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**SCIENTIFIC IDEALS AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT:
POLISH ETHNOLOGY AND THE
'ETHNIC QUESTION' BETWEEN THE WARS***

Abstract

The article brings to light the relationship between politics and social sciences in interwar Poland in its local and transnational dimensions. It explores the beginnings of expertise in ethnology and the evolution of the discipline's tools and methods as closely linked to the political goals of the interwar Polish state, and the post-coup *Sanacja* [Sanation] regime in particular. Ethnologists carried out fieldwork focused on multiethnic territories, such as Eastern Galicia, which were subjected to international territorial disputes. The collaboration with politicians and the administration – developed mostly in the framework of research institutes – was a source of inspiration and, at the same time, stiff competition between scientific schools. To illustrate some consequences of this collaboration, the article traces an argument over scientific approaches to the 'ethnic question' which involved ethnologists and empirical sociologists, and the connection of this argument to the objectivity principle in science. These different approaches reflect international theoretical and epistemological divisions at the time as much as they show the direct and indirect exchange of ideas within the European scholarship.

Keywords: ethnology, expertise, ethnic question, knowledge, objectivity, Eastern Galicia

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I INTRODUCTION

Across post-First World War Europe social sciences continued to play significant albeit different role as they had before the conflict.¹ This varied depending on a range of intertwined political and social factors, including the political model and the status society accorded to science and scientists.² But the uses of social sciences transformed over the course of the 1920s and the 1930s, as international paradigm shifts often coincided with regime changes and turbulent socio-economic conditions. The social scientific expertise that developed in interwar Poland is a case in point.³ The Second Polish Republic (1918–1939) was among those polities in which nationalism interplayed with both hierarchical societal divisions and ethnic diversity of the post-imperial lands. This interaction shaped social sciences and

¹ For more on this shift in social sciences and related spheres of racial anthropology, see Andrew D. Evans, *Anthropology at War: World War I and the Science of Race in Germany* (Chicago, 2010); Maciej Górny, *Wielka Wojna profesorów: nauki o człowieku (1912–1923)* (Warszawa, 2014); Reinhard Johler, Christian Marchetti, and Monique Scheer (eds.), *Doing Anthropology in Wartime and War Zones: World War I and the Cultural Sciences in Europe* (Bielefeld, 2010).

² Peter Wagner, 'The Uses of Social Sciences', in Theodore M. Porter and Dorothy Ross (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Science* (Cambridge, 2014), <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521594424.031>> [Accessed: 20 Sept. 2016], 535–52.

³ For the development of expertise in Poland, elsewhere in Europe, and the United States, see, i.a., Jeroen van Dongen (ed.), *Cold War Science and the Transatlantic Circulation of Knowledge* (Leiden, 2015); David C. Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts* (New York, 2009); Eric J. Engstrom et al. (eds.), *Figurationen des Experten. Ambivalenzen der wissenschaftlichen Expertise im ausgehenden 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 2005); Martin Kohlrausch et al. (eds.), *Expert Cultures in Central Eastern Europe: The Internationalization of Knowledge and the Transformation of Nation States since World War I* (Osnabrück, 2010); Roy MacLeod (ed.), *Government and Expertise: Specialists, Administrators and Professionals, 1860–1919* (Cambridge and New York, 1988); Stephan Stach, 'The Institute for Nationality Research (1921–1939): A Think Tank for Minority Politics in Poland?', in Yvonne Kleinmann et al. (eds.), *Religion in the Mirror of Law. Eastern European Perspectives from the Early Modern Period to 1939* (Frankfurt am Main, 2015), 149–79; Stephen P. Turner, *The Politics of Expertise* (New York, 2014). For my take on the Polish debates on expertise and applied social sciences, see Olga Linkiewicz, 'Toward Expertocracy: The Scientific Debates on Applied Knowledge in Interwar Poland', in Friedrich Cain and Bernhard Kleeberg (eds.), *A New Organon: Science Studies in Interwar Poland* (Tübingen, 2017) [forthcoming].

directed particular schools in forming a set of research questions and concepts, and broader social planning. Similar to the Romanian and Hungarian cases, the formation of social scientific expertise was part of a debate on the modernization of the predominantly peasant society, on the one hand, and politicized issues of citizenship and assimilation on the other.⁴ Although in the first postwar years geography and statistics dominated the intersection of the political and scientific landscapes, the position of social sciences in the emergent state was about to change. The minority treaty, which Poland signed at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, marked a turning point in the shaping of scientific expertise. It was the ‘ethnic question’ that gave additional weight to social sciences and secured ethnology and empirical sociology a prominent place in the politics of interwar Poland.⁵ Particularly, ethnology was connected directly to the research on ethnicity and the governmental interest in regionalism – seen by the state as a counterbalance to the rise of nationalism among the so-called minorities: Ukrainians, Jews, Belarussians, and Germans. The research thus mostly aimed at borderland regions such as Eastern Galicia, Volhynia, Polesia, and Pomerania. At the same time, the geopolitical menace posed by Germany and the Soviet Union encouraged the administration and academics to likewise collect and process information about society in these regions.

Politics is, however, a largely unacknowledged context for the crystallization and development of social sciences in Poland. So are the significance and dynamics of particular disciplines in the rhetorical

⁴ See Emese Lafferton, ‘The Magyar Moustache: the Faces of Hungarian State Formation, 1867–1918’, *Studies in the history and philosophy of biological and medical sciences*, xxxviii, 4 (2007), 706–32; Raluca Muşat, ‘Prototypes for Modern Living: Planning, Sociology and the Model Village in Inter-war Romania’, *Social History*, iv, 2 (2015), 157–84.

