

### **Jean Monnet of Excellence Research Report 2015**

I would like to thank the Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence and its selection committee for the 2015 Doctoral Student Research Grant. The 1500 euros, funded dissertation related field work as well as part of my visiting research fellowship with Lund University (in Skåne/southern Sweden), from 2015-2016. The time spent in Sweden was used to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews with members of civil society as well as with individual refugees throughout Sweden (Skåne, Gothenburgh, Stockholm and Växjö). Because of the refugee “crisis,” and the economic shift within Sweden toward greater privatization, the interviews were conducted with civil society members to first shed light on how role has changed since the 1990s, in the labor market integration process, and second to illustrate how resources are allocated and accessed by the refugee community. For refugees, interviews were conducted to obtain narratives of individual lived-experiences to learn about the difficulties and outcomes associated in obtaining stable employment in Sweden. In other words, the research was conducted to gain insight into the role of civil society organizations in the labor market integration process as well as delineate how some refugees (those who have arrived no earlier than 2000) acquire employment, and the challenges they faced in doing so, in an increasingly liberalized European welfare state.

To kick start the project, the funding was vital. The Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center for Excellence’s generosity provided me with the necessary funds to become settled and begin the long process of carrying out my fieldwork in Sweden. Notably, qualitative oriented doctoral projects (like mine) require extensive periods of time abroad. Hence, the utility of this research grant afforded me essential financial support for the early stages of my research, which was carried out over twelve months, from late summer 2015 to early fall 2016. Indeed, the time spent in Sweden greatly enhanced the overall quality of my dissertation which is set for defense the fall semester 2017.