

# The Race Concept in Six Regions: Variation Without Consensus

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## ABSTRACT

*Race, once the central concept in physical anthropology worldwide, now varies in the degree of support it receives in different regions. We present the currently available information on the status of the concept in the United States, the Spanish language areas, Poland, Europe, Russia, and China. Rejection of race ranges from high to low with the highest rejection occurring among anthropologists in the United States (and Canada). Rejection of race is moderate in Europe, sizeable in Poland and Cuba, and lowest in Russia and China. A discussion on the scientific and contextual reasons influencing these variations is presented. The tension between scientific evidence and social influences varies from region to region. The methods used in the studies reported here included questionnaires and content analysis. Response rates to questionnaires were often around 50 percent (with exception of the Polish studies). We discuss reasons for the low rates. Although a uniform method of data gathering is desirable, it may not suit scientists working in different traditions of theory and research. We conclude that it is once again timely to discuss the race concept in international meetings where all scientific and political changes occurring throughout the world in recent past decades are taken into account.*

**Key words:** race concept, variation, populations, subspecies, physical anthropology, history of ideas

## Scientists in Six Regions

### *The United States*

The survey of the status of the race concept in different regions we begin with the United States and content analysis of physical anthropology textbooks from 1932 to 1999. In the United States up to 1969 only one of 20 introductory textbooks rejected race (i.e., Montagu<sup>1</sup>). The decade of the 1970s was a turning point in which 10 texts rejected race and 5 accepted the concept<sup>2</sup>. In the decade of the 1980s the trend intensified and in the 1990s nine texts rejected, and only one author accepted race<sup>3</sup>, almost the reverse of 1932–1969.

A second source of information in the United States was a series of questionnaires mailed to members of the American Anthropological Association: (1) In the first of these series<sup>4</sup> a questionnaire was mailed to college and university teachers of physical anthropology in the United States. Among other questions, they were asked to agree or disagree with the statement that »Races do not exist because isolation of groups has been infrequent, populations have always interbred.« Agreeing was 37 percent of 374 respondents. (2) In 1985 in the second of the series, in response to the statement »There are biological races in the species *Homo sapiens*,« 41 percent (148) of responding physical anthropologists rejected the race concept<sup>5</sup>. (3) In 1999, in response to the same statement, 69 percent of responding physical anthropologists rejected the concept<sup>6</sup>. The combined tally of respondents in physical anthropology who accepted race or were neutral was 31 percent, a similar pattern to Cartmill's<sup>7</sup> study of articles using race and published in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* for the year 1996.

The questionnaire of 1999 mailed to members of the American Anthropological Association also provided responses

from several English-speaking nations where the rejection of race was the following: Canada, 72 percent (33 of 46); Great Britain, 70 percent (7 of 10). The numbers were small but consistent with the results from the United States. The similarity among the responses from English-speaking nations may reflect relatively similar cultures and interchange of scholars.

Part of the reason for the rejection of the race concept by physical and cultural anthropologists is suggested by the agreement of 91 percent (551 of 605) of respondents with this statement in the 1999 survey: »Human biological variation is best understood in terms of continuous gradations (clines) not races«. However, it is interesting to note that 48 percent (284 of 590) agreed that: »Race refers to a non-random clustering of skeletal and soft tissue traits that tend to be expressed in populations.« We regard this as a vague and minimal conception of race in striking contrast to Ashley Montagu's<sup>8</sup> definition: »Groups of human beings in which each individual possesses most of a particular set of traits that individually and collectively serve to differentiate them from individuals in all other groups«. It was this definition that Montagu rejected, whereas the minimalist definition to which 48 percent agreed could be taken either as a rejection of the traditional idea of race as defined by Montagu or as legitimizing the use of race for the weakest non-random covariance of traits.

### *Spanish language areas*

In 1999 a multinational survey was e-mailed by Antonio J. Martinez Fuentes<sup>9</sup> to 150 specialists in biological anthropology, and similar field, in 20 nations. They were asked whether there are biological races among human beings. Seventy persons responded, with 66 percent answering no, 31 percent answering yes, and 3 percent neutral. Apart from responses

from the United States (14 rejecting race), most of the responses rejecting races were from Spain (10). There were 40 responses from seven Latin American nations (Argentina, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Brazil, Guadalupe, Mexico). Agreeing that there are human biological races were 20 respondents, with 18 rejecting race. Responses from each Latin American nation numbered one or two, hence in our analysis section we will emphasize Cuba where 17 accepted race, and 9 rejected the concept.

