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Andris Skreija
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN POLAND[1]

Andris Skreija

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Contemporary cultural anthropology in Poland is characterized by two types of change within the discipline. One is the change in emphasis from founding or renewing old institutions, such as departments in universities, museums, and research institutes, to maintaining and improving them. Accounts of Polish post-World War II ethnography stress the rebuilding of the old institutions and the expansion of the discipline by the founding of new ones (e.g., Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa 1964, 1968). While it is difficult to predict the course of future events, it appears that the rebuilding and founding phase is all but over and that current emphasis and future activity will focus on maintaining and improving existing institutions.

The other type of change--more difficult to document--concerns theoretical orientation and research interests. The change in theoretical emphasis is from the traditional work of European ethnographers to interests more closely akin to those of "cultural anthropologists" as this term is usually understood in the United States. Partly, this occurs as older ethnographers, with their more traditional interests and points of view, retire and are replaced by younger ones who are more interested in what can only be called

"cultural anthropology." Partly, the change is within the individual scholar as he or she (in Poland, a substantial proportion, if not a majority, of ethnographers are women) becomes interested in new types of theoretical problems and different kinds of empirical research. The change is noticeable. There is less emphasis upon Polish rural material culture as such and more on other aspects of culture--in particular, culture change. Further, interest has been growing in conducting field research abroad.

This change of direction in Polish ethnography is a rather fundamental one from the initial orientation, usually placed at the turn of the eighteenth century, when peasant culture was being investigated in order to show the native origins of Polish national culture and when the romantic movement in poetry and music drew upon the peasant or folk culture for inspiration and motifs (Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa 1968:9). The orientation toward peasant or rural culture as the locus of the "real" national culture persisted till recently, the folk culture being considered a self-contained unit. Thus, Polish ethnography was regarded essentially as a separate branch of inquiry from the ethnographies of the surrounding countries. In this respect, Polish ethnography was similar to the discipline in other Eastern European countries where the scholars knew of one another's work but did little to create a common, unified science encompassing all of them without regard to the nationality of scholar, specific research interest, or the people being studied (Fél and Hofer 1969:4). In other words, one could, and still can, use the

terms "Polish ethnography" or "Hungarian ethnography" to refer to the two disciplines rather than the phrase "ethnographers in Poland" or "ethnographers in Hungary" to refer to scholars of the same discipline working in their respective countries. This points to one of the fundamental differences between anthropology and European ethnography or ethnology. When discussing anthropology, one usually does not refer to Mexican anthropology or to Canadian anthropology as independent entities, but rather one speaks of anthropology or anthropologists in Canada or the United States, the implication being that in speaking of anthropology one is referring to a single discipline.

Thus, while I take issue with Dynowski's (1967a) position that the terms "ethnography," "ethnology," and "cultural anthropology" are freely interchangeable as of now, I do feel that Polish ethnography is moving rapidly in that direction. It has, and certainly will continue to have, its own distinguishing features and special aspects, but the direction of development seems to be towards making Dynowski's description an accurate one.

At the moment, Polish ethnography encompasses scholars who belong to two rather different schools of research and theory--those who are oriented primarily towards the traditional European ethnography/ethnology and those who can most accurately be described as cultural anthropologists. This has created difficulties in defining the parameters of the field. Thus, at least one Polish cultural anthropologist has defined ethnography as whatever an ethnographer does.

Since the title of this paper is "Contemporary Cultural Anthropology in Poland," the following discussion will focus almost solely upon this type of activity and slight the work on problems of interest to the more traditional European ethnologists. A further caveat is in order: hereafter, unless indicated to the contrary, the terms "ethnographer" and "cultural anthropologist" will be used as if they were synonymous. This can be justified on the basis that almost all Polish workers in the field are to some extent one and the other simultaneously, and it may be difficult to determine where each one of them stands at the moment.

