

Race: Tradition and convenience, or taxonomic reality? More on the race concept in Polish anthropology

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ABSTRACT Against the background of the race debate and the principal elements of the current understanding of human intraspecific variation, we present the status of the race concept in Polish anthropology. Using questionnaires, we twice surveyed physical anthropologists about their agreement with the statement “There are biological races within the species *Homo sapiens*.” In the 1999 study, 62% of respondents disagreed with race (defined as subspecies) and 31% accepted it. In the 2001 study, this proportion was reversed: only 25% rejected race (by any definition) with the remaining respondents (75%) differing widely as to its accepted meaning. Each time, age was significant factor in differentiating the replies – in general, acceptance of race increased with age while rejection declined. It appears that Polish anthropologists regard race as a term without taxonomic value and often in a populational sense. Here we point out, however, the risks associated with the “metaphorical” use of the term “race”, as it relativizes the essential error of perceiving the existence of subspecific taxa within our species.

KEYWORDS race, human variation, physical anthropology, subspecies

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Introduction: The race debate

The intraspecific variability of humans has been one of the major enduring problems of physical anthropology since its emergence as a separate discipline in the 18th century. For almost 200 years, the description of and explanation for this variability have almost exclusively turned on the notion of human races, treated as taxonomic units within our

species. The term “race” was adopted by anthropologists from extra-scientific parlance where it originally referred (and still does) to breeding practice. It first appeared in scientific literature thanks to Buffon, who used it to replace Linnaeus’ term “variety” in reference to the intraspecific variability of humans. However, it owes its subsequent career in anthropology mainly to Blumenbach and his (1795) *De generis humani varietate nativa*.

As BIONDI and RICKARDS [2002] pertinently observe, physical anthropology has, from its very outset, been affected by an epistemological fallacy. The existence of human races, instead of being treated as a research hypothesis, was accepted as fact requiring no verification, and soon became a paradigm. People assumed they knew what race meant (see Figure 1), and that the existence of significant human differences had long since been demonstrated scientifically [MOLNAR 1983]. Thus the racial paradigm functioned for decades, and only in the mid-20th century was an attempt made to call it into question.

The history of the ideas of human racial differentiation, with all the negative consequences of its application and the arguments for its apparent inconsistency with biological knowledge, has frequently been propounded over recent decades (among others: HUXLEY and HADDON 1935; MONTAGU 1942, 1964; MEAD *et al.* 1968; GOULD 1981; BANTON 1987; SHIPMAN 1994; MARKS 1995; REYNOLDS and LIEBERMAN 1996; WOLPOFF and CASPARI 1997; BIONDI and RICKARDS 2002; CASPARI 2003) and hence requires no repetition here. Worth noting, however, are the principal elements of the current understanding of human intraspecific variability.

The development of the 19th-century race conceptions, and the classification systems they generated, was based on essentialist (typological) assumptions. This facilitated their popularization outside science. DARWIN [1871], to whom biology owes a new, evolutionary, and hence, anti-essentialist (anti-typological) perception of species, was skeptical towards human races as subspecies, and emphasized their transitional nature and

liquid boundaries. His doubts, however, produced no major effect on anthropologists. In the early 1930s some anthropologists became dissatisfied with racial typology. HUXLEY and HADDON'S [1935] *We Europeans*, besides being an important antiracist book, questioned the existence of races and was first to suggest replacing the term "race" with "ethnic group" – the idea later propagated by MONTAGU [1942].

The formation of a synthetic theory of evolution in the mid-20th century finally ended the typological way of defining species [MAYR 1963]. Assent to the postulates of this synthesis also implied the elimination of typology from the description of intraspecific variability. Yet, for physical anthropology, this did not connote dispensing with the race concept. As BIONDI and RICKARDS [2002] and CASPARI [2003] point out, anthropologists merely transformed the typological concept of race into a populational one, some of them (e.g., GARN [1962]) perceiving "population" as just another term for "race". Since the 1960s, DOBZHANSKY [1962] has stressed that populations (or races) are not taxonomic units – they are genetically open systems. In spite of this, however, populations were often treated as closed, and therefore, as ARMELAGOS *et al.* [1982] conclude, many studies of populations were just as typological as the studies of race.