### Poland

In Poland, the first introductory anthropology textbook appeared in 1955 – i.e., at the end of the period of isolation of Polish science from the West, and during the fascination with racial typology (which lasted until roughly 1965). Out of 12 textbooks (or manuals), some with several editions, that have appeared to date, none ever rejected race, though clear changes in textbooks occurred in the mid-1970s, when the typological concept was no longer the only one represented. Textbooks after 1975 were giving reviews of all the main concepts (geographical, typological, populational, and clinal). The majority of their authors took a stand against the typological concept, preferring to refer to »populations.« The decrease in popularity of the subject of human racial variation over the years 1926–2001 can also be observed in the decrease in publications on that subject in a leading Polish journal on physical anthropology – *Przegląd Antropologiczny* (now *Przegląd Antropologiczny – Anthropological Review*) from about 40 percent of articles in pre-war and post-war volumes until mid-1970s – to less than 20 percent in subsequent volumes<sup>10</sup>.

A 1999 study by Katarzyna Kaszycka and Goran Štrkalj<sup>11</sup> focused on physical anthropologists in Poland attending meetings of the Polish Anthropological Society (PAS) in 1999. The co-authors added

the term subspecies to the statement and asked whether respondents agreed that »There are biological races (meaning subspecies) within the species *Homo sapiens*.« Out of 55 respondents, 62 percent disagreed, 31 percent agreed, and 7 percent found it difficult to answer. The authors then concluded that although a majority of Polish anthropologists reject race defined as subspecies, it is possible that they might still support the concept of race in one of its many other labels.

To test this hypothesis, a follow-up study was conducted at the 2001 meeting of the PAS by Katarzyna Kaszycka and Jan Strzałko<sup>12,13</sup>. The authors then provided four basic meanings of race. Out of 100 respondents, rejecting race were 25 percent, but 75 percent accepting it using the following labels: geographical race 17 percent, populational 35 percent, typological 13 percent, subspecies 3 percent, and two of the four mentioned above definitions simultaneously 7 percent (amongst these 5 percent selected the 'subspecies' one plus another). Clarification is needed as to the empirical meaning of these labels to the respondents.

### Europe

In their 2002 pilot survey Kaszycka and colleagues<sup>14</sup>, aiming to assess the attitude of different European anthropologists toward the race concept, distributed questionnaires among the members of the European Anthropological Association at the biennial meeting of the society in Zagreb, Croatia. The participants in the survey were asked two questions: (1) Do you agree with the statement: »There are biological races (meaning subspecies) within the species *Homo sapiens*?« and (2) »Do you support race in any other of its meanings?« In general, out of 60 respondents from 18 European countries (at the end respondents from all non-European countries were excluded) 43 percent agreed (on either of the two definitions),

53 percent disagreed, and 3 percent could not tell. In this survey a clear difference in the respondents' views of race based on region of academic education was found. The participants in the survey from Western Europe rejected race more frequently than those educated in Eastern and Central Europe (i.e., former the so-called Soviet-block countries).

In his 1999 e-mail survey, reported above, Martinez Fuentes received replies from four European nations with 14 out of 15 rejecting the race concept. However, this method depends upon a web of contacts, accumulated by the author. The likelihood of it being skewed should be balanced by the fact that 17 Cuban respondents of 26 supported the race concept.

#### *Russia*

The international conference called »Race, Myth or Reality?« took place in Moscow, Russia in 1998. More than 100 physical anthropologists and geneticists from Byelorussia, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Mongolia, Poland, and Russia took part in the conference. The participants took up a special Resolution devoted to the race problem. They declared that the »race concept« in principle cannot be equal to a biological taxon. But they believe that physical anthropology terminology might be corrected, put in order and standardized according to the current practice in science, after wide international discussion. Reported in a later part of this paper is part of the document voted on and accepted by the overwhelming majority of participants. We note that voting as an assembled group at a conference is subject to influence from the immediate situation, and does not necessarily represent individual opinions, although one scholar from the audience declared that human races could be recognized as different *species* of the genus *Homo*.