⁵ The broad literature on minority rights in the post-imperial lands includes Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection* (New York, 2004); Mark Mazower, ‘Minorities and the League of Nations in Interwar Europe’, *Daedalus*, cxxvi, 2 (1997), 47–64; Jennifer Jackson Preece, *The League of Nations System of Minority Guarantees (1919–1939)* (Oxford and New York, 1998). On the widespread belief that Jewish diplomacy lied behind the minority treaty, see David Engel, ‘Perceptions of Power – Poland and World Jewry’, *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts*, i (2002), 17–28. On connection between the minorities’ legal situation and expertise in Poland see Stach, ‘The Institute for Nationality Research’.

construction of the Polish nation. Yet Poland is an illustrative example for seeing how changes in regime influence scientific endeavors. More concretely, this was a nation state in which two moments of political transformation brought about new visions for the relationship between scientific knowledge and society.⁶ In 1918 and the first years after the Second Republic came into existence (1918–1926), the state and intelligentsia gave priority to security concerns and internal national mobilization. At the same time, during this formative period and the professionalization of social sciences, many intellectuals and politicians were involved in a debate over the ways sciences should be pursued, the sciences' academic and public status, and the practical value of knowledge of society.⁷ After Józef Piłsudski seized power in the May Coup of 1926, the representatives of the *Sanacja* regime proposed a new approach to internal politics and contemporary challenges of the international order. The *Sanacja* camp aimed at systematic investigation and control of society, opening up for the collaboration with social scientific experts.⁸ Poland is also an interesting example of a nation state with a highly diverse ethnic and social landscape, in which academics and politicians dealt with the legacies of three different empires, while being at the same time shaped by the academic and political cultures of these empires. In general, the scholarly collaboration with the state was driven by pragmatism and political or power-related aspirations as much as patriotism, which was a unifying principle regardless of political views.

⁶ On the relationship between social sciences and interwar politics in Europe, the state politics in particular, see, for instance, Alice L. Conklin, *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850–1950* (Ithaca and London, 2013); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca and London, 2005); Jean Terrier, *Visions of the Social: Society as a Political Project in France, 1750–1950* (Leiden and Boston, 2011), chap. 5, 145–73. See also Peter Wagner *et al.* (eds.), *Social Sciences and Modern States: National Experiences and Theoretical Crossroads* (Cambridge, 1991).

⁷ Wiktoria Fryszkowska and Stanisław Kosiński, *Lwowskie początki socjologii polskiej* (Warszawa, 2010); Nina Kraško, *Instytucjonalizacja socjologii w Polsce 1920–1970* (Warszawa, 1996).

⁸ For a close analysis of this transformation, see Stach, 'The Institute for Nationality Research', 156–64. See also Waldemar Kozyra, *Polityka administracyjna ministrów spraw wewnętrznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w latach 1918–1939* (Lublin, 2009); Olga Linkiewicz, 'Applied Modern Science and the Self-Politicization of Racial Anthropology in Interwar Poland', *Ab Imperio*, 2 (2016), 160–3.

This article thus seeks to explain the constellation of scientific ideals, professionalization of ethnology in Poland, and political entanglement against the backdrop of national mobilization of the 1920s and the 1930s. Showing that the collaboration with the state and state-run institutions created opportunities for the development of ethnology in Poland as well as imposed limits on it, I argue that its crystallization period cannot be fully understood without an exploration of the triad of knowledge, professionalization of sciences, and politics.⁹ In this article I analyze two intersections of this triad. First, I introduce research methods and professional practices that were established or developed in connection with political aims. Second, I trace the debate that erupted between academic experts and which focused on ethnicity and scientific legitimacy associated with the objectivity principle. To illustrate the scholarly collaboration with the state and ideas about the so-called useful knowledge in interwar Poland, I probe their development in the city of Lwów [Lviv], in reference to Eastern Galicia: an area of competition and struggle between Poles and Ukrainians.¹⁰ A group of Polish scholars, based at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów and gathered around influential ethnologist and activist Adam Fischer, engaged in research with a practical orientation and conducted in collaboration with governmental representatives. Their activities peaked in the late 1930s when a research institute called the Institute for the South-Eastern Lands (*Instytut Ziemi Południowo-Wschodnich*) was established on the initiative of the minister of military affairs general Tadeusz Kasprzycki. My argument is supported by archival evidence, namely papers of academics, political institutes and agencies – including the little-known *Instytut Ziemi Południowo-Wschodnich*. Additionally I use published materials, that is, works written by Fischer and his disciples who followed the German-speaking scholarship in their methods and modes of explanation. The other side of the debate is represented by Józef Obrębski who, under the influence of social studies carried out in the

⁹ For a discussion of such an analysis, see especially Peter Wagner *et al.* (eds.), *Discourses on Society: The Shaping of the Social Science Disciplines* (Dordrecht and Boston, 1991).

¹⁰ See Tarik C. Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City between Stalinists, Nazis, and Nationalists* (Ithaca and London, 2015); Christoph Mick, *Lemberg, Lwów, Lviv, 1914–1947: Violence and Ethnicity in a Contested City* (West Lafayette, IN, 2016).

Anglosphere – including two key scholars, ethnologist (social anthropologist) Bronisław Malinowski and sociologist Florian Znaniecki – was becoming a major figure of the young generation of Polish social scientific experts. This debate thus was a local encounter that mirrored international epistemological divisions in social sciences at the time.

II

ETHNOLOGY, POLITICS, AND NATIONAL MOBILIZATION

As early as the end of the nineteenth century, Polish folklorists started their first ventures of what was then called ‘the study of native artifacts’. Initially, they were organized by the Ethnological Society (*Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze*) set up in the city of Lwów (then Lemberg) in 1895 and directed then by linguist and ethnographer Antoni Kalina. Although Polish-Ukrainian relations were tense within intellectual milieus at the time, Ukrainian writer and activist Ivan Franko was appointed to the society’s board of directors and also joined the editorial board of society’s journal *Lud*. However, the society gathered mostly Polish and some Polish-Jewish teachers, scholars, and students from the universities of Lwów and Kraków. Among them there were anthropologist Jan Czekanowski, ethnologist Adam Fischer, sociologist Ludwik Gumplowicz, and linguist Kazimierz Nitsch.¹¹ One of the society’s aims was to determine ethnic boundaries and conduct research on the Polish settlement and other ethnic groups in what was then the Habsburg province of Galicia, where it established a network of contacts in the countryside to collect objects.¹² In the interwar period, such collecting was still one of the main ethnographic approaches.