The development of populational genetics, however, provided a basis for the falsification of the race concept. The anthropologist who strove hardest to demonstrate that the modern advances in biology, including genetics, were incompatible with the "anthropological" concept of race was MONTAGU [1942,

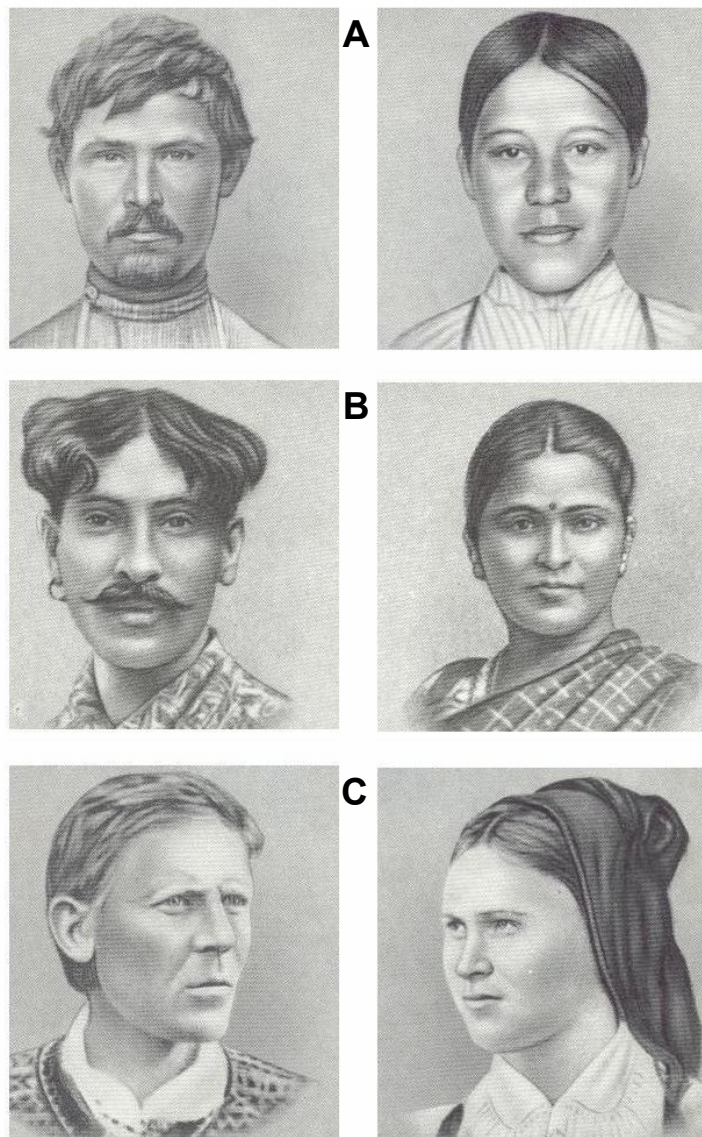


Fig. 1. Examples of “races” according to NESTURKH [1966] with his original description: (A) Man and woman from the Udmurt ASSR (East European group of the North Europeoid race with an admixture of the Ural-Laponoid contact group); (B) Indian man and woman of Hindustan (Indo-Mediterranean or South Europeoid race); (C) Norwegian man and woman (Atlanto-Baltic group of the Baltic or North Europeoid race).

1964]. Around the same time, the discussion by zoologists of subspecific taxa (e.g., in *Systematic Zoology* [WILSON and BROWN 1953]) led to the conclusion that a subspecies should not be a formally recognized category in systematics, as this is a unit determined on subjective and arbitrary grounds and no possibility exists for delineating its boundaries. (Race was regarded as synonymous with subspecies.)

In the early 1960s, LIVINGSTONE [1962, 1964] propounded and justified his famous statement: “There are no races, there are only clines” (p. 279), emphasizing that the absence of races did not imply the ignoring of human intraspecific variability. Among a series of populations, allele frequencies display continuous distribution patterns – clines. This was later confirmed by other authors, e.g., MENOZZI *et al.* [1978]. BRACE [1964] applied the clinal concept to demonstrate a non-racial approach towards the understanding of human diversity.

LEWONTIN [1972] showed that there is more genetic variation within individual populations than between human races: As much as about 85 percent of human genetic variance is intra-population; the remaining 15 percent is accounted for by differences between human groups (of which, 8 percent of genetic variance is between populations, and a mere 6 percent accounts for “inter-racial” variability). LEWONTIN [1972], therefore, went on to argue that racial classifications have no genetic basis. It should be mentioned that ROSENBERG’S *et al.* [2002] estimate was even higher than Lewontin’s: “Within-population difference among individuals ac-

count for 93 to 95% of genetic variation; differences among major groups constitute only 3 to 5%.” (p. 2381).

Finally, by means of molecular genetic data, TEMPLETON [1998] showed more recently that not only is it impossible to support the concept of human races based on its traditional definition (employing differences in gene frequencies and spatial distribution), but also one based on a modified definition of race incorporating the notion of “distinct evolutionary lineages”, as none of the geographically separated “continental” populations can be considered as a separate lineage. An analysis of human DNA haplotype trees [TEMPLETON 2002] has shown that the gene flow within the entire human species populating all the continents has been continuous and multidirectional. TEMPLETON [1998] therefore argues that:

Because of the extensive evidence for genetic interchange through population movements and recurrent gene flow going back at least hundreds of thousands of years ago, there is only one evolutionary lineage of humanity and there are no subspecies or races under either the traditional or phylogenetic definitions (p. 647).

