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Making Something From Nothing: Exploring Food, Transition, and Globalization in Post-Socialist Poland

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Making Something From Nothing
Exploring Food, Transition, and Globalization in Post-Socialist Poland

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with honors
in the Global & Regional Studies Program and the Honors College at the
University of Vermont, May 2016

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-----**Abstract**-----

This thesis explores post-socialist cultural practices, globalization, and conceptions of modernity through the lens of food. Linking macroeconomic and political upheaval with multigenerational ethnography, this project examines how everyday foodways have transitioned after Poland's emergence from socialist governance post-1989. Soviet influence remains visible in Poland's collective memory, architecture, symbols, political and economic systems, and, as examined in this thesis, foodways. Under socialism, chronic food shortages prompted Polish cooks to learn "...*jak zrobić coś z niczego*" ("...how to make something from nothing"). Ethnography with a typical middle-class Polish family reveals that they have incorporated new ingredients, recipes, and cuisines into their repertoire as the country has become more integrated into the global market. They retain, however, food practices that challenge Western conceptions of modernity, including growing home gardens, home-distilling liqueurs, and reviving regional culinary traditions. Combining ethnographic fieldwork in Poland with archival research using *Przyjaciółka* magazine, I explore perceptions and realities of life in the *Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa* (Polish People's Republic) and the increasingly globalized orientation of the current generation.

-----Introduction-----

At the close of World War II, Europe was in many ways fundamentally altered. With its infrastructure damaged or destroyed, its population and ethnic groups dispersed, dead, or demoralized, and its political and economic systems precarious, if not entirely broken, Europe lay in ruins. The end of the war signaled not only the end of an era, but the beginning of a systemic reorganization of power on the continent. Western Europe and half of Germany came under the protection of the United States and its Marshall Plan for rebuilding the continent's economies. Central and Eastern Europe began to coalesce around the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and its communist philosophy. As the war ended, "...the Soviets installed 'baggage train governments' in countries like Poland, led by communist leaders who had spent the war years in the Soviet Union and returned to their home countries with the Red Army".¹ These new Soviet-influenced governments constituted a sharp departure from capitalist ideology.

The primary goal of communist governance in the former Soviet Union and its satellite states revolved around rejecting the oppression of capitalism by "...increasing equality and power to the working class".² The mechanisms to achieve the eventual goal of a Marxian union often included a one-party political system, rapid industrial development, abolishment of private ownership, and agricultural nationalization. In Central and Eastern Europe, the Communist Party attempted to build fully communist societies, though these never came fully to fruition. The political and economic systems in those countries could more accurately be termed "socialist". Socialist systems, marked by state control, touched all aspects of life, from "...agriculture and industry to social welfare and the arts...".³ The imposition of socialist

¹ Wolchik, Sharon L. and Jane Leftwich Curry, eds., *Central & East European Politics From Communism to Democracy* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 15.

² *Ibid.*, 20.

³ *Ibid.*, 20.

leadership and control over industry and culture has left a lasting, though differentiated, legacy on the states of the former Soviet bloc.

Poland, whose invasion by Germany on September 1st, 1939 marked the beginning of World War II, faced significant challenges in rebuilding its society. After six years of occupation, in which the majority of the country's significant Jewish and ethnic minority populations were murdered or forced to emigrate by the Nazis, Poland's government moved progressively toward communist ideology after 1945. After 1952, the Soviet satellite state became known as *Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa (PRL)*, or the Polish People's Republic. Under the Communist Party's leadership, Poland began to emulate USSR example and directives in forming its national policy. Productive capital, cultural resources, and industry came under state control and until 1989, Poland remained unmistakably to the east of the Iron Curtain. In Central and Eastern European states, however, "...the Soviet model was modified over time..."⁴ Unlike many of the smaller satellite states, Poland's size, organized labor force, and historically defiant population kept it from more complete integration with the Soviet Union. In the 1970s, Poland's trade policies looked increasingly outside its borders.⁵ Peter Osnos wrote in 1977 that Poland under Soviet influence maintained cultural and economic systems that were uniquely Polish.⁶ He cited the fact that

[t]he Polish Church, with about 30 million adherents in a country of some 35 million people...represents the most formidable organized opposition force anywhere in Eastern Europe. Nearly 75 percent of the country's agriculture remains in private hands with no prospect of widespread collectivization. There are, by recent count, 188,000 privately owned businesses and small manufacturers employing about 400,000 people.⁷

⁴ Ibid., 24.

⁵ Ibid., 24.

⁶ Osnos, Peter, "The Polish Road to Communism," *Foreign Affairs*, October 1977, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/poland/1977-10-01/polish-road-communism>.

⁷ Ibid.

Poland's population was outward looking: travel to the West was fairly common, the populace was increasingly educated and cosmopolitan, and the climate for art, theater, and film was remarkably open.⁸ Unlike their Russian counterparts, the Poles proved less than subservient and "[t]he Kremlin ha[d] clearly been persuaded that it [was] not worth the ignominy of a direct intervention to suppress [political] outbursts. Thus, the Soviets ha[d] to tolerate in Poland a degree of open defiance that would be intolerable in the Soviet Union itself".⁹ Poland's unique approach to socialism would later prove a catalyst for change as the USSR began to falter in the 1970s.

The post-WWII experiment in the expanding USSR and its satellite states faced continual internal and external challenges. With production quotas and wages set by the government, capital and material shortages, low productivity, top-down control of cultural expression, travel, and the media, and widespread suppression of dissidence, socialist states failed to provide an adequate standard of living for much of their populations.¹⁰ The Cold War ensured that the states associated with the USSR were in a constantly precarious position vis-à-vis the West. Individual states attempted to address these issues with various reforms; occasionally, however, "popular demands on the street and disillusionment within the party went beyond [USSR-sanctioned] limits".¹¹ By 1980, a trade union called *Solidarność* [*Solidarity*] had emerged from the Baltic port city of Gdańsk in Poland. Led by Lech Wałęsa, *Solidarność* was the only trade union in Eastern Europe not controlled by a communist party.¹² By early 1981, *Solidarność*'s

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Wolchik and Curry, *Central & East European Politics*, 25.

¹¹ Ibid. 23.

¹² Bloom, Jack M., "The Solidarity Revolution in Poland, 1980-1981," *The Oral History Review* 33 (Winter - Spring, 2006), 34.

membership totaled more than 10 million and included most of the working population.¹³ *Solidarność*-backed industrial strikes around the country prompted a swift response from the government and “...Poland’s communist leaders under General Wojciech Jaruzelski imposed martial law in December 1981 to prevent a Soviet-led invasion”.¹⁴ Lech Wałęsa and other leaders were jailed, involvement in *Solidarność* became illegal, and censorship increased. Material conditions under martial law, which lasted until 1983, deteriorated from an already inadequate state.



L: The entrance to Stocznia Gdańska [Gdańsk Shipyards], the birthplace of the *Solidarność* movement
R: Shipyard entrance gate with *Solidarność* banner and photo of the “Polish Pope,” John Paul II
Photos by author, July 2013

Within five years, however, Poland’s political climate saw a radical shift and by “...the late 1980s, Poland’s communist leaders were so weak and unpopular that they turned to Solidarity to share power and responsibility for improving Poland’s disastrous economic performance, only to lose the first partially free election in communist Europe in 1989”.¹⁵ In December 1989, the Polish government amended the constitution and reestablished democratic institutions.¹⁶ This modified constitution also made provisions for plural political parties,

¹³ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “Solidarity: Polish Organization,” January 27, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Solidarity>.

¹⁴ Wolchik and Curry, *Central & East European Politics*, 24.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Balaban, Andrzej, “Developing a New Constitution for Poland,” *Cleveland State Law Review* 503, (1993), 3.

abolishing the Communist Party's monopoly on political office.¹⁷ Most importantly from an economic standpoint, the constitution contained new articles reestablishing private ownership.¹⁸ Under the revised constitution, Poland became known by its current name: *Rzeczpospolita Polska* or the Polish Republic. In 1990, Polish voters elected *Solidarność* leader Lech Wałęsa president of Poland.

The USSR's satellite states transitioned to non-communist leadership and political structures individually between 1989 and 1991. The USSR itself dissolved into independent states, of which the largest is Russia, in 1991. Poland's transition post-1989 to the free market and democratic governance was rapid, severe, and largely successful. The "shock therapy" strategy implemented in Poland facilitated privatization and market liberalization. Lawrence King and Aleksandra Sznajder argue that "[t]he relatively successful outcome in Poland was the result of *an interventionist and developmental state which facilitated state-owned enterprise (SOE) restructuring prior to privatization through competitive auction, prominently to multinational corporations. These foreign owners provide technology, capital, and markets, further facilitating successful enterprise restructuring*" (their emphasis).¹⁹ They claim that this unique program of development ensured that "...Poland (and the rest of Central East Europe) did not succumb to the pattern of underdevelopment found in the former Soviet Union".²⁰ Since 1989, Poland has developed a strong globalized economy and resolutely democratic government.

Poland's current orientation represents a major departure from the realities of the Soviet past, as "...European expansion has offered countries like Bulgaria, the Czech Republic,

¹⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹⁸ Ibid., 5.

¹⁹ King, Lawrence P. and Aleksandra Sznajder, „The State-Led Transition to Liberal Capitalism: Neoliberal, Organizational, World-Systems, and Social Structural Explanations of Poland's Economic Success,” *American Journal of Sociology* 112, nr. 3 (2006), 751.

²⁰ Ibid.

Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovakia, among others, opportunities to shift away from state socialism and toward an integrated “European” social world that excludes Russia and other former soviet republics”.²¹ The Polish state has been a member of the European Union since 2004. One of the least conformist and most Western-oriented states in the Soviet bloc, international influence in Poland country accelerated as the country fully entered the global economic arena. The 2013 International Chamber of Commerce report ranks Poland in 34th place of 75 major economies in terms of economic openness.²² The United States, in contrast, stands in 38th place.²³ During the 2008-2009 global recession, Poland was the only European country to report positive economic growth.²⁴ Poland now boasts the ubiquitous hallmarks of a globalized nation, with Starbucks, H&M, and McDonald’s increasingly common sights in its largest cities. Poland’s integration into the globalized world has had significant ramifications for the country.

Globalization can be conceived broadly as the accelerated “...exchange and flow of goods, people, information, knowledge, and images which give rise to communication processes which gain some autonomy on a global level”.²⁵ No longer constrained to sovereign states or isolated groups, globalization involves “...cultural integration and cultural disintegration processes that...occur on a trans-national or trans-societal level”.²⁶ Scholars disagree as to the extent that globalization homogenizes, standardizes, or Westernizes national cultures.²⁷ In my

²¹ Caldwell, Melissa, ed., *Food and Everyday Life in Post-Socialist World*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, 4.

²² International Chamber of Commerce, “2013-Open-Markets-Index-(OMI),” Accessed February 3, 2015, [http://www.iccwbo.org/Data/Documents/Global-Influence/G20/Products/2013-Open-Markets-Index-\(OMI\)-high-resolution-pdf](http://www.iccwbo.org/Data/Documents/Global-Influence/G20/Products/2013-Open-Markets-Index-(OMI)-high-resolution-pdf).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Kutzleb, Dana, “Czech Republic vs. Poland and the Economic Recession: Most Similar Systems Design,” *Political Analysis* 16 (2015), 66.

²⁵ Featherstone, Mike, *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization, and Modernity*, London: SAGE Publications, 1990, 1.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Keller, Douglas, “Theorizing Globalization,” *Sociological Theory* 20 (November 2002), 285-305.

experience with Poland's "successful" transition to liberal markets and democratic governance, this narrative is complicated. Mike Featherstone writes that

[p]ostmodernism is both a symptom and a powerful cultural image of the swing away from the conceptualization of global culture less in terms of alleged homogenizing processes (e.g. theories which present cultural imperialism, Americanization and mass consumer culture as a proto-universal culture riding on the back of Western economic and political domination) and more in terms of the diversity, variety and richness of popular and local discourses, codes and practices which resist and play-back systemicity and order".²⁸

This postmodern conception gives more autonomy to those experiencing increasing international interconnectivity and validates uneven, localized responses to globalization.

Poland's political and economic history has had a complex impact on Polish life. Food offers a conduit through which to view the effects, both positive and negative, of the socialist regime on the country's culture. Melissa Caldwell writes that "[f]ood also emerged as a key symbol in the mythologies of socialist states and socialist citizens".²⁹ Extensive state involvement in the food system stemmed from a need

...for practical ways to introduce and cultivate ideologies of communalism and egalitarianism among their citizens. One such method entailed radically reorienting the relationships of individual citizens to food and the relationships between people by moving food practices from the private sphere into the public sphere.³⁰

This attempted reorientation of private to public production and consumption had widespread implications for provisioning in socialist countries. In Poland, state-sponsored restaurants and canteens attempted to help citizens easily integrate into the workforce by removing the burden of home cooking. The food's poor quality ensured only partial success. In taking on food production, distribution, and provision, the state also hoped to promote egalitarian access and standardized quality. Lacking competition, however, state-run enterprises also lacked incentives

²⁸ Ibid., 2.

²⁹ Caldwell, Melissa, ed., *Food and Everyday Life*, 8.

³⁰ Ibid., 6-7.

for efficient production. Shortages resulted in inventive provisioning strategies, which are discussed elsewhere in this paper, and long lines for available goods.

Melissa Caldwell notes that “[t]hese persistent shortages generated food practices relatively unique to state socialist societies. Queuing emerged as a necessary cultural practice among consumers who were forced to wait in line to acquire limited provisions...[d]uring extreme shortages, socialist states introduced ration coupons to regulate the distribution of scarce foods and other goods”.³¹ Queues for basic goods became a mark of communism’s failed promises and remain a potent symbol of Soviet life. Chronic food shortages prompted Polish cooks to learn “...*jak zrobić coś z niczego*” [“...*how to make something from nothing*”], and develop creative strategies to subvert governmental directives and provisioning failures.³² Caldwell also notes that “[b]ecause socialist shoppers could never guarantee that the foods available in one store one week would still be there the following week, consumers learned to stockpile and improvise. Socialist consumers also developed extensive systems of informal exchange networks to circulate foods and other goods”.³³ The shortages characteristic of socialist production were further complicated by rural/urban differences in living standards.

Urban Polish consumers often had more purchasing power, but were limited by the goods available (or more likely, unavailable) in shops. Rural Poles, while poorer, benefited from agriculture that remained largely privatized in the face of stiff resistance from farmers and peasants.³⁴ Francis Pine writes humorously that “[t]he majority of the governments of the Soviet Bloc countries tolerated some level of private peasant farming. In Poland it would be more

³¹ Ibid., 10.

³² Izabella Dąbrowska, e-mail message to author, February 23, 2015.

³³ Caldwell, Melissa, ed., *Food and Everyday Life*, 10.

³⁴ Pine, Francis, “Kinship, Work And The State In Post-Socialist Rural Poland,” *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* 8 (1995), 48.

accurate to say that the private peasants tolerated a low level of state or collective farms”.³⁵

Living on small, diversified farms gave rural Poles greater access to fresh, quality vegetables, fruit, dairy, and meat. After the reintroduction of private ownership and democratic governance in 1989, the free market assumed the role of the state in dictating public food availability and variety. Pine argued in 1995 that the transition to capitalism,

directed and guided by international financial agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF, may well succeed eventually in achieving one part of what the socialist government attempted but failed to do: that is, replacing small family farms with large, specialised farming complexes.³⁶

No longer relegated to state control, industrial food production transitioned in tandem with the economy. The involvement of international financial institutions and corporations in the new economy warrants further mention.

Elizabeth Dunn’s work in the Alima-Gerber baby food plant examines the changing commercial landscape and issues of food quality in Poland. Constraints under socialism prompted Alima workers to employ creative manufacturing strategies and “...circumvent recipes...[because] fruit, for example, would arrive in varying degrees of ripeness, depending on when peasants had been able to marshal the labor needed to pick it...”.³⁷ After Gerber acquired the plant in 1992, American managers saw the formerly socialist workers’ flexibility to cope with top-down imposition of production goals and the variability and quality of supply as problematic.³⁸ Gerber “...emphasize[d] that...Alima’s products were of an inferior quality-at least by Gerber’s standards”.³⁹ Alima’s socialist workers, production processes, and quality control did not fit into the new capitalist logic. Gerber management instituted a total

³⁵ Ibid., 47.

³⁶ Ibid., 48.

³⁷ Dunn, Elizabeth, *Privatizing Poland: Baby Food, Big Business, and the Remaking of Labor*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 17.

³⁸ Ibid., 95.

³⁹ Ibid., 97.

reorganization of the processes, products, and worker training. Dunn argues that in the new economy, “...*change for the good equals more like Western Europe or the United States...*”.⁴⁰ The experience of the Gerber plant speaks to common experiences in the transitional economy, as socialist production, distribution, and provisioning were deliberately reworked to fit the emergent capitalist ideal. The complex processes and consequences of transition and global integration are the focus of this project.

My fieldwork for this thesis, which included gathering ethnographic data from my multigenerational Polish host family and archival material from the National Library in Warsaw, indicates that globalization has had a marked, but not homogenous, impact on Polish foodways and cultural perceptions of communism. Developing what Carole Counihan calls “food-centered life histories,” I found that my host family has incorporated new ingredients, recipes, and cuisines into their repertoire as the country has become more integrated into the global market.⁴¹ The transition to a more Western-oriented system has not been universally embraced, as Poles retain food practices that run counter to the “...dominant narratives of linear progression towards Western 'normality'”.⁴² They have employed alternative strategies to growing, procuring, processing, and eating their food; some of these include growing home gardens, foraging for mushrooms, home distilling flavored medicinal liquors, and canning jams, pickles, and condiments. Maintaining and developing robust regional, ecological, and homemade food practices has also been both a response to increasing globalization and a product of Poland’s participation in the free market. As Jehlička and Smith found in their work in Poland and the

⁴⁰ Ibid., 162.

⁴¹ Counihan, Carole, *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Florence*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1.

⁴² Smith, Joe, and Petr Jehlička. “Stories around Food, Politics and Change in Poland and the Czech Republic.” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, 32, no. 3 (2007): 395.

Czech Republic, alternative economic and cultural practices exist and are deemed locally and culturally important.⁴³

In this thesis, I posit three main claims: 1) that the experience of socialist governance had a marked impact on Polish food, 2) that this influence continues to be expressed in modern foodways, and 3) that Poles embrace some aspects of modernity while also employing creative alternative strategies in the face of globalization. After presenting a review of pertinent literature, I describe the methodological approach for this project, examine archival media to situate the ethnographic data, and analyze the narratives collected in Poland. By giving voice to the lived experiences of Polish families, I seek to explore issues of food, transition, and globalization in the post-socialist world.

⁴³ Smith and Jehlička, “Stories around Food,” 395-410.

Anthropology and Food: Examples of Transition and Globalization

Before discussing Poland's experience with Westernized foodways and its transition out of socialism, it is worthwhile to highlight pieces of anthropological scholarship on foodways in other countries. The following works examine the impact of the introduction of Westernized food products and services in China, the Philippines, and Italy. By providing a broad basis for the study of transitional foodways using a variety of approaches, these scholars shed light on differentiated responses to globalization around the world and offer models for comparable study in Poland.

