

## Master's thesis review

La Hongrie post-communiste comme opportunité : de la diffusion à l'abandon des modèles d'interventions urbaines de la Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations. Le cas de l'arrondissement du Ferencváros à Budapest (1988-2014). Paris, Budapest, Prague 2014, 96 p. Appendices 20 p. of interviews.

Paul Saïssset

The master's thesis presented for the defense elaborates the issue of post-communist transformation in Hungary on a case study of an experiment carried by the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*, which attempted to transfer the French neoliberal urban intervention model in the rehabilitation of housing business to Ferencváros district in Budapest (1988-2014). At certain point the French enterprise aware of the failure, decided to withdraw from the project. While the transformation studies have produced till now quite ample literature, the micro analytically studied cases are rare.

The studied case of an attempt of expansion to the Hungarian market of one French institution took place in the context of major political change of the fall of communism, and thus has an aspect of application of local, national, and transnational scale. The MA thesis is conceived as case study in contemporary history using sociological concepts and ethnographical method. The research is based on well defined actors network formed locally in Hungary. The network of those involved in the project had to be by the definition francophone, because a French enterprise was involved, and the experts suffered language barrier. Their Hungarian partners functioned as interpreters. From this situation benefits the author, who also does not speak sufficiently well Hungarian. Thus the narration of the case is a representation or interpretation of the francophone actors, the written sources used are texts published in English for European audience. In the introduction the author declares that he is aware of the limits given by the language barrier. The conclusion, however, does not take this into account. The failure of the expansion was due to political changes, demands or offers of European integration, changes in strategies of individual actors. What we can learn about it is limited by the type of sources used. It does not mean that these sources are not usable; they give specific type of information. I would have appreciated if in the conclusion the author would have discussed his research also from this perspective. If I had the opportunity to attend the defense, this would be the question I would ask him. What type of image he obtained from his sources, and what the sources concealed?

I have worked with Paul during his second semester; I was satisfied as he responded to the need to see the Hungarian case in the Central European context, where such cases were frequent. During the two years he made visible progress, although compared with other students, he clearly was in easier situation, since he could write in his native language.

The candidate has proven that he mastered the historian's craft, he has constructed a feasible project focused on important topic. It is a thesis which I can sincerely recommend for successful defense. I suggest to grade it: 14 – 16/20 (A-B) according to the performance during the defense.

Prague, 31.8. 2014

Prof. PhDr. Lud'a Klusáková, CSc.