In summary, no justification can be found for the existence of races as taxonomic units at the subspecific level. Many anthropologists, however, continue to use the term “race”, and when asked whether human races exist, reply largely in the affirmative. We, therefore, decided to determine the status of the race concept in Polish anthropology, the sense Polish anthropologists assign to the term “race”, and in which part that sense is taxonomic (synonymous with subspecies).

Polish surveys

Materials and methods

In two consecutive studies, KASZYCKA and ŠTRKALJ [2002], and KASZYCKA and STRZALKO [2003], assessed the current attitude of Polish anthropologists towards the concept of race. In order to accomplish this, questionnaires were designed and distributed among the members of the Polish Anthropological Society (PAS) at the Society's biennial meetings in 1999 and 2001. All the respondents held at least an MSc degree, and were employed by, or were PhD students at, various Polish academic or research institutions.

In the 1999 survey (carried out in Warszawa–Rynia), the questionnaires were distributed to a group during the general assembly of the PAS after the election of the society's central board. Eighty people present were polled; the completion rate being almost 70%. The participants in the survey were asked whether they agree with the statement "There are biological races (meaning subspecies) within the species *Homo sapiens*". The phrase was the same as that used by Lieberman and his co-workers [LIEBERMAN *et al.* 1989, LIEBERMAN and REYNOLDS 1996], except that after "biological races" the words "meaning subspecies" were added. Three answers were then offered: 'yes', 'no', and 'cannot tell'.

In the 2001 follow-up survey (carried out in Toruń), questionnaires were distributed to all ninety people attending the extraordinary assembly of the society. Two people stood at the exit doors collecting the questionnaires after the assembly. In addition, over the follow-

ing few months, a dozen or so more persons (those who had not attended the meetings) were asked (either in person or via e-mail) by one of the present authors (KAK) to complete the questionnaire. The total completion rate for this survey was very high (94%). The participants in the 2001 survey were asked whether they agree with the statement "There are biological races within the species *Homo sapiens*". A simple choice of two answers was offered: 'yes', and 'no'. Those who answered 'yes' were then asked which of the four basic meanings of "race" (geographical, typological, populational, or subspecies) they accepted.

Results

The 1999 survey

In the first survey (KASZYCKA and ŠTRKALJ [2002]), 31% out of 55 respondents agreed with human races (meaning subspecies), 62% disagreed, and 7% found it difficult to tell. In that study a dependence was sought between the type of response and a number of factors (which the respondents were asked to supply anonymously): age, highest degree obtained, and the employing institution. All three factors turned out to be significant in differentiating the replies.

On the basis of age, the respondents were grouped into three 15-year groups: 24-38 years, 39-53 years, and 54-68 years. The acceptance of race clearly increased with age while rejection declined. The correlation between response and age is statistically significant (chi-square = 10.5; $df = 4$; $p < 0.05$). In sum, those who agreed were (on ave-

rage) greater than 50 years old, those who disagreed were (on average) less than 40 years old, and those who could not tell greater than 55 years old.

In regard to the highest degree obtained, most Polish anthropologists with an MSc or PhD disagreed with the statement “There are biological races within the species *Homo sapiens*”, while most respondents with habilitation (DSc) and the status of professor agreed with it. The correlation between response and degree attained is highly significant (chi-square = 16.7; $df = 4$; $p < 0.01$).

Besides analyses by age and degree, another approach employed was to examine attitudes towards race relative to employing institution. Respondents were grouped into two types of institutions – universities, and all other (including AWF – academies of physical education, AM – medical schools, WSP – higher pedagogical schools, research centers such as PAN – the Polish Academy of Sciences, and other, smaller ones). Such a division was justifiable since universities employ the largest proportion of physical anthropologists (about 50% of respondents), who, moreover, are concerned with anthropology in its broadest sense. There were clear differences in the respondents’ views of race in relation to employing institution. Those associated with universities rejected race (as subspecies) five times more frequently than they accepted it, while those associated with all other institutions accepted and rejected race with almost the same frequency. The correlation between response (albeit excluding the variant, ‘cannot tell’) and institution is statisti-

cally significant (chi-square = 5.67; $F_i = 0.33$; $p < 0.05$).

In the 1999 study, specifying the meaning of race was then considered necessary for clarity (the term “race” has been used with several different meanings in anthropology, and biology in general, and has become very ambiguous), but appeared to have a disadvantage in that the results of that survey could not be fully compared with those of the American anthropologists. KASZYCKA and ŚTRKALJ [2002] concluded that although a majority of Polish physical anthropologists (62 %) reject race defined as subspecies, it is possible that they might still support the concept of race in other of its many definitions. Therefore, to test this hypothesis, and to further elucidate the status of the race concept in Polish anthropology, a follow-up survey was conducted two years later.