In "Of Hamburger and Social Space: Consuming McDonald's in Beijing," Yunxiang Yan explores the remarkable popularity of Western fast-food establishments in China, specifically Beijing, and some of the cultural attitudes, perceptions, and changing norms that have contributed to its rise. He first argues that "...foreign restaurants represent an exotic 'other'"⁴⁴. The experience of eating a meal at a Western fast-food restaurant is a departure from the familiar; it offers a taste of American culture without leaving the city. The food itself is not particularly important; rather it is the atmosphere (clean, brightly-lit, air-conditioned and with background music) and service (friendly, efficient, hospitable) that attracts customers.⁴⁵ These characteristics stand in direct contrast to the ambiance of most Chinese state-owned and private restaurants.⁴⁶

More broadly, the appeal of Western fast-food restaurants' extends well beyond the material. The emergence of new social groups in China makes Western-style dining more

⁴⁴ Yan, Yunxiang. "Of Hamburger and Social Space: Consuming McDonald's in Beijing," in *Food and Culture: A Reader 2nd Edition*, ed. Carole Counihan & Penny van Esterik. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 501.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 501-502.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 506.

attractive. Women dining alone or in groups find the social equality of choosing their own food (compared to traditional male-dominated ordering) and alcohol-free atmosphere appealing.⁴⁷ Frequenting modern, American restaurants carries cachet that appeals to increasingly cosmopolitan youth.⁴⁸ Yan posits that “[t]o many Beijing residents, “American” also means “modern,” and thus to eat at McDonald’s is to experience modernity”.⁴⁹ This research, though it takes place in a geographically distant and culturally distinct space from Poland, offers insight into the appeal of Western food and service in a transitioning socialist state.

Melissa Caldwell writes that “[b]oth symbolically and materially, McDonald’s and other transnational food corporations helped usher in radically new models of consumption and political-economic activity across the postsocialist world”.⁵⁰ Poland, like China, enjoyed limited Westernized fast food options prior to 1989; the first McDonald’s in Poland opened after the transition to democracy in 1992.⁵¹ Prior to the introduction of pizzerias and Western fast food restaurants, state-subsidized *bar mleczny* [milk bars] provided cheap, filling food to the working class. The brightly lit, almost sterile, Western fast food restaurants found in shopping malls and flashy new buildings today offer a marked contrast to these traditional restaurants. My host family’s complicated perceptions of fast food restaurants and the attraction these spaces can hold expand on Yan’s research. Their narratives offer other examples of fast food restaurants serving more than purely culinary functions.

The introduction of food service and products to new environments is an enduring hallmark of human contact and globalization. As globalization has expanded, largely driven by

⁴⁷ Ibid., 512.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 508.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Caldwell, Melissa, ed., *Food and Everyday Life*, 14.

⁵¹ *Polskie Radio Dla Zagranicy*, “Poland’s First McDonald’s Shuts up Shop,” accessed December 10, 2014. <http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/182850,Polands-first-McDonalds-shuts-up-shop>.

Western economic goals and media, significant critiques have emerged. As previously mentioned, one of the most common is that globalization may act as a homogenizing influence that essentially replaces local cultures with American/Western ideals. Ty Matejowsky's research on SPAM's popularity in the Philippines explores a noteworthy modern example of "glocalization," a process by which a product of globalization is adapted to fit a local culture. SPAM, an American product that has become something of a cultural joke domestically, fit only for children and those without means, is a genuinely popular item in territories and countries like Guam and the Philippines.⁵⁴ Majetowsky writes that this "...global product has been indigenized by Filipinos as both a commodity and a cultural symbol".⁵⁵ Not only does it represent *America*, it also holds homegrown cultural and culinary significance divorced from the Western view of the product. The 2004 opening of a SPAM fast-food restaurant, complete with SPAM-based recipes and décor, underscores this point.⁵⁶ Using SPAM as an example, Majetowsky highlights the complex nature of globalization and suggests a more nuanced view to the homogenization argument. Cultural stretching, or the local adaptation of foreign norms, products, and values, remains an important mode of cultural diffusion.

Carole Counihan's work in Italy focuses on the experience of modernity in everyday experience; for her modernity is "...the processes of social and economic change engendered by capitalism, technology, and informational and bureaucratic complexity that transformed Italy (and the globe) in the twentieth century".⁵⁷ Using ethnographic and participant-observation methods, Counihan explicitly connects conceptions of modernity and transition. Her subjects, a

⁵⁴ Matejowsky, Ty, "SPAM and Fast-Food 'Glocalization' in the Philippines," *Food, Culture & Society* 10 (2007), 23.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 31..

⁵⁷ Counihan, Carole, *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Florence*, New York: Routledge, 2004, 4.

multigenerational family of Florentines, had lived through fascist governance and the shift to a more democratic, free market state. For them, “[m]odernity involved a transition from a localized subsistence and market economy that provided people with barely enough to survive to a fully market, wage labor economy of conspicuous consumption, with altered social relationships and meaning systems...”.⁵⁸ Their interviews revealed complex generational and gendered understandings of “tradition” and responses to globalization. Counihan’s understanding of modernity as a process of changing involvement in the market is critical in the Polish context. Her food-centered research holds that by cooking, eating, and talking with people who have lived through abrupt political and economic change, we see human and cultural resilience, creativity, agency, and adaptability in the face of and in tandem with modernity and globalization.

These scholars offer methodological guides for discussing social, political, and economic changes at the household-level within globalizing foodways. The research speaks to complex responses to transition, increasing international interconnectivity, and new food and provisioning strategies. Culturally specific experiences, history, and norms may impact if, how, and why people embrace globalized values, products, and food. In speaking specifically about the post-socialist context, a rich and growing literature explores cultural change through the lens of food.

Scholarly Approaches to Post-Socialist Foodways

Scholars have long recognized the connection between foodways and the socialist agenda.⁵⁹ Melissa Caldwell argues that “[t]he very negotiations between socialism and capitalism, communism and democracy, and the past and the present have been deeply and

⁵⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁹ Caldwell, Melissa, ed., *Food and Everyday Life*, 7.

strikingly embedded in the food practices of postsocialist consumers”.⁶⁰ I highlight here the work of several scholars using ethnography to study post-socialist foodways around Central and Eastern Europe. These scholars help situate my work within the larger literature.

Yuson Jung’s study of canned and frozen foods highlights the complicated responses that urban Bulgarian consumers have to standardization. Her subjects, many of whom were long-time home canners, are beginning to choose commercially produced jarred foods over homemade foods. Their stated preference for homemade products complicates their growing acceptance of standardized jarred food. Nostalgia emerges as a key theme in Jung’s work; she highlights the importance of memory and collective symbolism in considering Bulgarians’ present attitudes about canned food.⁶³ Furthermore, Jung argues that “[t]he increasing acceptance and normalization of buying and consuming standardized jars, and...processed frozen food in urban Bulgaria suggests a more nuanced process that cannot simply be labeled as a form of globalization where transnational flows of goods and ideas lead to homogenous practices, thus overlooking the experiences of the people undergoing these changes”.⁶⁴ Rather than simply reflect a blind acceptance of Western practices, Jung claims that consumer competence and autonomy are linked to changing food choices. She argues “...that increasing consumer competence among urban Bulgarians reflects consumers’ rationalizing tendencies originating in their experience of modernization during the socialist period, and then developing further under neoliberal capitalist processes.”⁶⁶ Jung’s work informs my understanding of how socialist means of production and standardization may impact the *value judgments* that modern post-socialist citizens apply to their consumption choices.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁶³ Ibid., 32.

⁶⁴ Jung, Yunson, “From Canned Food to Canny Consumers,” *Food and Everyday Life in Post-Socialist World*, ed. Melissa L. Caldwell, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 33.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 33.

Diana Mincyte's work with Lithuania's informal raw milk economy offers a gendered lens through which to explore post-socialist foodways. Her work found that "...small-scale, semi-formal markets are valuable assets for local communities, as they incorporate actors, enliven neighborhoods, and build social capital among its participants.⁶⁷ By providing raw (unpasteurized/uninspected) milk through unofficial market channels, women in Lithuania gain income and autonomy. Their clients also used the raw milk networks as a means of subverting commercialized, regulated exchange. Robust informal networks, which exist outside the market, remain important means of expressing tradition, autonomy, and conceptions of health and quality. For North American and Western European consumers, "...globalization has caused a paradigmatic shift in the production, consumption, and distribution of foodstuffs. Most of the food consumed in North America and Western Europe is no longer grown locally, but in mega-sized farms scattered around the globe. Traditional processing methods have been replaced by assembly lines and biochemical treatment".⁶⁸ In Europe, Jung and Mincyte's findings indicate that the post-socialist experience is hardly homogenized; diverse responses to the introduction of processed, standardized foods and markets exist. Newly autonomous consumers may choose very different ways of interacting with or circumventing the market.

Perceptions of the market are equally important, as Neringa Klumbytė's work in Lithuania indicates. Lived experiences challenge dichotomous perceptions of Soviet or socialist ideology or culture as "bad" and modern, European, or capitalist culture as "good". Neringa's study of two Lithuanian brands of sausage, "Soviet" vs. "Euro," offers an intriguing example of complex responses to modernization. She writes that

⁶⁷ Mincyte, Diana, "Self-Made Women, „*Food and Everyday Life in Post-Socialist World*, ed. Melissa L. Caldwell, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 81.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

'Soviet,' on the one hand, and 'Euro' or 'Europe,' on the other, are antithetical geopolitical codes and symbolic orders that became routine during the Cold War...the label 'Soviet' is often associated with backwardness, totalitarianism, and failure. 'Euro' or 'Europe,' on the other hand, invokes Lithuania's post-Soviet history epitomized by Lithuania's integration in the EU in 2004. Unlike the word 'Soviet,' the words 'Euro' and 'Europe' are associated with the present, the future, and the West and simultaneously signify success, prosperity, and democracy...By naming a product 'Soviet' producers invoke past oppression and colonization, and so the victory of 'Soviet' over 'Euro' brands in the food market is counterintuitive.⁶⁹

In this case, the "...perceptions of sausage quality primarily depend on whether they are seen to be 'natural' and not on EU quality standards such as the product's safety, nutritional value, and hygienic requirements. In valorizing natural food, consumers challenge normalizing hierarchies of expert scientific knowledge, including those of European health authorities".⁷⁰ Neringa's work highlights the multifaceted, often contradictory, associations that consumers maintain regarding food under socialism and capitalism. Health, quality, and tradition remain important considerations.

Poland: Communism, Consumption, and Culture

In the years immediately following the fall of socialism in Eastern Europe, employment, income, and food prices began to show the effects of a chaotic transition to a market economy. Catherine Morton examines the state of Poland's food provisioning and marketing system and its expected evolution soon after the fall of socialism. She writes that "[i]n 1991, most food distribution was disorganized, allowing and responding little to feedback from consumers".⁷¹ State-run enterprises responded to central planning directives rather than consumer needs and desires. She also notes that "[i]n 1991 it was already clear that the wholesale sector would need

⁶⁹ Klumbytė, Neringa, „The Geopolitics of Taste,” *Food and Everyday Life in Post-Socialist World*, ed. Melissa L. Caldwell, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 131.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁷¹ Morton, Catherine. “The Development of Poland's Food Marketing System.” *British Food Journal* 95, no. 7 (1993), 24.

to develop rapidly if it was to cope with the demands of the retailers. Specialist retailers were disappearing quickly and all-purpose, often self-service, grocers were developing in their place”.⁷² This was partially the result of foreign direct investment (i.e. from Aldi and other multinational corporations) to develop a market in Poland. After the fall of communism, “...imports were a novelty and consumers tended to buy on impulse rather than on a regular basis.”⁷³ The transitional economy experienced chaotic consumption, as the socialist conditions of scarcity began to be replaced with a culture of choice. Analysts expected fickle and unpredictable consumer behavior as they navigated new product availability facilitated by the free market.

Capricious consumer behavior was complicated by the material difficulty of the transition. Research by Giovanni Andrea Cornia indicates that in socialist Europe’s “full employment, low income inequality, and low food prices generally ensured a minimal level of food intake even for those in the bottom deciles of the income distribution”.⁷⁴ Food quality and variety may have been inadequate, but quantitatively food provisioning was sound. Yet sufficient access to calories did not necessarily translate into adequate nutritionally rich diets across income levels. Cornia writes that

“[p]articularly in urban area and among low-income groups, food intake was characterized by a high consumption of cholesterol-rich products (such as eggs and animal fats), sugar, salt, bread, and alcohol and a low intake of good-quality meat, fruit and vegetables, and vegetable oils.

As the region transitioned into the free market, the proportion of those classified by Cornia as “ultra-poor” (earning incomes below the subsistence minimum) and “poor” (earning incomes

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Cornia, Giovanni Andrea. “Poverty, Food Consumption, and Nutrition during the Transition to the Market Economy in Eastern Europe.” *The American Economic Review* 84, no. 2 (May 1994): 297.

above the subsistence income but below the social minimum) increased.⁷⁵ Between 1989-1992 real average income dropped and food prices rose..^{76 77} Cornia claims, too, that “[f]ood intake ha[d] also been protected by an increase in consumption of household-produced foods, which has partially offset the decline in food purchases in the market and consumption in public canteens”.⁷⁸ Cornia also discusses the impact of changed diets on health, leading to an interesting comparison to today’s concerns. In 1994, “...the shift in dietary composition triggered by the substitution between more and less expensive sources of nutrients has further deformed the structure of the diet toward animal fats and starch...” and away from healthy sources of nutrients.⁷⁹ This looked likely to produce greater prevalence of diet-related illness, a trend that characterizes many modern economies. Research suggests that from the beginning, Poland’s transition out of socialism has been, while successful, also incomplete.

Alison Stenning writes eloquently that “[a]s 1989 signaled the end of the knowable world order, founded on relatively stable regulatory systems, it heralded the celebration of an unruly globalization”.⁸⁰ She contends that a linear conception of “transition” out of socialism or into capitalism is incomplete and

... that post-socialism will not disappear after EU accession...but that the particular experiences of socialism, its construction on a particular set of nascent capitalist societies and its replacement through a period of rapid and widespread ‘transition’ shape a common condition...instead, any post-socialism must be seen as a partial and hybrid social formation, existing in combination with contemporary others-‘Western’ capitalism, the post-colonial-and founded on older forms-pre-socialism and socialism.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Ibid, 297.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 299.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 299.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 300.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 301.

⁸⁰ Stenning, Alison, “Post-socialism and the changing geographies of the everyday in Poland,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30 (2005), 113.

⁸¹ Ibid., 114.

Stenning's ethnographic work in Poland work indicates that accounts of transition may be too simplistic, implying a start point and an eventual, perceivable end. She claims that "...post-socialism cannot be reduced to neoliberal economic restructuring, nor just to the legacies of socialism (and pre-socialism), nor indeed to the passage of 'transition'. It is all of these".⁸² By conceptualizing of "transition" as a nonlinear experience, Stenning rejects expectations that Poland's culture will show all hallmarks of Western, or even other post-socialist lifestyles. Her conclusion complements Smith and Jehlička's scholarship.

Smith and Jehlička have studied transitional foodways in CEE (Central and Eastern European) countries, specifically the Czech Republic and Poland, to "...show that there are diverse responses to 'transition' that are resistant or alternative to dominant narratives of linear progression towards Western 'normality'".⁸³ These countries and provide a rich environment for studying changing consumer behavior, attitudes, and responses to Western-led transition.⁸⁴ I draw heavily from their research because it closely parallels my goals; they also "...want to draw attention to practices that suggest variously irony, resistance, independence, or revisions in response to, and in the midst of, the rapid introduction of a capitalist political economy of food".⁸⁵ They have found through surveys and household interviews that CEE "[f]ood systems...continue to blend self-provisioning, barter and use of local markets for primary goods with the increasing extension of Western European/North American mainstream patterns".⁸⁶ These strategies indicate that indiscriminate homogenization caused by globalization is a myth.

⁸² Ibid., 124.

⁸³ Smith, Joe, and Petr Jehlička. "Stories around Food, Politics and Change in Poland and the Czech Republic." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, 32, no. 3 (2007), 395.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 395.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 395.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 396.

The gaps in their methodology, specifically their focus on the Czech Republic and their omission of everyday ethnographic narratives, leave space for my small contribution to the scholarship. Using similar categories to separate food consumption patterns, attitudes, and knowledge is useful for providing this thesis' structure. In this project, linking household interviews and histories with more public experiences is essential. Outsiders' experiences of socialism are also important, as they provide insight into potentially differing priorities of home cooks and elites.

Anne Applebaum paints a longtime expatriate's portrait of Polish food as the socialist government began to deteriorate. A journalist, historian, and wife of former Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, Applebaum arrived in Warsaw as "[t]he communist political system was...in its death throes, and the communist food distribution system barely functioned. The state shops were half empty, stocking vinegar, canned meat and dry crackers. Restaurants were slow, expensive and unreliable. Sometimes they had what they claimed to have on the menu. Sometimes they didn't".⁸⁷ In spite of outwardly deficient food options, Applebaum acknowledged the culinary creativity of Poles who used fresh, organic ingredients en masse "...because farmers couldn't afford pesticides".⁸⁸ She connects the end of socialism with Poland's culinary revitalization, for "...as civil society came back to life, the producers and consumers of good-quality food began to organize themselves".⁸⁹ In contemporary Poland "...the best Polish restaurants serve Polish food...they serve roast pork with plums or roast duck with apples, lightening and flavoring the traditional recipes with spices and ingredients that were once impossible to find but are now readily available. Trout, venison and wild boar, all

⁸⁷ Applebaum, Anne, "Revolutionary Eating in Poland," *The Washington Post*, January 8, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/revolutionary-eating-in-Poland/2013/01/08/58107952-514b-11e2-950a-7863a013264b_story.html.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

historically a part of Polish cuisine, have reappeared on menus”.⁹⁰ Applebaum has produced a cookbook, available in both English and Polish version, which contains dozens of reimagined traditional dishes.

In the book’s introduction, Applebaum offers her own experience living in Poland prior to 1989. She offers a vivid picture of defiance, Polish ingenuity and creativity, and culinary rebirth. During socialism,

...sullen waiters handed their customers long menus, invariably featuring dishes that were not available...Of course, if you knew where to go and what to ask for, there were culinary surprises...through connections-in Warsaw there was a ‘veal lady’ who went from house to house-one could get excellent meat and cheese...Almost everyone had an aunt or a grandmother in the country who made jams and pickles....In the years that followed, Polish cuisine, which had become something of a national secret-sometimes restaurants were hidden away in private houses along with the underground printing presses-burst into the open...in recent years, Polish cooks, both amateur and professional, have returned to their roots, launching a revival of Polish cooking on a national scale.⁹¹

Her observations about the transformation of Polish food highlight both outside influence and homegrown innovation. She writes that “[t]he Slow Food movement has also taken off in Poland...the cuisine has been modernized, and is less fatty and less salty than it used to be...the new cuisine is recognizably Polish, not pseudo-French or mock-Italian, and is much the better for it”.⁹² Applebaum’s work, a Polish cookbook published by an American expatriate, itself suggests a global dimension to the revitalization of Polish cuisine since the fall of socialism.