The position ethnology held in interwar Poland is similar to its role in other countries. In many aspects it reminds us of the institutionalization of *Völkerkunde* during the formation of the German empire.¹³ However, in Poland the environment was dominated by

¹¹ Zygmunt Klodnicki (ed.), *Kronika Polskiego Towarzystwa Ludoznawczego (1895–1995)* (Wrocław, 1997), 15–35.

¹² Olga Gajkova, ‘Historia Polskiego Towarzystwa Ludoznawczego’, *Lud*, li, 1 (1966), 9–11.

¹³ See, for instance, Andre Gingrich, ‘The German-Speaking Countries’, in Fredrik Barth *et al.*, *One Discipline, Four Ways: British, German, French, and American Anthropology* (Chicago, 2005), 84–93.

Volkskunde – specifically by ethnography focused on Slavic studies – which, in reference to folklore and more broadly to peasant issues, was called *ludoznawstwo* ('knowledge of folk').¹⁴ As Reinhard Johler has pointed out, this was *völkerkundliche Volkskunde*: the studies of different groups within the Habsburg monarchy.¹⁵ Therefore, the discipline's ethos was, from the beginning, associated with a debate on the relationship between the intelligentsia and the peasantry and hierarchies of power in the divided and diverse society of the Second Polish Republic. Moreover, this ethos was a significant element of contemporary intellectual reflection on the conflict of values between different social groups and the reshaping of those groups.

In the interwar years ethnology went through a period of professionalization and rapid expansion in academic and public spheres. For instance, in Lwów, where the Chair of Anthropology and Ethnology had existed since 1910, the establishment of a new Institute of Ethnology (*Zakład Etnologii*) in 1924 and the appointment of Adam Fischer¹⁶ as director marked a turning point in the development of ethnological expertise. The offer to Fischer did not come as a surprise: by that time he had obtained his habilitation degree and his courses were popular among students. Moreover, he was an editor of *Lud* and one of the most dedicated activists of the Ethnological Society. At this point Fischer appeared to be a non-controversial figure supported

¹⁴ *Ludoznawstwo* implied activities conducted by both professionals and amateurs. In interwar Poland, there was an ongoing debate on how to define the terms *anthropology*, *ethnology*, and *ethnography*, and how these definitions would relate to the professionalization of particular disciplines. Usually the term *anthropology* was used to describe science focused specifically on race and its connection to social phenomena. *Ethnography* was treated as a descriptive branch of ethnology which would focus on "uncivilized people and archaic stages of civilized people" (Archiwum Naukowe Polskiego Towarzystwa Ludoznawczego [henceforth: AN PTL], Poniatowski, 408). In the present-day Poland *cultural anthropology* mostly replaced *ethnology*.

¹⁵ Reinhard Johler, 'The Invention of the Multicultural Museum in the Late Nineteenth Century: Ethnography and the Presentation of Cultural Diversity in Central Europe', *Austrian History Yearbook*, xli (2015), 51. See also Lafferton, 'The Magyar Moustache'.

¹⁶ Adam Fischer (1889–1943), professor, dean of the Jan Kazimierz University Humanities Department. He was also editor of the Polish division of *Handwörterbuch der slawischen Volksglaubens und Volksbrauch* and *Volkskundliche Bibliographie* (the latter, edited by Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer and Paul Geiger, was published in Switzerland). Adam Fischer, 'Odczyty radiowe', AN PTL, Spuścizna Adama Fischera, 94.

by his academic milieu¹⁷ and relatively well-connected to scholars in Austria and Germany, in particular ethnologist Wilhelm Koppers,¹⁸ based at the University of Vienna and Slavist Erdmann Hanisch, who worked for the Osteuropa-Institut in Breslau.¹⁹ In the following years Fischer became a center of a circle of young scholars who were involved in the expert work for the state, mostly in the framework of research institutes. As Marek Kornat has observed, these institutes were modelled after think tanks created in Germany – such as the Osteuropa-Institut – and the Anglosphere.²⁰ The year of 1919 was also a turning point in that respect: not only British and American specialists but also those from Poland came back from the Paris Peace Conference with a conviction that expertise should be integrated into institutional structures.²¹

Although Fischer occasionally gave talks on the importance of ethnology in ‘national upbringing’²² and published in the right-wing journal *Mysł Narodowa*, his real engagement in politics began when the *Sanacja* camp came to power. It is clear that after the May Coup of 1926, Fischer changed his political sympathies and began to support Marshal Józef Piłsudski. A year later he sat on the committee of the ‘Stu Team’. This organization took over *Słowo Polskie*, the most important right-wing newspaper in Lwów, an organ of the nationalist

¹⁷ Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Lvivskoi Oblasti [henceforth: DALO], Uniwersytet Jana Kazimierza [henceforth: UJK], Życiorysy profesorów Wydziału Filozoficznego, 26/7/809; DALO, UJK, Adam Fischer, 26/5/1956.

¹⁸ On Koppers and his network of scholars which included also Malinowski, see Gingrich, ‘The German-Speaking Countries’, 109–10, 114.

¹⁹ On the work of Hanisch see Helmut W. Schaller, ‘Erdmann Hanisch (1876–1953): Sein Beitrag zur slawischen Philologie’, *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, xxxix, 2 (1994), 230–8. On activities of the Osteuropa-Institut before and after 1933, see Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (Cambridge and New York, 1988); Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, ‘Das Osteuropa-Institut in Breslau 1930–1940. Wissenschaft, Propaganda und nationale Feindbilder in der Arbeit eines interdisziplinären Zentrums der Osteuropaforschung in Deutschland’, in Michael Garleff (ed.), *Zwischen Konfrontation und Kompromiss. Interethnische Beziehungen in Ostmitteleuropa als historiographisches Problem der 1930er/1940er Jahre* (München, 1995), 47–72.

²⁰ Marek Kornat, *Bolszewizm, totalitaryzm, rewolucja, Rosja. Początki sowietologii i studiów nad systemami totalitarnymi w Polsce (1918–1939)* (Kraków, 2003), 57–8; *idem*, *Polska szkoła sowietologiczna 1930–1939* (Kraków, 2003), 28–9.

²¹ Linkiewicz, ‘Toward Expertocracy’.

²² See, for instance, *Lud*, 21 (1922).