The 2001 survey

In the second survey (KASZYCKA and STRZAŁKO [2003]), 75% out of 100 respondents accepted race using the following connotations: geographical – 17%, typological – 13%, populational – 35%, subspecies – 3%, and two different meanings simultaneously – 7% (amongst these 5% selected the “subspecies” one plus another), while 25% rejected race (see Figure 2). Again, a dependence was sought between the type of response and several factors: sex, age, highest degree obtained, place (city) of academic education, affiliation – i.e., graduating institution and employing institution, and participation or not in the previous survey.

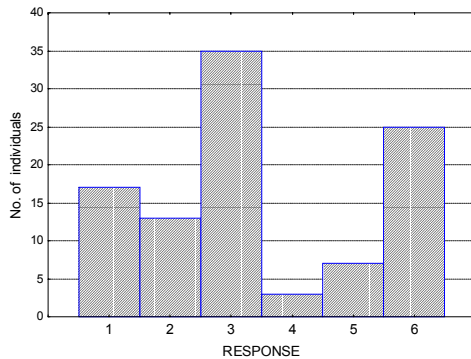


Fig. 2. Proportion of respondents selecting different meanings of race: (1) Geographical, (2) Typological, (3) Populational, (4) Subspecies, (5) Two definitions, (6) No races.

It should be mentioned that because of the small sample sizes, the category “other”, i.e., “subspecies” and “two definitions”, was omitted by KASZYCKA and STRZĄŁKO [2003] from their further analyses. Therefore, just four types of responses were then taken into consideration (agree: typological, agree: geographical, agree: populational, and disagree with races). On that division, two factors, i.e., age and place (city) of education, turned out to be significant in differentiating the responses. In other words, age and place of education were the critical factors for determining the chosen meaning of race.

On the basis of age, the respondents were again divided into three age groups. In general, the highest percentage of the oldest generation of physical anthropologists agreed that human races exist – 92%, followed by the youngest generation – 73%, and then the middle-aged generation – 66%. The oldest generation (56-72 years) selected the “populational” meaning of race most frequently, none selected the “geographical” one, and only two respon-

dents disagreed that races exist. The middle-aged generation (39-55 years) selected the option that races do not exist most frequently, while the youngest generation (25-38 years), surprisingly, selected the “geographical” concept of race quite frequently, while selecting the “typological” one very infrequently. The correlation between response and age is statistically significant (chi-square = 20.3; $df = 6$; $p < 0.005$). The median age of the respondents accepting the “typological” meaning of race was 52 years, that for the “populational” concept – 47 years, the “geographical” one – 32 years, and 39 years for those rejecting race.

On the basis of place (city) of university-level education, respondents were grouped into three: Poznań, Wrocław, and all others. Such a division was due to sample sizes – 34 respondents from Poznań, 25 from Wrocław, and 37 from all other places, but furthermore justified by the fact that the two mentioned cities are the largest centers of physical anthropology in Poland, having the largest numbers of staff and graduating students. In sum, those respondents having their university-level education from Poznań and Wrocław rejected race more frequently than the group educated in other cities, while those from other places selected the “typological” meaning of race much more frequently (27% versus 6% and 4%). The correlation between response and place of education is statistically significant (chi-square = 13.21; $df = 6$; $p < 0.05$).

In this study, in contrast to the 1999 one, there was no correlation between response and higher degree obtained, nor there was a correlation between response and affiliation.

Table 1. The 2001 study: Proportions of different views on race of Polish anthropologists by sex, highest degree obtained, age, graduating institution, place of academic education, employing institution, and participation in the 1999 survey.

Response	Total		Sex		Degree			Age Group (yrs)			Graduating Institution			Place of Education*			Employing Institution			1999 Survey		
	N	M	F	MSc	PhD	DSc	25-38			39-55			56-72			Univ.	Wroc.	Other	Univ.	Other	Yes	No
							25-38	39-55	56-72	Univ.	Other	Other	Univ.	Other	Univ.							
Agree	75	34	41	16	33	26	29	23	23	23	59	16	25	16	32	45	30	45	30	33	42	
Subspecies	8	6	2	0	3	5	1	3	4	7	1	2	2	2	4	3	5	3	5	1	7	
All other meanings	67	28	39	16	30	21	28	20	19	52	15	23	14	28	42	42	25	42	25	32	35	
Disagree	25	10	15	7	12	6	11	12	2	23	2	9	9	9	5	11	14	11	14	9	16	
Total (N)	100	44	56	23	45	32	40	35	25	82	18	34	25	37	56	44	42	56	44	42	58	

*Total number does not sum up to 100 because no answer to this question was provided in some questionnaires.

