Seweryn Kapinos

Summary of doctoral thesis

Fri: *"Socio-cultural identity of Polish emigrants in the United Kingdom after 1989. Example Hertfordshire"*

The present paper attempts to describe a phenomenon of the latest migration from Poland that took place after the socio-political and economical transformation in Poland that began in 1989. The post-EU-entry emigration of Poles in this context is the most important event. In addition to traditional patterns of international mobility, a completely new direction for Polish emigrants became Great Britain. It has been estimated that about 700,000 Poles moved to the UK after Poland joined the European Union in 2004. Post-EU-entry emigration from Poland is one of the main factors shaping the image and ethnic structure of contemporary Great Britain.

Most immigrant from Poland, long-term, fairly well-educated, young and with bad experiences in exporting country can manage quite well proffesionally and socially in the new circumstances and are basically happy with the decission to have left the country of origin. This is a completely new quality in polish migration. This problematic is new, important and difficult to grasp because of its distinctness as compared to traditional forms of migration.

When people migrate from one nation or culture to another they carry their identity with them. On settling down in the new culture, their cultural identity is likely to change and that encourages a degree of belonging. In this paper author attempt to find the answer of the identity of Poles, ordinary people in new socio-cultural enviroment. The main subject of the study is the relationship between socio-cultural identity and migration. In the present paper author tries to answer the question of how identity of Polish migrants look? Who are they?

The present paper is composed of ten chapters. It would be very hard to analyze any relations between identity and migration without 'anchoring' results of empirical research in the theoretical background. The first three chapters of this study presents the general problem and conceptual achievements of different disciplines in this field.

First chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the idea and phenomenon of identity. It shows identity from different angels: 'identity' is a key term of contemporary politics, and social analysis and the `identity" crisis in the social sciences on the other hand.

In the second chapter, the author aims to order and resolve the theoretical and empirical problems pertaining to the definition of migration as well as to the usage of this category to conduct analyses on the phenomena of human migration and identity change in migration process. There have been distinguished three dimensions of identity: individual, social and collective. The most important part of the chapter presents socio-cultural understanding of identity which exists in the form of elements preserved in the culture, knowledge, and in the socially accepted beliefs or group patterns.

Third chapter shows Great Britain as popular country for immigrants and tries to answer the question: why Britain can now be characterised by 'super-diversity'. Chapter attempts to show not only a change in migrant flow, but also provides the demographicand social characteristics of this group of people and its spatial distribution. In addition, the paper describes the principal UK and Polish sources of information on the scale of post-EU-entry migration.

Theoretical deliberations has been next verified in the course of empirical research about identity of Polish migrants living in Hertfordshire County. Author accepted that socio-cultural identity is located in many factors: rooting (length of stay, satisfaction, plans for the future); participation in social and cultural life (neighborhood relation, social environment, participation in the life of the ethnic organization); maintaining contacts with the country of origin; pride in being a Pole; practizing Polish habits; religiosity.