Endecja movement. The ‘Stu’ manifesto insisted that the “national state as a social state should be based on ... sustainable and deep ethical principles.” Thus the ‘vital’ nationality issue could only ‘be resolved’ if, in state policies, ethics and the common good prevailed over force. At the same time, “there could be only one nation in the state, notwithstanding different ethnic groups”. The ‘Stu’ members did not want democracy but elitist expertocracy.²³ Fischer assumed that in Lwów, a site of right-wing and conservative hegemony, to support liberal views was futile and thus was tantamount to submitting to the radical right and contributing to its success.²⁴

Fischer’s close associates were also frequently active in public sphere. After a few years of service in the army Jan Falkowski, for instance, joined the paramilitary sports association *Strzelec* (‘The Rifleman’) and was an editor-in-chief and contributor to ‘Civic Education’ (*Wychowanie Obywatelskie*).²⁵ At the beginning of his career, Falkowski specialized in methodology and traditional cultures in Asia. Fischer’s reference letter, prepared for Falkowski’s habilitation in 1938, pointed out the significance of his publications on the ethnicity of East Carpathian highlanders (inhabitants of Eastern Carpathian Mountains) – Hutsults, Lemkos, and Boykos. Falkowski’s work thus demonstrated a considerable change in his academic interests, which was a result of a general shift in the work of the Institute of Ethnology since 1933–4. This change was due to Fischer’s – and the authorities’ – conviction of the priority “to get an ethnographic view of the southeastern lands”.²⁶ Apart from the area of former Eastern Galicia, ethnologists from the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów were also conducting research in additional areas of the eastern and northern borderlands – Polesie, Volhynia, and Pomerania. In a radio address in 1939, Fischer emphasized “the exceptional nature of the Institute ... which makes it distinct from the activities of other ethnology Chairs”, its “association with contemporary life”, and “constant

²³ Agnieszka Biedrzycka (ed.), *Kalendarium Lwowa 1918–1939* (Kraków, 2012).

²⁴ Adam Fischer, ‘Charakterystyka młodzieży w Uniwersytecie Jana Kazimierza we Lwowie’, AN PTL, Spuścizna Adama Fischera, 91.

²⁵ DALO, UJK, Jan Falkowski, 26/5/1939; Anna Engelking and Olga Linkiewicz, ‘Jan Kanty Falkowski (1901–ca. 1940)’, in Anna Spiess and Zofia Szromba-Rysowa (eds.), *Etnografowie i ludoznawcy polscy. Sylwetki, szkice biograficzne*, iii (Wrocław and Kraków, 2010).

²⁶ DALO, UJK, Jan Falkowski, 26/5/1939.

readiness to face challenges that are of vital importance for the nation and the state".²⁷

Institutionally, this new direction was based on the Commission for Scientific Research of the Eastern Lands (*Komisja Naukowych Badań Ziemi Wschodnich*), which commenced operations within the governmental structures based in Warsaw.²⁸ It was created by the Committee for National Affairs (*Komitet Badań Spraw Narodowościowych*), the body responsible for national policies and governed collectively by the prime minister and several ministers.²⁹ General Tadeusz Kasprzycki, appointed in 1933 deputy and later vice minister of military affairs, was the *spiritus movens* of activities of the Commission for Scientific Research of the Eastern Lands. He engaged Falkowski to organize a research center and a museum located in Żabie in the Hutsul region.³⁰

The Lwów Institute of Ethnology was supported by the Foundation for National Culture³¹ – a major governmental sponsor of institutions and individuals – and the Society of Friends of the Hutsul Region (*Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Huculszczyzny*), a highly politicized organization striving for regional mobilization in support of the central state.³² The activities of the Commission for Scientific Research of the Eastern Lands were continued by the Institute for the South-Eastern Lands (*Instytut Ziemi Południowo-Wschodnich*), established in 1938 (and registered March 1939), with headquarters in Lwów. The research

²⁷ Fischer, 'Odczyty radiowe'.

²⁸ On the Commission see Olgierd Grott, *Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych i Komisja Naukowych Badań Ziemi Wschodnich w planowaniu polityki II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na Kresach Wschodnich* (Kraków, 2013).

²⁹ The Committee included the minister of internal affairs, military affairs, foreign affairs, religious affairs and public education, and agriculture. Wanda Paprocka, 'Instytucje i organizacje polskie na Kresach Wschodnich 1920–1939', *Etnografia Polska*, xlv, 1–2 (2001), 10–11.

³⁰ Kazimierz Pawlewski (ed.), *Sprawozdanie Związku Ziemi Górskich za okres od 12 XI 1936 – 31 XII 1937 r.* (Warszawa, 1938).

³¹ The Foundation for National Culture (*Fundusz Kultury Narodowej*) was established in 1928 on the initiative of Józef Piłsudski.

³² Fischer, 'Odczyty radiowe'. See also Patrice Dabrowski, 'Borderland Encounters in the Carpathian Mountains and their Impact on Identity Formation', in Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz (eds.), *Shattered Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2013), 193–208.

in the late thirties was meant to be conducted nearly exclusively from within the region.³³

In line with general state propaganda, the Institute claimed that it was an apolitical organization, created in order to benefit society and the state.³⁴ The Institute divided its supporters into three groups: government and army representatives, business and industry associates, and – the largest group – Lwów academics. While the Institute officially cultivated an above-party appeal,³⁵ Kasprzycki backed one person – Józef Gajek, who was a committed supporter of government policies. As an ethnologist and Fischer's student, he had already gained experience in expert service in the Baltic Institute in Gdynia and Toruń.³⁶ The new institution gave a fresh impetus to fieldwork in local communities of villages and towns, and the city of Lwów. The research in field was carried out mostly by graduate students and young assistant professors.

In the 1930s, the necessity to investigate (not to say infiltrate) local rural and urban communities increased substantially. Villagers were solicited by various governmental agents working to secure potentially unsafe territories, in particular the interwar Poland's East. In Eastern Galicia, many of these efforts were coordinated by the Secretariat for the Agreement of Polish Social Organizations in Eastern Little Poland (*Sekretariat Porozumiewawczy Polskich Organizacji Społecznych w Małopolsce Wschodniej*), a nationalistic organization set up in 1936, which, in turn, was directed by Adam Fischer in 1939.³⁷ Perhaps, the questions asked by these experts are more revealing sources than the answers they were given. There was a mismatch between their state- and nation-building concerns and the interests

³³ AN PTL, Instytut Ziem Południowo-Wschodnich, 500.

