

# Euroculture Master Thesis Assessment Form



Name of Student: Lucie Argentier

Thesis Title: „Starting a business as an immigrant in France: A viable integration path or a double disadvantage“.

University of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester: Strasbourg

University of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester: Olomouc

Name of Supervisor / University: Philippe Hamman, University of Strasbourg

*In this report, please consider the following, by answering the following questions. Please add a short explanation instead of simply answering 'yes', 'no' or 'partly':*

1) Content: Problem statement, method and theory:

a) Is the topic of the thesis clearly presented and motivated?

Yes

Contextualization of the subject is very clear, dealing with the obstacles which immigrant entrepreneurs face when creating their activity in France, mapping different stakeholders involved in the process and analyses their implication.

It is relevant from a political as well as a cultural point of view.

b) Are the aims and objectives of the thesis clearly identified and explained?

Yes.

Lucie Argentier has truly led an in-depth initial working definition of the subject, especially in the first introductory sections dealing with the delimitation of the research object, the literature review, the methodological design, the vocabulary of the subject and the theoretical framework (acculturation, integration & socialisation, in particular).

The central purpose of her research is to contribute to the current literature on immigrant entrepreneurship by focusing on the French environment, counterbalancing ethnic and cultural models, and underlining the centrality of the processes of immigration in explaining the obstacles and factors leading to entrepreneurship.

Six dimensions are taken into account, following the trajectory of immigrant entrepreneurs; as Lucie mentions in her introduction, "the first two sections analyse their possibilities for professional insertion upon arrival and present a typology explaining the entry conditions of immigrants in self-employment. Then, the third and fourth parts focus on the obstacles faced when starting-up the project, and introduce the social network as a central element to take into account to launch a project as an immigrant entrepreneur. The last two sections delineate the limitations of the current frameworks when it comes to the involvement of the formal support schemes and the French institutional actors".

All this is well justified and explicit thanks to the construction as well all the empirical material of the thesis.

c) Is there a well formulated problem statement and is it of sufficient complexity for an MA level?  
Briefly explain?

Yes, it is clear and original, dealing with the trajectories of immigrant entrepreneurs, thanks to a very detailed case study in France and a powerful rationale.

d) Has the student convincingly explained the relevance of the research?

Yes. It is very timely to propose a comprehensive examination of the processes of integration / socialisation of immigrant entrepreneurship in Europe.

As Lucie sums up, "it was found that immigrants experience a loss of immaterial and material resources through displacement, the question of the access to capitals hence being at the forefront when starting a business. The access to informal and formal social networks in particular appeared as a pivotal element in their entrepreneurial path. While the development of specific support schemes has contributed to overcoming these obstacles, the general French environment and the entrepreneurship ecosystem still need to adapt to this public and facilitate their navigation among the different mechanisms. In doing so, they would benefit from the expertise of immigrant entrepreneurs who have personally gone through these hurdles, and who can act as role models for prospective immigrant entrepreneurs".

e) Has a suitable methodology and theoretical frame been taken to solve the stated problems?

Yes.

Dealing with the theoretical frame, the literature is well thought out and the bibliography is both realistic and substantial. The references mentioned are valuable ones, regarding the case study and academic references.

The methodology is clear and can be considered as really relevant, through in-depth interviews of immigrant or refugee entrepreneurs, who have launched their project in the past five years, analysed using the grounded theory method.

All these issues are very well explained (p.12-29); the corpus table of the interviewees on p.15 is an example: everything is unfolded with great mastery.

f) In case where empirical research has been conducted: is there a suitable research design and has the research been conducted adequately?

Yes.

The methodology is well explained, as well as the results, through a logical plan in 6 steps that follows the trajectory of immigrants while highlighting the thematisation of key analytical issues. It is very precise, and well done. The construction and logic of an academic demonstration combining empirical material and broader analysis is perfectly mastered, which remains quite rare at a Master level indeed.

g) Does the conclusion provide convincing answers/proof to the initial questions/hypotheses?

Yes.

Lucie Argentier has done a very good job both for gathering materials and conducting interviews (13 in-depth sociological interviews) and for their analysis, and it is a very exciting subject (and not an easy issue in fact).

h) Does the research constitute a contribution to knowledge in this field or domain?

Yes, of course, because it's an original work and perspective, and a hot topic – particularly in relation to social cohesion in EU countries.

Besides, it has an added value regarding Social/economic integration theory too.

## 2) Structure:

a) Is the thesis coherently structured in chapters and sections?

Yes, it's well done. The thesis is very clearly structured into introductory sections and 6 chapters (each chapter is then very well structured according to the main issues analysed), as mentioned before. Finally, a conclusion is provided, as well as bibliography and appendix, as required in a Master thesis.

b) Are concepts clearly introduced and explained, and critically and consistently applied?

Yes, Lucie has conducted her research in a very progressive way, by considering the issues about the conceptual framework, the methodological approach, and the empirical analysis thanks to empirical material, as well as well-thought opening perspectives in conclusion.

## 3) Sources (primary and secondary):

a) Has (enough) relevant (primary and secondary) literature been adequately interpreted and integrated into the thesis?

Lucie has done her best to include a theoretical analysis based on Integration/socialisation theory. It's very rigorously conducted and convincing indeed.

b) Is the bibliography/list of references complete and accurate?

Yes, the literature review is really well done; the bibliography is accurate.

## 4) Stylistics:

a) Is the use of language (English) acceptable and of the required standard (i.e. no spelling mistakes and typos, range of vocabulary, grammar)?

Yes, ok. No problem regarding language and academic standards.

b) Are references in the text given in a coherent and consistent manner (either in text or as footnotes)?

Yes, it's coherent.

## 5) Format:

a) How is the thesis presented (i.e. consistency in lay-out, choice of fonts, headings, tables and graphs)?

It's ok, the document is formally very well done

b) Does the thesis contain all required elements (title page, declaration, table of contents, bibliography, etc.)

Really no problem, and Lucie asked us (both supervisors) conscientiously at each stage of her work.

## 6) Quality of writing process:

a) To what degree has the student been able to work independently?

Lucie has worked independently, and always asked pertinent questions when it was useful.

b) Have recommended revisions been executed to a satisfying degree?

Yes, absolutely, especially to mix theoretical references and empirical material throughout the demonstration in her final version.

c) Any other relevant comments (e.g on planning and commitment of the student).

Very committed indeed.

It really seems to me that the level of this thesis is clearly above the average of the renderings I have been able to follow in the last few years in the Euroculture framework, and as such (without forgetting the context of Covid-19 for doing empirical research) it deserves an excellent grade.

7) Possible questions for thesis defence (only if this thesis is to be defended

Orally):

What did you learn, from a broader point of view, on EU debates about migrants, immigration and integration thanks to your study?

How can you re-read the sociological literature about “social capital” thanks to these empirical elements?

From a sociological point of view, what did you learn from the information you mention regarding the profile of the participants? You mention the issue of gender divide; can you draw any consequences for what is sometimes called a generational divide? Or a socio-spatial one between urban and rural areas, etc.?

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(National) Grade: 18

*Suggestion for corresponding converted grade  
according to the other university's (national) grading scheme: A*

Date and place: 04/08/2021 in Strasbourg

Signature: