



Universitetet
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Anna Marsikova:

Emigration from Czechoslovakia and the Feeling of Betrayal: Nation vs. Family

MA Thesis EMMIR (European MA Migration and Intercultural Relations)

ASSESSMENT

The thesis establishes an interesting area of research in that it analyzes the feelings and perceptions connected to (e)migration of those that remained in the home country – close and more distant family and friends, but also the larger community. Within that perception the expression *the feeling of betrayal* is an important element.

This is not a main area in the larger field of migration research, but a very interesting one. It certainly adds to the understanding of migration as a very complex phenomenon.

The time period being investigated is 1948 – 1989, the period of communist rule in Czechoslovakia. Within this period the years after the Velvet Revolution of 1968 constitute the main focus.

The attention is given to the consequences for those staying behind, not so much to the migrants leaving the country – rather the opposite of what usually is the case.

The *consequences* for those staying behind is measured by a combination of questionnaires/in-depth interviews on one side, and close reading of relevant documents and articles on the other.

The latter is of particular interest in order to understand the negative view of emigration outlined by the political authorities at the time, and what was the experiences of those being affected by government measures of various kinds, even down to the local place for work or studies. Source material used are divided into five categories in order to give a broad picture including a great number of social actors involved (an aim of the author is to be able to include a variety of social actors). Thus, the source material activated will also include documentation of use of the *Feeling of Betrayal* as a weapon in today's politics.

The former (questionnaires/in-depth interviews) is naturally the instruments used to analyse and discuss the personal experience by those left behind. This has been a major endeavour as it has involved two main groups of respondents: those old enough to have a personal experience, and a younger generation that can be used to measure to what extent feelings/emotions created by emigration has prevailed.

This is a well structured thesis. It is positive that not too much space is given to outline the full history of migration from Czechoslovakia in much detail. This has some times tempted other authors, and taken away some of the attention from the real purpose of the thesis. Only the necessary historic background is given. More space is rightfully given to a solid discussion of methodology used, and to anchor the text to research of relevance.

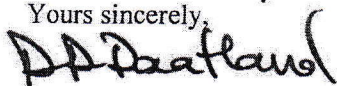
In addition, there is a separate chapter discussing the official policy on emigration (the official approach towards emigration as presented in documents) from 1948 onwards. The largest chapter in the thesis is dedicated to the research proper with two sub-chapters aimed at analysing the current discourse on the issue (articles, reports, laws and regulations), and to the survey done (questionnaires/in-depth interviews). Of the methods mentioned the use of in-depth interviews

can be understood as supporting the other two (questionnaires and content analysis), still in a way that has permitted a robust use of triangulation (Bryman).

As for the value of the study conclusions the author discusses representativity (respondents from South Bohemia), and with students and their grandparents as constituting the two age groups being tested. An interesting aspect of the results found is that people in general seem to be more positive to emigration than expected from earlier literature, and that younger people in general are even more positive. Still, it is clear that there is an understanding that people left behind, so to speak, in some circumstances did feel this problematic. Also, that emigration still can be used in contemporary politics as an instrument against political opponents.

Based on the assessment above I will as Head of the JMMIR Consortium recommend the MA Thesis of Anna Marsikova for the Dean's Award for the MA thesis.

Yours sincerely,



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