Finally, a discussion of the PRL and post-socialism would be theoretically incomplete without considering memory, collective symbolism, and nostalgia in post-socialist states.

Daphne Berdahl’s work in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR/East Germany) explores the concept of “*ostalgie*,” or “nostalgia for the east”. She describes the growth of a

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Applebaum, Anne and Danielle Crittenden, *From a Polish Country House Kitchen*, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2012), 31.

⁹² Applebaum and Crittenden, *From a Polish Country House Kitchen*, 32.

“...nostalgia industry in the former East Germany that has entailed the revival, reproduction, and commercialization of GDR products as well as the ‘museumification’ of GDR everyday life”.⁹³

This *ostalgie* includes the resurgence of socialist brand names and products, the introduction of GDR trivia and board games, and the staging of GDR events and venues. The process has given socialist products

...new meaning when used the second time around. Now stripped of their original context of an economy of scarcity or an oppressive regime, these products largely recall an East Germany that never existed. They thus illustrate not only the way in which memory is an interactive, malleable, and highly contested phenomenon, but also the processes through which things become informed with a remembering-and forgetting-capacity.⁹⁴

Responses to the products, exhibits, and events are varied: some view them as commercial kitsch, some as a means of resistance and solidarity against a western vision of modernity, and some as a symbol of socialism’s failures.⁹⁵ From these diverse responses, Berdahl asserts that “[o]stalgie, in all its various forms...does not entail an identification with the former GDR state, but rather an identification with different forms of oppositional solidarity and collective memory”.⁹⁶ This work offers important context for understanding Poles’ memories about socialism.

Paralleling the GDR case, Poland has also seen a growing resurgence in interest in socialist-era products and cultural artifacts. In Warsaw, the Czar PRL Museum presents socialist-era objects, products, and furnishings arranged into a staged kitchen, living room, and Communist Party member’s office. The museum also offers city tours that highlight important PRL monuments. Another museum in Kraków offers exhibitions, tours, and a collection of socialist cars. The recent introduction of a card game, “*Pan Tu Nie Sta!*” [“*You Weren’t*

⁹³ Berdahl, Daphne, “(N)ostalgie for the present,” *Ethnos* 64, (1999), 193.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 203.

Standing Here!”), and a similar board game, *Kolejka [Queue]*, speaks to the *ostalgie* trend. Released in 2007 and 2011, respectively, the games give players the chance to experience the hardship and creativity of life in the PRL without standing in a single line. In “*Pan Tu Nie Stał*,” players try to assemble the most optimal hand of cards to obtain basic articles like clothing, food, and toilet paper. In *Kolejka*, players must decide how to allocate their time in various queues on the board to achieve the same aim. Players try to choose the shortest lines, frequent the best-stocked black market bazaars, utilize their informal networks (epitomized in “*Pan Tu Nie Stał*” with the card: “*Synku, stań w kolejce*” [“*Little Son, stand in line*”]) and avoid the local militia. Those who have the most sophisticated strategy, win. The popularity of the PRL museums and games is a testament to the enduring cultural importance of the era.

Significance

Post-socialist studies are an important and multidimensional field. The impact of the socialist system of 1945-1991 continues to be felt in Central and Eastern Europe and Poland is an especially interesting example for several reasons. In contrast to Russia, which suffered some degree of cultural stagnation under socialism, Poland’s culture found means of expression and support.⁹⁷ Poland’s successful transition from communist governance and current status as one of the fastest-growing economies in Europe position it as an important strategic state in Central Europe.⁹⁸ Poland is also distinguished by its ethnically and racially homogenous population and strongly developed national culture.⁹⁹ Polish cuisine and food rituals, epitomized in the United States by galumpkis (*gołąbki-stuffed cabbage rolls*), pierogies (*pierogi-dumplings*), and panczkis

⁹⁷Osnos, Peter. “The Polish Road to Communism”.

⁹⁸ “Taking Europe’s Pulse: European Economy Guide”. *The Economist*, August 15, 2014, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2014/08/european-economy-guide>.

⁹⁹ “The World Factbook: Poland”. *CIA.gov*, accessed November 3, 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pl.html>.

(*pączki-jam doughnuts*), show lasting regional, seasonal, and religious influence. Cultural change in the modern era is an important issue as states, ethnic groups, and individuals navigate new influences.

Food is more than the sum of its nutritive parts; Roland Barthes holds that “[an] item of food sums up and transmits a situation; it constitutes an information, it signifies”.¹⁰⁰ Food and food practices, which “...link body and soul, self and other, the personal and the political, the material and symbolic,” are a deeply personal, yet globally oriented, expression of culture and offer a unique avenue for investigating the effects of globalization.¹⁰¹ Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterisk write that “...as food shifts from being local and known to being global and unknown[,] it has been transformed into a potential symbol of fear and anxiety as well as of morality”.¹⁰² Scholars have done significant work in examining evolving foodways in the face of political transition in Central Europe. Much of the research in Poland focuses on the technical aspects of changing foodways (i.e. GMOs, alternative food movements, and agricultural land use) without considering everyday food practices.¹⁰³¹⁰⁴ Some scholars (see Smith and Jehlička 2007, Stenning 2004, and Haukanes and Pine 2003) have taken a more human-scaled approach. This project will complement earlier scholarship, combining political, economic, and ethnographic research to illuminate some of the impacts of transition on Polish culture.

¹⁰⁰ Barthes, Roland, “Toward a Physiology of Contemporary Food Consumption”, in *Food and Culture 2nd edition*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterisk, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 31.

¹⁰¹ Counihan, Carole and Penny Van Esterisk, eds., “Introduction to the Second Edition,” in *Food and Culture 2nd Edition*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 1.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰³ Turnock, David, “Agriculture in Eastern Europe: Communism, the Transition and the Future,” *GeoJournal* 38, no. 2 (1996), 137–49.

¹⁰⁴ Twardowski, Tomasz, “Societal Attitudes Regarding GM Food: The Case of Poland within the European Union,” *Environmental Biosafety Research* 7, no. 4 (2008), 181–84, doi:10.1051/ebr:2008016.

-----Methodology-----

The ethnographic fieldwork that forms the basis of this project took place in Poland in the kitchens, dining rooms, and gardens of various members of my Polish host family. Additional participant observation in a *bar mleczny* took place in the Baltic port city of Gdańsk.

Background in Poland

From August 2009-June 2010, I studied abroad in Poland through the Rotary International Youth Exchange program. After a lengthy application and interview process, I was placed in a city (pop. ~20,000) in north-central Poland with a host family, the Dąbrowscy*. At the time, many of my friends still believed Poland to be a communist country. I knew enough of its history to know that it had transitioned to democracy 20 years prior, but my knowledge of the country and culture was limited. To prepare to study abroad, I met with a Polish gentleman living in my hometown for about two months to practice the minimal Polish I had acquired from books and online tutorials. Upon arrival in Poland, I settled into the typical routine of a high school student: I attended classes with one of my host sisters, ate meals with my host family, and practiced my Polish constantly. The town where I lived offered little opportunity to speak English, so I was fully immersed in Poland every day and carried my well-worn dictionary with me everywhere. Part of the Rotary Exchange program included gatherings with the other exchange students in various cities around Poland; travel to these meetings and to visit other exchange students introduced me to the major cities of Warsaw, Kraków, Gdańsk, Toruń, Wrocław, and Lublin.

In contrast to the typical model of rotating host families, I lived with one host family during my entire exchange and developed a very close relationship with my host mother and father, sisters, and aunt and uncle. I spent countless hours in the kitchen with my host mother as

she prepared delicious daily meals, various cakes for *drugie śniadanie* [*second breakfast*], and homemade liqueurs that she brewed in our apartment building's cellar. I was also actively involved in planning and preparing the traditional and labor-intensive food for Christmas and Easter. I also became close with my host father, an inexhaustible font of knowledge on Polish culture and history. Once my Polish progressed to a higher level, I greatly enjoyed conversations with him on those topics.

I returned to Poland in 2013 to visit with my host family and spent two weeks at their new home in a rural village about one hour from where I had lived during exchange. During the summer of 2014, I traveled again to the country to complete an intensive language program at *Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika* [*Nicholas Copernicus University*] in Toruń to continue to maintain and develop my Polish skills. I stayed with one of my host sisters and visited with my host parents and aunt and uncle. When I returned from Poland in 2014, I began to plan for my undergraduate thesis on Poland. For more than six years I have experienced the unique culture of a country whose history is a study in contrasts: Poland's past contains a litany of conquest, war, and deprivation but the resiliency, ingenuity, and creativity of the Polish people is striking. The flourishing of Polish music, art, language, and culture in the face of oppressive regimes is something I have experienced firsthand. My host family, a globally connected and modern family in my experience, had lived through the transition from a markedly different political and economic system in 1989. I wanted to explore their perceptions of that transition, perceptions I had gathered in bits and pieces from dinnertime conversations. The medium through which to do it was obvious to me from years of conversations in my host family's kitchens: food.

Funding

My fieldwork in Poland was made possible through a generous Travel Award and Mini-Grant from the University of Vermont Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR). The travel award covered the cost of my plane ticket to Poland, transportation while in the country, food, and an audio-recorder to record my interviews. My research subjects received no compensation for their participation, though I used some of my funding to purchase ingredients for meals we cooked together. The Mini-Grant also provided other research materials, including a subscription to ExpressScribe transcription software and ingredients for representative foods prepared for my thesis defense. The awards also allowed me to expand the scope of my project to include ethnographic excursions with my host family and a visit to a *bar mleczny* in Gdańsk. The ethnographic richness of my research would not have been possible without OUR support.

Ethnographic Methods, Archival Research, and IRB

Anthropological methods, including interviews and participant observation, among others, seek to aid in "...the development of cross-culturally useful concepts about the nature of the human condition...[and] the acquisition, under natural conditions, of accurate data on human behavior and cognition throughout the world".¹⁰⁵ Qualitative research methods, including ethnography, in the social sciences offer a means of capturing human experience and validating diverse expressions of culture. Food-based ethnography has become an important and growing area of anthropological work, "...as food links body and soul, self and other, the personal and the political, the material and the symbolic".¹⁰⁶ I based my methodology on the work of Meredith

¹⁰⁵ Bernard, H. Russell, *Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, (Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1988), 26.

¹⁰⁶ Counihan and Van Esterisk, "Introduction to the Second Edition," 2.

Abarca, who uses “*charlas culinarias*” [*kitchen chats*] as a springboard to understand issues as complex as gender, agency, and power. Using informal conversations with her family and their extended network, she combines participant observation with a feminist approach to food studies. I take as foundational her assertion that “[c]harlas are about vertical thinking, not horizontal, meaning that the researcher and women in the field are intellectually on the same plane”.¹⁰⁷ This removes researcher expectations about the data and allows the interview subjects to be active participants.

Carole Counihan takes a similar approach in her research with a multigenerational extended Florentine family in *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Florence*. Joe Smith and Petr Jehlička’s methodology in the Czech Republic and Poland involves gathering “food stories” or “[b]iographies of food, to suggest life-stories not just of people, but also of the inter-relations between people, food, and nature/environment”.¹⁰⁸ These are split into three categories: consuming normality (Western “normal” consumption), consuming tradition, and consuming ecology (focus on growing environmental awareness in food procurement).¹⁰⁹ My goal was to complement this strategy and to utilize their methodological framework of gathering “food stories”.¹¹⁰ As my project evolved from conception to fieldwork, I found that these scholars’ approaches in combination produced the most appropriate and flexible methodology for me to explore the transition from communism in Poland. Using ethnography allowed me to develop a family food history and understand more deeply the impact of communist governance on family life, food, and perception of culture.

¹⁰⁷ Abarca, Meredith E., *Voices in the Kitchen: Views of Food and the World from Working-Class Mexican and Mexican American Women*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 9.

¹⁰⁸ Smith and Jehlička, “Stories around Food,” 396.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 399.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 396.

The basis for this project was ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Poland over a period of two and a half weeks in August 2015 and subsequent analysis of both ethnographic and interview data and magazine articles. In order to conduct fieldwork with human subjects, I applied for IRB approval. As my interview subjects did not constitute a vulnerable population and my questions were not sensitive in nature, I received an IRB exemption prior to traveling to Poland. Upon arrival in the country I made two presentations to members of my host family (who live in two separate towns) with information about my project and the interview process. I also translated the IRB-required information sheet into Polish and gave a copy to each. I informed them that their participation was entirely voluntary and asked that they approach me after the meeting if they were interested in participating. I made it clear that agreeing to participate implied consent. Six members of my host family gave their consent to participate.

Multigenerational members of a middle-class Polish family, these research subjects are illustrative of some of the diverse experiences of Polish people pre- and post-socialism. My host father, mother, aunt, and uncle (born c. 1955-1960) have lived in both rural and urban areas. They have spent most of their lives in larger towns and cities, however, and can speak more deeply to the urban experience of socialism. All of them have received at least a bachelor's degree, placing them in the upper quintile for their generation.¹¹¹ My host sisters (born c. 1985-1995) are representative of their generation's trend towards higher educational attainment, urbanization, and globalization. Both have received their bachelor's degrees and one is pursuing a doctoral degree. In contrast to their parents' generation, more than a third of Poles aged 18-54

¹¹¹ "Share of the population by level of educational attainment, by selected age groups and country, 2014," Eurostat, 2014, accessed May 9, 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:T1_Share_of_the_population_by_level_of_educational_attainment,_by_selected_age_groups_and_country,_2014_%28%25%29.png.

has at least a bachelor's degree.¹¹² My host sisters have studied, lived, and worked abroad in several European countries and the United States. Their experience is consistent with recent migration trends; since Poland's accession into the EU, a significant portion of the population has emigrated within the borderless Schengen area and beyond for study and work.¹¹³ I want to emphasize that the limited sample size here prevents fully generalizable conclusions. Instead, the following narratives present just some of the perceptions of life in the PRL and the modern post-socialist state.

I interviewed each member of my host family separately and in groups at my host parents' home and host aunt and uncle's house. I conducted five structured interviews (lasting 30 minutes-2 hours each) and collected about 20 informal conversations (about 8 hours total) that occurred in the car, at restaurants, and at home outside of a structured interview setting. I audio recorded all of the interviews and took field notes during cooking sessions and my visit to the *bar mleczny*. Using ExpressScribe, I selectively transcribed and translated the 10 hours of collected recordings and hand-coded them for shared ideas, experiences, and perceptions. Using a joint codebook for my host parents' and host sisters' generations, I analyzed the interviews using nine main codes. Some of these codes, including "scarcity" and "regional/local," related to characteristics of the food my host family ate pre- and post-1989. Others, like "creativity" and "*kombinować*," ["*to come up with, to make do*"] described strategies employed during socialism to combat scarcity. "Tradition," and "generational differences" pertained to values surrounding food. The full codebook can be found in the appendix.

In order to extend my research from ethnography with a small study sample to more generalizable data, I also included archival research in this project. Using a popular ladies'

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ White, Anne, *Polish Families and Migration Since EU Accession*, (Bristol: Policy Press, 2010), 27-28.

magazine published since 1948, *Przyjaciółka* [*Girlfriend*], I examined the information, recipes, and articles that Polish women encountered in the weekly (now bi-weekly) periodical. I had originally intended to use another magazine, *Kobieta i Życie* [*Woman and Life*], but found *Przyjaciółka* easier to procure. After an orientation at the *Biblioteka Narodowa* [*National Library*] in Warsaw, I photocopied and scanned the recipes and culinary articles in five-year increments beginning in August 1970. I translated and coded the data for types and numbers of ingredients, regional/local vs. foreign origin, “traditional” recipes or techniques, and seasonality.

Obstacles to Ethnography

The timeframe in which I was able to complete my research necessarily limited the scope of my project. The difficulty of coordinating international travel and lodging with my host family meant that my fieldwork was kept to about three weeks in Poland. Successful ethnography and participant observation demands rapport with research subjects, which often takes researchers years in the field to develop. My long-standing relationship with my host family allowed me to circumvent the need to develop rapport from scratch and made it possible to fully use the time I had in the country. I found, however, that three weeks is a limited amount of time to conduct comprehensive interviews in the midst of busy lives. Another challenge that restricted the time I spent with my host aunt and uncle was traveling between my host family’s homes. My host parents live in a rural village about an hour from the nearest train station. My mobility was thus dependent on my host father’s trips to the larger town. I had also anticipated interviewing my host brother-in-law, but prior to my arrival he won a contest to travel to Croatia for the duration of my visit.

Most significantly, my intention to use Abarca’s *charlas culinarias* model for conducting conversations was hampered somewhat by logistical issues and the personal preferences of my

host family. My host mother, the family's main cook, considers the very small galley kitchen her domain. It became clear after the first interview there that she would be more comfortable, and I more likely to get undistracted answers, if we moved our conversations to the dining table or the living room. The *charlas* evolved to be less focused on cooking together and more focused on eating together. This often meant that both of my host parents participated in interviews at the same time and offered the unexpected advantage of richer stories and remembrances as they jogged each other's memories.

Profile of Interview Subjects

This research was largely focused on the experiences of two generations of the Dąbrowscy family. The ethnographic data collected emerged from structured interviews, numerous informal conversations, and email exchanges during and after my time in Poland.

*Identifying information, including names, has been changed to protect my interview subjects' anonymity.

Prudencia, my host mother, is a middle-aged retired elementary school teacher now living in a rural village (population ~200) in central Poland. Prudencia is the family's most talented and confident cook, a founding member of her community's culinary club, and an active environmental steward. Since her move from an apartment to the country, she has been dedicated to cultivating a vegetable garden and preserving much of her food. She also makes cheese and home-brewed liqueurs.

Jan, my host father, is retired from a career in theater. A lifelong student of history, politics, literature, and Polish culture, Jan is the family authority on Soviet culture and current local

politics. Growing up in the country, Jan gained skills as wide-ranging as home construction, gardening, pruning, animal rearing, and forestry. He enjoys collecting mushrooms and berries in the forest surrounding my host parents' rural home.

Elżbieta is Prudencia's sister and my host aunt. She works as a social worker in a town of about 50,000 in northeastern Poland. A world traveler and adventurous spirit, Elżbieta enjoys both trying new food and maintaining traditional practices, including cultivating a home garden and preserving much of her crop.

Stanisław is Elżbieta's husband and my host uncle. He works for the municipal government and is passionate and knowledgeable about meat (including raw beef *tatar-tartar*), beer, and sprits.

Nadia, my youngest host sister, is 22. I shared a room and attended high school with her while living in Poland. An inveterate traveler, Nadia was a Rotary Exchange student in the USA, an Erasmus student in Portugal, and until recently worked as an au pair in England. She is very interested in Korean and Japanese culture and food and plans to live in South Korea someday.

Izabella, 28, is my middle host sister. She studied political science and philosophy as an undergraduate and plans to get her masters equivalent in political science. Her studies are currently on hiatus, as she is now a mom to my 2-year-old nephew. She lives with her husband in a city famous for its gingerbread.

