EMIGRATION AND THE SOCIAL TOPOGRAPHY OF A VILLAGE – AN ANALYSIS OF OVERSEAS MIGRATION FROM BABICA

INTRODUCTION

Babica is a village located in the Province of Podkarpacie. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century emigration from this village became a very popular phenomenon, reaching considerable size over the years. According to Franciszek Bujak in villages near Krosno, Jasło, Strzyżów, Rzeszów almost every third adult male spent a year or a few years in America. He also stated that the emigration to America was started by Polish peasants from central Galicia, in particular areas from Rzeszów to Jasło.

Popularity of migration in this region attracted the attention of many researchers. The first migration study in this area was held by a sociologist Krystyna Duda-Dziewierz, who carried out her explorations in the Interwar Period. She presented the conclusions of her research in the book Village of Malopolska and the American Emigration. Study of Babica Village. As a major issue, the author raised the question of impact that migration may have on the structure of rural social organization.

The study in Babica was a part of the research project of Sociological Seminar, led by Józef Chałasinski, which covered the areas of several villages.

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1 Own translation of the author. „We wsiach koło Krosna, Jasła, Strzyżowa, Rzeszowa prawie co trzeci dorosły mężczyzna był przez rok lub kilka lat w Ameryce.” F. Bujak (1905), Wieś zachodno-galicyjska u schyłku XIX wieku, Lwów, p. 76.
of Malopolska. Its main aim was to analyse the emigration from Poland in the context of local community. Chałasiński claimed, that many sociological aspects of migration can only be observed through the study of local communities. This is due to the different levels of intensity within emigration in various localities, but also difference in its type. [...] Emigration can be studied sociologically only as a manifestation of the natural social groups with which it is functionally connected. Only in such an intensive study of migration its connection with the social structure of a village, with division of the village into subgroups and the entire dynamics of group life can be seen.

According to these assumptions, Duda-Dziewierz limited her study to one location that has already been mentioned – Babica. Based on the example of one village she tried to discover processes and problems of emigration from a village of Małopolska in general.

In her research, Duda-Dziewierz’s made the following assumptions:
1) she emphasized the importance of studying migrants as members of a particular social group, not as a set of unrelated individuals;
2) she assumed that if isolation of a village is one of the basic elements of the traditional rural social organization, emigration has to constitute here a major threat. Therefore, emigration hits the organization of the village in its weakest points by affecting those people who are least associated with the village affairs;
3) emigrants are not a random set of inhabitants of a village;
4) the importance of emigration for the group is closely dependent on the type of social organization characteristic of this group and subsequent change that takes place when the organization is transformed.

Such an approach to the analysis of migration process allowed the researcher to conduct a detailed study, describing the functioning of this phenomenon’s mechanism. Moreover, she observed and referred the behavior of an individual to a wider context of the rural community.

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3 The results of this project were also published in: M. Gliwicówna (1936), Drogi emigracji, “Przegląd Socjologiczny”, Vol. 4, pp. 502-520., and T. Makarewicz (1936), Emigracja amerykańska a macierzysta grupa parafialna, “Przegląd Socjologiczny”, Vol. 4, pp. 521-546.

4 "Own translation of the author. „Wielu socjologicznych aspektów emigracji nie da się uchwycić inaczej, jak tylko poprzez studium lokalnych społeczności. Różne jest bowiem nie tylko nasilenie emigracji w różnych miejscowościach, ale i jej typy. [...] Emigracja może być socjologicznie badana tylko jako przejaw tych naturalnych grup społecznych, z którymi jest funkcjonalnie związana. Dopiero w takim intensywnym studium emigracji występuje jej związkek ze strukturą społeczną wsi, z jej zróżnicowaniem na podgrupy i z całą dynamicą jej życia grupowego.” J. Chałański (1936), Emigracja jako zjawisko społeczne, “Przegląd Socjologiczny”, Vol. 4, p. 500."
CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRATION STREAMS FLOWING FROM BABICA TO THE UNITED STATES – FROM 19TH TO 21ST CENTURY

The first migration streams from Babica to the United States began in the 90s of the nineteenth century. An important fact in the village’s history of international mobility is that the first emigrants were people who came from outside the village and places settled in the remote hamlets.