³⁴ DALO, Instytut Ziem Południowo-Wschodnich, 1/3/1709.

³⁵ Apart from many other things the Institute also alleged that it has public support. AN PTL, Instytut Ziem Południowo-Wschodnich, 500.

³⁶ DALO, UJK, Józef Gajek, 26/2/337; AN PTL, Instytut Ziem Południowo-Wschodnich, 500.

³⁷ In 1936, the Secretariat was directed by general Aleksander Litwinowicz, who soon later became the vice minister of the military affairs. For a typical piece of propaganda, which was produced by the Secretariat and aimed to mobilize Poles from Eastern Galicia against the activities of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, see *Nasza Praca*, ii, 43 (1937), 4 <http://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/Content/308950/NDIGZAS013854_1937_043.pdf> [Accessed: 20 Sept. 2016]. See also Biedrzycka, *Kalendarium Lwowa*, 767, 847–8, 880, 959.

of a majority of the experts' informants: "Does the Polish population make comparisons with the situation before the war – in what (whose) favor? Which realms of life appear unfavorably, by comparison, according to the people? How do any autonomous or separatist tendencies manifest themselves?"³⁸

To a certain extent this cooperation and dependence on governmental agencies was induced by miserable financial conditions, unemployment, and limited resources for research and publications. After the First World War, the financial standing of the Józef Mianowski Fund, the main source for research support since 1881, deteriorated significantly. Half of its resources came from government subsidies. Starting in 1926, the authorities became more interested in scientific expertise and scholars began to seek official support.³⁹ In particular, ethnologists exerted their influence in order to create ethnographic divisions in the numerous Civil Defense outposts that had been set up all over the country.

The most popular way of doing fieldwork was to focus on typical units, recognized as representative of a particular region, group, or phenomenon. The next step was to make calculations that could produce a broader, quantitative picture. Investigations were also based on press and archival research, and questionnaires. The crucial point was that, in the thirties, for the first time, research was dominated by fieldwork – performed not only by ethnologists, but also historians, economists, and linguists. Such fieldwork, according to directives, would include an initial trip, and then a detailed, long-term observation, with systematic recording of recollections and opinions. The final

³⁸ These questions come from a survey in Pomerania. See Bernard Grzędzicki to Józef Gajek, 1937, Pomorska Biblioteka Cyfrowa, Kolekcja Józefa Gajka, 2639. It needs to be stated that other questionnaires, used by various institutions of the Second Republic to establish ethnic (national) belonging, produced similarly doubtful results. In these cases, problems arose mostly from the mismatch between the intelligentsia and peasantry and their ideas of what identity was. The well-known example are the two censuses, of 1921 and 1931 respectively, and the questions about nationality and language they included. See Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, 'Liczebność i rozmieszczenie grup narodowościowych w II Rzeczypospolitej w świetle wyników II Spisu Powszechnego (1931 r.)', *Dzieje Najnowsze*, xv, 1–2 (1983), 231–51. For my take on these issues inspired by Mędrzecki's discussion, see Olga Linkiewicz, 'Peasant Communities in Interwar Poland's Eastern Borderlands: Polish Historiography and the Local Story', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, cix (2014), 17–36.

³⁹ Linkiewicz, 'Applied Modern Science', 156, 163.

outcome would be a monograph.⁴⁰ The key elements that traditionally made up expeditions in the countryside – that is collecting future exhibits, cataloguing, and preserving objects – were supplemented with or sometimes replaced by interviews and surveys, and the activities that later developed into participant observation.

During their field sojourns, scholars relied on local activists, including non-Poles. In particular, ethnologists from Lwów were constantly preoccupied with issues of Ukrainian national identity. Falkowski even worked in collaboration with the Ukrainian *Boykivschyna* Society from the Galician town of Sambor. There were limits, however. “The reason for cooperating with [the Ukrainian] Dr. Pasznycki is only his help in collecting materials”, Fischer stated.⁴¹ Despite these limits imposed by Fischer, in the field the willingness to reach out to Ukrainians facilitated practical relationships. These perhaps saved such expeditions from complete failure. Falkowski wrote in his report from searching for the ethnic boundary between the Carpathian highlanders of Lemkos and Boykos that the “conditions of my sojourn among these villagers are rather bad. The people are reserved, suspicious, and very secretive, not used to this type of research. The Greek-Catholic priests were of great help”. In general, he stressed the assistance he received from some activists who identified themselves as Ukrainians.⁴²

What we do not know, unfortunately, is whether ethnologists from Lwów used all the languages of their informants or spoke only Polish (or maybe used interpreters). We do know, however, that the language in which respondents were approached made an important difference to their reaction, while fieldwork reports were written in Polish. At the same time, they included Ukrainian or other non-Polish terms. It is fair to assume that respondents who did not see Polish as their own language, were nonetheless interviewed in Polish, probably with some pragmatic flexibility. For these respondents (at least), this is likely to have made their experiences with the ethnologists also experiences of traditional social hierarchy. Peasants often called the researchers *pany*, a term that, in this context, should be translated as ‘lords’.⁴³ For these ethnologists, conducting research without participation in and

⁴⁰ AN PTL, Instytut Ziemi Południowo-Wschodnich, 500.

⁴¹ DALO, UJK, Jan Falkowski, 26/6/1939.

⁴² AN PTL, Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Huculszczyny [henceforth: TPH], 499.

⁴³ AN PTL, Józef Gajek, 478.

familiarity with the local life implied only limited access to information. For us, in hindsight, it implies a lack of professionalism as we understand it now, i.e., in Malinowski's terms.