-----Visions of Tradition, Modernity, and Globalization in *Przyjaciółka* Magazine-----



Kalendarz Przyjaciółki 1976 [Girlfriend's 1976 Calendar]
Special edition magazine, property of Elżbieta
Photo by author

Introduction

The ethnographic data discussed later in this paper serves as an illustrative sample of experiences under socialism and in the years since 1989. In order to present a more inclusive portrait of the influences on Polish foodways, I looked to archival media collected from the *Biblioteka Narodowa [National Library]* in Warsaw, Poland's capital city. The use of a nationally circulated magazine, *Przyjaciółka [Girlfriend]*, situates my ethnographic data within the larger cultural milieu. *Przyjaciółka* has been in print since 1948 and has remained one of the most popular women's magazines in the country.¹¹⁴ During the socialist era, circulation reached up to three million women.¹¹⁵ It served as an important source of news, public announcements, domestic aids (including clothing patterns), nutrition information, and recipes and culinary features. Prior to 1990, the magazine's appearance was austere, with minimal photography, newsprint-style formatting, and between three and ten pages of content. The covers typically featured a single photograph. The most recent issue collected in August 2015 ran 58 glossy pages, with an additional 16-page insert focused on cakes made with puff pastry. In its current iteration, *Przyjaciółka*'s covers and content resemble familiar Western women's magazines with a smiling cover model, lush photography, human-interest stories, nutrition and weight loss tips,

¹¹⁴ Sokół, Zofia, "'Przyjaciółka,' –Tygodnik Kobiety (1948-1998)," *Kieleckie Studia Bibliologiczne* 6, 2001, 89.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

and entire sections on gastronomy. It is now quite common for *Przyjaciółka* to attract readers with free promotions, including themed recipe booklets or cooking utensils packaged with the magazine.

My purpose in choosing a women's lifestyle and culinary magazine in general, and *Przyjaciółka* in particular, was three-fold. As important as cookbooks can be for disseminating culinary information, their reach is limited. Weekly or biweekly magazines sold at every street corner or train station kiosk have a much wider readership and can respond more quickly to changing culinary trends. Employing a magazine geared toward women recognizes their important role in preserving tradition and introducing change to their family's diets. Finally, *Przyjaciółka* is ubiquitous throughout Poland. Its publication coincides with the introduction of socialism in Poland and continues to the present, thereby offering important continuity.

Due to time constraints and the sheer number of *Przyjaciółka* published, I could not conduct an exhaustive analysis of the magazine. Instead, I chose to parallel my analysis with my host parents' and siblings' experiences by beginning with the 1970 issue. From 1970-2015, I collected the culinary and recipe sections from late August issues in five-year increments (ten issues in total). All of the issues, except for the 2015 issue that I bought at a kiosk, were obtained with help from the librarians at the National Library and were copied with their permission. My recipe and article analysis focused on four dimensions: scarcity, seasonality, foreign vs. domestic production, and regional, global, and cultural labels.

Scarcity

The 1970 issue of *Przyjaciółka* ably captures some of the recurring themes of socialist life that my interview subjects will discuss elsewhere in this paper. The *Nowinki [News]* section in the late August issues mentions shortages, innovative substitutes for scarce goods, and the

quota system used for importing household appliances and other goods. The language attempts to reconcile consumer desires with production realities.

Artificial Caviar has begun to be produced in the USSR. It is not as good as real caviar, but has the same appearance, and its nutritional value is even higher.

Washing machines, with programing control, will be experimentally placed on the market in quantities of 1000 pieces. We imported these modern washing machines from Yugoslavia, where they are manufactured in two types under Italian license.

“Inka” and “Maltino” are two new canned roasted grain coffees, packaged similarly to Marago. Like Marago, “Inka” dissolves in boiling water, cold water, or milk. “Maltino” has the addition of malt. Both of these coffees are produced by Amino, the Poznan Food Concentrate Plants.

Citric acid is highly sought after by housewives for different home-economic purposes. Though we annually produce about 750 tons, there is still a shortage. The situation will improve when they finally launch a new food acid plant in Pelplin. After reaching full production Pelplin will provide 2,000 tons of citric acid annually.

We are importing electric boilers for the bathrooms, in quantities of one hundred thousand pieces, from East Germany. Maybe ultimately the countryside will have hot water in the kitchen and bathroom.

(Przyjaciółka 1970, pg. 11)

The mention of a citric acid shortage is significant, as it is an essential ingredient for many home canners who made jams and pickles. The description of Inka “coffee” also warrants mention. Introduced around 1970, Inka is a roasted grain beverage meant to substitute for real, chronically unavailable coffee. A mixture of roasted rye, barley, beets, and chicory root, Inka continues to be consumed in Poland today. Finally, the candid language regarding the artificial caviar produced in the USSR speaks to socialist states’ creative, if perhaps misguided, attempts to provide for their citizens. The *nowinki* highlight the tenuous circumstances for rural citizens, many of whom apparently lacked hot water even in 1970, and the creativity of food producers through the Soviet bloc to provide substitutes for scarce luxury and staple items.

As Poland's political climate began to deteriorate, food prices served as an impetus for political unrest, including 1980 strikes against rising meat prices.¹¹⁶ Maintaining consistent food prices was an important means for the government to avoid discontent and strikes. With holidays often provided by employers, Poles commonly traveled to Mazuria, the lake region, the Tatry mountains in the south, or to the Tri-Cities (Gdańsk, Sopot, and Gdynia) on the Baltic coast. Price controls for holidaymakers occupied the editors of *Przyjaciółka* in the August, 1985 issue.

Many potential holidaymakers this year remained at home, especially since the disturbing news of the disasters caused by the weather joined uncertainty as to the new meat prices in catering establishments. Had they saved enough or not for the holiday? Had dinner prices gone up a lot or only slightly?

To find out, we visited several dining establishments in the province of Gdansk. We selected popular bars, chippies, and soup kitchens...Seasonal catering establishments are entitled to charge slightly higher prices. This year, however, at the request of "Społem" [grocery consumer cooperative started in 1868], the governor of Gdańsk made the decision to standardize prices for the same food in all chippies, kiosks and bars catering to tourists. This correct step proved to be beneficial for visitors.

Changes in the prices of meat supplied to eateries including the cafeterias and holiday resorts, provoked understandable interest of all those who have tables already just in canteens, or are choosing to go on holiday. We wish to inform you that there are no grounds for such fears, since on 3 July, the Minister of Finance published a special decree, which says that the prices of holiday meals and those in the canteens will not change. Consumers still pay the same predetermined price as of July 1st; workplaces will have to cover the remaining difference.

(Przyjaciółka 1980, pg. 11)

Poland's socialist provisioning system gave the state control over both production and, to some extent, the means (and obligation) to address failures in the system. Controlling food prices,

¹¹⁶ "Crisis in Poland," *Economic and Political Weekly* 15, nr. 35 (Aug. 30, 1980), 1460 .

mitigating shortages, and introducing substitutes in the face of uncertainty were all governmental tools, albeit ultimately unsuccessful ones, for placating concerned citizens.

Seasonality

The August issues of *Przyjaciółka* from 1970-2015 displayed a consistently heavy emphasis on seasonal fruits (and some vegetables) in the recipes and articles offered to readers. Sweet cakes, pastries, and preserves appeared in nearly every issue. Locally produced fruit, including apples, raspberries, gooseberries, cherries, plums, bilberries, pears, and blueberries featured prominently. Oranges appear once in the August 1970 and 2015 issues, while kiwis, quinces, and other exotic fruits appear in the magazine in the 2000s. An explicit linkage between homemade baked goods and guests appeared in numerous issues, indicating both the enduring importance of Polish hospitality, succinctly described in the saying, “*Gość w dom, Bóg w dom*” [“*Guest in the house, God in the house*”] and a lasting desire to use local, seasonal fruit.

“When guests visit on summer Sundays, let’s treat them to something good, like cake with fruit”
(*Przyjaciółka*, 1970, pg. 11)

“Good homemade cake is always a major attraction for family members and guests. The season of apples, pears, and plums is conducive to all kinds of baked goods with these fruits” (*Przyjaciółka*, 1975, pg. 11).

“At Our Table: Summer Cakes. More impressive pastry can be quickly and without trouble bought at a patisserie, but cake baked at home is truly tasty. Now, when we have plenty of fruit, it is easy to prepare delicious and aromatic dishes.” (*Przyjaciółka*, 1980, pg. 14)

“Pears...[are] most commonly and most eagerly eaten raw. You can also prepare delicious desserts with them. Unfortunately, the “pear season” only lasts a short time, the fruit-except in rare and expensive winter varieties-are not sour and quickly overripen. It is thus worthwhile to preserve part of this year’s harvest for the winter.” (*Przyjaciółka*, 1985, pg. 12)

“Plums: fresh and dried fruit can be cooked in many dishes: pierogi, dumplings, pancakes; added to meat, made into preserves, dried. Mature Hungarian plums may remain on the tree until the skin starts to wrinkle-they are then tastiest and sweetest-perfect for drying”. (Przyjaciółka, 1995, pg. 21).

Cucumber Season...[d]uring the summer cucumbers are often in demand. They are refreshing and cheap enough that one can make a lot of dishes out of them. In this way they are present on our tables throughout the year.” (Przyjaciółka, 2005, pg. 30)

“Midsummer is the time when it is possible to buy fresh Polish peppers. Their price isn’t high and the culinary possibilities are endless. Try them yourself! (Przyjaciółka, 2015, pg. 30)

Articles on gardening and preserving the harvest also appeared frequently. Tips on preparing the ground, fertilizing, sowing, and caring for the plants complimented recipes for pickles, jams, preserves, canned vegetables, and dried herbs and mushrooms.

“After the harvest, strawberry and raspberry plants must not be left to their own fate. You have to take care of them as soon as possible, otherwise you can not count on nice and ample fruit next year. I really take care of my strawberries and raspberries, and I have to admit that so far I have not been disappointed. In the summer I always have fresh fruit on the table and preserves in the winter.” (Przyjaciółka, 1980, pg. 14)

“September in the Kitchen Garden: it is a calmer period of work in the garden. Only a little sowing, planting, harvesting and preliminary preparations for the upcoming autumn and winter. (1990, pg. 10)

Articles encouraging Poles to use local food, garden, and preserve the harvest indicate cultural values of self-sufficiency, practical knowledge, and tradition. These practices continue to be important and carry meaning for my research subjects in their modern provisioning strategies.

Emerging Global Cuisine

A more politically- and culturally-open country than many of its Soviet bloc counterparts, Poland began to look increasingly outward in the 1980s. A 1980 article on seasonal holiday food options available in the coastal city of Gdańsk speaks to this trend. From pizza to kebabs, fast food options are no longer only the domain of *bary mleczne*.

Snack bars, which offer the Italian delicacy-pizza, have multiplied. Why are these appearing on the Polish seaside? Maybe from the fact they are tasty, do not require scarce raw ingredients, use meat, and are served hot makes them a compelling replacement for dinner. The pizzeria on Piwna Street in Gdansk, where Stanisław Chmielewski is the “ajent,” serves approx. 500-600 servings. At the same time, in the blast ovens [they] bake six different types of the yeasted dough covered with fragrant compositions of ingredients, which are based on tomato sauce, cheese, sausage or mushrooms or bacon. For gourmets, Mr. Chmielewski introduced onion soup. There is also pasta served the Italian way with spicy toppings. A serving of pizza 21-25zł. With the soup you pay a little more than 30 PLN. So not excessive. No wonder that even near a beach in Sopot a pizzeria also has a queue.

Adjacent to the pizzeria is the “Kebab” snack bar which is effectively competing with it to gain customers. At “Kebab” they bake and fry several dozen different Arab recipes, as the chef here is a native arab, Al-Nakshabandi Muhi. There is also pizza but is called “Safiha” and smells great with unusual spices. There are burgers, sandwiches, rotisserie chicken in a purple color due to its sauce, in which it is marinated before cooking. The company’s namesake dish is kebabs, or oblong patties of ground meat (just a pity that the ajent is not receiving allocation of mutton/lamb, which is necessary for such dishes). The dishes are eaten in the open air (the bar is seasonal), and prices range from 20-30zł. (1980, pg. 11)

With culinary features and profiles, *Przyjaciółka* offered its readers an introduction to new cuisines and ingredients. The trend of increasingly globalized cuisine continued after the fall of socialism; below, a 1995 profile of an Indian restaurant owner in Warsaw provides another window into disseminating new cuisines. With a glowing recommendation and recipes, *Przyjaciółka* effectively introduces new vocabulary (“tandoori oven,”) and ingredients (“cardamom”) and invites the reader to actively participate by trying the recipes.

The “Maharaja” Indian restaurant has been located in the city center for over a year. Chef Ram Prasat Tiles, which formerly was the chef in Delhi, has been in Poland for three years. The original Indian cuisine has been received very successfully here, and the largest attraction of its dishes are baked in a special Indian clay oven, tandoori. It can cook different dishes: meat, chicken, cheese.

Many of the guests come for the delicious roti pancakes, with dark rye flour, or naan, with wheat flour, which are eaten with all meals. In Indian cuisine other breads are not used. In addition to lamb baking here, there is often chicken, accompanied by aromatic sauces. The vegetables fried in batter and other meatless dishes have unusually [good] flavor. A large amount of fruit and vegetables and wonderfully smelling and tasting spices attract many lovers of spicy dishes, most of which you can prepare at home. Here

are suggestions from the chef, Mr. Ram Prasat Tiles, who recommends dishes baked in the tandoori oven, but you can prepare them in home conditions on the grill or simply in the oven. It's worth trying them; they are really tasty. (1995, pg. 22)

The chef advises:

- 1. Use lamb, a meat that is not very popular in Poland, but is very satisfying, healthy, and deserving of more attention.*
- 2. Use of cardamom, one of the most popular spices from the ginger family. It is one of the main ingredients in spice mixes in India. It has a mild, bittersweet, camphor-like aroma (at the beginning), and an intense, spicy flavor. It enriches the flavor of both sweet and savory dishes.*

These features give insight into role of the media in encouraging the average Polish women to recognize, taste, and perhaps embrace “exotic” cuisines and ingredients.

Traditional and Regional Cuisine

Przyjaciółka offered advice and recipes geared toward maintaining or promoting traditional Polish meals and regional cuisine. A 1990 feature offered a handy week's guide of suggested two-dish (soup and entrée) dinners. This traditional meal structure can be very labor-intensive for the (usually female) Polish home cook if prepared daily.

*SOUPS: cauliflower*fried semolina*apple soup with croutons*cucumber*mixed vegetable with cream*chicken soup with “grated dough” (“z tartym ciastem”-spätzle-like dumplings)*leek*

*SECOND DISHES/ENTREES: pasta with vegetables and meat, pickled cucumbers*chicken stewed in tomato sauce, potatoes, green beans*“Babka” of cabbage, potatoes, salad with tomato*pork cutlets, cabbage, potatoes*tripe from the stomachs of poultry, rice groats, Italian cabbage slaw*Hungarian-style stew with peppers, potatoes*beef meatballs, potatoes, beets.*

(Przyjaciółka, 1990, pg. 10)

Przyjaciółka's promotion of traditional food continues into the 2000s. Indicating a revived interest in local food and distinctively Polish ingredients and dishes, a 2010 feature on regional cuisine claimed that “[t]he basis of Polish regional dishes are simple and popular/well-liked ingredients: potatoes, flour, eggs, pork, but cooked in different ways. That's why sometimes it's

worth it to break with home tradition and try what the neighbors eat". The headline reads, "[It's] good, because it's our Polish food!". In the article, the authors mention the European trend of embracing region-specific ingredients and cuisines. In the feature, the authors explore each region of Poland, highlighting some of their most traditional dishes.

Some regional dishes are known nationwide. Others, though less known, are also worth a try. We invite you therefore to a simple but delicious feast.

Our openness to new culinary experiences meant that the traditional regional delicacies have no longer been as popular as before. Meanwhile, in Europe, they are increasingly willing to come back to the old recipes. Let's discover them again together; we did!

...The culinary map of Poland has been decided not only by history, but above all, by climate, terrain, and soil fertility. In the areas bordering the water the most accessible food were fish, while in the mountains they raised sheep. To the east, they had great success with wheat, in the Podkarpacie and Podlasie with buckwheat, while in past years, Mazovia was associated with peas. In Polish cuisine, dishes made from flour and buckwheat reigned supreme, though potatoes did, too, and have become of the main ingredients used in all regional kitchens. It is these delicacies that must be tried while, for example, on vacation. And it is precisely the recipes for these dishes that we must carefully hold on to!

Local Treats

*In **Pomerania** and **Kashubia** the fish dishes are worth a try, including scrambled eggs with herring (recipe on page 44), chowder, carp with mushrooms or herring with onions and sour cream served with [pulki], or "potatoes". The thrifty Kashubian Kashubian is also famous for honeyed and sour "bonek," sour-sweet-and-sour bean soup.*

***Warmia** and **Mazury** cuisine has a lot in common with the German menu. They eat a lot of meat, "kluski" dumplings, and sour dishes. Dishes are often seasoned with sour cream and herbs. Typical dishes include, among others, cabbage soup, sour soup, sausages in beer, dybdzalki (dumplings stuffed with beef) or pokuczaj "meatballs" (recipe p. 41).*

*In **Podlasie** there is no lack of influence from Lithuanian, Belarusian and Tatar cuisine. Potato cake (recipe on page 45), kartacze (dumplings with meat filling) or soczewiaki (potato buns with lentils) are popular here. In addition, the region is famous for its excellent bread, sękacz (cake baked on a rotisserie), knishes (baked dumplings), bigos, kindziuk [a kind of Lithuanian sausage] and bison grass-vodka.*

***Mazovia** in the olden days nourished itself on the gifts of forests. But when Warsaw became the capital, local cuisine became somewhat more glamorous/opulent. Characteristic for the region are Varsovian trip (recipe on page 44), chicken stuffed with*

offal, sour soups, pea soup and beetroot.

Wielkopolska was always the wealthiest region of Poland. A lot of meat, poultry and potatoes were eaten here. To this day popular [dishes include] roast duck with apples and “pyry” (potatoes) with white cheese “gzik” (cottage cheese with cream, onion, radish and dill). Dumplings “on a rag” (recipe on p. 45) and “blind fish” (potato soup with dill and sour cream are local specialties.

Silesia is famous for its tasty noodles/dumplings “kluski”, red cabbage, sour rye soup, karbinadli (ground-meat cutlets), “zrazy”-meat rolls (recipe on p. 44) and krupnioków (black puddings).

In **Małopolska (Galicia)**, [the cuisine] shows the influence of Austrians, Hungarians, Czechs, and Jews. You can try, among others, maczanki-a dish with pork, bread and caraway sauce-duck stuffed with mushrooms and grits (“kasza”), Lisiecka sausage, and bagles.

Lublin is associated with cebularz-a yeast cake with onion and poppy seeds-food made from buckwheat and honeys (including pitnymi).

The basis of **Podhale** cuisine is potatoes, from which they make moskole (pancakes with boiled potatoes), sauerkraut, which is, for example, the basic component of kwaśnica soup (recipe on p. 44). Also mutton and sheep cheese (bryndza, oscypek).