In *The History of Biological Anthropology in Russia and the Former Soviet Un-*

*ion* it is stated that »Racial typology of individuals had never been popular in this country«<sup>15</sup>. In the view of V. V. Bunak<sup>16</sup> race was a dynamic category, and he argued strongly against typological thinking, and anticipated the later works of T. Dobzhansky<sup>17</sup> on the population concept of race. In the 1993 history of biological anthropology, Godina and co-authors<sup>15</sup> present an analysis of 1229 articles in 92 issues of *Voprosy Antropologii* from 1957 to 1990. It is surprising that among the 24 topics race is not explicitly one of them. The closest related topic is »anthropometry and anthroposcopy of living peoples« which is about 25 percent of all articles. Godina et al.<sup>15</sup> state that ethnic studies traditionally consisted of three parts: »ethnic anthropology (studies of human races), human evolution... and human morphology«. In the 1955–1959 investigation by Bunak<sup>18</sup> of 17,000 adult men and women in 107 regions, »twelve local populations could be distinguished by their anthropological features«. Our conclusion from the above information is that although the term race is used in writing, race is not favored as a formal taxon within *Homo sapiens*, and that populations and types are considered valid morphologically but without racist implications.

#### *China*

The status of the race concept in China has been studied by examining research papers in *Acta Anthropologica Sinica*, China's leading journal devoted to biological anthropology<sup>19,20</sup>. Out of 779 research papers from 1982 to 2001, 41 percent (324) were directly related to the study of human variation. To estimate whether the concept of race is utilized authors used criteria established by Cartmill<sup>7</sup> in a similar survey of research papers published in the *American Anthropologist*. According to Cartmill<sup>7</sup> 'racial categories' include: »traditional racial taxa ('Australoids'), self-contradictory geographical de-

scriptions ('Australian Europeans'), ethnic identifications inferred by the researcher by just looking at people, and any groupings in terms of supposed historical origins rather than observable characteristics. «. When these criteria were applied to the relevant 324 papers published in *Acta Anthropologica Sinica* it was found that all of them utilized the concept of race. Over 80 percent of these papers investigated biological differences of ethnic groups in China, while indicating they were all of the same Mongoloid race. Those that examined Paleolithic fossils reported that some Mongoloid traits are present in Middle Pleistocene *Homo erectus* populations. Wang et al.<sup>20</sup> conclude that the concept of race is deeply rooted in Chinese biological anthropology and uncritically accepted among scientists working in the discipline. They also hypothesize that the reasons for this should be sought in China's specific social and political contexts within which science is practiced, and its relative isolation from Western anthropology.

### **Discussion of Scientific and Contextual Influence on the Race Concept**

#### *The United States*

The natural science reasons for the rejection of the biological race concept by anthropologists and by prominent biologists in the United States<sup>21,22</sup> include: (1) Starting in the late 1940s and the 1950s Sherwood Washburn<sup>23</sup> encouraged physical anthropologists to »replace typological constructs with the core ideas of the new synthesis of evolutionary theory – the genetic diversity of populations and the modification of gene frequencies through selection, mutation, and drift«<sup>24</sup>. In 1963 Washburn<sup>25</sup> declared that »the goal of physical anthropology should not be the classification of human diversity but rather explanation of the processes and mechanisms that gave rise to it«<sup>24</sup>. (2) The lack

of agreement on how to define the race concept<sup>26</sup>. (3) Disagreement on how to classify diverse and overlapping human populations into racial categories. (4) The inadequate degree of geographic covariance in alleged racial traits. (5) The continuous distribution of most genetic traits<sup>27</sup>. (6) Awareness of the preceding items arising from the concept of clines and the clinal distribution of sickle cell alleles corresponding to the distribution of malaria throughout West Africa, the Mediterranean, and South Asia<sup>28</sup>. (7) The utility of studying the natural selection sources of each clinal distribution rather than using a racial approach<sup>29</sup>. (8) While acknowledging Montagu's<sup>30</sup> role in defining race as a myth, there seems to be less awareness of his pioneering use of the idea of populations and the principles of genetics (gene flow and independent assortment) to disprove the myth of racial homogeneity and purity. (9) Often cited in rejecting the utility of race is the study by geneticist Lewontin<sup>31</sup> of 17 genes in which he found that only 6.3 percent of genetic diversity is accounted for by alleged interracial categories (also see Templeton<sup>32</sup>).