The pioneer of overseas trips was Paweł Dudek from Nowa Wieś. After his marriage with a widow Aniela Pasternak, he settled on her farm in Budy. In 1883 he moved to the United States to pay off his debts which he ran into after losing a law suit for sharing the land with his neighbor. He probably also ran up a debt to cover the costs of his overseas travel. In her book Duda-Dziewierz did not concentrate on loans for the trip, which were a common place back then. This issue was presented widely by Maria Gliwicówna, who wrote that during the first year an immigrant would work to pay cost of his/her journey, since prior to leaving he/she borrowed from the usurer. In turn, upon arrival to the United States he/she borrowed money from the family to pay off the debt incurred in the country. Currently, although travel costs are much lower, borrowing money for the trip still happens. Frequently, the journey of immigrants from Babica is refunded by their family living in the United States.

Upon taking up a job and gaining some stability in the new location Dudek brought his wife and children. Next, his family helped many of their neighbors to organize a similar trip and settle down in the United States. Good news and the success achieved by this family in the new land contributed to the rapid increase of their followers also willing to travel. In this way, overseas emigration turned from a relatively marginal phenomenon into a very general process of forming a more extensive migration chains, mainly due to the existence of very dense networks. In the years 1883-1936 around 60% of households in Babica were involved in migration.

As it can be seen, the pattern of emigration to the United States came to Babica from outside the village. The question is how did Dudek find out about

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5 The analysis presented in this article is based on two main sources: publication of Duda-Dziewierz and own research of the author. The research has been conducted in Babica since 2009 and is still continued. The material was collected with the use of in-depth interviews. These were conducted among 60 respondents who had emigrated to the United States from 80s of the twentieth century onwards. The sample was selected using the snowball method.
7 M. Gliwicówna, Drogi..., p. 517.
8 These data are based on research carried out by Krystyna Duda-Dziewierz.
the possibility of traveling to a different country? The assumption is that he could gain knowledge from the village of his origin, or from a neighboring Czudec, where overseas emigration began earlier than in Babica.

However, emigration for work was known in this village already before. In the second half of the nineteenth century, residents of Babica left mainly for Prussia and Austria-Hungary. Therefore, mechanism of labor migration itself was so well known here, although not as common as subsequent trips to the United States. Maria Gliwicówna stated that the emigration to the United States for many people was just the next step. Most of them already had experience of migrating to other regions of the country, or to Prussia and Austria-Hungary.

The first migration streams, flowing from Babica in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, were dominated by men. They accounted for 80% of all the migrants at that time. The remaining 20% were, in turn, female migrants who followed their partners and were responsible for running the households in the destination country. Some managed to also undertake work in the United States.

The scale of current migration from Babica to the USA is not as large as in the early twentieth century. The labor migration, so strong before the World War II, lost its dynamics in subsequent years. It was mainly a result of the political strategy conducted by the government of the People’s Republic of Poland, which negatively influenced the size of emigration from this country. Over the years, the communist government led diverse migration policy. The labor mobility to Western countries, including the U.S., increased significantly only in the 70s and 80s, which was the effect of the loosening of immigration policy.

Dense networks, which generate the formation of multi-generational migration chains, helped to largely revive the overseas emigration from Babica. It is still an important part of the community life. It penetrated into the canon of local customs and became simply a way of life. The labor migration to the United States is something completely normal and natural there and it does not arouse public opposition.

Present emigration from the village is characterized by increasing feminization. This trend is also seen in migration on the global level. Women predominate among the respondents. However, this does not result from sampling, but rather reflects the actual trend of the current migration from the village, where women play a leading role.