Carpathia is a region in which dishes from potatoes, buckwheat and millet are popular. It is famous for stuffed cabbage with buckwheat, various dumplings, sour rye soup and kugel, or potato casseroles.
(Przyjaciółka, 2010, pg. 44)

Przyjaciółka magazine has provided Polish women with culinary information, trends, and recipes since 1948. By examining some of the information disseminated through these magazines, I aimed to gain a better understanding of the kinds of messages Polish women received through the media. My analysis revealed that the 1970s and 80s were marked by concerns about shortages and food prices, that nearly all of the issues from 1970-2015 showed a strong focus on seasonal, local, homegrown, and home-processed food, and that *Przyjaciółka* used culinary features to promote regional food and culinary traditions. This analysis helps to contextualize the following ethnographic narratives.

-----Host Parents' Generation Findings-----

Introduction

With swarthy cheeks, a quick smile, and the wiry build and energy of a younger man, my host father, Jan, is a true Renaissance man. Brought up in a small peasant village, Jan studied theater, history, and literature at university and worked as an artistic coordinator in some of Warsaw's largest theaters. As well versed in Polish poetry as he is capable of repairing a fence, Jan is a veritable fountain of knowledge. When sharing his memories of socialism, his wry sense of humor is always apparent. Prudencia, my host mother, is a jolly version of Mrs. Bennett from *Pride and Prejudice*. Opinionated and jovial, Prudencia clearly runs the show in her home. A retired elementary school teacher, she can usually be found in the kitchen, in her garden, or reading and simultaneously gossiping on the couch. Elżbieta, Prudencia's younger sister, is a woman not easily cowed. She travels around the world by herself, practices her English constantly (if amusingly), and continues to make sugar-free jam despite loud familial objections. Her husband, Stanisław, is a great bear of a man, with a beard and deep belly laugh. He is an aficionado of beef tartar and serves it, along with copious amounts of vodka, to all unsuspecting guests. The narratives about socialism, transition, and food that emerged from conversations with these interview subjects were complicated and non-dichotomous. On one hand, my host father Jan remembers that

it wasn't permitted to say or do anything against the government...to get a passport back then, you had to go to the local militia to apply, which wasn't so easy. They looked to see if you listened to Western radio, Radio Free Europe or Voice of America, if you voted in elections. With elections, I mean, why go? You knew who was going to win. [They looked to see] if you went to marches. Everything was sprawdzona [checked]. If you said or did something they didn't like you didn't have a chance of getting a passport, which you could use to go Bulgaria, then on to Greece, then to Germany, then to Australia, maybe.

Yet Poland was unique among Soviet bloc countries; Jan emphasized that “*it was not a little Czechoslovakia, not a little Romania*”. It enjoyed some degree of political openness because Poles “*have conspiracy in their blood: there had to be some [relaxation] of restrictions, or there would be an uprising. [So, for example] Poland was the only communist country where you could watch American films without a problem*”. Underground culture flourished, including music, art, and the famous *kabaret [sketch comedy]* acts parodying Party leaders that remains popular today. There were other positive aspects to the socialist experience. As Prudencia notes,

It's really difficult [to unequivocally deride communism] because there was poverty and we didn't have a lot, but we had certainty in our experience. We didn't have to see how it works in other places. There were good things...we were a more egalitarian society. The [pre-WWII] hierarchies dissolved a bit.

Jan agreed and expanded on the optimistic expectations Poles held at the beginning of their transition to democracy.

Everything was ours. It wasn't much but it was ours. After the fall of communism, there was totally enthusiasm, euphoria. No one believed that the results [of the first democratic election with Solidarność candidates] would come out like it did. Some people believed that from then on everything would be wonderful. After 1989, of course that enthusiasm that had been there at the beginning ended too soon. Lots of things weren't working in the new economy. Socially, not everything hoped for has been achieved.

My host parents expressed conflicted feelings about life under socialism. For all its shortcomings, the socialist system had as its basis a goal of increased egalitarianism, self-sufficiency, and communal support. In order to institute its agenda of communalism and worker empowerment, the socialist state deliberately altered the ways that Poles procured, prepared, and provisioned their food. Prudencia described the workday schedule and its impact on mealtimes:

Canteens were a part of the Polish socialist system from nursery school, because there was this state-run system where you gave birth to a child and then put them in the nursery school. In Germany, it was even worse than here. Here you left the kid in the morning and after work you picked them up. In Germany, you dropped off the kid in nursery school on Monday and picked them up on Saturday. It was basically an

orphanage. Because it was shift work, for three shifts, for example. So it wasn't clear when you were supposed to have time to pick them up!

And I went to nursery, for example, and then preschool, and then primary and secondary school, then university. And everywhere we had canteens. Even when my eldest daughter was little...we ate there at least until 1993 for sure because I worked shifts as a teacher. For example, I would go one day at 8:00 to 15:00 (3pm) but the next day I might go from 11:00 to 18:00 (6pm). And I was exhausted because I had to be at home to cook. And so we would go to the canteen to eat or I would send Jan with a trojaczka [three-tiered container]. Those containers were a hit during Socialism. You can still buy them in stores! But now they're really fancy. We had this glazed metal one with one pot and a second one that lined up with it. And inside you would have potatoes, meat, salad, and soup.

Shift work and the integration of women into the workforce had lasting effects on Polish mealtimes and Polish restaurant spaces. The public eating spaces, including canteens, continued to be important spaces well into the transition post-1989.

The capitalist and democratic system that followed socialism has its own defects and challenges, including increasing international influence. Economically, politically, and socially, the transition that began in 1989 has had a marked impact on Polish culture. Food practices offer a conduit through which to view these cultural shifts. The complicated relationship these Poles had and continue to have with their socialist past manifests itself in their complex understandings of their foodways. The dichotomies into which I organized their narratives, including “trust and distrust,” “scarcity and plenty,” “creativity and ease,” “globalization and reclaiming tradition,” serve only as an initial framework. Even as the codes outlined below emerged, the stories that my host family told were more dialectic; they would often interact, contradict, or at least complicate, the simplistic division of pre- and post-transition realities.

Trust and Distrust

It was an old truth that if you bought something, for example wine, a good one made from Hungarian grapes, you looked and saw that it was diluted. One part was water...Poles may still have it in their genes [to be suspicious].

~Prudencia, August 2015

A deeply rooted, and seemingly residual, distrust of food providers and state-provisioned services was a thread that ran throughout my host family's stories. Jan commented that "[f]ood at home and in state-sponsored *bary mleczne* absolutely dominated". Important sites of state-control in the PRL and nostalgia today are *bary mleczne*, or milk bars. Milk bars were, and continue to be, popular sources of nutritious, if lower quality, state-subsidized food for workers and students. So-called because they served mostly milk-based, meatless dishes, *bary mleczne* in the PRL were notorious for their poor service and bad food. In our interviews, Jan's humor belied the gravity of his remembrances:

Eating out was an extreme sport. You never knew how it was going to end! It was easy to conceal what went into the food; you never knew what was in the middle...Food in the restaurants was always terrible. It was an institution! Now you can be at ease eating bigos [a stew of fermented cabbage and meat]. It used to be really risky. At a train station bar I used to go to they had kotlet that you had to watch out for. They made it once a week out of leftovers. If there was chicken left one day or other meat they just ground it up and made kotlety. The food at that bar was really terrible, but occasionally I would go.

At bary mleczne they didn't automatically add the seasonings, like salt and pepper. So you would go up to the window, and if you ordered soup with salt and pepper, they charged you for it. And often they didn't have a lot of dishes. Flaki [tripe] they always seemed to have, unfortunately. They often didn't have real flaki, though, so they'd make it out of mushrooms or something. Baked crepes, cut up, looked a little like flaki. Once I ate flaki z krila [krill-like shrimp] because there were problems with protein because there wasn't enough meat in Poland. And those flaki had the most disgusting color. Yuck!

Prior to the introduction of hamburger stands and McDonald's, *bary mleczne* [milk bars] offered cheap, fast food in often-drab establishments. In these restaurants today, the counter service is generally brusque and efficient and the food is quickly dispensed, filling, and unimaginative. A

recent *SAVEUR* article explores how “...these institutions, relics of a political and economic landscape the country has outgrown in the years since communism fell in 1989, are now in danger of extinction”.¹¹⁷ Poland’s growing incomes and food options threaten the cheap, no-frills *bary mleczne*. In spite of the residual distrust of such restaurants, nostalgia for this “treasured piece of Polish culture” remains; for low-income Poles, students, and those who prefer *rosół* [*chicken noodle soup*] and *kotlet* [*pork cutlet*] to Kurczakburger (McDonald’s “ChickenBurger”), *bary mleczne* continue to fill a necessary niche.^{118 119}

During a visit to Gdańsk, Jan, Nadia, and I stopped for a quick snack at “*Bar Turystyczny*” “Tourist Bar” in the large coastal city of Gdańsk. Famous as the birthplace of the *Solidarność* movement that eventually toppled communism, Gdańsk’s beautifully rebuilt Old Town contrasts sharply with its industrial shipyards and docks. In the restaurant a sleek white and green interior, with metal tables and chairs and cheery decals on the walls, greeted us. With its long line to the chafing dishes, brusque service, shortage of many of the menu’s offerings, and cheap dishes, *Bar Turystyczny* nonetheless retained much of the ambiance of a PRL-era restaurant. My host father’s enthusiasm for reliving socialist mealtimes was matched by his gratitude that a quality pizzeria (for our real dinner) was located down the street.

Polish standards like *pierogi* [*dumplings*], *flaki* [*tripe*], and *surówki* [*grated vegetable salads*] filled a large yellow menu board, though French fries and hamburgers were also on offer. As we attempted to order, the server rather rudely told us “*Nie ma*” [*“We don’t have it”*] for dish after dish. My host father became increasingly animated, almost delighted: “*This is exactly how it was! The same service!*”. What was once a normalized experience of poor quality and

¹¹⁷ Childs, Morgan, “The Fight to Save Poland’s Milk Bars,” *SAVEUR*, March 7, 2016, <http://www.saveur.com/fight-to-save-poland-milk-bars-warsaw>.

¹¹⁸ McDonalds Polska, „Kanapki,” accessed December 11, 2015, <http://www.mcdonalds.pl/oferta/menu-klasyczne/kanapki/>.

¹¹⁹ Childs, Morgan, “The Fight to Save Poland’s Milk Bars.”

inattentive service has become an exceptional, nostalgic event, almost a historical reenactment. My meal of mashed potatoes dispensed with an ice cream scoop, pierogi, grated carrot salad, and pork cutlet was edible, if lukewarm. Jan's tripe was, judging by his reluctant but heroic attempts to clean his plate, not as appetizing. The entire meal cost 22.45zł, or about \$7 with the exchange rate at the time.



*Kotlet schabowy z ziemniakami i surówką z marchewek [pork cutlet with potatoes and carrot salad]
from Bar Turystyczny in Gdańsk
Photo by author, August 2015*

Later, during a visit to a local supermarket, we observed patrons at a small fast food kiosk in the parking lot. These now common, even mundane, sites prompted the following story from Jan. A theater student and later employee in Warsaw, Jan had spent the late 70s, 80s and 90s commuting to the city by train.

See that kiosk? If that had been allowed to open next to the milk bars and offered a price even a few grosze [cents] below the state price, they would have won all the business. All the prices at those bars were set by the state. These restaurants encouraged eating at home as a result of the big difference between home cooking and restaurant food and the lack of trust in restaurants. Now the restaurants are great, but during the tough times they were often really dreadful.

Once the woman working at the train station bar had offered me bigos [stew] or kluszki, [dumplings with meat] in the middle. I ordered the kluszki, but the woman said "Today, I really wouldn't recommend them," meaning they were totally inedible. I had the bigos, instead. It, of course, sucked. With those state-owned bars, there was no competition.

The historical distrust of restaurants and state-provisioned food translates into a strong preference for home-cooked food and food provided by small producers that are intimately known to the family. Each member of my host family individually remarked that the eggs they buy from their friend in a nearby village are better than any they can get in town. They also claimed that *mleko proste z krowy* [milk straight from the cow] occasionally provided by their farmer neighbor is by far the best. In an era of growing alternative food movements in the U.S., it is worth noting that "...the informal networks of trust between small farmers and individual consumers that are promoted as the ideal economic model for North American farmers' markets replicate the informal exchange practices that have constituted socialist informal economies of barter within and across socialist geographies".¹²⁰ These informal networks continue to be important to the current generation and are discussed later in my host siblings' chapter.

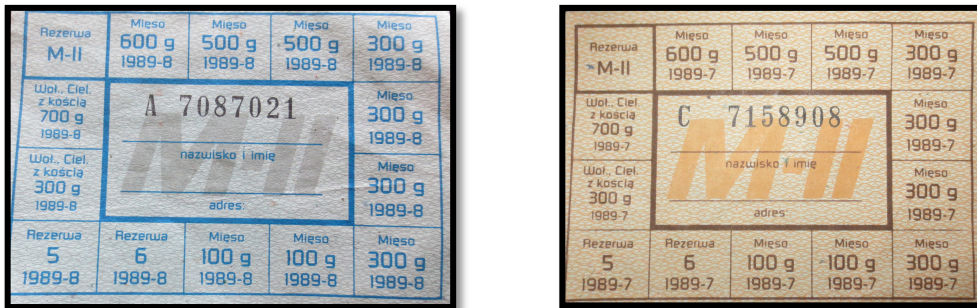
Scarcity and Plenty

Scarcity and recurring shortages were defining failures of Soviet markets and factored heavily into the stories recounted to me. The tenuousness of procurement has endured for this generation of Poles. Prudencia told me "*now everything is [available] ...but we [the older generation] still have this feeling that at any moment something might happen and you have to be prepared*". Food shortages were not a new experience for war-torn Poland. Jan noted that

Post-WWII, there were ration cards. In '62 when I was eight, under Władysław Gomułka [Party Secretary, 1956-1970], everything was great and there was a lot of everything. Ok, not everything, but a lot of what they had available. Candy, etcetera. Then it started to get worse. First I remember after 1970 there was progressively less. It still wasn't too bad. In 1976, we had the first kartki [ration cards] for sugar. Prior to that, you theoretically could get as much as you wanted but there wasn't always any in stores. The first kartki for sugar came out in June or July, but those were the only ones at the beginning. 1979 or 1980 there were ration cards for meat. Later, during marital law,

¹²⁰ Klein, Jakob A., Yuson Jung, and Melissa L. Caldwell, *Ethical Eating in the Postsocialist and Socialist World*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014), 5-6.

there were kartki for everything: coffee, shoes. Poland produced a lot of its own foodstuffs...but the things we couldn't like, sugar, had shortages.



Examples of ration cards for *mięso* [meat] in quantities of 100-600g (3.5-21oz.), circa 1979
Property of Elżbieta, copied with permission

Chronic food shortages made daily procurement of food difficult. Caldwell notes that “[i]n principle, this was a system of transparency in which goods were publicly displayed and customers knew what was available. In practice, however, socialist consumers knew that this visibility was a mere illusion”.¹²¹ As Prudencia succinctly said: “*You couldn’t buy anything*”. While exaggerated, this statement nonetheless reflects an experience of insufficiency relative both to non-socialist countries at the time and to their experiences today. Elżbieta mentioned that shortages occasionally strained her marriage and noted that those students and workers couldn’t fully participate in the queues were at a disadvantage when food became available.

when we were students we used to get kartki where you had a choice to get either chocolate or wine. I of course wanted chocolate, and Stanisław wanted wine. That really tested our relationship! When I had classes, I couldn’t stand in line with my kartki to pick up food, so I’d give them to my parents to stand in line for me.

Jan expanded on Prudencia and Elżbieta’s statements, linking scarcity and creativity.

I settled, I got my hands on [things], but I didn’t buy them. It wasn’t like you could go into a store and buy [whatever you wanted]. During PRL you had to cope, because there were so many things you couldn’t get. So you had to come up with different things.

Even in recipes, for example, the original would say that you need this, this, and this but since Poles didn’t have anything to buy you could substitute something else. For instance, with oranges, there was this Party Secretary, who was the most important

¹²¹ Caldwell, Melissa L, „Tempest in a Coffee Pot,” in *Food and Everyday Life in the Post-Socialist World*, ed. Melissa L. Caldwell, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 108.

person, and his name was Gomulka, and he thought, "Why would we buy lemons and oranges when sauerkraut has a lot more vitamins?" So you couldn't buy them. Of course, citrus fruits, lemons and oranges, were an important part of the Christmas holidays.

Lack of access to certain foods constituted not only a challenge to daily meals, but also a significant barrier to celebration of traditions. As a predominantly Catholic country since 966 A.D., Poland's deep connection to its faith has served to maintain cultural consistency in the face of invasion, regime change, war, and a 123-year removal from the map from 1795-1918. During the 1945-1989 socialist period, Poles continued to embrace their faith and resisted much of the atheistic rhetoric of the Soviet Union. My host parents mentioned several times the difficulty of making Christmas Eve dinner, which traditionally involves 12 meatless or fish dishes (often carp-based) and a litany of desserts, and Christmas Day dinner, which typically includes ham. Prudencia told me that the family would start stockpiling ingredients, like flour, butter, sugar, and spirits two months prior to the holidays to ensure they had enough to make "*the most traditional meal possible*". Jan mentioned that

at that time the only oranges that we could get were Cuban ones and they were terrible. They had this papery skin and the juice is gross and in food they were nasty. And back then as we would approach the holidays, maybe in November, then there would be this komunikat [public announcement] that "The ship bearing our Christmas oranges has arrived in Gdańsk!" And after that, in the stores you could buy maybe a kilogram because they couldn't give out more than that. So you had to wait in line so that house would smell like oranges. But it wasn't always so bad. There was a time, after the 1970s during Edward Gierek's [Party Secretary, 1970-1980] time when you could buy more of that citrus. But it was tough.

Ham, a Christmas tree, and oranges-you had to get those things or it wasn't Christmas. Everything else you had to make or buy. Carp, the fish, you could still find. Mushrooms you had to gather from the forest, poppy seeds which then you could still cultivate. Now you can't since you can produce narcotics with poppy plants. Everything else you could make. To buy the ham, tree, and oranges you had to stand in line. Now when Prudencia plans out the holiday menu, she makes this, this, and that. Then, you just didn't plan like that. Maybe for Christmas Eve you would obviously plan to make the traditional dishes, but the rest of it, you'd make whatever you could with the ingredients you had managed to buy. Maybe you could bake a cake or something. Maybe you had nuts and you managed to buy 30% cream from somewhere, since you couldn't get in stores.

Even as food shortages signified a hardship for the average Polish citizen, my host parents expressed a more complicated relationship with the dearth of luxury items. In discussing their first time trying foods previously unavailable to the masses, they articulated a greater enjoyment and appreciation than someone for whom that consumption was normalized, including my host sister, Nadia. These memories stand out because the food was special. Jan and Nadia contrasted their different experiences with now-ubiquitous items: bananas and Coke.