Polish cultural anthropologists have shown an interest in the cultures of areas outside Poland. Perhaps the most interesting research that has been undertaken by them recently was in Mongolia. Members of the Department of Ethnography of the University of Warsaw and of the Institute of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences spent several summers in doing field work there.[2] The main research interest was focused on the processes of urbanization and the transformation of nomadic Mongol herdsmen into settled farmers. The field phase of this research has been completed and the materials are being analyzed and prepared for publication. Thus far, two publications have resulted (Dynowski 1967b and 1968: Part II) and more are to be expected.

Other projects include an investigation of contemporary changes in a Bulgarian village (Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa 1968:18-9; Nizińska 1968), begun in 1966. This project involves cooperation between Polish

and Bulgarian social scientists and is expected to continue for some time yet.

Research is focused on the following four problem areas: (a) defining the traditional peasant culture and establishing a typology for it; (b) investigating the effects of urbanization, industrialization, population shift to the cities, the introduction of nonfarming employment opportunities, and the mutual interaction of rural and urban cultural patterns; (c) the sociocultural impact of various types of agriculture, e.g., small farms, large-scale private farms, state and cooperative farms, and the attempts made to adapt to modern farming techniques; and (d) the manner in which traditional folk culture affects the formation of national culture. This approach is intended to shed light on the changes in the social and economic life of the country resulting from socialism. The research design is comparative, with Poland and Bulgaria as the foci of comparison (Nizińska 1968:157).

Another project involving the cooperation of social scientists of several countries is the investigation of Carpathian villages (Kopczyńska-Jaworska 1968; Zawistowicz-Adamska 1968:27-8). While a basic uniformity of herding techniques, methods of processing and storing dairy products, type of shelter and almost identical tools and their nomenclature are reported, regional and local variations are still noted. Kopczyńska-Jaworska posits a basic similarity of herders (pastoralists?) in the Carpathians, the Balkan mountains, the Alps, and the Pyrenees (1968:38).

In addition to the above-mentioned international projects, all of which involve direct field work, Polish cultural anthropologists are interested in Africa and the Americas. Lewicki (1968:116) traces Polish interest in Africa to the sixteenth century. Currently, Polish African studies are centered in three universities--those of Warsaw, Cracow, and Lodz. In addition, various committees, commissions, and institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences are interested in the area. In 1962 the African School of the University of Warsaw was organized and since 1964 Africana Bulletin has been published in English or French (Rovelstad and others 1966:59). The following fields show the most interest and the greatest accomplishments in African studies: Egyptology, cultural anthropology, archaeology, history, linguistics, and recently, sociology and economic history. Attention is directed for the most part toward Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, and North and West Africa. Except for an ethnological-archaeological expedition along the west coast of Africa (Lewicki 1968), it appears that the majority of research is based mainly on secondary sources. In 1958 a special African seminar was held, sponsored by the Polish Ethnographic Society (Gajkowa 1966:56).

Polish interest in the Americas dates back to 1551. At the present time, American studies in Poland are concentrated at the universities in Cracow and Poznan. Since 1954, there has been a Center for American Studies at the latter. Currently, the Center has been integrated with the Department of General Ethnography at Mickiewicz University and the Ethnographic Department of the Institute

of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences. In 1966 the Polish Ethnographic Society organized an American Studies section and expects that this is but the first step toward founding an independent American Studies Society (Frankowska 1968). Another noteworthy event was the American seminar held in 1965 under the sponsorship of the Polish Ethnographic Society (Gajkowa 1966).

The main interests in American studies are directed toward pre-Columbian culture contact in the Americas and Oceania, culture change in Indian communities--especially those of Latin America--and the records left by early Polish travelers in America. There have been a number of publications on these topics (Frankowska 1968).

In addition to research, the two main tasks at the moment appear to be popularization of this area of studies and the training of research workers. While in the past the main focus has been on history, culture change, religion, and methodology (individual studies often touching on more than one area), the present effort is toward elaborating theory and methodology in order to bring the discipline within the mainstream of world scholarship (Frankowska 1968).