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9 M. Gliwicówna, Drogi…, p. 509.
10 These data are based on research carried out by Krystyna Duda–Dziewierz.
The study shows that the factor generating greater emigration of women from Babica is mainly a higher unemployment rate among them compared to that of men. There is, therefore, a situation where a man holds jobs in the country, takes over responsibility for the household and caring for children, while a woman migrates, thus becoming the bread winner.

The increased emigration of women is perceived as the effect of the rise in the demand for ‘hands’ in typically female occupations such as domestic help, nanny or a carer, resulting from the absence of the native workforce in those sectors. This demand on the labor market in the United States reflects the occupational structure of immigrants from Babica. Almost all female respondents found employment as housekeepers, whose duties include household chores, caring for children or the elderly.

Emigration of Babica residents to the United States has always been a predominantly long-term process, involving at least a year-long stays. This type of migration relates to two-thirds of immigrants. With time, in some cases, these few – or even several – year-long stays abroad turned into a permanent emigration.

Long-term migration was often the result of illegal residency status of immigrants to the USA. Inhabitants of Babica are not any different here with more than two thirds of them being illegal in the new country of residence. In almost every case, they went to the United States using a tourist visa, whose provisions they violated through the unlawful extension of their stay and illegal work there.

In conclusion, the typical modern migrant from Babica is a long-term, illegal labor migrant, and more frequently – a woman. It should also be noted that emigration of the inhabitants has become an economic strategy of many families. The phenomenon of migration seems to be an integral part of life of this community. It took the form of somewhat local tradition, dating back to the 90s of the 19th century. Therefore, the observation of Dorota Osipowicz made about Mońki may refer to Babica. She noted that such communities incorporated migration into the canon of the potential and, most importantly, acceptable behaviors of individuals. Migration has become a means to achieve the desired objectives. The symbolic labor migration is intertwined with other cultural factors in the city [in this case in the village – JK] – family, church and culture of village.

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All that is associated with migration has been reconciled with other factors in such a way that it does not conflict with the values promoted by them.

EMIGRATION AND SOCIAL TOPOGRAPHY OF THE VILLAGE

When analyzing emigration from Babica one very important issue to focus on is its social topography. History of each part of the village sheds much light on their mutual relations and antagonisms. Some districts took a more active role in rural community life, while others did not show too much interest in the village affairs or were barred from them. Moreover, the division into hamlets did not change easily. Each of the parts produced its own tradition and tended to preserve its identity. In this sense one can talk about the central part or parts of the village and their periphery, which vary depending on the features they had in the life of the community.

SOCIAL TOPOGRAPHY OF BABICA – SHORT DESCRIPTION

Babica is divided into five hamlets: Dół (the Bottom), Góra (the Top), Dział I, Dział II and Budy. The first two form central parts of the village and hence their inhabitants fought for dominance in the settlement. The dispute was mainly about the mayor, because both parts wanted for the mayor to come from their hamlet. The two parts are located along the main road linking Jasło and Rzeszów. The other three hamlets are on the periphery of Babica and are located far from the main road. Moreover, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, there was no municipal road connecting the outlying hamlets with the village center. There were only private roads, which could be used by courtesy of their owners. The only existing public roads allowed the inhabitants of the more remote parts of the village to get to the economic centers of the region, that is to Czudec and Rzeszów.

Budy is the oldest hamlet. Initially, it was the area inhabited by the servants working in the manor. Those living here were among the poorest inhabitants of the village. They were loyal to the lord of a manor, which prevented them from sympathizing and identifying with the interests of central parts of the village. Some residents of Babica even considered Budy as a part separate from the village.

Dział was mostly uncultivated land, covered with woods and bushes. Reluctance to settle in this area also increased the remoteness of the hamlet from the village center. According to the stories of Babica inhabitants, Dział was the place where deviants and other unwanted people were settled, in order to remove them from the life of the village. Therefore, from the beginning Dział was supposed to be a periphery, permanently separated from the village affairs.