Lewontin's study<sup>31</sup> led to the often-used phrase that there is more genetic variation within populations than among them. Similarly, Livingstone<sup>33</sup> is quoted as saying: »There are no races, there are only clines«. W. W. Howells prefers to say that there are no races, there are only populations (according to Ousley & Jantz<sup>34</sup>). Whether conceptualized in clines or in populations, the perception of the magnitude of racial differences is exaggerated according to Cavalli-Sforza<sup>35</sup>: »We automatically assume that differences of similar magnitude exist below the surface, in the rest of our genetic makeup. This is simply not so: the remainder of our genetic makeup hardly differs at all« (quoted by Campbell & Loy<sup>26</sup>).

One textbook of physical anthropology<sup>26</sup> summarizes the situation regarding

biological variation: »It seems that in order to understand modern human variation, we must study individual traits, their genetic bases, and their evolutionary histories—not arbitrarily constructed biological races«. It should be noted that C.L. Brace<sup>29</sup> has repeatedly argued for the study of variation in one or more noncovarying traits as a complete alternative to the use of the race concept.

In addition to the foregoing natural science reasons for rejecting the biological race concept there are social science considerations. Beginning in the time of Franz Boas, early in the 20th century, there is the increasing entry into American anthropology of persons biographically different from the anthropological establishment in Washington, DC and at Harvard University. The generation of new anthropologists at Columbia University studying with Boas were immigrants, Jews, Blacks, Native Americans, and many were women who experienced both racial and gender discrimination<sup>36</sup>.

Increasingly women and younger persons entered the discipline. In the 1960s, during their graduate training, they were exposed to and some participated in the social movements concerned with civil rights, gender equality, and opposition to the war in Viet Nam<sup>37</sup>. Defenders of the race concept may prefer to portray the rejection of race as being a politically correct response. Instead, it is proposed that their social experiences of discrimination and awareness of the use of racism to excuse the slaughter of millions in the Holocaust and in the massacres of World War II stimulated their sensitivity to the new natural science data and concepts and enabled them to reject the concept of race. The transition away from race required two new ways of thinking about human differences. One was based on clinal variations noted above. In the second the differences between human societies were conceived as cultural ethnic groups in

which one or more populations were identified on the basis of »behavior, customs, or genealogy (descent)«<sup>26</sup>. This is a cultural distinction that avoids explaining differences between groups on the basis of race or genetic determinism, although regrettably, some use ethnicity to refer to biological races as in *The Bell Curve*<sup>38</sup>.

The transition from biological race to the cultural concept of ethnicity, and some of the influences that brought that about may be unique to anthropology in the United States. The strength of the trend in the United States raises questions about whether support for race has undergone similar trends in other nations.

#### *Spanish language areas (especially Cuba)*

In 1958 Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris<sup>39</sup> published *Minorities in the New World*, referring to the origin of the people of the Americas from three racial stocks with four centuries of »mixing and fusion of diverse peoples and cultures on a scale which is perhaps unprecedented in all of human history«. During those four centuries a struggle occurred between indigenous peoples, people of mixed ancestry, and those more or less of European origin. This struggle is also conceived as a complex and varied process analyzed as race formation by Omi and Winant<sup>40,41</sup>.

Since most responses to the survey by Martinez Fuentes were from Latin America we will present the context affecting the race idea from 1870 to 1945 as described by Graham<sup>42</sup> in *The Idea of Race in Latin America 1870–1940*. During this period the racial theories that prevailed in Europe, North America, and Latin America involved the classifying and ranking of humans into superior and inferior races<sup>42</sup> and accordingly shaped public policies and theories in the sciences. In the later decades of the 18th century colonialism and the expansion of the United States seemed to prove this hierarchical view

of the races. It would not be until Nazis began the genocide of the so-called inferior races that most scientists would denounce these racist theories. Before that the ideology of racial superiority and social Darwinism were used to justify the power of the lighter-skin social classes.

The varied makeup within nations of Latin America and the development of a sense of natural identity were met with diverse responses. Brazilian intellectuals ignored the warnings from scientists about race mixture and advocated progress through »whitening« of the population. In Brazil even mestizos accepted the racial hierarchy, and mulattoes identified with whites against Indians or Blacks. The influence of European ideas seemed »scientific« and reinforced racism during the 19th century but in the 20th century genocides in the Amazon and in Tierra del Fuego aroused reaction among some of the intellectuals<sup>43</sup>.

