská's thoughts:

1. Your piece on department cultures and connections to HE governance systems and indeed your knowledge of the HE governance literature has been an important introduction to particularly American thinking about occupational wellbeing and other understanding of HE systems. In your work, you note on a couple of occasions disciplinary culture citing empirical diffs in SS and Humanities vs medical and natural sciences. I am curious to hear how the idea of org culture models connects to disciplinary culture.. Why might SS and Humanities experiences and natural and medical sciences experiences be different? And is this even a useful direction to pursue?
 - a. On a related note to culture, for workplace bullying, there is some recent work on the application of psychological safety climate and conflict management climate (Einarsen, Baillien have written about this) as preventive approaches. In another vein from more of a communication discipline perspective is Desraynaud et al discussion of conflict management culture and its connection to bullying. Their perspectives sound in some ways like what you have articulated. I wondered what were thoughts were on these perspectives and approaches and how they link or don't to your thinking on organizational/institutional culture.
2. Your collective biography piece, which was published in 2011, and the articulation of the inextricable link among bully, victim, system and discourse I found challenging to me in a good way. It reminds me of the work of Pam Lutgen-Sandvik and her colleagues in organizational communication, talking about the embeddedness of individual and department experience in broader institutional and societal narratives...inextricably linked. Because of my focus as an applied scholar, I am curious to hear your thoughts on what understanding this inextricable nature of bullying means for 1) researchers in how they conceptualize their work and program of studies and 2) practitioners and institutional members who want to take this knowledge and translate it into concrete action?
3. Your characterization of Czech HE as being more of a hybrid strikes me as being time bound, i.e., many of your studies drew on data collected around 2014-2016 and the world and HE has continued (I think) to change (not sure evolve is the word), the pandemic being one massive change (I am eager to read your 2022 piece on this!), which you do note in your discussion of your thesis work. If you were to gather data today on Czech HE and faculty well-being, what do you think you would find? Is the model still a hybrid of self-governance and marketing? Are Czech faculty still showing high job satisfaction and low stress? If no substantive change, why and if substantive change, what does it look like and what does the mean for possible recommendations or action?
4. If you were standing in front of a bunch of Anglo American researchers, what would you tell them they need to consider to challenge, enrich, deepen, broaden and make actionable their thinking and work on occupational well being generally and manifestations of mistreatment generally? Feel free to be very blunt and direct...overcoming ethnocentrism requires such frankness.

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled Occupational well-being among Czech university faculty in the context of market-oriented reforms by Mgr. Kateřina Záborská, Ph.D. **fulfils and exceeds the** requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Social Psychology.



Signature

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