IMPACT OF THE SOCIAL TOPOGRAPHY OF THE VILLAGE ON PROPENSITY TO MIGRATION

The analysis of Duda-Dziewierz research allows for observing the connection between migration and social topography of the village. The latter one is a reflection of internal relations and social organization existing between its inhabitants. Living in certain hamlets was associated with a definite social status. Residents of outlying hamlets were barred from the affairs of the village, mainly due to the lack of roads and the distance that separated them from the central part of the village. As it was previously mentioned, a significant part of the population of Dział was settled in this area as a punishment. They rarely appeared at the meetings of the village community. Children living in Budy even attended school in Czudec, not in Babica.

The peripheral hamlets varied from the center of the village due to the size of their farms. They were much smaller in Budy and in Dział than in central parts of Babica. According to Duda-Dziewierz, relation of residents of the Top and the Bottom to other hamlets resembles the attitude of the city center to its periphery, or the capital to the province. People from the central region said that they did not maintain contact with the inhabitants of the periphery, arguing that people from Budy and Dział had even different names from the rest of the village, which was related to the presence of newcomers14.

The above examples clearly show that topography of the village had a significant impact on its structure and social organization. The location of

various hamlets, which determined the place of their residents in the social structure, was also not without significance for the migration process.

One of the features of emigration from Babica is the fact that it was initiated by residents of peripheral hamlets. The first emigrant to the United States came from Budy. However, not all Babica residents joined the process of emigration to the United States at once. Initially, only residents of peripheral hamlets were leaving the village. The first emigrants were seen those destroying the established order, and reference was made to them with reluctance. Only after the increase in number of migrants, re-emigrants began to be treated almost like heroes.¹⁵

The most skeptical attitudes to migration were held by the inhabitants of the Bottom. This part of the village, representing the social center, was inhabited by families of large landowners. They regarded emigration as unworthy of their position. After changes in the law of inheritance, which contributed to the disintegration of farms of large landowners, the inhabitants of this hamlet began to take significant share in migration.

The Top joined the emigration process faster than the Bottom. This part of Babica was also a place, where most of the enterprising re-emigrants lived – innovators, who wanted to introduce changes in their native village. After some time, they led to the transfer of the social center of the village from the Bottom to the Top.

Lands situated in Budy and Dział were not of high value to the residents of the village center, so they were sold for very low prices. It was hence an ideal opportunity for people from outside the village, looking for a place to settle. As a result, peripheral hamlets of Babica soon became area inhabited by the poor, servants from the manor, unwanted people and the newcomers. These parts of the village were then an excellent basis for a pervasive wave of emigration. People there did not have so much to lose, so they decided to emigrate.

The individual hamlets differed not only in social status, occupied in the social hierarchy of countryside, but also in terms of propensity to migrate. Living in particular hamlets was associated with certain social status, as well as the social position. According to Duda-Dziewierz, people who settled in the periphery felt less connected with the affairs of the village, so the decision to migrate came easier to them. They were often newcomers, so they were not yet quite attached to their current location. Life in the periphery was associated with a sense of lack of opportunities and possibilities to change hard fate of its residents. The overseas trips seemed to be the only way to improve it. Emigration to the United States was hence seen as a way of increasing their social position. Re-emigrants invested money earned abroad mostly in the purchase of land. They often bought

¹⁵ M. Gliwicówna, Drogi..., p. 509.
few acres of fields next to their farm or in another part of the village, moving to another hamlet. These internal migrations usually took place from the periphery to the center, by which the status of the family grew up.

As such, migration contributed to the changes in the social structure of the village. According to Duda-Dziewierz, enlightenment which was brought by overseas migration to the residents of Babica, resulted in gradual decrease in importance and later collapse of the large landowners’ families. Nevertheless, in this case the more important changes were the ones made to the law of inheritance and land parceling.

