

Supervisor's report

Les transmigrants hispano-américains en Europe d'aujourd'hui et l'instrumentalisation de la nostalgie: les réseaux sociaux, les pratiques transnationales et les biens symboliques de ceux qui partent et retournent, Prague 2013, 93 p.

Priscilla Hidalgo Solis

Priscilla Hidalgo Solis holds BA in Anthropology from the University of San José in Costa Rica. In September 2011 she entered TEMA Erasmus Mundus Master program at the World History Institute of the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague. During her two years in master program she has studied one semester at the University of Catania. She has formulated her project focused on the problem of transmigration from Latina America to Central Europe as an outcome of personal experience, and a desire to learn about the community of transmigrants in the region where she studied.

Migration studies represent very important research field in history as well as in anthropology. Migration between Europe and Latin America in both ways offers many themes. The topic of transmigration which Priscilla Hidalgo Solis chose for her MA thesis is a relatively new theme in the field. When in the last twenty years the pattern of labour migration transformed into very frequent “pendling” even in a long distance format of transmigrants, and the migration stream between the two continents reversed, it was not the Central Europe where the migrants were heading. The Central Europe is still not receiving large numbers of migrants, but it appears now as an interesting region for certain Latin Americans. The group of migrants in Central Europe is of course outnumbered by those we would find, I believe, in Spain, Portugal, Italy or France. However, the smaller the scale of migration in Central European context does not mean that it is not interesting or not worth of researching. The questions who they are, how many they are, and how they integrate in the majority society are on the agenda of this MA thesis.

Priscilla has chosen to focus on the transmigrants from Hispanic American countries, and on those who are educated. Her methodological background is in the theory of transmigration (Glickl-Schiller), and of symbolic goods (bien symbolique, Pierre Bourdieu). The first one helps her to deal with the migration flows of groups or individuals coming and returning across the ocean. The analysis of symbolic goods – what they are, how they are being achieved – function as the display of nostalgia. Since the group of migrants in Prague is rather small, she chose to work in small groups with them, and focus on a small group of educated young people.

The research was done in two perspectives: first a description of the field with the help of official sources (statistics); second an analysis of migration on the grounds of semi-directed interviews, which narrate the story of decision taking, migration, and an effort for integration. The two perspectives were carried with two different methods. The author wished very much

to finish her thesis on the first deadline, and thus the finalisation was very stressful, and may be visible in some small errors in the editing, which however do not degrade the whole work.

Conclusion: the MA thesis of Priscilla Hidalgo Solis meets fully the formal standards. It is a new problem, so far not researched. The approach combines methods of two disciplines, ethno history and anthropology. She proves that she knew how to establish her group of respondents, construct the questionnaire and has mastered the analysis of the qualitative data (interviews). The most valuable part of the research is the discussion of the networks established by the migrants around radio programme, Expats website, Cervantes – Institute, restaurants, etc., which are now supported by electronic social networks. Here she linked the experience from interviews with personal effort to enter the social networks. It has to be noticed that the author herself experiences transmigration, and often is in the position of participant observer, which she sincerely acknowledged. It is certainly original research which has a potential for further development.

Grade: A

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