The above should not be taken to mean that Polish ethnographers' interest in research outside Poland is a recent phenomenon. One need only peruse Gajek's (1967) discussion of materials about Poland's neighbors published before World War II and shortly thereafter to know otherwise. However, the difference between the past and the present effort is readily apparent. The traditional ethnographers concentrated on material culture, described rural people while

generally ignoring cities and their culture, and were preoccupied with the past, showing little concern with contemporary changes. When dealing with change in nonmaterial culture, their treatment all too often was anecdotal, with little hard data presented. Frequently these workers equated old with genuine and worked under the theoretical and methodological assumption that the older something was, the more it resembled the "real" folk culture. By contrast, the Mongolian project was concerned precisely with the contemporary processes of urbanization.

Some cultural anthropologists are intending to commence studies in Poland aimed at two sorts of problems: (1) the investigation of groups that have lived in cities for some time, yet have maintained close ties with their rural relatives and have retained many rural characteristics in their culture, and (2) the processes of contemporary urbanization in Poland. These studies are to be distinguished from research on working-class culture which, in Poland, has been linked with the workmen's movement and dates back to the 1930s. At the present, there is a feeling that due to rapid urbanization, working-class culture tends to be greatly influenced by rural people and that differences between peasants and workers are disappearing because villages are being industrialized and urbanized.

One long-term project to investigate the effects of industrialization has already been launched by the anthropologists at Lodz. It was envisioned as consisting of essentially two steps: (1) the description of village culture before industrialization, and (2) a

set of long-term studies in five villages reporting the changes occurring as the industrialization of the region progresses. Zawistowicz-Adamska reports that the first stage has already been completed and that the data obtained suggest the existence of two types of villages--pure farming villages and villages with farming and cottage industry, i.e., weaving. It is expected that as industrialization of the region progresses, the differences between the two types will disappear (1968:34).

Such long-range studies of change in the rural setting are not new to Polish cultural anthropology. Thus, there is a study of fishing cooperatives that has lasted for some twenty years which has traced the change of a kin-based cooperative into a strictly purposeful association. The study has documented the beginnings of deep-sea fishing and its effect upon the family and the community. The relative prestige-ranking of fishing as an occupation depends directly upon the type of village, whether it is a fishing or a farming and fishing village. These two types of villages also differ in their systems of mutual rights and duties and their group solidarity, and they have a "different type of material standard" (Zawistowicz-Adamska 1968:27).

Another set of investigations has been focused upon the practices and effects of log-rafting. Here, in contrast to fishing, where cooperative groups have relatively stable membership, a new crew is recruited for each raft. In villages from which the crews, and especially the pilots, were recruited, cash income from rafting is

reported to have speeded up the change from mutual aid and cooperation to hired labor. While raft pilots had a high standard of living because of relatively high cash wages, their farms were poorly farmed because women and hired hands did the work. In contrast, the surrounding villages were relatively poorer but the land was better farmed. Reputedly, women had high status in "rafting" villages.

Other studies of cooperation or mutual aid include a series of studies in the Kurpie region. The basic questions asked were: "Who, with shom, why, under what conditions does co-operate?" [sic] (Zawistowicz-Adamska 1968:27). One interesting finding is that in a certain village there are two types of traditional cooperation: (1) mutual aid based upon strict reciprocity, only members of the middle group in the socioeconomic scale engaging among themselves in this type of cooperation on the basis of strict equality, and (2) cooperation among members of unequal status groups, i.e., cooperation between the wealthy and the poor. Here, a patron-client relationship had been established with the poorer partner working for the wealthier one, and the latter providing various services in turn. These relationships obtain between specific families and endure over a period of many years. One interesting finding was that the members of the poorest group do not exchange any services or engage in mutual aid among themselves. Fainlly, it appears that the form of mutual aid varies from locality to locality and over time (Zawistowicz-Adamska 1968).

In Potakówka, another village, cooperation was of a different type. The inhabitants cooperated in order to build schools, a community center, and roads. In addition, there was mutual economic aid. In this village, research was focused on the villagers' socio-political orientation as well as the role of the leaders' personalities and the young people's social commitment (Zawistowicz-Adamska 1968).