In the present study, a different aspect of the 2001 data was taken into consideration – i.e., the division of responses into three types: “race meaning subspecies”, “race in any other of its meanings”, and “no race”. The responses as broken down by the above-mentioned factors are summarized in Table 1.

Based on such a division of replies, only one statistically significant correlation – that between age and views towards race was found. The youngest generation of physical anthropologists had a deficit (the observed number was much lower than the expected number in the case of a random distribution) in choosing the “subspecies” connotation of race. The middle-aged generation showed a deficit in selecting “other meanings” of race, whilst having an excess (the observed number was much higher than the expected number) in stating that races do not exist. Finally, the oldest generation had a deficit in disagreeing that races exist, while showing an excess in selecting race as “subspecies”, and “all other meanings” of race (see Table 1, Figure 3). The correlation between response and age is statistically significant (chi-square = 9.63; $df = 4$; $p < 0.05$), as is the dependence expressed in terms of the results of the analysis of variance ($F = 4.09$; $p < 0.05$).

The median age for those respondents accepting the “subspecies” connotation of race was 59 years; the median age for those accepting race in any other of its possible meanings was 43 years; and that for those rejecting race was 39 years (see Figure 4).

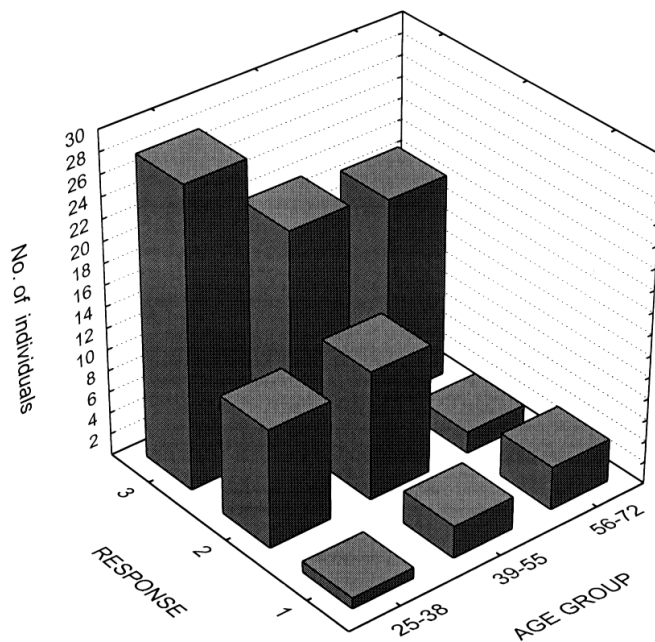


Fig. 3. Responses [(1) Subspecies, (2) No races, (3) All other meanings of race] by age of respondent.

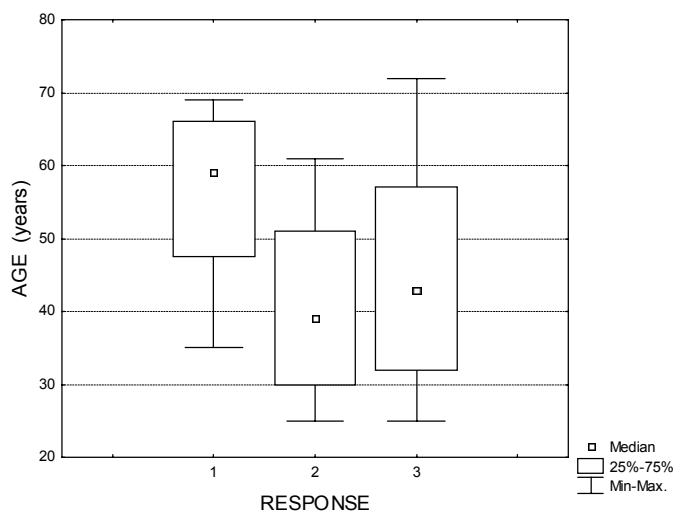


Fig. 4. Age of respondents by response (1) Subspecies, (2) No races, (3) All other meanings of race. Statistically significant differences are between pairs: 1-2, and 1-3.

Discussion

While in both of the previous Polish studies the authors had focused more on the rejection of race in general, as well as (in the second study) on the proportions of acceptance of three essential connotations of race (geographical, typological, and populational), the focus of the present study was the taxonomic meaning of race – i.e., acceptance of subspecies.