Jan: I remember the first time that I ever had a banana and I remember perfectly the first time I ever drank a Coca-Cola.

Nadia: For me, that's normal. When I was born, we had all of those things, so I don't remember my first Coke.

Jan: I remember that for bananas, this was just before martial law, I was in Zakopane [resort town in southern Poland] in the mountains for this theater conference and we went to this delicatessen we saw bananas. So we stood in line and bought as many as we could! It was only a few kilos, some person had already come in and bought some for a sick patient and there weren't a lot left. So my friend and I locked ourselves in my room with these bananas and proceeded to eat them all and didn't share a single one! And then soon after that, there weren't any available, it was martial law, everything was on the ration cards and it was the first and last time I ate bananas for several years.

[With Coca-Cola], my mom came back from Warsaw with my brother and there was this announcement on TV that "On this certain day, a shipment of that American imperialist drink will be coming to Poland!" You know, in the classic glass bottle! And so my mom bought us each a bottle for 5 zloty [Polish currency]. We all drank it little by little, hoping to make it last.

This exchange exemplifies the generational gap between those who lived through socialism and those now firmly in contact with the West. My host father's experience of the exceptional has been transformed into my host sister's understanding of "normal". The confluence of an American beverage with imperialism speaks to the rhetoric of the Cold War and is a prescient connection between Western globalization and cultural domination.

When talking about the food available now, several terms, including “richness,” “choice,” and “healthy,” appeared repeatedly. Jan described food today as “*a lot richer,*” because it now includes options from around the world, a variety of eating venues and cuisines, and high quality ingredients that weren’t available in PRL times. The changes are both lauded and condemned. Jan shared this complicated response, which touched many of the themes mentioned above.

It’s obvious to see that the manner of eating [here] has changed. When I was little, there were maybe one or two overweight children in my class. Now, in nearly every class it’s like half of the kids are overweight. Having choices is good; you can buy healthy options, or fast food. You can get food that is “certified organic” or “healthy” or without added preservatives. Those foods are expensive, unfortunately, but they’re there. Choice is always a good thing. There isn’t any doubt about that. I can go out and buy whatever I want. When we were young you could sometimes buy maybe one beer at a time. Good ones, like Żywiec or Okocim, once every six months or so. Most often there wasn’t any at all and we’d wait in line all day to buy beer and there wouldn’t be any. Now you go into a store and there are 80 different kinds of beer to choose from.

Jan is unequivocal here: “*choice is always a good thing*”. The shortages under socialism, the top-down imposition of quotas and rationing, and the regulation of product choice removed much of the autonomy from the consumer. The newly empowered Polish consumer, however, now has to reconcile freedom of choice with changing eating habits, threats to traditional foodways, and potential health consequences.

Creativity and Ease

Poles often lacked luxury items or faced shortages of staple foods, but their experiences of scarcity, which the current generation has not known, were balanced by a rich tradition of innovation and creativity. The adage that “necessity is the mother of invention” aptly describes their experience. My host family used the Polish word “*kombinować*” [*to come up with, to make*

do] repeatedly. Elżbieta and Stanisław reminisced about some of the tasty, and less than tasty, dishes that Poles invented to use the ingredients that were available.

Elżbieta: *When there wasn't any pork, Poles thought up this dish where you took mortadella [a kind of sausage], cut it into fat pieces, dipped it in egg, then bread crumbs, and threw it in the pan with some fat. And it looked exactly like pork.*

Stanisław: *Yeah, but it only looked like it.*

Elżbieta: *True. And when there really wasn't all that much to eat, like sweets, we would buy cream and put it on bread with butter and sugar. It was really delicious! And when there wasn't cream or butter, we'd dip the bread in water and sprinkle it with sugar. In really poor houses, that's how they ate. A real taste of PRL times. And when I was in college and I had a little money, I'd go to the milk bar and bought fasolka po bretońsku. That was chopped bacon, sausage...well, sometimes sausage if you were lucky, beans, tomato paste, salt, pepper. I still make it, but now I use really good bacon, really quality sausage.*

Jan and Prudencia expressed an appreciation for the abundant creativity evident in Poles' recipes, even though the conditions from which it arose were difficult.

You couldn't buy certain things, so Prudencia made do with what she found. Now what we have is a lot better than what was there during communism. There are a couple of things that were great, maybe, that we liked. Things, for example, like blok czekoladowy [chocolate block]-those kinds of surrogates. Limitations always have one good side in that they inspire creativity. Now, there's practically no creativity. You see a culinary program on TV or find a recipe on the internet, you go to the store, you buy the ingredients and you make it. Then, I managed to buy this or that and then I had to figure out how to make something great out of it. When there weren't any sweets, blok czekoladowy was created out of what was available. And that happened with loads of sweets. Simple things. The girls made lollypops, for example. They melted sugar and poured it on a sheet to make a lollypop.

You could also make alcohol that you couldn't buy using spirits or clear vodka as a base. For example, you could buy this thing called zaprawka [essence/flavoring] in the stores and you would add this whiskey zaprawka and that's how you made whiskey! Or the cognac flavoring and voila, you had cognac! There were all kinds of things made that I don't think you could even translate to English. Like "wyrób czekolada podobna [chocolate-like confection]. It looked like chocolate but wasn't. It was made out of cacao. It was tasty.

If I go a supermarket now and can't find a particular item, I'm really indignant! What do you mean, it's not here? How is it possible they don't have it? As though I can't remember a time when they didn't have anything...

Jan's last comment highlights an inverted version of the exceptional vs. normal experiences described earlier by Nadia and Jan in their discussion of Coca-Cola. Unreliable provisioning was once a common and normalized, if unwelcome, occurrence. Now global supply chains and the competitive market ensure a nearly seamless provision of food in supermarkets. The exceptional experience is to have difficulty procuring any single item, leaving Jan frustrated with the system's "failure".

Scarcity, both constant and yet cyclical in its severity, tied directly into the innovative strategies for survival and taking advantage of the system that Jan and Prudencia shared with me. The *kolejki* [queues] that remain the most evocative image of Soviet market failure were a part of daily life. Staples from butter to sugar to toilet paper all faced shortages. Jan told me that

You'd get toilet paper, 8-10 rolls on a string, and people would carry it around their necks from the store. You know, it's funny now, but people would look at those people jealously. Because there was no guarantee there'd be any when it was your turn in line. If you went to the store and saw something for sale, you didn't think about whether you needed it or not. You bought it, because either things would change or you might need it and it might not be possible to buy it later-Sometimes you would see lines and you wouldn't even know what they were waiting for, but you got in line because it might be worth it.

Once ration cards became part of everyday life in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, a kind of informal subversive economy emerged for the products on the *kartki*. Jan told me that "*I didn't drink coffee back then, so I could exchange the kartki for extra butter, maybe. Officially, I don't know if that was allowed, but why would you try to do it officially? People figured it out among themselves.* The informal networks of family and friend connections were critical for accessing food one couldn't buy regularly. Jan's recollection of a visit to a Communist Party-only restaurant with a friend illustrates the contradictions of a system supposedly designed to promote equality.

There was this restaurant, "Konsumen," where you could eat really cheap food that you couldn't buy other places. Not just anyone from the street could come in to eat. You had to have an identification card from the Communist Party. I had a friend whose father was a milicjant [officer]. She took us there several times. You could even get cheap beer, which normally was really hard to get. Two weeks you might wait for beer normally. But [in that restaurant] there was always beer available and it was cheaper than in the stores! Of course, the food at "Konsumen" was good because the Party made it for themselves. Once sometimes in the 70s we went in with the Solidarność newspaper, and I remember that the first page of the newspaper had a satirical cartoon about the government. I laughed and the waitress came over and then a military officer. "Identification, please!". Of course, we didn't have them since we were there with my friend. "Please vacate these premises immediately! This restaurant is not for normal people!" The restaurant was only for Party members and we couldn't go back, unfortunately.

Jan's experience triangulates Caldwell's assertion that "...despite the social egalitarianism expressed in the ideologies that socialist states promote, these societies were marked by striking social hierarchies articulated and maintained through differentiated access to food goods".¹²²

Prudencia's experience with a local party official provides insight into the power of that access.

I worked in a school with some children of Communist Party members and one December, right around Christmas, I heard a knock on my apartment door. And who was there, but Mr. Grubalski! Even today I remember his name! I had a student in one of my classes who really wasn't smart; he really couldn't learn anything. But his daddy, Mr. Grubalski, wanted him to pass my class. So he came to the house and he brought a little...gift from his cellar, shall we say. A bribe! He had brought me a giant side of pork! I said, "No, sir, I can't accept it". He said, "Mrs. Teacher, I know you don't have anything but what's on the kartki, but I have ham, pork, I have good bread, I have everything. You just have to accept it, so that my dear son, Michał, can learn everything you're teaching him". And then I knew exactly what was up. So I took the pork and he brought out another package! A whole bottle of real cognac! I told him, "I'll accept the pork because it's Christmas, but I really can't take the cognac". And he said, "Mrs. Teacher, you really can't have such a good piece of pork without cognac. You really must take it". So I took the cognac and tried to balance it in my hands, thinking, "That must be it". I hoped so, because this was all taking place in our apartment building's hallway! But then he goes back into his bag and pulled out another bottle of some kind of liqueur. And I said, "Really, Mr. Grubalski, I can't take anymore". And he then went back in the bag for dessert!

¹²² Caldwell, Melissa L., ed., *Food and Everyday Life in Post-Socialist World*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 11.

Foreigners and Foreign Goods

Even as the Cold War made the official relationship between the USSR and its satellite states and the United States highly strained, opportunities for interaction with Americans occurred in every large city. Rather than reinforce Polish commitment to the socialist cause, access to foreigners and foreign goods highlighted the failures of the socialist government. Jan told me that

back then working as wait staff in "good restaurants," like those in hotels that served visiting foreigners was respectable work. The salary was what it was but there were tips. Illegal, of course, but there were tips. Americans would come and tips in dollars. A dollar to an American who came to Poland was nothing. But if a waiter got \$10 over the course of a week, it was like they got a second salary. \$10 in "old money," that was maybe the minimum salary per month. Those were popular jobs, always sought after.

The citizen's appreciation of Western business mirrored that of their government. Ironically, even as ostensibly communist countries sought to reject Western ideology and governance, they nonetheless depended heavily on them in order to provide for their populations. In the early 1980s, the Polish government faced a significant hard currency crisis. With little to buy in the state-run shops and rampant inflation, the Polish currency, the zloty, lacked purchasing power. At the time, possession of American dollars and other foreign currencies was illegal. Due to travel abroad and international visitors staying in Poland, foreign currencies were, however, widely available. In an attempt to alleviate its hard currency issues and increase its stock of the illicitly held dollars, Poland opened "Pewex" (Przedsiębiorstwo Eksportu Wewnętrznego - Internal Export Company) stores. Pewex shops operated under a unique system, in which different currencies could be exchanged for "bon". These *bon* could then be used in lieu of cash to purchase luxury items, like cigarettes, alcohol, and candy, solely in Pewex stores. In order to attract dollars, the quality and quantity of merchandise available far surpassed that provided in

other state-run shops. A 1983 *New York Times* report indicated that more than 620 such stores operated across the country in that year.¹²³ Jan remembers that Pewex

was a store where you could buy the kind of things that you couldn't find in the normal stores. Most often, things from abroad, jeans for example. So you could buy a pair of jeans. You had to bring money in dollars, which were scarce and expensive. There were also these dollars, just not real ones, called "bony," and those were produced by the Polish state. With those you could buy things in Pewex. So you had to use zloty to buy bony or if someone came back from abroad and they exchanged their dollars with the state-because they had to return them to the state-they would get bony in return. Because in Poland, theoretically, you couldn't get dollars. But of course people did! In the Pewex stores-they were really good stores-you could look in and see things like jeans, Wranglers or Rifle...

The goods available included food, including American chewing gum bearing one of Disney's popular characters. Jan noted that

you could buy different things to eat, sometimes Polish things. Ham in cans, which was impossible to buy in normal stores, for example, was always available in the Pewex stores...or chewing gum, for example. I remember, the gum with [the Disney character] Donald on it! And you couldn't buy it anywhere else. There was also a black market, bazaars, but that's a different story. In Pewex you could buy alcohol...real whiskey, for example, you could find there. Sometimes after school, we would go and look in the windows.

Jan's fascination with Western clothes, products, and food points to the paradox of provision: in seeking to alleviate its currency issues, the government inadvertently emphasized what its citizens were missing.

Globalization and Reclaiming Tradition

As Poland has entered the free market system and left the shortages and scarcity of the past behind them, new issues have emerged. Maintaining authenticity, tradition, and health emerged as common themes in my host parents' narratives. Access to international cuisines has become commonplace, often through marketing ploys in supermarkets. Some supermarkets

¹²³ Kifner, John, "Poland's 'Parallel Economy' Thriving," *The New York Times*, April 29, 1983, <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/04/30/world/poland-s-parallel-economy-thriving.html?pagewanted=all>.

offer periodic “international weeks”. During those weeks they offer a variety of real, “and often not real” products from a variety of different countries. While shopping at Carrefours, a French supermarket chain, Jan and I found a kit to make “*sushi na słodko*,” [*sweet sushi*] with rice, gummy candy that resembled vegetables and nori, and chopsticks. Questions of authenticity are important in a globalized world. Jan expressed incredulity that such a kit could be representative of true Japanese food.

Supermarkets offer trendy food. Since sushi is trendy, they offer sushi. Whether “sushi na słodko” is authentic, I don't know. I ate my first sushi in 1990. I was working in the best theatre in Poland... Quite a few different theatres came to us and among them was a Japanese “kabuki” theatre company. And after the performance there was a banquet. The Ambassador of Japan was there, along with a lot of guests. And there was Japanese food, so that the guests would be comfortable. The banquet was incredibly beautiful. I was next to some Japanese guest and I picked up the most neutral looking thing I could find, some sort of roll with rice and something else in the middle. I put it in my mouth and I could just feel it growing and growing and growing. I wanted to wash it down, so I grabbed a glass of sake...and that also did not taste good to me. The food on the table did look, beautiful, though, like a picture. Asian flavors aren't my flavors, but Asian and Eastern cuisines maybe are now an established thing in Poland.

My host father’s preference for Polish food aside, the introduction of international *cuisines*, especially for my adventurous host mother, has often been greeted with enthusiasm. She told me that

I love to try foreign food. Exotic cuisines, you know, where I don't know what it is, but I'll try it. And then I like figuring out what it is. Thai food, for example, I like. But unlike my daughter, Karolina, who lives in England, I can't stand “fusion” food. You know, where they give you a big plate with a single little mushroom on it. Just green, gray, white. I like restaurants where the food is colorful, fills the plate, and smells good. Experimental food, bleh. If I walk in somewhere and it doesn't smell like food, how is that a restaurant?

Global fusion cuisine, in which food is performance or science experiment, does not mesh with Prudencia’s conception of “good” food. Good food is colorful, vibrant, aromatic, and attractively presented. She is more comfortable with food that fits a particular cuisine, rather than combines flavors outside their traditional boundaries. Beyond some reservations about

globalized fusion cuisine, Prudencia also expressed misgivings about food that is produced abroad.

I prefer Polish products. Fortunately, here in Poland there still are not a lot of chemicals in the food. But even “local” products aren’t really local sometimes. At Lidl [a German supermarket chain], they might buy geese in Poland, make sausage in Germany, and then send it back here. One grocery store, Biedronka, has local bread, which I feel good buying. I’ve taught my kids to search for local products. I took a class, “Global Education” and learned about fair trade, local food, that kind of thing. It’s better to eat what grows here—for example, plums instead of bananas. I absolutely prefer to eat plums or apples. And I always look at the origin label and preservative content. That’s important to me, to know what’s in the food.

My host parents spoke nostalgically for the traditions that suffered both under socialism and today. They now live in a small house with a barn and garden and discussed their plans to reinvigorate some of the “old” traditions, which pre-date socialism. This “looking back” seeks to combat the homogenizing effects of socialism and some of the seduction and consequences of globalization. Jan described their plans.

Prudencia makes nalewki [liqueurs], which are an old Polish tradition in home... a specific kind of Polish alcohol made with spirits and different ingredients. Herbs, fruits doused in spirits that give the nalewki their specific flavors or medicinal properties. And that tradition is returning.



Prudencia’s collection of homemade nalewki [liqueurs]
Photo by author, August 2015

Smoking meats at home has returned. Hams smoked at home are better beyond compare to those from the store. You buy meat, you know, good, “proven,” meat and you add herbs and garlic and you smoke it for several hours in wood smoke. And that’s smoke from

special wood, alder wood, or cherry wood, or applewood. Several hours you smoke it and then it's good. And then it can sit out for a long time and it has a totally different flavor from what they have in the stores. We have plans to build a real smokehouse sometime in the future. Typically, people smoke in a barrel, you know, out of wood. You make a fire underneath and then use that smoke in the barrel. But I want to have a real one.

My host mother cans extensively through the summer using the fruit from her small orchard and also prepares traditional pickled mushrooms, condiments, and concentrates. Many of her cookbooks date from pre-1945 and contain recipes with few instructions, presuming that the cook already knows the method. Prudencia's reasons for maintaining such practices are myriad.

Julianna: *"Why do you make your own jams?"*

Prudencia: *"It's our tradition to make jams and preserves. I like tradition. All of those condiments and jams you buy in the store are chemically preserved. Always. Sometimes you can find some in health stores that aren't, but then they cost an awful lot of money. Why, if I have my own fruit, would I not make them myself? I absolutely love to use what I myself grow. It's our tradition, especially in rural areas.*

Jan: *It's our tradition, yes. But in the PRL the shortages lasted for so long that there wasn't anything in stores.*

Prudencia: *Right. You looked at what you had, you knew there might not be anything worth buying in the stores, and so you made things yourself. A well-stocked cellar was a guarantee that you might be able to live somewhat normally [without interrupted supply].*



Prudencia and Jan's whitewashed *piwnica* [cellar] with pickles, jams, conserves, sauces, and condiments
Photo by author, August 2015

The resurgence of regional food emerged as a theme in my fieldwork. Soviet attempts at state-control and egalitarianism led to greater homogeneity in the food eaten. Regional variance and

traditional dishes became secondary to the socialist project of standardization and developing a national identity. Prudencia described that trend.

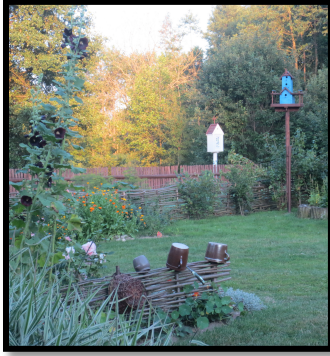
We saw that regional differences in cuisine decreased because food became, in its scarcity, "more egalitarian". Everyone ate the same thing across the country. The government gave programs about how to make zapiekanki [casseroles], for example. Now, people are searching out these regional foods but in the past, it was the other side of that coin.