A group of research projects of particularly great potential interest is that conducted in the western territories, areas of present-day Poland that had been parts of the German state before 1945. After the German exodus, the area was settled by Poles from other regions in Poland, as well as Polish "immigrants" (Poles who came from either Western or Eastern Europe). In addition, there were about a million Poles who had lived there before, and members of several minority groups. These groups differed among themselves in their way of life, in the dialects they spoke, and in other aspects of culture. Yet, in their new locations, they settled in juxtaposition, often members of several groups living in the same village or town (Kwilecki 1968; Nowakowski 1963). Polish social scientists seized the opportunity to study this unique situation (for Europe) where a large number of people of diverse backgrounds settled in an area practically devoid of population. The cultural anthropologists have mainly focused upon the various processes of cultural and social change and adjustment that resulted (Burszta 1968).

One of the largest projects which the Polish cultural anthropologists have launched since World War II is the Polish Ethnographic Atlas,

sponsored by the Institute of the History of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The research design is to gather materials in some three hundred villages distributed relatively evenly over all of Poland. Out of some 800 projected maps, approximately one-third already have been published. The emphasis has been upon material culture with some consideration given to historical development, e.g., the informants are asked when a given tool or crop or some other item was first introduced or last used (whichever might be the more appropriate in the specific case) in their village. The results have been used to draw inferences as to the sequence of change in traditional equipment and to try to delineate some of the mechanisms responsible for the change. Professor Gajek, the coordinator of the project, has utilized the results in attempting to check the accuracy of earlier attempts to establish ethnographic regions in Poland based on the content of the traditional folk culture (Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa 1968:16).

Another large-scale project launched by the Institute of the History of Material Culture is the gathering of materials for a series of monographs depicting various aspects of culture of the village, region, or the whole country. Initially, the intent was to give a comprehensive description of the development of the unit studied, and there were attempts to link changes in other aspects of culture with changes in economics. Two general tendencies can be discerned in this type of work: (1) attempts at exhaustive description with data specified as to time, locality, and social structure,

and (2) generalized historical descriptions where hard data are largely replaced by generalizations and examples are used in lieu of evidence (Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa 1968:16-7).

Coverage by these monographs is uneven with undue emphasis on regions close to universities and places of special interest because of their unusual features. The spotty coverage has resulted in other institutions, e.g., museums, initiating their own research, thus compounding the difficulties inherent in attempting to provide comprehensive ethnographic coverage for the whole country (Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa 1968).

In this respect, the Institute of Arts, which in Poland includes not only contemporary fine arts but also areas of ethnographic interest such as oral literature, folk music, and folk arts and crafts (Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa 1968:15), has been more successful in its project to produce a comprehensive description covering all of Poland and, in addition, detailed studies of the various fine arts. At the moment, the Instituteis attempting to produce monographs covering folk music of specific regions (Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa 1968:17).

In contrast to recent trends among anthropologists in America, Polish cultural anthropologists rarely use or present quantified data. The usual research tool for gathering materials in the field is the questionnaire or interview schedule. Frequently the actual investigation in the field is conducted by students using instruments prepared by the principal investigator. A common tactic is to select key informants in each community to be investigated. Only

rarely is the participant-observer or observer-participant method employed and seldom does the investigator reside in the community for long, unbroken periods of time. However, the practice of taking numerous field trips to the same site over a period of several years is quite common. While each individual trip may be of relatively short duration, the total result is the amassing of an impressive number of days in residence.

The above applies to research in Poland itself. My knowledge of the details of research techniques and conditions encountered by Polish scholars abroad is slight. The impression is that conditions in Mongolia were difficult for a number of reasons. Among them were problems with language which required the use of interpreters who were responsible for the materials gathered. It appears that American studies are based on second-hand materials and the African research primarily so, although in the latter case some archaeological field work was carried out. The Bulgarian project is at the moment in its field stage and thus difficult to judge.

On the whole, there is a bias toward material culture, and historical reconstructionism often is readily apparent. This is easily understood if one keeps in mind that in Poland ethnography is included in the Institute of the History of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences along with archaeology and the history of material culture both in mediaeval and modern Poland. Certain other areas, which are usually considered part of ethnography or cultural anthropology, e.g., folklore, folk music, and folk arts and

crafts, are institutionally segregated by being included either in the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences or in another institute of the Academy dealing with the fine arts. Even though Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa claims that this division of labor has not prevented cooperation (1968:15), it has not been, and still is not, completely without consequences as far as Polish cultural anthropology is concerned.

