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REVIEVER
prof. dr hab. Ewa Frątczak

COVER DESIGN
Anna Sadowska

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This book would not have been possible without the generous financial support from the Institute of Sociology at the Jagiellonian University Cracow and by the Polish Sociological Association
In 1364, after many years of efforts to do so, King Casimir the Great received permission from the Pope to establish a university in Kraków, the capital of the Kingdom of Poland. It was the second university to be founded in Central Europe – after the Charles University in Prague was initiated in 1348. Soon afterwards, other universities were launched in the region: Vienna in 1365, Pecs in 1367, Erfurt in 1379, and Heidelberg in 1386.

Institute of Sociology

Scientific and educational activity at the Institute of Sociology is a direct result of rich tradition and the diverse research interests of our academic staff. Sociology has been taught at the University since the end of the 19th century.

Following various University restructurisations and initiatives, a chair of ethnology and sociology was created in 1930. The chair was first headed by Prof. Jan Stanisław Bystron, and then by Prof. Kazimierz Dobrowolski. This academic unit transformed into the Chair of General Ethnography and Sociology in 1957, chaired also by Kazimierz Dobrowolski.

Amongst other studies, trends in methods of integration and cultural-historical studies were developed, as well as a perspective on social anthropology that was presented by Prof. Andrzej Waligórski, a student of Bronisław Malinowski. In the same year that the chair was created (1957), the Chair of Sociology and Demography came to life, directed by Prof. Paweł Rybicki. It concentrated mainly on the issues of social structures and population studies (the latter being studied mainly by Assistant Prof. (Docent) Wanda Czarkowska).

In 1970 both of the Chairs merged to form the Institute of Sociology. Former heads of the Institute were Profs. Władysław Kwaśniewicz, Piotr Sztompka, Andrzej K. Paluch, Zdzisław Mach, Krzysztof Frysztacki, Marian Niezgoda. The Institute is currently run by Prof. Marek Kucia.

One of the key characteristics of the Institute is how both staff and students alike co-operate with other institutions in Poland and abroad. A good example of this is of Prof. Piotr Sztompka, who was the president of the International Sociological Association (2002–2006).

The Institute of Sociology is fully accredited by the University Accreditation Commission in Poznań, and has a certificate of quality for its teaching.

The Departments of the Institute of Sociology:

– Department of Theoretical Sociology,
– Department of Sociology of Social Structures,
– Department of Social Anthropology,
– Department of Sociology of Norms and Organizations,
– Department of Population Studies,
– Department of Applied Sociology and Social Work,
– Department of Sociology of Economics, Education and Social Research Methods,
– Department of Sociology of Social Communication.
The Polish Sociological Association is the scholarly and professional organization of Polish sociologists. Its tasks, as formulated in its articles, are “to promote the development of the sociological disciplines, to spread sociological knowledge, to shape the professional ethics of the sociologists and to represent the interests of its members in the sphere of their scholarly and professional activity.” The history of the Polish Sociological Association goes back to 1956 when, following the collapse of Stalinism, the restitution of sociology in Poland took place. At that time a group of sociologists, acting upon the initiative of Stanislaw Ossowski, organized a Sociological Section within the Polish Philosophical Association, which was then transformed into an independent Polish Sociological Association. Professor Stanislaw Ossowski became the first President of the Polish Sociological Association, with Jan Szczepanski acting as his deputy.

Today, the Polish Sociological Association [PSA] has about 1000 members in 13 regional branches in Warsaw (the largest one) and in all cities with universities. Within PSA there are research committees (sections) on sociology of labour, sociology of medicine, rural sociology, sociology of science, social engineering, sociology of deviance and social control, sociology of law, urban sociology, sociology of religion, social anthropology, social research methods, social work, and history of sociology.

The highest authority within the Polish Sociological Association has the General Assembly of Delegates, which elects the Association’s President and the Executive Board. Previous PSA Presidents include Stanislaw Ossowski, Nina Assorodobraj-Kula, Wladyslaw Markiewicz, Jerzy Szacki, Stefan Nowak, Janusz Ziolkowski, Antonina Kloskowska, Antoni Sulek, Andrzej Kojder, Wlodzimierz Wesolowski and since 2006 Piotr Glinksi has been President.

The basic forms of activity are meetings and conferences, organized in sections.

The most important scholarly event organised by PSA are national congresses, convened every four years. They summarise and synthesise the sociological knowledge of the changing society, stimulate new trends in social research and are a forum for the exchange of opinion about the current state of sociology in Poland, as well as on changes in the professional roles of sociologists and their public duties. The latest XIII Sociological Congress was held in Zielona Gora in 2007 and was dedicated to “What unites us, what divides us?”

Since 1961 The Polish Sociological Association has published The Polish Sociological Review [in English], and quarterly informational bulletin. This bulletin, Informacja bieżąca, contains descriptions of lesser known sociological centres, announcements of, and reports from, sociological conferences in Poland and internationally, and a list of new sociological publications with an emphasis on those books which are published in relatively few copies and hence are little known outside their place of publication.

PSA participates in the world sociological movements by being part of both the International Sociological Association [ISA] and the European Sociological Association (ESA). Polish sociologists have held important positions in ISA, with Professor Piotr Sztompka being its President (2002–2006).
The Center for Social Research of the Polish Sociological Association functions since 1984. It is a unique post known for its high academic standards of social research.