III ETHNICITY AND OBJECTIVITY

The beginning of the twentieth century saw a profound crisis in knowledge traditions and methodological analyses, particularly visible in the field of social sciences and humanities. The collapse of empires and the experience of the First World War further challenged paradigms and research methods, and this often corresponded with debates on politicized issues of race, ethnicity, and nationality.⁴⁴ An example of such interplay is the epistemological and institutional rivalry between schools of ethnology and sociology in Poland over disciplinary authority. This included scientific claims to objectivity that saturated the contemporary academic debates. Objectivity was used as a tool to achieve an advantage over adversaries. Yet this principal but elusive set of ideas and attitudes⁴⁵ was not merely employed instrumentally, that is, to justify dubious claims. It was also inextricably linked to patriotism. Both objectivity and patriotism were considered morally good and noble, and the majority of scholars were unable to query patriotism, treating it as the intrinsic part of the value of 'objective' scientific endeavor.⁴⁶

In interwar Polish academia we can observe representatives of several theoretical schools. Yet in the interwar period, Polish ethnology and, in general, social sciences were not dominated by any particular school or method. Conversely, intellectual influences were relatively numerous and rich – coming from France (Durkheimians), Germany (historical method), Great Britain (Malinowskian anthropology), and the United States (the Chicago school and Boasian school). This diversity of approaches and familiarity with various milieus and academic systems occurred as a result of the migrations before 1918

⁴⁴ Kohlrausch *et al.* (eds.), *Expert Cultures*, 10–13; Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, 1988 [2007]), 111–32.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem.*

⁴⁶ Olga Linkiewicz, 'Ethnopolitics': *The Making of Scientific Knowledge and Utopian Projects in Interwar Poland*, paper, AHA convention, New York, Jan. 2015.

and during the First World War, and, subsequently, research stays abroad.⁴⁷ Ethnology in Lwów – having its roots in rural folklore studies by amateurs – was strongly attached to historical methods, which aimed to determine origins of cultures and artifacts. It saw itself within the academic tradition of the German language zone, but – contrary to what is usually written about this school – Fischer and his students were critical of diffusionism and the related *Kulturkreise* (culture spheres) concept. In the 1930s, they began to realize that their rival scholarly camp, which followed Znaniecki's and Malinowski's approaches to society, had gained a competitive advantage and popularity among governmental circles, in particular with Kasprzycki and Stanisław J. Paprocki, who had been a head of the Institute for Nationality Research (*Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych*) and the behind-the-scenes organizer of politically-involved expertise.⁴⁸ Therefore, the Lwów ethnology's representatives publicly claimed allegiance to "the sociological method, and even the functionalist one", referring to the work of Florian Znaniecki and Bronisław Malinowski, respectively. In reality however, Fischer and especially Falkowski strongly criticized the humanistic approach represented by Znaniecki. One illustration of this was a serious argument over defining ethnicity and the method by which ethnic boundaries should be determined: the so-called objective criterion which Lwów championed against the Znaniecki's humanistic principle ('coefficient') – a method which proposed taking into account a subjective perspective of social actors.

To understand the Lwów ethnology's position better we shall turn to the British social sciences of the time. The year of 1922 was the big leap when Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* and *The Andaman Islanders* by Alfred Radcliffe-Brown were published. Instead of historical explanations, these researchers and their followers studied functioning societies, arguing for an analysis of all interconnected aspects of a given culture. However, the emerging paradigm was received with reluctance and adopted slowly. Malinowski's post at the London School of Economics, which is now considered the institutional symbol of this transformation, was an exception, even in the British context. Other universities were still dominated by scholars advocating evolutionism or diffusionism: elsewhere in Great Britain,

⁴⁷ Among them there were research grants from the Rockefeller Foundation.

⁴⁸ See Stach, 'The Institute for Nationality Research'.

social anthropology was not a discipline in its own right.⁴⁹ What, again in hindsight, may look like Lwów ethnology's traditionalism was, in other words, the opposite. Ironically, Fischer and his disciples were internationally up-to-date in failing to be ahead of their time. Yet their stance was not hidebound but, in their own paradigmatic terms, critical and dynamic: they did question such classical representatives as Adolf Bastian (evolutionism) and Leo Frobenius (cultural diffusion and culture spheres, i.e. *Kulturkreise*), and adopted a comparative, historical method (*szkoła kulturowo-historyczna*). It is important to observe that Wilhelm Koppers, Fischer's Viennese colleague, also repudiated *Kulturkreise* by the early 1930s.

As mentioned above, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Polish ethnography and rural folklore studies (*ludoznawstwo*) branched off from the *Volkskunde* tradition and represented mostly amateur research carried out in the then-popular objectivistic fashion.⁵⁰ If we look at the debate on ethnicity in the 1930s, it is clear that the methodological differences formed a considerable part of the disagreement between academics. However, the methodological side of the debate also had an explicit political dimension. The outcome of the preceding deliberations of how to determine ethnic and national belonging and which methods and factors (religion, language or nationality) should be decisive was inconclusive. These enduring questions were brought to public attention by the politically hot issue of censuses: the two which were taken in Poland in 1921 and 1931, and also German censuses, which were discussed by experts in connection with the situation of the Polish minority in Germany. As for the latter, the intensive research based on the "exact scientific objectivism" was seen as a remedy for the German propaganda.⁵¹

The substance of the polemics was, thus, ethnicity and processes of nation-building in the borderlands and specifically among the

⁴⁹ Fredrik Barth, 'Britain and the Commonwealth', in Barth *et al.* (eds.), *One Discipline*, 25–6.

⁵⁰ Zbigniew Libera, 'Lud ludoznawców. Kilka rysów do opisanja fizjognomii i postaci ludu naszego, czyli etnograficzna wycieczka po XIX wieku', in Aleksander Posern-Zieliński (ed.), *Etnologia polska między ludoznawstwem a antropologią* (Poznań, 1995), 137–52.