Even as Prudencia saw the end of socialism as a boon to regional and traditional cuisine, Jan felt that the variety of foreign cuisines, food products, and venues now available are potentially threatening to traditional food. He noted that "...there is a difficulty when it comes to the fact that traditional food in some places is being forgotten a little bit. Culinary tradition is a part of the traditions of history. There's value to taking care of it". This emphasis on culinary tradition also connected with Prudencia's participation in the modern *eko* [eco-friendly, green] movement and a village culinary club. She told me that

using everything and not wasting, that was always our tradition, because we were poor. Now we're a middle-class country, not yet a rich one, but people buy a lot more now and waste a lot more. That's really not good. We compost here at the house because I believe in eko practices. I was probably the first in our town to hear about ecological practices and I really liked it. I was definitely the first teacher to start talking about ecology because it didn't seem to occur to anyone else to talk about it. I took a class called "Global Ecology" and learned about the environmental impacts of agriculture, things like that. I keep a garden: this year we have arugula, red cabbage, kale, tomatoes, zucchini (too many), beans, peas, beets, parsley, dill. I want Jan to get me some potato seeds so that I can eat my own potatoes from my land, without any chemicals.

We're a capitalist country now, rather than a socialist one, so now we have all that fast food, chemicals, nasty stuff. But now there's a movement to return to traditional Polish cuisine. Now ingredients are coming back, even some that have been forgotten for a really long time. Goose and goose fat for frying, things like that. I've always been interested in folk culture and conservation.

I'm starting a project z babami [with the little old ladies] here in the village; we want to have a kind of club like they used to have in the villages around here. It brought people together to combat the russification of this part of the country. We're planning to get together to cook together, to have members of the club teach us their skills in crafts, sewing, things like that, and to sing. We're going to call ourselves "Baby na wsi" [The Village Ladies].



Host parents' garden, with white traditional shrine to the Virgin Mary
Photo by author, July 2014

All of the strategies that Jan and Prudencia describe, including gardening, canning, and composting, have a basis in both the experience of socialist scarcity, capitalist excess, and the different iterations of uncertainty inherent to both. Each of these systems has confronted Poles with challenges to procuring food in a safe, adequate, healthy, and culturally appropriate way. Socialism threatened regional diversity with standardization. Today globalization tests Polish resiliency and tradition with fast food and Western eating habits. My host parents, especially my host mother, simultaneously embrace the option of choosing to enjoy foreign cuisines while revitalizing Polish culinary practices that have been forgotten.

Synthesis

My host family's remembrances of life under socialism are complex, and often contradictory. They believed in some of the goals of socialism, including the promise of egalitarianism. The mechanisms employed by the Communist Party, however, often failed. Inefficient state provisioning of basic goods and food often led to shortages, queuing, and hoarding. The food provided in *bary mleczne* and other restaurants was often unappetizing at best. This generation's distrust of restaurants and food produced by strangers remains a legacy of experiences pre-1989. My host family's conviction that local food is best stems from the important use of informal networks to get quality food when officially it was in short supply.

The chronic shortages of material goods remain a potent symbol of socialist failures, while the food available today distinguishes itself in the variety offered and the surety of supply. The experience of scarcity nonetheless informs my host parents' appreciation for the food they can now purchase with ease. "First" food experiences, like Jan's with Coca-Cola and bananas, were considered special. Now they wonder: what is special if you can have it all? They express some nostalgia for the creativity, innovation, and excitement felt by those who had to "*kombinować*" [*come up with*] ways to "*robić coś z niczego*" [*make something from nothing*]. The variety and ease of shopping today are a luxury, but it comes at a price.

My host parents levy their love for local food into a robust tradition of making jams, pickles, smoked meats, and medicinal liqueurs. The culinary club recently started by my host mother and other village women seeks to preserve and build local culinary and craft knowledge. These strategies serve simultaneously to address the homogenization inherent to socialism and the pull of globalization. They explicitly seek to develop and maintain ecologically sound and culturally important practices.

-----Host Siblings' Generation Findings-----

Introduction

The interviews I conducted with my host sisters presented a more globalized, transitory, and media-dependent worldview and diet that my host parents' generation. Exemplifying the increasingly international orientation of their generation, each of my host sisters has lived abroad multiple times. Izabella has spent anywhere from one month to more than a year in Ireland, Finland, and Spain. She now lives in central Poland in a picturesque city famous for its spice cakes. A slim, fluttery woman of 28, Izabella is the most intellectual of my host sisters. She studied philosophy and political science in college but has put her master's degree on hold to take care of her son, Maciek, full-time. Born with Down's syndrome, Maciek requires several types of rehabilitation therapy and a modified diet. Pale, tall, and sporting a mane of coppery red hair, Nadia was an exchange student in the United States in high school and an ERASMUS student in Portugal in college. She currently works as an au pair in England. Aided by the Internet, TV shows, and travel my host sisters have been exposed to and learned to cook a wide variety of cuisines. Nadia, in particular, uses blogs to find foreign recipes. Her language skills also allow her to access English-language blogs and recipe sites.

These women's narratives predictably yielded data without the historical depth of my host parents' remembrances. Born in 1987 and 1993, respectively, Izabella and Nadia remember a democratic Poland without the chronic shortages. The impact of socialism remains visible, however, in their knowledge of PRL-era family traditions and impact of socialism on Polish cuisine. Nadia described a traditional Dąbrowscy family dish: *pierogi z fasolką [dumplings with bean filling]*, which I prepared with Prudencia the first Christmas I spent in Poland. Nadia told me,

You know that pierogi dish is pretty rare. Even in Poland almost nobody makes them like that, you know, pierogi with beans. Because it was a recipe for Grandma. You know, during communism everyone had to kombinować [come up with] with different things and some of them have stayed around. And in our family, it was pierogi with beans that stayed around.

Izabella commented that Polish food in general maintains retains some lasting influence from experiences under socialism.

And I think in modern times, and maybe even from a long time ago, we have integrated a little of the cuisines of other countries and we remake those dishes our own way but always we have dishes, like Italian dishes, that are "Pasta a la Italy" but they're more Polish than Italian. They have a lot of Polish ingredients and Polish flavor... We have our pizza, you know, from a long time ago, like from PRL times when nobody went to Italy but people still made pizza and they're "à la Poland"...

Nadia and Izabella , like my host parents, reveal complex experiences and understandings of Polish culinary identity vis-à-vis global culinary identity, the demands of more traditional and modern ways of life, and emerging trends in diet and nutrition. The interaction between tradition and diverse responses to globalized foodways featured prominently in their narratives. Their narratives reveal awareness of some conflict between “traditional” Polish cuisine and the integration of international cuisine and ways of eating into their everyday diets.

Speed and Convenience vs. Tradition

Izabella, her husband, and Maciek live in a city of 200,000 in a cozy, practical flat near the Old Town. Our first interview took place over cakes and coffee for *drugie śniadanie* [second breakfast], so naturally our conversation began with a discussion of mealtimes. *Drugie śniadanie* has long been an important part of the Polish day, usually taking place midmorning. In contrast to breakfast, which usually features bread, butter, cheese, meat, jam, or cereal or porridge, *drugie śniadanie* is often a sweet pastry or cake. For school-age children, it usually includes a sandwich.



A typical *drugie śniadanie* of cake, cookies, and coffee
Photo by author, August 2013

Izabella noted that the tradition of *drugie śniadanie* and two-dish (soup, entrée) dinners has long been represented in the media. As mentioned previously, the August 1990 issue of *Przyjaciółka* offered menus for a week's worth of two-dish dinners. The lived reality for many may look very different today. In my host family, for example, the former is much more important than the latter.

In preschool, there's practically no child that doesn't bring second breakfast with them to school and it really has to be something sweet. And if you see an ad on TV, for example, pudding, "Pudding: Perfect for a Mid-Morning Snack". Our Grandma always did that; she made pudding or gelatin and it would sit on the windowsill until after dinner and then everyone would receive a little bowl with their dessert. And now all of the ads on TV are like that, you know. And for example there are ads on TV all the time about dinner and how you should have two dishes at dinner. Now, it's maybe not that common for people to cook like that, but there are definitely still families that do that.

Unlike my host parents and aunt and uncle, Nadia and Izabella mentioned frequently the role of the media in presenting traditional food ideals and introducing new cuisines. Izabella's comments about advertisers reveal that, while modern Polish families may be leaving behind the labor-intensive two-dish meals, those images are still evocative and communicate traditional values. In my host sisters' lives, for example, time constraints, speed, and convenience, rather than tradition, often informed her food choices. The way she and her husband observe mealtimes is very different than the way my host parents do.

In our house we always eat something sweet for breakfast. It's not really Polish style; it's more like they eat in France. We very rarely cook, sometimes we make waffles, but if we don't do that we buy doughnuts, Danishes, or croissants. We eat those with espresso. If we have that kind of breakfast we don't eat second breakfast because we basically eat second breakfast first. But before I was married, I ate that sweet breakfast and then had a second doughnut or danish or croissant for second breakfast. And we always have to drink coffee in the morning. And then for lunch, it varies. If we cook, we often make soup because we can have leftovers for two or three days and you don't have to cook as much them. And often we cook quick dishes, like pizza or quick pasta with different add-ins but sometimes on Sunday, then we make goląbki [stuffed cabbage rolls] or pork or we have this automatic crockpot/steamer that's great because you can put all the ingredients in, turn it on, and it steams vegetables or say, turkey, or fish. And you don't have to work that hard. It doesn't tire you out, that kind of cooking. And it makes a lot at a time. And of course, after dinner we have to have something sweet again. And for supper we eat sandwiches.

Izabella's subtle comments, "if we cook," indicates a very different way of viewing meals than my host parents' generation has previously. Her focus is on speed, quantity, and not having to "work that hard" on meals in the midst of busy lives. Nadia offered some insight into these differentiated eating patterns, complicating the narrative of distrust that emerged in my host parents' data. She explored the reasons that homemade food still dominates in many parts of the country, linking it to poverty and thrift. Poland's economy has shown tremendous growth in the past twenty-five years, but it remains a relatively poor country. Gross national income, in terms of purchasing power, is approximately half that of the US.¹²⁴

Maybe when people start to make a bit more and cook less, they'll be happier to eat out. It's different in bigger cities, because there they eat more like people in the West, in the sense of, like, "I'm working, I don't have time, let's go for "luuuunch" or "Let's eat something quickly, look, American burgers". Like my cousin, I think she eats out a lot, because she has money but doesn't have time to cook for herself and maybe she doesn't really like to cook that much. You know, normal stuff.

In the country, it's obvious there aren't really any restaurants or bars. People go to the shop for beer; you know, typical Polish peasants do that kind of thing. And here people make, you know, traditional Polish dinners, big ones, for the whole family. Two dishes.

¹²⁴ "GDP per capita, PPP (current international dollars)," The World Bank, accessed April 21, 2016, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD>.

You know, they never go to restaurants or anything like that because many of them haven't really left the country. Because they haven't had time or money.

The urban vs. rural gap emerged in Izabella's interviews. In contrast to my host parents, who have always eaten out very rarely, she expressed an appreciation, even preference for, for the convenience and diversity of restaurants options in her city. An intergenerational gap emerged as my host father, Jan, listened in.

Izabella: I eat out and I really like doing it. I would eat out all the time if I could. I cook a lot at home since I can't eat out all the time because it costs a lot. If we're at home, then maybe once a week we eat out because there are a lot of things that we like to eat and that we can't make as well at home. Secondly, sometimes you just don't want to cook, and then clean up afterward. And thirdly, we're often really busy and we'll get home at 7pm and realize, "Oh, no, we forgot to eat lunch!" For example, we order pizza for delivery. But if we eat too much of that, my husband especially, likes to eat at home for a long while after that. Me, not so long.

When we were in college, we ate at the student cafeteria and there was also a little bar-restaurant in the main library and the food there was really not good but it was cheap. And while you were studying you could just grab a bite to eat. But the food was way worse than we could make at home, you know? And now we don't go there anymore. Now we go to places where they make food we can't make at home or are better than what we can make. Pierogi, for example. It seems like no one can make pierogi at home as well as you can get at the restaurants anymore-well, except at the holidays.

Jan: *"What do you mean, no one can make them as well at home? That's baloney!"*

Izabella: *"What? It's true! So if you want to eat good pierogi, you go to Pierogarnia. Or at Christmas you can buy them pre-cooked and they just need to be boiled to heat them up. Those are good, too."*

The assertion that standardized food, or food bought in restaurants, is better than homemade food indicates a very different experience of restaurants and public provisioning of food. While Izabella did not display the correct filial appreciation for homemade pierogi, she nonetheless echoed her parents in discussing her food provisioning choices. An urban dweller, Izabella nonetheless retains her parents' clear values about "good" quality and trustworthy food.

When we buy vegetables, we buy them at the targowisko [farmers' market] because then we can buy them from a lady we trust and we know where they come from and that they won't deceive us about the quality. The market is right down the street from us and there we have this lady who's able to get us really good vegetables, even in the winter, and there you can buy really good Polish carrots or apples in the winter. That's one thing. If we're talking about normal, everyday products, we generally buy those at Biedronka [a supermarket].

Meat we buy in town, but very often my mother-in-law goes to the country and buys an entire large pig and they cut it up into various cuts of meat and she brings us some. Pork chops, pork loin, ground pork, sausage, and soup bones. I don't like it, honestly, because they you have the entire fridge totally full of meat. But it's good to get it like that. And then, of course, we have meat from the country. Chicken, unfortunately, we buy at Biedronka. Fish we buy at a fishmonger. Bread and baked goods/cake we buy at the patisserie-bakery. The good "Staropolska" (Old Poland) one below our apartment. Eggs we buy here in the country, near my parents' house. I love them! Those are the only eggs in the world that are good. You know, I'm not comfortable eating eggs from Biedronka. Sometimes my mother-in-law brings us eggs when she goes out to the country, but those aren't as good as the ones we buy, either. And I almost can't eat eggs from anywhere else but here in the country.

I would love to have a garden someday, like my parents have now. It's a lot of work, so maybe not, but the food is better quality, fresher, who know what's in it.

Nadia's take on *eko* trends indicates more cynicism about people's motives than my host parents expressed. Her distrust mostly centers on urban Poles who embrace traditional ways of life because they *can*, rather than because they have to.

Gardens, too, are big. The people who live in the country, rural, almost everyone then has one. Now there's this kind of trend here in Poland, "Oh, we're eco [-friendly], we have a garden" Now even people in the cities have little gardens on their balconies, not a lot, but some have it. A lot of people at least have herbs. Or little cherry tomatoes. Now it's really trendy to do that. In the country, it's obvious, it's cheaper, and people have always done that.

Now, too, there's this trend in supermarkets, like Biedronka, and you see the ads on TV, "Polish products blah blah blah!" But even that's not totally clear; who knows where it comes from? But yes, I think that if people can have things from where they live, then it's logical to take advantage of them. There are things, like apples and meat, that we export abroad.

Nadia also offered some astute observations when describing the difference in Polish provisioning versus Western (American) provisioning. The enduring legacy of scarcity and poverty continues to be felt by both rural and urban Poles, even by a generation that has not experienced in. This draws a parallel with the post-Depression generation's experience of thrift and enduring uncertainty.

Nadia: When I was in the States, people there really overstock. They have a pantry, a mega-fridge, they have loads of food. And it seems to me that a lot of that food eventually ended up in the trash. But in Poland it's different. When you start one way, it's hard to change, and though people are buying more now, they still prefer fresh food. There is never that kind of "super full" fridge; you see what you need, you go to the store, you buy it, you eat it, and when you're done you go again to the store. You don't shop to stock up. Because here in Poland there's this...maybe it's a result of us being a Catholic country, or that not enough time has passed that we have freedom here but we have something, we just don't like to waste food. Like bread. Bread is holy.

Izabella: We go shopping pretty often. We don't have a system whereby we go once a week and buy a ton of things and have the kitchen bursting with loads of food. Rather, we go more or less every day and think "What will we have for dinner?" and then we go to the store and buy the things we need. Or maybe it'll happen that someone is taking a walk and they buy something and we make a couple of meals out of it. But it's never like we have 15 cuts of meat in the house in the fridge and 500 things to make sandwiches in the evening. We go shopping almost every day.

In spite of increasing access to supermarkets and packaged food, my host sisters maintain provisioning strategies that mesh with traditional food values, with bread being “holy” and waste being bad, an indication that people have forgotten the hardship and values of the past.

Changing Trends: Polish vs. International Food

Compact and historic, Izabella's city is cosmopolitan and popular with tourists. The plethora of restaurants catering to different tastes is a highlight. Both girls are adventurous, even rebellious eaters; Izabella followed a vegetarian diet throughout high school. This was no easy task. When I arrived in Poland in 2009, I was also a vegetarian. I found very quickly, though, that most restaurants in small towns had very limited options for those who did not eat meat. At

friends' houses, my diet was cause for consternation and confusion. Within three months, it became clear that this diet was not yet practical in a Polish context. Izabella notes that

Pasta is really trendy here at the moment; there's this Italian restaurant with loads of different kinds of pastas. Pizza, of course. Vegetarian and vegan burgers are a new thing. It seems to me that a lot of the vegetarian food is Asian because there are a lot of strange things. It's not like you're eating vegetarian or vegan pierogi, no. Almost always it's something else from abroad. Right now it's really trendy to have vegan burgers, you know. And there are restaurants now that only serve vegan burgers and vegan soup made from soy or buckwheat or lentil, and then there are other weird things, like kofta, lasagna without meat, or samosas. I adore them! But they're not Polish.

And you can eat, like Mexican food, and when I was younger you really couldn't find that. For sure, yes, the variety and availability is expanding. Like when I was a young adult in high school, it was starting to be really trendy/popular to eat vegetarian food in the restaurants. And all through high school I ate there. It was cheaper and I loved it. And then for a long time those restaurants kind of disappeared but now they're back again. But for example, Mexican food, or "American Chicken," or Chinese food or sushi--sushi has been around for, I don't know, several years---but they're all pretty trendy now.

Izabella's repeated use of "strange" and "weird" to describe foreign food, even food she likes, is an indicator of incomplete normalization. The food may be appetizing, but it retains a distinct distinction as "other" vis-à-vis Polish food. Nadia and Izabella expressed a preference for Polish food in general, but had more criticism for the traditional diet than I heard from any other member.

Nadia: Ok, Polish food is...well, there's always too much. You know, the amount is huge. There's a lot of fat. The majority is meat. Because, well, it's obvious, because we're from this part of the world, where there's a lot of meat and it's always been like that. Because we have 4 seasons, we have winter, so we've historically eaten a lot of meat to get through the winter. And it's stayed that way

Izabella: I think our diet is too fatty. I personally don't like that much, but a lot of people cook with a lot of fat. Like my husband's mother, for example. Everything is really fatty and I really don't like that. We eat a lot of bread and I think we eat a lot of carbohydrates and starchy dishes. Noodles, dumplings, pierogi, crepes, bread, sandwiches all the time. In the cafeterias there's always soup served with bread or a sandwich. If you have soup without bread, whew, that's not allowed! And it has to be

with butter, because it always has to be a little fatty. Of course, 30% fat cream always has to be there for soup, too. That's pretty typical.