In Argentina dark skinned peoples seemed to have disappeared partly through interbreeding and mostly through the merciless destruction of indigenous peoples. Scientific racism and nation building seemed incompatible. In Mexico after the Revolution of 1910 intellectual elites opposed the racism of the pre-revolutionary regime, although not criticizing racism towards the Chinese, and even towards Indian ethnic groups. In several nations racist beliefs influenced policy decisions regarding immigration, elections, and criminal behavior, labeled as deviant.

There was one voice against racism early in this period. It was soundly scientific, and not polemic, being based on empirical observations. It was written by Anténor Firmin<sup>44</sup>, a Haitian anthropologist in response to Count Arthur de Gobineau's<sup>45</sup> four volume *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* (1853–1855). It was published in French in 1885 with the title *The Equality of Human Races*. Firmin<sup>44</sup> examines data on cranial capacity calcu-

lated by Broca<sup>46</sup>, Morton<sup>47</sup>, and Davis<sup>48</sup>, and used by them to support the inequality of races. He observes that on Davis's list the Marquesa Islanders have average cubic cranial contents higher than that of the Anglo-Saxons. He finds similar striking contradictions in the cephalic indices published by Broca. Firmin<sup>44</sup> writes that »we may well have the right to declare that the cephalic index does not in any way give anthropologists sufficient grounds for dividing the human races into distinct groups«. Firmin's thorough, eloquent, and empirical book establishes the case for the equality of races by presenting evidence that mating between races does not produce inferior offspring. The evidence was Darwinian: the rapidly increasing number of mulatto children of black and white parents. Firmin also presented solid evidence of equality of achievement. Unfortunately the prevailing outlook of the 19th century, and well into the 20th, was that of race hierarchies. Illustrating how scientific concepts express the social conditions of their time, Firmin<sup>44</sup> recognized that Morton's<sup>49</sup> evidence of inferior Negro cranial capacity was written when slavery was under attack. Firmin's book would receive little attention until re-discovered by anthropologist C. Fluehr-Lobban and published in English translation in 2000. Ashley Montagu's widely known challenge to racism was first published in 1942 when knowledge of Nazi racial practice of genocide was becoming more widely known. There would be six more editions of Montagu's book<sup>30</sup>.

In Latin America the forces that led to the increasing rejection of the ideas of race and racism among some anthropologists were similar to those listed earlier in the United States. These included the new genetic data and the sensitivity to them made possible by knowledge of the holocaust<sup>50</sup>. However, in Cuba, as reported above by Martinez Fuentes, a surprising

17 accepted race and 9 rejected the idea. This, despite the 1946 book by Cuban professor Fernando Ortiz<sup>51</sup>, *The Fallacy of Race*, which made available to Spanish scholars ideas challenging the reality of race.

The continued support for the race concept in Cuba can be partly attributed to Luis Montané who introduced the discipline of physical anthropology to Cuba. He received medical training in Paris, and at the same time studied anthropology under Paul Broca, Jean Louis Quatrefages and Jules Hamy, all three of whom were researching and publishing about human races. In 1899 Montané was appointed holder of the first chair of Anthropology and Anthropometric Exercises at the University of Havana. Earlier he had established a laboratory patterned after Broca's in Paris<sup>52,53</sup>. Montané retired shortly after World War I, but given that his mentor Broca<sup>46</sup> worked extensively on the anthropometry of races, traditionally conceived, it seems likely that there would be students of Montané who would pass that view of races on to the current generation of anthropologists. He influenced »two generations of students and professionals on the island – much the same way that E. A. Hooton (1887–1954) influenced the development of physical anthropology in the United States«<sup>53</sup>. In terms of the social and historical context it should be noted that Cuba was a very racist society under the Spanish system of color-clan bias, and continuing under the century of United States domination of Cuba prior to Castro. It is possible that current emphasis on affirmative action has also lent continued support to the idea of race as seen in Martínez Fuentes' survey<sup>9</sup> in which 17 of 26 accepted the race concept.

### Poland

Poland has a long tradition of physical anthropology and the study of human bio-

logical/racial variability which emerged as a separate discipline in the mid-19th century with the first university lecturer in anthropology – Józef Majer. In 1873 a Paris-educated anthropologist, Izidor Kopernicki, was *ad personam* given a chair of physical anthropology at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, the second university chair in this discipline in Europe after the Parisian one of Paul Broca<sup>54</sup>. At that time, Polish scientists' opinion on race was the same as in Europe. That was to change, however, with the rise of the Polish school of anthropological typology, which emerged in Lvov under Zürich-trained anthropologist – Jan Czekanowski in 1913.

