

Environment and Migration: Can the past help us rethinking the matter?

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“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change”

Ch. Darwin



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Markandya, 2007

“ There will be floods, devastated regions, and the inhabitants of a lot of territories from all around the World will be compelled to migrate in order to find a safe future. Just question of surviving”.

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 - The concept of “catastrophic event” at the media (Lozano, 2004).
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ALICANTE

Inmigración, «¿invasión o huida?»

■ Dentro del seminario que se celebra en la sede de la Universidad en Alicante –Ramón y Cajal 4–, a las 16 h. Víctor Martín, de la Universidad de La Laguna, habla-



rá de los factores de rechazo en los lugares de origen de los inmigrantes. A las 18.15 Gemma Cánova disertará sobre la inmigración como fuerza de trabajo rentable.

La Vanguardia - Colaboran - La invasión que no queremos ver

http://www.lavanguardia.es/gen/20061107/51291239884/posts/la-invasion-que-no-queremos-ver-es

LA VANGUARDIA.es

Jueves 3 de mayo 2007 - Actualizado a las 16:04h

Colaboran
Que pliegan los lectores y cómo lo articulan

Para enviar su texto

Ranking de las causas de muerte: toxala ZP • Inicio • El gran perdidor

La invasión que no queremos ver

Jordi Sellada | 07/11/2006 - 09:30 horas

La inmigración es un tema de actualidad. Para no ser tachado de racista o xenófobo, nadie pone en duda el dogma políticamente correcto de que es necesaria en España. Implícitamente, también, se la considera imparable e irremediable. Buena. Vamos a una sociedad multiétnica, aseguran. Este verano llegaban en cayucos. Antes eran pateras.

En un desayuno redonde en la Cámara de Barcelona, el candidato a la Generalitat de lo que De Gaulle denominaba el Partido Extranjero y ahora se visten como eco-socialistas, aseguró que crecemos gracias a la inmigración, y que al millón de habitantes extranjeros que han llegado a Cataluña en los últimos años se sumará otro millón y medio, al que habrá que acoger con todo el bienestar imaginable. Regalándoles el derecho al voto imagino que esperan incrementar su poder. Con ese poder, cambiarán el mundo. Porque otro mundo es posible. Uno mucho peor que el actual. Pero uno que niegue que las razas y las naciones coexisten con problemas, como ellos creen.

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Cómo enviar su opinión

Puede remitir su artículo a lavanguardia.es si desea que valoremos su publicación voluntaria en este blog, que recoge las opiniones de los lectores

Tiempo estimado de lectura 11 min.

Versión para imprimir

Enviar a un amigo

Compartir (¿Qué son estos símbolos?)

- 1) IMMIGRATION: STOP TO THE INVASION Image from the website of the Spanish right-wing party Nuevo Orden;
- 2) IMMIGRATION: INVASION OR RUNAWAY? Information about an university seminar;
- 3) THE INVASION WE DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT. From the opinion section of the mainstream newspaper La Vanguardia

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 - The concept of “catastrophic event” at the media.
 - The not-so-new collective fear at host societies because of the migrations.
 - The need of further research to determine how, whom, when and to which extent environmental factor can condition of affect migration.
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Historiography on migration and environment.

- Migration: as old as Humankind.
 - Not an exceptional incident but a core foundation of individual and collective behavior for millenia.
 - A complex and mutating phenomenon.

Historiography on migration and environment.

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 - A preference to study questions based on a fixed place rather than issues that cross borders and link several spaces together.

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 - > A strong dependence on theories imported from other human and social sciences, normally with delay.
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Historiography on migration and environment.

1885. Ravenstein. The birth of the scientific historiography on migrations.

- “Migration is life and progress, and permanency is immovability”
- It has impelled researches to the way of understanding the phenomenon in terms of “positive” or “negative”.

Historiography on migration and environment.

XX century: approaches.

- School of “Annales”. Mainly economic approach.
 - Cost/benefit ratio.
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- School of “Annales”. Mainly economic approach.
 - Cost/benefit ratio.
 - Focus on a macro perspective (comparison of wages and salaries).
 - Social turn (decade of 1960).
 - Putting attention in individuals rather than in masses (rationality of migrants).
 - Focus on a micro perspective.
 - Chain migration (McDonalds); Social Space theory (Bordieu), Social networks...
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Historiography on migration and environment.

Newest tendencies.