On comparing the results of the 1999 and 2001 Polish surveys, both similarities and differences can be noticed. In both (along with three different variants of grouping), age was always a significant factor in differentiating the replies: In general, acceptance of race increased with age while rejection declined. KASZYCKA and STRZAŁKO [2003] showed a contrast between the two surveys with regard to percentage of rejection of the concept. In the 1999 study, 62% of respondents expressed non-belief in the taxonomic significance of race (i.e., the subspecies definition), while in the 2001 study, only 25% rejected the race concept by any definition; the remaining respondents differing widely in regard to the accepted meaning of race.

An interesting finding was revealed in the analysis of replies from the participants in both surveys. (Three-fourths of participants in the first study – i.e., 42 out of 55 persons – again participated in the second study). Whereas 17 individuals agreed with the statement that “there are biological races meaning subspecies” in the 1999 survey, only one participant who had participated in that survey agreed with the subspecies connotation of race in the survey of 2001.

This must imply that some of the participants in the previous survey had such a strong sense of the reality of human races that, although they, apparently, did not agree that races are equivalent to subspecies, they nevertheless still answered ‘yes’. In other words, if one has no choices, one can still accept race (however defined), but if a choice of race’s meaning is offered, few (in this case only 8%) respondents agree with race as a subspecies.

In general, the results of the 2001 Polish survey corroborated KASZYCKA and ŚTRKALJ’S [2002] assumption that although physical anthropologists have increasingly become inclined to abandon the concept of subspecies among living humans, the concept of race by some other definition might still endure.

The fact that in the 1999 survey a majority of Polish anthropologists (62%) rejected human races as subspecies proved that, in this case, the Poles concur with the Americans: According to LIEBERMAN *et al.* [2003], 69% of US physical anthropologists and 80% of cultural anthropologists nowadays reject race (although CARTMILL and BROWN [2003] suggest that this percentage might not be as large as Lieberman claims). The fact, however, that in the follow-up survey a greater percentage of Polish anthropologists accepted the race concept (by any of its definitions) proves that opinions continue to differ. In general, the Polish surveys, as well as the European pilot survey (based on 60 respondents from 18 European countries) [KASZYCKA *et al.* 2003], show that the Polish and European view on the race concept differs from the American view in a greater percentage of those who accept the concept. It should be

mentioned, though, that in their European pilot study, KASZYCKA and colleagues [2003] found a significant difference in respondents' views on race based on country of university-level education: Those educated in Western Europe rejected race more frequently than those educated in East-Central Europe (formerly, the Soviet-block countries).

The present study also shows that, unlike US anthropologists for whom the issue of "race" is, above all, a taxonomic issue, Polish anthropologists tend to regard race as a term without taxonomic value: Only 8% agreeing with the subspecies connotation of the term, while as many as 35% (see Fig. 2) viewing race as a substitute for "population".

The reasons for the differences between the Polish and the US anthropologists in regard to attitudes toward the race concept were described in detail by KASZYCKA and STRZAŁKO [2003]. Below, we summarize the five most important factors that might have influenced these differences: (1) Traditions of the Polish Anthropological School (and CZEKANOWSKI'S [1934, 1962] system of racial typology); (2) Education: The long period of isolation of Polish science from the West, curtailment of international contacts, lack of exposure to the Western world's literature, and the fact that Polish anthropologists are not taught that "races do not exist" – no Polish anthropology textbook has ever advocated such a stand, and the same is likely true of graduate training; (3) Socio-political history: Half a century of socialism; (4) Semantics: Possible misunderstanding of the main issue being not the existence of human variation but, as LIVINGSTONE [1962]

put it, "that this variability does not conform to the discrete packages labelled races" (p. 279); human morphological variation being continuous and gradual, overlapping population boundaries, and forming geographic gradients – i.e., clines; (5) Attitudinal factors (avoiding a response): A high response rate for Polish physical anthropologists with a low percentage of race rejection, as against a twice that lower response rate for US anthropologists with a two-and-a-half times higher percentage of race rejection.

In summary, one may say that amongst current Polish anthropologists there exists a small, yet increasing tendency to abandon the concept of race in general (i.e., by any of its definitions), but a strong tendency to reject the concept when race is identified as subspecies.

Concluding remarks

The question remains, of course, as to whether the term "race" is useful (it has been long argued that it is not), and whether there is any real need for the defining of some populations as races. Employing the term "race" in the populational sense, as a substitute for local population, may be convenient and is certainly traditional. That, indeed, was DOBZHANSKY'S [1962] understanding of race when he, in the discussion with Livingstone in the same issue of *Current Anthropology*, wrote:

... if races have to be "discrete units," then there are no races, and if "race" is used as an "explanation" of the human variability, rather than vice versa, then that explanation is invalid. Races are genetically open systems while species are closed ones (p. 279).

