1. Ethnic Voluntary Organizational Dynamics in Canada: A Report

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The Report deals with selected findings drawn from historical data and field research conducted in 1973 (Radecki, 1975). The data pertains to the structures and activities of the Polish and other ethno-cultural minority group's voluntary organizations and their roles in the maintenance and preservation of cultural distinctiveness for members and for their respective groups. The Report focuses on the comparison of findings, derived by the present author, with other available and relevant studies.

A preliminary search for literature on ethnic voluntary organizations discovered little of immediate relevance to this subject in Canada. The studies, cited below, appear to be the only ones providing some concrete data and analyses, and are amenable to a limited comparison with the findings of the present study. The strategy used in the Report is to draw out such topics and information from these studies which also constitute the subject matter of the present study, in order to allow for comparisons and generalizations, and to a lesser extent, outline briefly the scope and a number of findings related specifically to the Polish voluntary organizations in Canada.

The historical portrayal, and the data derived from the field research among Polish organizations in Toronto, led to similar conclusions as made by the researcher among ethnic organizations in Montreal (Breton, 1961). The presence of network of organizations (organizational completeness), hinders integration or entrance of immigrants into the host society by providing loci of orientation, sources of continuous allegiance, and situations for practicing cultural distinctiveness.

Three sets of factors, found to be strongly related to the participation in, and support for ethnic organizations in Montreal, apply also to the Polish organizational dynamics in Toronto and in other parts of Canada. The first set of factors

1 The study aimed to establish the role that the voluntary organizational structure, its religious and secular components, plays in the preservation and maintenance of aspects of culture of Poland for the Polish immigrants and their descendants in Canada. The study examined the establishment and later dynamics of organizational life in the years 1850 to 1973. A field research was carried out in the Metropolitan Toronto in 1973, focusing on the structures, goals, and activities of Polish organizational life in that city.
was that "the more different the people of certain ethnicity are from the members of the native community, the easier it will be for them to develop their own institutions to satisfy their needs" (Breton, 1964; 204). The present study has shown that the values, customs and traditions characterizing Polish immigrants to Canada in the past, were strongly related to the establishment and later growth of separate organizations and institutions.

The second set of factors related to the "level of resources" that the ethnic group controlled in the new setting. These resources included the presence or the absence of occupational and trade skills or other means of coping with economic security, necessitating creation of mutual aid and insurance organizations. The historical portrayal of Polish organizations stressed that mutual aid and insurance were among the primary aims of both, lay and parish affiliated organizations since the Polish immigrants, largely unqualified labourers or farm workers, were subject to job insecurity, seasonal lay-offs, and low rates of remuneration. The more recent developments suggest that these concerns have ceased to be important because of occupational mobility and a general economic security enjoyed by the Polish group.

The third set of factors, found important in the Montreal study, were the number of immigrants and the rates of their arrival to Canada. The present study considered that the "phases" of arrival of Polish immigrants were closely related to the establishment, growth, diversification and sophistication in the structures and activities of the Polish organizations. Significantly, the declining numbers of new Polish immigrants in the last decade is posing a threat to the survival of various components of the organizational structure, conclusions almost identical to those of the Montreal study.

Greek organizations in Toronto were found to be "Greek culture preserving force" (Nagata, 1969) and similar conclusions are made in the case of Polish organizations in this city. On the other hand, membership in Greek organizations, which were termed "highly stratified", serves as a demonstration of economic achievement and arrival at a higher social status for the first generation Greek immigrants, providing incentives for joining to the second and later generations. In the case of Polish organizations, involvement in organizational life is largely limited to the first generation immigrants and their children before they reach maturity. The Polish organizational structure is not recognized as a vehicle of socio-economic class distinctions by the majority of first generation members, while the second and succeeding generations do not maintain sufficiently strong bonds of affiliation with the Polish group at their maturity to resort to organizational involvement as a demonstration of their socio-economic status. In other words, Polish organizations do not serve as frames of reference for those born or raised in Canada.

A leadership study of the Italian group in Toronto discovered very few acknowledged leaders, and the researcher concluded that "most ethnic minorities have a difficulty in finding a person of rare qualities - leadership." (Jansen, 1969; 41). The field research data, based on the questionnaire responses and interviews among Polish organizations' officers, found that this was not true for the Polish group in Toronto in 1973. A few individuals are acknowledged as ex officio spokesmen for other organizations and the unaffiliated Polish people, especially in relations with Canadian governments. In addition, there are a number of individual leaders representing various sub-groups within the Polish