The division of Babica into hamlets still exists. Today, however, these peripheral parts of the village are no longer in such isolation from the social center. Their historical past is not reflected in the current position of their inhabitants. However, due to the large span of the village (7km), contacts between particular parts are limited. One of respondents, not involved in migration, living in the Top, said that “I can only say how it is here. I only know people who live here. In the Bottom there is no one I know. I have never cared what happens in the Bottom, because why should I?”  

CONCLUSIONS

The research of Duda-Dziewierz showed a process of penetration of migration in a rural social structure. She treated this phenomenon as a factor disintegrating the community, breaking its isolation. When describing the process, Maria Gliwicówna claimed that: breaking social isolation of the group takes place slowly and gradually. It is a two-way process: from outside – influences of other groups come, from the inside – the attitudes keeping group in isolation break down. However, the disintegrative processes existed in Babica even before the first journeys to the United States. The social topography of the village showed how diverse had this community been before the first overseas trips. At the same time, the diversity also allowed for initiating the migration process from this village, as the emigration from Babica was started by people least associated with its social organization, living on its periphery.
However, further analysis of Duda-Dziewierz research shows that emigration from Babica can also be seen as an integration process. In her work, she drew attention to another important phenomenon. Describing the spread of emigration, she showed the formation of a chain migration, although she did not name it this way as yet.

The research of Duda-Dziewierz, which is one of the first studies of emigration from the Polish village, allows for observing the process from the moment of formation of the first migration chain. There were always very strong contacts and ties between emigrants and their families and friends remaining in Babica. Therefore, inhabitants of Babica found themselves very quickly within a dense migration network.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the chain migration from the village had family and neighborhood character. Emigrants assisted in organizing travel and living in the United States not only of their relatives but also the neighbors and friends. With time, however, migration chains began to form mainly within the family. The migration history of many families began even before the World War I and still continues today through the emigration of successive generations. They even still go to the same destinations in the United States, as their ancestors in the early twentieth century, which are mainly Detroit and New Jersey.

During the first migration streams, residents of Babica as a local group were not a coherent whole. The clear division into hamlets, specifying the social position of their inhabitants, did not favor unity of the country. This dismemberment led to the situation, where social networks connected only residents of the individual parts of the village, and the ties created did not penetrate beyond boundaries of particular hamlets. At the same time, individual districts produced social capital each in its own circle. This situation has gradually changed over the years.

The beginning of modifications was the disintegration of farms of large landowners and then opening of the community center to the periphery. Since that time, ties began to extend gradually beyond the boundaries of individual hamlets, breaking the pre-existing barriers and increasingly spreading the range of functioning of social capital. According to Robert Putnam’s typology this phenomenon is described as bridging social capital, which united all inhabitants of Babica in a common purpose and work for the village. An example of this type of joint actions in Babica was the collection of funds for the renovation of the school.

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Migration has always been the factor connecting the residents of Babica despite the borders of individual hamlets. All *Americans* of Babica from various parts of the village know each other well. The emigrants were distinguished from the total population of this village as a separate group. Every new migrant and his family becomes a member of this group, entering the connections of the existing migration network. However, present ties are not as strong as those linking the first emigrants. At the turn of the century being a member of the migration network, which was rich in high level of social capital, was associated with large benefits, facilitating life in the new country. Back then a neighbor helped another neighbor. At present, this support is limited mainly to family circles.

Finally, living in certain hamlets does not influence the propensity to emigration anymore. Emigration from Babica develops independently of origin, age or level of education. The analysis of mobility from Babica shows how, in the next decades, the process which started with something entirely new, brought from the outside of the village, became a very common phenomenon, penetrating into the sphere of local customs. Nowadays, this tradition of traveling to the United States is still present and will be continued. This is mainly due to the existence of dense migration networks, although the country is no longer as attractive as it was twenty or even a hundred years ago.