- Eclecticism.
 - Combining economic, social, and even cultural perspectives.
 - Comparing macro, meso and micro perspectives.
 - Taking into account both individuals and groups (families).
 - Accept the complex variety of migratory processes.
 - Not only the traditional view of one-time one-way displacement, from a departing to an arriving point, once in life.
 - But other types: temporal, circular, seasonal, forced...
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Historiography on migration and environment.

The concept of SPACE.

- Understood in the narrowest of its meaning: DISTANCE.
 - used to differentiate three types of migration only taking account of the distance: long-, medium- and short-distance migrations.
 - forget that any person can combine during his life different kinds of migration (not a characteristic of contemporary world).
 - > A neutral chessboard in which pieces are spread out, depending on several economic, politic, social factors.
(migrations are produced because of human factors).
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Historiography on migration and environment.

The birth of Environmental History.

- Space understood as a interrelated factor with society.
 - not a sumatory of kilometers, but as ENVIRONMENT.
 - relatively young speciality or approach to history -not more than 20 years old-.
 - > “every history is contemporary history” (B. Croce).
Asnwer to today's hot questions.

Historiography on migration and environment.

From the IRISH EFFECT...

- Pre-Ravenstein European literature on migration: focuses on environmental (mainly “natural”) causes to explain migrations.
- The example of the Potato Famine of Ireland (1848-1849) as a path to follow.
 - Causes and effects of Famine.
 - Environmental changes and natural catastrophes as cause of migrations.
 - Focus on rural-to-urban migrations.

Historiography on migration and environment.

From the Irish effect to the Basque case.

- All the essayists on Basque migrations try to establish correlations between migration flows and environmental factors.
- “Impoverished territory, bad provided by Nature, of barren soil, high mountains (..) that has not got a mild climate that fit with the needs of agriculture; is not given by Nature the advantages that it mercifully offers to other regions” (Egaña, 1876).
 - > Where Nature is not munificent, emigration is not a choice but a need.

Historiography on migration and environment.

Aided by the spread of theories on the effect of environment and Nature in historical development of civilizations (XIXth century).

- Ratzel: try to apply Darwin's theories to History.
 - Huntington. Theory of climatic determinism of societies.
 - > Too simplistic, univocal theories (uni-causal)
 - > a society proud of its recent scientific and technological advances (industrialization) was more prepared to accept a human perspective (like Ravenstein's) than an environmental one.
 - > Vidal de la Blache: historical geography: possibilistic theory. Accepted and diffused by the school of Annales.
 - > Braudel (1949). Long durée – Le Roy Ladurie (1983). Climate's history.
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Historiography on migration and environment.

- “Horror determinismi”. Resilience to introduce environmental factors in historical explanations.
- More willing to accept the use of these environmental explanations in “underdeveloped”, “savage”, “cold” societies out of Europe, than in our “developed”, “complex”, “civilized” world.
 - First relevant contributions from the *edge of history*: specialities of History that have intense relationships with other social and natural sciences (prehistorians, historical anthropologists, archaeologists...).
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Historiography on migration and environment.

Examples:

- Climate changes after the end of Pleistocene: Sahara, the valley of Indus, the population of America.
- The Mayan people's great exodus of Xth century.

Historiography on migration and environment.

Examples:

- The Early Middle Age's “climate optimum”.



Map By Marcia Bakry, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution

Fig. 3. Vikings' expansion in Early Middle Ages
Source: Fitzhugh, 2000.

Historiography on migration and environment.

Examples:

- The XVI-XVIII centuries' “Little ice age”.



Fig. 4. The Little Ice Age reflected in Art works

P. Bruegel: Winter Scene (1565)

H. Avercamp: Iced Scene (c. 1610)

- Increasing of conflictivity.
 - Increasing of migration flows overseas.
 - European internal migrations North->South.
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Historiography on migration and environment.

Disasters and their management:

- The earthquake and tsunami of Lisbon (1755).



Historiography on migration and environment.

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Abalo Sísmico de 1755 (<http://www.wilsonsalmanac.com>)

“Even though scientific History cannot either “predict” the future nor provide with examples of infallible behavior, it allows us to present the origins of present and illuminate the circumstances of its gestation, running and transformation. The historical experience of any society is its only positive reference, its better tangible resource, from which we can infer its plans and projects to be implemented in the present and the future”.

E. Moradiellos (1996)

Thank you!

Applause
(if you wish)