I remember that my friend, for example, from high school, her mother was a typical Polish cook and when I went to visit them I could never eat anything there. Because I would get, for example, czarnina [duck blood soup], tongue, and other food like that. Ugh. They always had two dishes at dinner and two different cakes to choose from for dessert. And they were always cooking-that to me is bleh.

But I think that no, if we're talking about Polish soups or meat dishes, they haven't changed much. I look at older cookbooks and they look very much the same. Now, maybe, I travel more and I see that there are dishes in Bydgoszcz there are dishes that we aren't familiar with here in our family. For example, my husband's mom makes chicken fricassee [kurza potrawka]. That's chicken, chicken fat and fruit. Pears and maybe cream. It's delicious and disgusting at the same time. And that's with rice. And when you eat that, it's delicious. Sweet, with the fruit.

Nadia loves Polish food but has been fascinated by international, especially Asian, cuisines since she was a young teenager. Access to the Internet introduced her to Japanese anime and inadvertently improved her English skills as she read the subtitles for the shows. This longtime exposure to and interested in Asian cultures and, by extension, Asian food, has made Nadia the most adventurous eater in the family.

Foreign food...you know, there are a lot of things I like to eat. It depends on the day and my mood. But I really like sushi and pizza, of course. Who doesn't like pizza? ...my dad. He'll eat it, but he's all "Meh" about it. What else? I really Chinese food, like ramen and "sajgonki," [spring rolls]. I don't know how they make them in China because I've unfortunately eaten really real, authentic ones. And I dream about trying really authentic Korean food because I love kimchi... it's the best thing ever!

Korean food is really spicy and sour and healthy and I love it! Kimchi is my number 1. And I really like those little Korean soups from the store, with the yummy noodles, not like those Chinese soups here in Poland. These ones you cook in a pot and they have really thick noodles. And you can add kimchi to that soup and it's delicious. And sometimes cooked egg to pep the soup up.

Japanese and Korean food are starting to get more popular. A lot of people know about it, it's kind of trendy. They might read some article, or an as happened with me, I watched the "drama" (show), I got interested, and started to read about it. Now I'm interested in North Korea, though not so much in the food, since you know, they're kind of starving there.

Nadia's association of ramen (a Japanese dish) and *sajgonki* (a Vietnamese dish pronounced "Saigon-kee") with Chinese restaurants in Poland complicates our understanding of "foreign" food. In Poland, some Chinese restaurants serve *Asian* food, without any distinction between national cuisines. Nadia, whose interest in Japanese and Korean culture makes her knowledgeable source on each country's traditions, nonetheless does not seem to recognize the homogenization of the cuisines that has occurred by placing them under a single "Chinese" heading. This points to the incomplete integration of globalized cuisines and the homogenization of cultures as they are transmitted abroad.

Traditional Preferences and the Challenge of Alternative Diets

A particularly salient challenge for Izabella is trying to balance her family's preference for Polish food with the strict diet that her son, Maciek, must observe. In a country in which bread has historically been holy and a family in which butter may be, too, Maciek's diet challenges Izabella's creativity and ability to source ingredients.

Maciek has a gluten- and milk-free diet and he's not supposed to eat a lot of sugar. He can't eat table sugar, only sweeteners like Stevia or maple syrup. He can't eat honey, unfortunately.

I often experiment a lot. I make something from a recipe but I don't have a particular ingredients and I use something else. For instance, I cook a lot for Maciek and I can't use gluten but I have a great recipe and I think, "Hmmm, what can I use in place of flour?". My experiments with gluten-free dishes/recipes have come out pretty bad. The worst thing is making good bread. We have tried everything but it's not really possible because we like pizza and crepes. We're Poles and very few restaurants offer gluten- and lactose-free options. And even when it seems like something is without gluten or lactose, often it actually turns out that it has those things in it or the chef can't be sure that he didn't add something to it that has gluten or milk. So, it's really hard to eat out.

But now it's going better because I have a ton of ideas for recipes and I can share my recipes with acquaintances. There are now a lot of internet "portals"-sites where you can search for gluten-free recipes. The only things I don't know how to make are bread and cake. I'm constantly trying to make them but either I make them wrong or they're simply bad. I'm constantly trying: I make muffins, or cakes with millet, or we bake

bread. The muffins sometimes aren't the worst. But they're not like you eat them and say "Wow, yum!"

Most surprising about this conversation was Izabella's praise of fast-food restaurants. While popular in the family on car trips and for a treat, her appreciation had less to do with the food and more to do with the transparency and consistency they offered.

Another problem is that there aren't particularly a lot of restaurants that offer a lot of gluten-free options, or that are trying to, for example, to give the recipes or let you check. Right! McDonalds has them. It has lists of allergens and that's wonderful. But the only restaurants that I've really seen that have been McDonalds and restaurants that are exclusively gluten-free. Ikea, too.

Izabella's need for assurance that food could meet her son's dietary needs made her grateful for the introduction of Western restaurants that display their ingredients.

Synthesis

Nadia and Izabella are educated, cosmopolitan women who have lived and traveled abroad. Their narratives revealed an enduring understanding, if not direct experience, of socialism and its impact on Polish foodways. Rather than discuss distrust of public food provisioning, or creative strategies used to survive chronic shortages, however, their interviews included expanded considerations of globalized foodways. Changing mealtimes, media influence, and questions of time, speed, and convenience factored into their narratives. Their participation in the global market has manifested itself through media consumption, travel, eating in international restaurants, and using the Internet to try new recipes cuisines. For Izabella, eating at Western fast food restaurants has less to do with the food offered, and more to do with their transparency in listing ingredients. As a mother of a child with a disability, Izabella's Polish identity sometimes finds itself in conflict with her child's needs. Both Nadia and Izabella maintain a preference for locally produced ingredients and often use trusted networks to access

quality food. Their experiences and perceptions of cultural change offer expanded insight into the relationships young modern Poles have with their food in a globalized world.

-----Conclusion-----

The second half of the 20th century saw a marked reorientation of political and economic systems in Europe. In Poland, socialism informed government, industry, culture, and food practices until 1989. At once symbol and sustenance, "...food offers perhaps the most fascinating and compelling lens for tracking and measuring the diverse, unexpected, curious, and often paradoxical trajectories and consequences of the dramatic transformations that have spread across the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe over the past century".¹²⁵ Using ethnographic techniques and archival research, I sought to complement Smith and Jehlička's "food biographies" in the Czech Republic with those of an illustrative Polish family.¹²⁶ The data that emerged suggest a complex and conflicted relationship both with Poles' socialist past and their capitalist present. In spite of its failed performance, the socialist system attempted to promote egalitarianism, self-sufficiency, and communal support. The promises of capitalism have not been fully realized, nor have the cultural shifts since 1989 been wholly embraced. Conceptions of modernity, tradition, and transition continue to evolve. I found that the impact of socialist governance continues to be felt on Polish culture, with relics, games, and museums indicative of homegrown *ostalgie* for the era. Current food practices and attitudes reflect the uneven transition from a culture of scarcity, shortages, and state-provisioned food to one of choice, increasingly unrestrained consumption, and free market-provisioned food. Lastly, Poles employ creative and alternative strategies to adopt, subvert, and reject globalized and "modern" food practices.

My host parents maintain some residual distrust of restaurants and eateries, stemming from experiences of unappetizing, low-quality, even inedible state-provisioned food. Home-

¹²⁵ Ibid., 2-3.

¹²⁶ Smith and Jehlička, "Stories around Food," 396.

cooked food remains, for them, dominant. For my host sisters, eating out offers convenience and variety. Both generations, however, articulated a strong preference for local *ingredients* produced by those they know well. They maintain informal trust networks, both in my host parents' rural village and Izabella's urban neighborhood, to procure eggs, milk, meat, and vegetables. This use of informal markets originated in rural traditions of self-sufficiency that pre-date socialism. At the same time, these networks became critical sources of quality food during the chronic shortages inherent to socialist production. In spite of the modern expansion of convenient and well-stocked supermarkets and international chain stores, these consumers continue to seek food that, as Prudencia unequivocally stated, "*tastes best,*" comes from a trusted source, and contains no chemicals or preservatives. Maintaining food practices outside of international supermarkets is critical.

My host parents' and aunt and uncle's practice of growing gardens preserving jams and preserves, drying mushrooms, smoking meat, distilling liqueurs, and making condiments and sauces serves several purposes. Keeping gardens and preserving ones own food offered food security and predictability when socialist production and distribution systems failed to adequately meet demand. *Przyjaciółka*'s emphasis on seasonal and home-canned food in nearly every issue from 1970-2015 points both to values about quality food and to a need for local production to supplement any international provision. Today, these practices also serve to maintain traditions that pre-date socialism, to address perceived health and cultural challenges in a globalized world, and to build community. In one of our interviews, Prudencia told me simply that "[she] likes tradition". Reviving regional cuisine, recipes, ingredients (like goose), and techniques is important and consistent with the value she places on rural and folk culture. Her garden, the preserves she makes using recipes published pre-1945, and the Village Ladies club

she helped found all serve as means of reviving traditions that were threatened first by war, then by socialist homogenization, and now by an aggressive free market. *Przyjaciółka*'s spread in 2010 points to a renewed interest in regional cuisine, local ingredients, and cultural preservation and parallels Prudencia's narrative.

In spite of renewed interest in Polish traditions, reactions to globalization are not entirely negative. For my host sisters, international and fast foods offer them an introduction to a foreign culture, tasty alternatives to Polish cuisine, convenience, and accommodations for my nephew's restricted diet. Western fast food restaurants like McDonalds offer a distinct (and often maligned) kind of food. They also, however, have introduced a space that promotes consumer agency and transparency beyond what is offered by Polish restaurants. For environmentally conscious Prudencia, the modern *eko [green]* movement marries practices like composting (which originated in a poor, rural context where waste was sacrilegious) with a humanistic understanding of the global environmental impact of consumption choices. Nadia noted, however, that such a movement could simply be a trend for some urban Poles.

The transition out of socialism, arguably an incomplete and nonlinear process, continues to shape the experiences of multiple generations of Poles. Globalization and its threatened homogeneity interact with a strong national culture, rich traditional food practices, and unique socialist past to produce a "modernity" that in many ways does not fit the Western mold. There is ample room for further scholarship, as "[f]ood is a particularly conducive channel for enacting and understanding social change, both because its materiality makes it a concrete marker of transformation and because the sensual qualities of food evoke visceral responses that transform external, anonymous social processes into intimate, immediate, and personal experiences".¹²⁷ More research could expand the limited scope of this project and make the findings more broadly

¹²⁷ Caldwell, Melissa, ed., *Food and Everyday Life*, 3.

generalizable. Incorporating a more exhaustive study of culinary media to explore socialist symbolism in modern Polish life, examining challenges to alternative (gluten-free, etc.) diets, and comparing rural and urban multigenerational experiences are all avenues for future scholarship.

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1: Index of Polish Vocabulary

Bar mleczny (pl. bary mleczne): milk bar

Under socialism, state-sponsored restaurants that served cheap, primarily vegetarian meals. Known for their no-frills atmosphere, low-quality food, and brusque service, milk bars remain in many Polish cities.

“Bar Turystyczny”: “Tourist Bar”

Milk bar located in Gdańsk, Poland.

Biblioteka Narodowa: National Library

Polish national library; located in the capital, Warsaw.

Bigos: fermented cabbage stew

Blok czekoladowy: “chocolate block”

Dessert made with sugar, cacao, and biscuits

Bon: dollar-equivalent third currency

Legal tender issued by the government-controlled bank PEKAO in exchange for American dollars. *Bon* could be used only in state-run shops, including Pewex

Czarnina: duck blood soup

Drugie śniadanie: second breakfast

The second meal in Poland; generally consists of a sweet pastry or cake eaten with coffee or tea around 10-11am. For school-age children, a sandwich is a common choice.

Eko: eco-friendly, environmentally conscious

Flaki: tripe

Flaki z krilla: “tripe” made from krill-like shrimp

Fasolka po bretońsku: dish made with beans, bacon, sausage, and tomato paste

Gołąbki: stuffed cabbage rolls

Grosz (pl. grosze): the złoty equivalent of pennies

“jak robić coś z niczego”: “how to make something from nothing”

kartki: ration cards

Kluszki: wheat dumplings often stuffed with meat

Kolejka: Queue and Pan Tu Nie Stał!": "You Weren't Standing Here!"

Popular board games released in 2007 and 2011, respectively. Players must devise strategies to procure staples and foodstuffs while standing in various lines on the board.

Kombinować: to come up with; to make do

Komunikat: Public service announcement

Kotlet (schabowy): (Pork) cutlet

Kurza potrawka: chicken fricasse

Marchewki: carrots

Milicjant: local militia officer

Mleko proste z krowy: milk straight from the cow (raw, local)

Nalewki: liqueurs

Traditional liqueurs made from various spirits, usually vodka, and herbs, flowers, and fruit. Often used medicinally.

"Nie ma": "There isn't any"/"We don't have it"

Nowinki: news/updates

Pączki: jam-filled doughnuts

Pierogi: dumplings

Wheat dough wrapped around a variety of possible fillings, including fruit, cheese, potato, mushroom, or cabbage fillings

Pierogi z fasolką: dumplings stuffed with bean filling

Dąbrowscy family recipe dating from PRL times

Piwnica: cellar

Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa (PRL): Polish People's Republic

Official name of socialist Poland between 1952-1989

Przyjaciółka: Girlfriend

Polish women's magazine published 1948-present

Rosół: chicken noodle soup

Rzeczpospolita Polska: Polish Republic
Official name of the Polish state 1989-present

Sajgonki (pronounced “Saigon-kee”): spring rolls

Solidarność: Solidarity

Polish trade union founded in 1980 in Gdańsk. Led by Lech Wałęsa, a shipyard worker jailed during martial law and later democratically elected the Polish Republic’s first president in 1989

Sushi na słodko: sweet sushi

Sushi kit made with rice and gummy “vegetables” and “nori”

Targowisko: Farmers’ market; open-air bazaar

Trojaczka: socialist-era stacked meal container; resembles an Indian

Wyrób czekolada podobna: “chocolate-like confection”

Zapiekanka (pl. zapiekanki): casserole

Zaprawka (pl. zaprawki): flavoring/essence

Cognac or whiskey zaprawki could be used to flavor and color cheap vodka

Ziemniaki: potatos

Złoty (zł): Polish currency

2. Codebook

Code	Subcode	Description
Trust	Quality	Perceptions of reliability, quality, and confidence
Distrust		Experiences of disappointment, failure, and risk
Creativity	<i>Kombinować, coś z niczego, connections</i>	Examples of inventiveness and survival strategies
Ease	Choice, alternatives	Ability to procure food and access cuisines without impediment
Scarcity	Difficult	Lack of access, choice, or variety; examples of dependency on failed state provisioning
Plenty		Availability to and/or excess of products and food
Convenience	Speed, access, delivery	Ability to fit food practices to lifestyle
Global	Foreign, <i>eko</i> , wasteful, international food	Examples of international and foreign products, food, practices, and values
Regional/Local		Examples of local, region-specific, or “Polish” food, products, practices, and values
Tradition	<i>Eko, health, no waste, pride</i>	Examples of pre-socialist practices and values

3. Structured Interview Questions

a. *Kiedy i gdzie się urodziłaś/eś? Gdzie teraz mieszkasz i w twoim życiu gdzie mieszkałaś/eś?*
(When were you born and where? Where have you lived?)

b. *Czy poszłaś/eś na studia? Gdzie i po co?*
(Did you go to college? If so, where and for what?)

c. *Jaki jest twój zawód? Jeśli jesteś na emeryturze, co miałas/eś na pracy? Pracowałaś/eś blisko domu o dojeżdżałaś/eś do pracy?*
(What’s your occupation? If you are retired, what was your job? Did you work close to home or commute?)

d. *Gotujesz? Często? Lubisz gotować?*
(Do you cook? Often? Do you enjoy cooking?)

e. *Daj mi przykłady jedzenia typowych, że może gotujesz na śniadanie, drugie śniadanie, obiady, i kolacji.*
(Give me some examples of typical foods you might cook for breakfast, second breakfast, lunch, and dinner.)

- f. *Skąd pochodzą jedzenia? Idziesz na zakupy w supermarkecie? W małych sklepach? Dlaczego wybierasz szczególne sklepy? Cena? Udogodnienie? Jakość?*
(Where does your food come from? Do you shop at supermarkets? In small stores? Why do you choose particular stores? Price? Convenience? Quality?)
- g. *Kto idzie na zakupy? Kobiety w rodzinie, mężczyźni, o obie? Dlaczego?*
(Who does the shopping? Women in the family, the men, or both? Why?)
- h. *Jedzą posiłki poza domem? Jak często i na jaki typy jedzenia?*
(Do you eat meals outside the home? How often and what kind of food?)
- i. *Twoim zdaniem, co to jest: polskie jedzenie? Jakie są osobliwości tego stylu kuchni? Jak jest różne (od/z?) jedzenia czeskiego o ukraińskiego (o amerykańskiego)?*
(What is “Polish food”? How would you define it? How is different from, for example, Czech or Ukrainian (or American) food?)
- j. *Zmieniła się twoja definicja polskiego jedzenia od twojego okresu dojrzewania? Jeśli tak, jak? Czy masz jakieś pojęcie dlaczego się zmieniła?*
(Has your definition changed since you were younger?)
- k. *Zmieniła się twoja definicja polskiego jedzenia od twojego okresu dojrzewania? Jeśli tak, jak? Czy masz jakieś pojęcie dlaczego się zmieniła?*
(Who taught you to cook? Or how do you learn to cook?)
- l. *Kiedy się nauczyłaś gotować/piec, używałaś książki kucharskie o napisane przepisy rodzinne? Dzisiaj używasz książki kucharskie?*
(When you learned to cook/bake, did you use cookbooks or written family recipes? Do you use cookbooks now?)
- m. *Jaki typy jedzenia byli dostępni/niedostępni podczas komunizmu? Gdzie ich kupiłaś?*
(What kinds of food were available/unavailable during Communism? Where did you buy them?)
- n. *Jaki typy “zagranicznego” jedzenia byli dostępni?*
(What kinds of “foreign” foods were available?)
- o. *W twojej rodzinie, kto idzie na zakupy (n.p. na składniki), kto gotuje, i kto sprząta (n.p. po kolacji)?*
(Who does the majority of the food shopping, cooking, and cleaning after meals?)
- p. *Jeśli dziewczyny i kobiety zwykle robią takie zadania, kiedy pomaga Tato o Wójek?*
(If it is typically you, the women, when do Tato (Dad) or Wójek (Uncle) help?)
- q. *Kiedy mężczyźni oferują pomoc w domu?*

(When do men offer assistance? (i.e. men hunt for mushrooms in forest, prepare 2-3 particular dishes, or cook because woman works outside the home, etc.).

r. Jaka jest sytuacja w domach twoich koleżanek?
(What's the situation like in your friends' homes?)

s. Zawsze tak było?
(Has this always been the case?)

t. Nauczyłaś gotować swoje dzieci? Kiedy? Dlaczego?
(Did you teach your children to cook? When? Why?)

u. Co możesz gotować? Jak się nauczyłaś/eś?
(For my host sisters: what can you cook? How did you learn?)