

Tutor's report of the M.A. thesis:

Tereza Horáčková, *Les immigrés vietnamiens à Prague avant et après 1989 en perspective transnationale et transgénérationnelle* (ÚSD FF UK, École des hautes études en sciences sociales (Paris), Etvös Loránd University (Budapest), 2015, 116 pp.)

Tereza Horáčková decided to pursue her research in the field of one of the pressing problems of contemporary, globalized world – the theme of migrations, the processes of integration of large immigrant populations to host societies and, at the same time, their effort to maintain at least some aspects of their culture and their collective identity. Concretely, she focused on the problem of the Vietnamese community on the territory of the Czech Republic (and, previously, the territory of Czechoslovakia). And, even more specifically, she decided to study the Vietnamese family of first and second generation, intergenerational transfer of values and cultural features, and the role of the family in the processes of the preservation of sense of separateness and/or adaptation to the new environment.

The thesis consists of three chapters. After the introductory part, that is, explication of theoretical and methodological background and the clarification of crucial concepts and approaches, follows the second chapter, presenting a historical overview of the reasons and circumstances of the beginning of a massive wave of immigration from Vietnam to Czechoslovakia in the 1970s, within the frame of the strategy of “socialist internationalism”. Here, mostly, the archival sources were used, together with the remembrances of participants or their family members. The most important milestone in this historical overview seems to be the year 1989, that is, the end of the communist regime that changed the legal framework for Vietnamese immigration and, at the same time, opened new economic and social possibilities for those who were already settled in Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, the year 1993, that is, the establishment of Czech Republic, does not seem crucial. At least, from the text of the thesis does not result any substantial change for the Vietnamese, as for their economic activities and position in society.

The most important is the third chapter, which deals with the problem of the influence of the familial networks upon the process of adaptation, mostly on the basis of semi-directed interviews. She analyzed the personal motives for resettlement, the specificities of families formed within the frame of the program of controlled migration from Vietnam, the intergenerational differences caused by the political and social changes in the second half of the 20th century, the continuity of social practice within the families etc.

In the past half century, the Vietnamese in Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic have formed rather numerous, compact and conspicuous community. Therefore, they have attracted the attention of social scientists, who have studied various aspects of their social life and culture, in especial with respect to their relations with the majority society. The results of these studies appeared in scientific articles, as well as M.A. and Ph.D. theses, written by Czech scholars. Tereza Horáčková quoted and used many of them as a background, but still she was able to approach her subject in an innovative way.

In the first place, her thesis offers an example of interdisciplinary approach, combining historical method (archival study of, especially, the normative documents, treaties, laws and ordinances) with those of ethnology and sociology (in the first place the interviews and, to lesser degree, participant observation). By confronting the two sets of data against each other, she aspired to be able to analyze her chosen problem (the role of the family within the process of (non)adaptation) on various levels, from macro-social to individual life stories, and to contrast the efforts of the Czechoslovak/Czech government to mold the Vietnamese community into its specific social vision and the perceptions from part of the very objects of these efforts.

While the source basis is wide and diverse, the author did not content herself with a mere inventarization of facts (even though this alone might prove useful for the scientific community, especially as she is offering the specific Czech case for the use of foreign scholars by translating the interviews and sources into French). But she aspired to a profound theoretical embedding of her research, making use of various approaches – among these could be named the network theory or the theory of social capital. Besides naming the authors whose works she aimed to apply, she made great effort at identifying and defining her crucial concepts (collectivité, translocalité, diaspora etc.)

Important is the fact that she was able to stress, in her analysis, the notion of the change through time, often lacking in sociological and ethnological analyses. On the other hand, given the content of the M.A. course (“Civilisation, Nation, Region, City“), there should have been more attention dedicated to the specific “urban” character of the Vietnamese migration to Czechoslovakia/Vietnamese presence in the Czech Republic and, even more specifically, their concentration in the capital city of Prague.

The obvious enthusiasm of the author for various theoretical frameworks, her equally obvious fascination with diverse source material and her untiring concern for the problems of everyday life of the object of her study represent at the same time her greatest strength and greatest weakness. She has been able to amass an impressive volume of data and to approach her topic from various angles. But precisely because of this extensive approach, and given her lack of experience, at some moments the line of explication gets blurred and overly ramified and the author is unable to reflect in depth all the partial questions that arise out of her questioning. This is especially the case of the effort to deal simultaneously with the efforts of Czechoslovak/Czech government to direct the adaptation of the Vietnamese and the reactions of the Vietnamese community itself. On the other hand, as there remain many fields to be explored, and obviously great amount of data were collected by the author but not included in the thesis, there is certainly the prospect that Tereza Horáčková can continue in her studies, refine them and this enrich further the corpus of the social science research of modern society and its problems.

The thesis is written in very good French, with precise bibliographical references and the identification of respondents, clarification of the choice of reference group and of the method of conducting of interviews.

Tereza Horáčková thus produced a thesis based on the original research and meeting all the formal standards that can serve as a basis for future research and reference to other scholars interested in the topic. In spite of my partial criticisms listed above, I propose the evaluation by **grade A** (Czech scale: výborně; French scale: 16; Hungarian scale: 5).

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