⁵¹ Emil Kuroński, 'Polacy w Niemczech w urzędowych spisach ludności', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, xii, 4–5 (1938), 384–428; Roman Lutman, 'III Naukowy Zjazd Pomorzoznawczy', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, vi, 6 (1932), 653–8.

peasantry. Like in other East Central European counterparts, the scientific debate on the peasantry was oriented toward territories within which the processes of national acquisition were still in flux. Notably, the 'ethnic question', in this context, was not the 'Jewish question', and the omission of this aspect was assumed as self-evident. Hence not only the lack of language competence that would allow researchers to gather data but also a set of convictions and beliefs shared by ethnologists and the leadership alike excluded Jewish subjects from this debate.⁵² One side of the argument was represented by Fischer and his associates, who pursued research rooted in historical methods and focused on collecting data that could 'objectively' represent a given culture or group. They searched for origins and cultural affinities and argued for a meticulous reconstruction of 'cultural facts'

⁵² The so-called Jewish question was phrased in a variety of ways (directly or indirectly) by different scholars at the time. Among the most famous statements there were those prepared for the Paris Peace Conference. See Franciszek Bujak, *The Jewish Question in Poland* (Paris, 1919) (also in Marta Przyłuska-Brzostek [ed.], *Ekspertyzy i materiały delegacji polskiej na konferencję wersalską 1919 roku* [Warszawa, 2009], 381–425); Stanisław Kutrzeba, *La question juive en Pologne: essai historique* (Cracovie, 1919). The large literature on the 'Jewish question' in Poland includes, *i.a.*, Robert Blobaum, 'Criminalizing the "Other": Crime, Ethnicity, and Antisemitism in Early Twentieth-Century Poland', in *idem* (ed.), *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland* (Ithaca, 2005), 81–102; Claudia Kraft, 'Die jüdische Frage im Spiegel der Presseorgane und Parteiprogramme der galizischen Bauernbewegung im letzten Viertel des 19. Jahrhunderts', *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, xlv, 3 (1996), 381–410; Grzegorz Krzywiec, 'The Polish Intelligentsia in the Face of the Jewish Question', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, c (2009), 133–69; Theodore R. Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism: the "Jewish Question" in Poland, 1850–1914* (DeKalb, IL, 2006). On some approaches to the 'Jewish question' in Galicia before 1918, see Polin: *Studies in Polish Jewry*, xii (1999): *Focusing on Galicia: Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians 1772–1918*, ed. by Israel Bartal and Antony Polonsky. The research on Jewish ethnic (national) belonging was conducted by the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO) in Wilno / Vilna and, most notably, its director, sociologist Max Weinreich. Cf., *i.a.*, Itzik N. Gottesman, *Defining the Yiddish Nation: The Jewish Folklorists of Poland* (Detroit, 2003); Kamil Kijek, 'Max Weinreich, Assimilation and the Social Politics of Jewish Nation Building', *East European Jewish Affairs*, xli, 1 (2011), 25–55; Cecile E. Kuznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture: Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation* (New York, 2014); Katherine Lebow, 'The Conscience of the Skin: Interwar Polish Autobiography and Social Rights', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, iii, 3 (2012), 303; Leila Zenderland, 'Social Science as a "Weapon of the Weak": Max Weinreich, the Yiddish Scientific Institute, and the Study of Culture, Personality, and Prejudice', *Isis*, ciii, 4 (2013), 742–72.

in their historical and geographical contexts. Since the shift of 1933–34, initiated by the ministries and executed particularly by Kasprzycki, the Lwów Ethnology Chair partly redirected its interests to the study of current ethnic and nationality issues of the multiethnic borderlands. Changing the thematic scope led to a major problem: the so-called historical method (*szkoła kulturowo-historyczna*) was no longer adequate to deal with the new set of questions.

To respond to challenges, Fischer's associates gathered empirical data during fieldtrips and via questionnaires sent to schools. Ethnologist Jan Falkowski sought to grasp ethnic boundaries and map the divisions between groups inhabiting the Eastern Galician mountainous region – Hutsuls, Lemkos, and Boykos. The divisions were based on language and the presence or absence of ethnographic features and cultural artifacts.⁵³ During his fieldwork trips Falkowski noticed that, depending on the situation, the inhabitants identified themselves differently – on one occasion as Hutsuls or *Ruski*, as Ukrainians on another. Falkowski realized that identification was flexible, which only underpinned his conviction that ethnicity should be determined outside, not within the object of a study.⁵⁴ Abandoning the objective criteria was, in his view, tantamount to dilettante, unprofessional work.

The opponents of the Lwów ethnology, including sociologist Florian Znaniecki and ethnologist Józef Obrębski, changed the approach to researching ethnic groups and national identity from etic to emic. They postulated leaving aside the fusion of 'objective' criteria – such as race, language, and ethnographic features – in favor of investigating the subjective experience of individuals or groups. Obrębski, who, in 1934, returned from the London School of Economics, which was dominated by Malinowskian anthropology, elaborated the notion of an ethnic group, extrapolated from a case study of Polesie where the persistent local (that is non-national) identities and increasing popularity of urban and mass culture trends conflated. Obrębski thought that ethnicity cannot be reconciled with arbitrary categories imposed on the realm of individual or group consciousness. Put differently,

⁵³ Jan Falkowski and Bazyl Pasznyi, *Na pograniczu lemkowski-bojkowskim. Zarys etnograficzny* (Lwów, 1935); Jan Falkowski, *Zachodnie pogranicze Huculszczyzny. Dolinami Prutu, Bystrzycy Nadwórniańskiej, Bystrzycy Solotwińskiej i Łomnicy* (Lwów, 1938); *idem*, *Północno-wschodnie pogranicze Huculszczyzny* (Lwów, 1938).

⁵⁴ A fieldwork report by Falkowski. AN PTL, TPH, 499.

in numerous polemics Obrębski objected to Falkowski's method on the grounds of a different understanding of nation – in his mind, an imagined rather than concrete community.⁵⁵ In his papers and reviews Obrębski articulated pluralism of knowledge and, therefore, did not consider the consciousness he researched as 'false'.⁵⁶

In the 1930s, when ethnology and sociology – institutionally settled – gathered momentum, their representatives often claimed the exceptional abilities of their discipline or method to resolve social issues. Stanisław Orsini-Rosenberg, for instance, stated that sociology is the only discipline which would reveal the essence of ethnic issues.⁵⁷ Ironically, although competing scholars lacked a minimal consensus on method, the state-sponsored projects positioned their research close to one another; much closer than they could have anticipated and would ever be ready to admit. The shift in research interests prompted the upholders of conservative approaches to social sciences to pursue, even if only superficially, Malinowskian field methods and research questions. It was in the heat of the polemics and competition that those scholars who advocated modern approaches – such as Obrębski and Znaniecki – not only intended that their research be applied to concrete policies of the state but also asserted that their methods and tools were capable of producing desirable results quickly and efficiently.⁵⁸

Obrębski, for instance, postulated that the distance between academia and the concrete sphere of social practices should be reduced to a bare minimum.⁵⁹ Yet in his key essays, the relationship between scientific practice ('ethnosociology', as he called it)⁶⁰ and the

⁵⁵ Józef Obrębski, 'Statyczne i dynamiczne podejście w badaniach narodowościowych', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, x, 6 (1936), 585–600; *idem*, *Problem etniczny Polesia*, in Anna Engelking (ed.), *Józef Obrębski, Polesie* (Warszawa, 2007), 186–91.