If, however, we should agree with DUNN and DOBZHANSKY'S [1952] definition that: "Races can be defined as populations which differ in the frequencies of some gene or genes" (p. 118), then we might well quote Howells who (according to OUSLEY and JANTZ [1996]) supposedly said: "There are no races, there are only populations" (p. 20).

Another question arising is why it is so hard to dispense with the term race altogether. One of the reasons is certainly an attachment to paradigms – a well-known attitude in the history of science. Let us call this "tradition" for simplicity. But this is not all. There is also the factor of convenience. This was convincingly described by HULL [1998], who explained why "ordinary people", as he called them, are so attached to the notion of human races. These people classify the perceived variations of the living world, including humans, typologically. If genes affect our way of thinking at all, as HULL [1998] argues, then essentialism, or in other words, stereotype thinking, lengthens the list of such "genetically conditioned" psychic propensities. This manner of thinking about the specific variability of the living world is contradictory to our knowledge of evolution, yet this knowledge is, after all, not innate. Hence, there is no reason why people who have not acquired it should see differences between species in terms other than the typological and thus have no reason for not believing species valuation to be morally justified.

By the same token, a typological classification of intraspecific variability may seem real, intuitively easy to grasp and, from the perspective of the history of our species, adaptively advantageous.

These advantages, however, have become questionable in modern human populations, yet the mechanism of attaining them has remained. The aversion to or prejudice against strangers, who are easy to label as representatives of a "race", thus gains moral support: they are genetically different. Ordinary people do not wonder as to whether races are open or closed systems; neither can they be expected to understand the principles of breaking up genetic variance into an intra- and an inter-population components. But to what extent should anthropologists consider themselves ordinary people?

In conclusion, and following on from the above, we would like to point out the risks associated with any "metaphorical" use of the term "race". Firstly, in a sense, it relativizes the essential error of perceiving the existence of subspecific taxa within our species. Secondly, it has an adverse effect on the awareness of people who do not deal with anthropology professionally.

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Streszczenie

Badania nad zróżnicowaniem rasowym człowieka mają długą i kontrowersyjną historię. Antropologia fizyczna, kształtująca się jako niezależna dyscyplina w XVIII w., przejęła termin „rasa” z praktyki hodowlanej i zastosowała go do zmienności wewnątrzgatunkowej człowieka. Wkrótce istnienie ras ludzkich, zamiast stać się hipotezą badawczą, zostało uznane za fakt nie wymagający weryfikacji i przyjęło postać paradygmatu. Paradygmat ten funkcjonował przez dziesięciolecia i dopiero od połowy XX w. zaczęto go kwestionować. WILSON i BROWN [1953] wnioskowali, że takson „podgatunek” nie powinien być formalną kategorią systematyczną w zoologii ze względu na brak możliwości wskazania jego granic. LIVINGSTONE [1962, 1964] przedstawił i uzasadnił swą słynną opinię: „*Nie ma ras, są tylko kliny*” podkreślając przy tym, że stwierdzenie braku ras nie oznacza ignorowania zmienności wewnątrzgatunkowej człowieka. LEWONTIN [1972] wykazał, że zmienność genetyczna naszego gatunku w 85% realizuje się wewnątrz populacji, a jedynie 15% jest zmiennością międzygrupową (z czego 8% wariacji – międzypopulacyjnie, a jedynie 6% – „międzyrasowo”); klasyfikacje rasowe nie mają zatem podstaw genetycznych. Wreszcie TEMPLETON [1998], wykorzystując dane genetyki molekularnej dowodził, że nie tylko nie da się utrzymać koncepcji ras ludzkich w oparciu o tradycyjną, tzw. populacyjną definicję, ale także o jej zmodyfikowaną wersję uwzględniającą element „odrębności filogenetycznej” grupy. Wielu antropologów ciągle jednak posługuje się terminem „rasa”, a zapytani o to czy rasy ludzkie istnieją, w poważnej części odpowiadają twierdząco.

Przedstawiany artykuł zawiera wyniki sondażu, który miał na celu określenie stosunku współczesnych antropologów do pojęcia „rasa” – jaki sens temu terminowi nadają polscy antropolodzy i w jakiej części jest to sens taksonomiczny. Podczas dwu kolejnych ogólnopolskich konferencji antropologicznych PTA w 1999 i 2001 r. przeprowadzono anonimowe badania ankietowe. W pierwszym, uczestnicy zostali zapytani, czy zgadzają się ze stwierdzeniem, że „w obrębie gatunku *Homo sapiens* istnieją biologiczne rasy (rozumiane jako podgatunki)”; zaproponowano 3 odpowiedzi: ‘tak’, ‘nie’ i ‘trudno powiedzieć’. W drugim zapytano, czy „w obrębie gatunku *Homo sapiens* istnieją biologiczne rasy” oferując 2 odpowiedzi: ‘tak’ i ‘nie’. Odpowiadających twierdząco poproszono o wskazanie jednego z czterech podstawowych znaczeń terminu „rasa”: geograficznego, typologicznego, populacyjnego i podgatunkowego.