The Center facilitates collaboration between its clients and leading national specialists in methodology and other sub-disciplines of social research. It operates a highly reliable national network of interviewers supervised by an experienced team of local coordinators.

We conduct both quantitative and qualitative research projects. Our area of expertise covers basic to complex projects, employing interviewers who are highly skilled in their craft. We also specialize in projects requiring the collection of restricted data as well as projects involving pilot studies, tape registered focus groups, and narrative interviews. In addition, we assist in research projects conducted by other companies, including all aspects of research design. From drawing random samples to executing the sampling process, and administrative services from editing and printing research questionnaires, constructing codebooks, and processing data, we have the expertise for all your research needs.

Our list of services includes:
- consulting,
- preparing expert opinions and evaluations,
- methodological assistance,
- interviewer supervision,
- statistical data analysis,
- pilot studies,
- servicing research grants including those for graduate (PhD) students,
- public opinion surveys,
- evaluation studies,
- socioeconomic studies on companies,
- political elite studies,
- local self-government studies,
- local community studies,
- job market studies,
- youth studies,
- medical sociology studies,
- social deviation and pathology studies,
- studies on book releases [offer] including educational books,
- studies addressed to universities and colleges interested in being evaluated and planning development strategies.

For over twenty years, the Center for Scientific Research of the Polish Sociological Association – originally known as PSA Social Research Center – earned a reputation for being customer friendly, combining high reliability and academic standards with affordable service prices.
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Population ageing poses a challenge to society, with new problems as well as new opportunities emerging. The United Nations identified population ageing as one of the key challenges of the 21st century (UN 2002) – by the year 2050 2 billion people worldwide will be aged 60 years and over (UN 2007). At the moment, the effects of demographic ageing are nowhere else as visible as in Europe, which has become the first ‘mature society’ in the world where older people outnumber the young (Harper 2006). Today about 22 per cent of the people living in the European Union are aged 60 years and older (Eurostat 2006) and the share of older Europeans is projected continuing to rise. As a consequence, European societies are changing – a society with many older people has needs different from one with many young people.

The post-communist societies of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)\(^1\) are facing an even more rapid ageing process than Western Europe. This is mainly due to an unprecedented drop in fertility across the region during the 1990s in combination with large numbers of young Eastern Europeans at the height of their reproductive phase emigrating to Western Europe and other parts of the Western world, thus reducing the share of younger people (Hoff 2008). Life expectancy at birth has also increased, thereby increasing numbers and share of older people. The resulting very rapid demographic change coincides with an equally rapid social change in the wake of transformation from communism to market economies that CEE has been undergoing for nearly two decades now. In the absence of generous, well-developed, comprehensive public pension, health and long-term care systems and social services like the ones common in many Western European societies, CEE seems to be ill equipped to cope with yet another transition. The prospect of ageing societies, however, has become a reality in CEE already – this

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\(^1\) In its broadest definition, CEE encompasses Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, East Germany, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia (European part), Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Ukraine.
The acronym EAST stands for “Eastern-European Ageing Societies in Transition” and is a network of academics with a research interest in ageing issues in Central and Eastern Europe, which is facilitated and coordinated by the Oxford Institute of Ageing, University of Oxford. It brings together gerontologists from the post-communist societies in Central Eastern, South Eastern and Eastern Europe. Members of the network do not only have in common an interest in gerontological or geriatric research – they also share biographies in a societal system quite different from the contemporary (capitalist) market societies in Europe.

The post-communist societies face demographic challenges that are slightly different from those experienced by the ‘old’ EU Member States. Although population ageing set in later than in the West, its course and impact are likely to be more severe than in the West, due to more rapid demographic changes in the absence of generous social security systems. Life expectancies are still lower than in the West. Contemporary fertility rates, however, are very low and well below the EU average. Moreover, many young people are moving to the West to escape unemployment or to find better job prospects. Even more rapidly ageing populations than in the rest of Europe is the result of these demographic trends.

The EAST network welcomes everyone interested in the research on ageing in Central and Eastern Europe. For more information please contact:

Dr Andreas Hoff
Oxford Institute of Ageing
University of Oxford
Manor Road
Oxford OX1 3UQ, UK
Tel.: +44-1865-286190
Fax: +44-1865-286191
E-mail: andreas.hoff@ageing.ox.ac.uk
Established in 2001, the Oxford Institute of Ageing (OIA) is the first research institute to examine societal ageing and demographic change, rather than the ageing of old people per se. The mission of the OIA is to undertake research into the impact of ageing at the global, societal and individual level. The institute’s aim is to understand how an ageing population affects work, family and social networks, political, economic and consumer behaviour, the delivery of health and social services and how state support should be provided. The OIA works with colleagues in government and policy making to help develop the economic, political and social structures that are needed in order to take advantage of the opportunities that a mature society will bring.

The Oxford Institute of Ageing is fully committed to the belief that the production of high quality, strategic research, which informs, and is informed by, good policy and practice, will lead to a greater understanding of societies as they age, and ultimately to better lives for older people throughout the world. Global, demographic change provides not only challenges but also opportunities to harness the experience, expertise and creativity of such a historically large number of older people. As the world’s first research institute with a global perspective on the question of ageing societies, the OIA is perfectly placed to help politicians and policy makers plan for a future in which all can take advantage of the opportunities that mature societies will bring.