⁵⁶ See Zbigniew Benedyktowicz, "Portrety obcego". *Od stereotypu do symbolu* (Kraków, 2000), 18–38.

⁵⁷ Stanisław Orsini-Rosenberg, 'Program badań socjologicznych w zakresie zagadnień narodowościowych w województwach wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, iv, 1 (1930), 1.

⁵⁸ Linkiewicz, 'Toward Expertocracy'.

⁵⁹ Anna Engelking, 'Ekspedycja etnosocjologiczna Józefa Obrębskiego w latach 1934–1937. Organizacja, metody badań, problematyka, uczestnicy', *Etnografia Polska*, xlv, 1–2 (2001), 27–8.

⁶⁰ Obrębski chose the name 'ethnosociology' (*etnosocjologia*) in order to distinguish his venture from both physical anthropology and traditional ethnology

ideology of his own research is suppressed, while political engagement of other scholars is underscored.⁶¹ In other words, Obrębski did not avoid the pitfall which stemmed from the assumption that adequate methodology would guarantee objective results, political involvement notwithstanding. His scholarly self-definition exhibits the strongest feature of ‘neutral expertise’, based on impartial observation.⁶²

IV CONCLUSIONS

In Peter Wagner’s and Björn Wittrock’s discussion on what they called ‘sociology of the social sciences’ the development of social sciences has been integrated into the history of both governmental politics and societies in which European and American academics operated.⁶³ This lens of analysis, and the emphasis on the state as an actor in particular, risks reducing complex phenomena to political variables only. Yet, as we have seen above, the intersection of politics and social sciences is not merely about the political views or political pressure. Especially in the early twentieth century Europe the core debates on science’s aims, its relationship to the state, the concept of autonomy of science, and the principle of objectivity gave academics an opportunity to support their theories and methods, to gain power and respect, and to establish a professional reputation.⁶⁴

These themes and debates were present throughout the interwar period but the way they interacted with political aims of the Polish state evolved considerably. The new formula of the ‘patronage of knowledge’, which developed in Poland after the May Coup of 1926, provoked closer collaboration and, to a certain degree, dictated research topics and prioritized goals of scholars. In the absence of other patronage, the state – although financially weak – was the major provider of resources, and also played a vital role in forming

attached to historical methods. Later the term has been used by Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu.

⁶¹ Obrębski, ‘Statyczne i dynamiczne’.

⁶² Martin Kohlrausch, *Building Europe on Expertise* (London, 2014); see also Novick, *That Noble Dream*.

⁶³ Peter Wagner and Björn Wittrock, ‘Analyzing Social Science: On the Possibility of Sociology of the Social Sciences’, in Wagner *et al.* (eds.), *Discourses on Society*, 4.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, 4–6.

networks between experts and local politicians. The post-coup regime brought into conjuncture central and newly-established regional institutions, making the latter significant in the relationship between centers and provinces of the state. In particular, research institutes that gathered information about society became a platform for cooperation and exchange between academics, the administration, and activists. These key institutions of modern scientific expertise were, at the same time, quintessentially political institutions.⁶⁵ Most of the important research endeavors of the time were conducted in geopolitically strategic regions. Simultaneously, the growing demand for scientific data and analyses for the government entailed that young scholars had special opportunities to gain experience and carry out their own self-reliant fieldwork. Perhaps paradoxically, the intensified reach of the state into social sciences also meant that these young scholars gained independence from traditional academic hierarchies.

It needs to be acknowledged that in the case of ethnology the political goals often determined the choice of research subjects and research questions, and shaped the scientific methods and tools as well as standards of fieldwork. Yet the crystallization of interwar Polish ethnology coincided not only with the interests of the Polish state but also with international paradigm shifts. In Poland, while some ethnologists were still content with older standards of practice, forerunners of modern methods already insisted that fieldwork must be done exclusively by experts and ethnology should be turned into a fully professional discipline.⁶⁶ The interplay between politics and epistemology is particularly intriguing in the case of the generation born in the 1880s, which was shaped by the structures and cultures of the three empires.⁶⁷ The collaboration with the Polish state was deeply ingrained not only in these scholars' biographies and careers but also their understanding of scientific endeavor.

Research in interwar social sciences reflected the most burning political and social issues of the time. This included debates about

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, 4.

⁶⁶ Cezaria Baudouin de Courtenay-Ehrenkreutz, *Zakład Etnologii Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego w Wilnie i jego zadania* (Wilno, 1933), 90, 97–8.

⁶⁷ On the influence of imperial legacies on the development of expertise in East Central Europe, see Martin Kohlrausch, Katrin Steffen, and Stefan Wiederkher, 'The Internationalization of Knowledge and the Transformation of Nation States since World War I – Introduction', in Kohlrausch *et al.* (eds.), *Expert Cultures*, 9–30.

ethnic belonging and national identity of the society, mostly concerning the peasantry. A common way of disputing these issues was to invoke the nature of science and the extent and validity of particular research methods for assessing the condition of society in the Second Polish Republic and that society's susceptibility to change. Against the backdrop of political involvement, social scientists disagreed over what should be defined as an objective approach to studies of society, which method would lead to objective results, and whether or not the subjective experience of social actors could be introduced into scientific analysis. Thus the state imperative to make contributions to science and the drive to gain academic and social respect fueled epistemological debates in the social sciences.

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