W 1999 r. [KASZYCKA i STRZALKO 2002], spośród 55 respondentów 31% zgodziło się z istnieniem ras ludzkich, 62% wyraziło sprzeciw i 7% nie miało zdania. W 2001 r. [KASZYCKA i STRZALKO 2003], spośród 100 respondentów 25% odrzuciło rasy, natomiast 75% je zaakceptowało, używając następujących konotacji (patrz Rys. 2): rasa geograficzna – 17%, typologiczna – 13%, populacyjna – 35%, jako podgatunek – 3%, dwa znaczenia – 7%

(z czego 5% wybrało „podgatunek” i inną). W badaniach poszukiwano również zależności pomiędzy rodzajem odpowiedzi a kilkoma czynnikami: wiekiem, stopniem naukowym i miejscem pracy (1. ankieta) oraz dodatkowo płcią, ukończoną uczelnią i miejscem edukacji (2. ankieta). W pierwszym badaniu wszystkie 3 czynniki istotnie różnicowały odpowiedzi, w drugim tylko dwa – wiek i miejsce edukacji. Przy innym pogrupowaniu odpowiedzi respondentów drugiej ankiety, zastosowanym obecnie (na 3 kategorie – patrz Tab. 1), wystąpiła jedna istotna korelacja – między wiekiem a rodzajem odpowiedzi (Rys. 3). Mediany wieku osób udzielających różnych odpowiedzi pokazuje Rys. 4.

Za każdym razem (w obu badaniach i przy 3 różnych metodach podziału) akceptacja rasy rosła z wiekiem, a odrzucanie rasy z wiekiem malało. Fakt, że w badaniu z 1999 r. polscy antropolodzy w większości (62%) odrzucili rasy rozumiane jako podgatunki oznacza, że w tym przypadku Polacy byli zgodni z Amerykanami: wg. LIEBERMANA i wsp. [2003] obecnie w Stanach Zjednoczonych 69% antropologów fizycznych i 80% antropologów kulturowych w ogóle odrzuca pojęcie rasy. Jednakże w kolejnym badaniu (z 2001 r.) wystąpił znacznie większy procent polskich antropologów akceptujących pojęcie „rasa” w ogóle, co dowodzi, że pod tym względem opinie te jednak się różnią. Można zatem wnioskować, że polscy antropolodzy skłaniają się raczej ku odrzucaniu podziału współczesnego *Homo sapiens* na podgatunki, podczas gdy samo pojęcie „rasa”, definiowane w jakikolwiek inny sposób, może być akceptowane. Badania te pokazują też, że w przeciwieństwie do Amerykanów, dla których istnienie ras jest przede wszystkim zagadnieniem taksonomicznym, polscy antropolodzy w zasadzie nie nadają rasie sensu taksonomicznego: tak widzi rasę tylko 8%, podczas gdy aż 35% nadaje jej znaczenie populacyjne. Przyczyny różnic między polskimi a amerykańskimi antropologami w stosunku do pojęcia „rasa” zostały szczegółowo przedstawione przez KASZYCKĄ i STRZAŁKO [2003]. Podsumowując stwierdzamy, że wśród polskich antropologów istnieje niewielka, choć rosnąca tendencja do odrzucania pojęcia „rasa” w ogóle; silna tendencja natomiast istnieje by odrzucić to pojęcie kiedy rasa definiowana jest jako podgatunek.

Nadal otwarte pozostaje zagadnienie czy termin „rasa” jest terminem użytecznym i czy istnieje potrzeba nazywania populacji rasami. Jeśli przyjąć za DUNNEM i DOBZHANSKYM [1952], że „rasy mogą być zdefiniowane jako populacje, które różnią się częstością genu lub genów”, to wówczas równie prawdziwe jest stwierdzenie Howellsa, że „nie ma ras, są tylko populacje”. Powstaje też pytanie, z czego wynika niechęć do odstępowania od terminu „rasa”. Jedną z przyczyn jest niewątpliwie przywiązanie do paradygmatów; skrótowo można to nazwać tradycją. Istnieje jeszcze czynnik wygody. Przekonywująco sformułował to HULL [1998], pisząc, że zwykli ludzie dokonują klasyfikacji dostrzeganej zmienności świata żywego typologicznie. Na tej zasadzie typologiczna klasyfikacja zmienności wewnątrzgatunkowej człowieka może wydawać się realna i intuicyjnie zrozumiała. Jednak argument, jakim jest wygoda wynikająca z faktu posługiwania się terminologią potocznie zrozumiałą, przez antropologów nie powinien być wykorzystywany.