

The identity of Czech expatriates and their descendants in New York

Abstract

The thesis examines the identity of Czech expatriates and their descendants living in the metropolitan area of New York. It focuses on the dynamics of preserving Czech national identity within a culturally diverse and assimilative environment, emphasizing the impact of historical developments, expatriate associations, Czech institutions, and community activities. The theoretical framework encompasses concepts of identity, national identity, and transnational migration, expanded by an analysis of specific aspects of the Czech community in the United States. The empirical part of the thesis is based on qualitative research, including interviews and surveys conducted among Czech Americans of various ages and generational affiliations. The findings reveal that the degree of maintaining Czech identity varies significantly across generations, with the first generation retaining the strongest ties, while the third generation faces challenges in preserving cultural identity. Czech schools, cultural centers, associations, and state institutions in New York play a crucial role in supporting the preservation of Czech culture, language, and traditions. The thesis provides insights into the influence of institutions such as the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in New York, the Czech Center New York, and the Bohemian Citizens' Benevolent Society of Astoria on strengthening national identity. It also discusses the challenges faced by this community, including generational change, assimilation, and language attrition. The work contributes to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms enabling the Czech community in New York to maintain its identity and organizational structure. At the same time, it raises questions about the future of this community in the context of shifting conditions of global migration and multicultural integration. The findings have the potential to enrich discussions on the functioning of diasporic communities and provide inspiration for their effective support.