Dynowski (1967a) sees the question of how a society changes from a traditional one into an industrialized and urbanized one, whether in Europe or outside of it, as the central problem in Polish post-World War II ethnography. Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa (1968:14-5) lists seven features as being cardinal in this time period. Four of them deal with the organization of research and the division of labor among the various disciplines and institutions. The remaining three--recording of peasant culture, investigation of changes in rural and working-class culture, and testing the theories of the various other social sciences against accumulated data are more theoretical and perhaps of more interest to the reader.

In cross-disciplinary discussions, the emphasis has been upon what to describe, units of measurement in field work, and the generation of historical models based upon empirical data instead of logical constructs. Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa has great expectations regarding the possibilities inherent in anticipated cross-disciplinary discussion with sociologists and historians for the development of theories of culture change (1968:18).

Polish ethnographers are employed in three types of institutions: museums, universities, and the Polish Academy of Sciences. Most cultural anthropologists seem to be in either the Academy or a university. The museum workers do not appear to be as overburdened with duties as their American counterparts who, according to Guldbeck, are considered lucky if they can spend five percent of their time on research (1964). However, the Polish workers seem to be more oriented towards traditional ethnography. Employment by the Polish Academy of Sciences is deemed the most desirable and the most prestigious. It is difficult to assess either the exact numbers employed by each type of institution or to set up a tight typology of interests that would be highly correlated with the place of employment because frequently the same individual will be on the staff of more than one institution.

One interesting aspect is that despite their interest in the Americas, it appears that no Polish scientist subscribes to the American Anthropologist as an individual. This is in sharp contrast with Current Anthropology where a number are associates.

As the reader is well aware by now, this paper has focused upon two types of materials in Polish social science: research done by ethnographers who can be called cultural anthropologists by virtue of their theoretical or empirical research interests and, secondly, materials which can be fitted into categories such as research abroad or research into patterns of cooperation or of industrialization. This has meant that much work of potential interest done by

scholars in other disciplines--notably the Polish sociologists, especially their rural sociologists--has been omitted. All that can be done here is to refer the interested reader to such journals as The Polish Sociological Bulletin (published in English), Africana Bulletin (published in English or French), or Roczniki socjologji wsi, which has an English summary after most articles and a special issue published in 1968 entirely in English. Likewise, the major ethnographic journals, e.g., Lud, Etnografia Polska, Acta Balto Slavica, etc. (see Kutrzeba-Pojnarowa 1964:194-5 and Gajkowa 1966 for other titles of possible interest), usually summarize major articles in English, French, and Russian, and at times in all three languages. Most books and monographs also follow this practice. Besides the already much-cited work by Dynowski (1968), which is in English, there is another, older work in French (Dynowski 1964) that might be consulted. Finally, Ethnologia Europaea at times has pertinent articles, such as the one by Sokolewicz (1967) on ethnography in Polish universities.

In summing up, it can be said that the branch of Polish social sciences called ethnography is at the moment in a state of change. The change is from the traditional orientation of European ethnography to one more akin to cultural anthropology. Currently, Polish anthropologists are investigating sociocultural change both at home and abroad. Their research interests no longer focus solely upon rural people but are widened to include cities. On the whole, rapid advances in methodology and theory are to be expected.

NOTES

[1]This is an expanded and revised version of a paper presented at the Sixty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in New Orleans in November 1969. The paper is based in part on the sources cited and in part on information collected during my own field work (June 1967 to October 1968) in Poland. My field research was financed by a National Science Foundation grant for Improving Doctoral Dissertation Research in the Social Sciences and by a Fulbright-Hayes scholarship.

[2]I do not know the exact sponsorship or the full membership of the various expeditions to Mongolia. In conversations with some of the participants it appeared that the majority of them were from these two organizations, with a few individuals from other institutions and places.

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