Czekanowski, a pupil of Rudolf Martin, developed his own sophisticated but consistent system of racial typology<sup>55–57</sup> based on his new, original, taxonomic methods. He, and his followers, believed that a population consists of a mixture of various racial types. In this way, a long tradition of typology began in Poland, which dominated the study for over half a century, functioned as a separate branch within anthropology and was taught as a major university course. As Strzałko<sup>10</sup> points out: »Lack of touch with the findings of international biology resulted e.g., in Polish anthropology sinking for many years into typology which it has not entirely shaken off, even to date«. There were basically two main reasons for this sinking: The tradition of the Polish anthropological school, and that Polish science underwent a long period of isolation, due to the World War II and then to Stalinism and Lysenkoism (roughly years 1939–1956).

In the 1950s the Polish anthropological school split into two opposing factions – one under Czekanowski (at that time in Poznań) – the »anthropo-statisticians« (as Bielicki et al. <sup>54</sup> call it) and the other, the »morphologists«, under Michalski (in Łódź). At the end of the 1950s, the third group – the »populationists«, under Bie-

licki (in Wrocław), appeared, and the debate over typology began. In 1962 Polish anthropology received international attention when articles by Wierciński<sup>58</sup> and Bielicki<sup>59</sup> were published in *Current Anthropology*, with the former advocating typology and the latter opposing it. Soon after that, and with the deaths, in 1965, of the leaders of the typological schools – Czekanowski and Michalski, racial typology began to decline. It stopped being taught at universities, and later textbooks would change<sup>60,61</sup>.

Overcoming typological traditions, however, cost a great deal of effort, and the fall of the typological school did not occur without victims. As Bielicki and colleagues<sup>54</sup> put it, »Symptoms of disorientation and disheartenment became particularly visible among members of one university team; the group, formerly very active, became virtually dormant for many years«. In general, after typology was discredited in Poland, physical anthropologists retreated from the issues connected with human biological variation, being attracted by other themes of research: auxological, populational, osteological, etc.

Nowadays, as studies of Kaszycka and Strzałko<sup>12,13</sup> show, the Polish view on the race concept is different from the American one with a greater percentage accepting the concept. According to those authors, there are several reasons for such a discrepancy, the most important being: Traditions of anthropological schools, the differing socio-political histories (and no negative connotations with 'race'), education (among others the fact that Polish anthropologists are not taught that »races do not exist«, semantics, and attitudinal factors (e.g., avoiding a response). It seems that Polish anthropologists, unlike those Americans who support the race concept, tend to regard race as a term without taxonomic value: Only 8 percent of responding Polish anthropologists expressed belief in the taxonomic signifi-

cance of race – i.e., the subspecies definition, while as many as 35 percent accepting race as a synonym for 'population'<sup>12,13</sup>.

The American practice of using »ethnic groups,« was advocated by Huxley and Haddon<sup>62</sup>, Montagu<sup>30</sup>, and Lieberman and Reynolds<sup>37</sup>, in order to refer to biological populations without the baggage of the race concept. Objection to this usage was expressed by Wierciński<sup>58</sup> because it was: »an even more dangerous concept, opening possibilities for racist theories about the biological superiority of entire nations or nationalities« as was done during the nationalistic racism of Nazi Germany. Furthermore, in Kaszycka and Štrkalj's<sup>11</sup> opinion, it confuses biology and culture.

### *Russia*

In Russia, the first introductory anthropology textbook appeared in 1941<sup>63</sup>. Later Levin and Roginsky had written a textbook and its endured three edition (1955 – 1978)<sup>64</sup>. The latest edition of a textbook on physical anthropology was written in 1999 by Khrisanfova and Pervozchikov<sup>65</sup>. All the books mentioned above contain a part especially devoted to the human races and support the race concept. They define race as the totality of the people having common physical types whose origin is connected with a certain geographical area. However, due to the social nature of mankind, race cannot be equal to any zoological taxon. Russia was occupied by peoples of different physical types: Baltic in the North, Europeans in the Center, Caucasians in the area of the Caucasus, and Asiatics in the East, with mixed variants in the contact zones. The history of Russia involved interactions at different times between Eastern and Western populations who in part were of different physical types. The study of population contact and interbreeding is a process that has been a tradition in Russian anthropology<sup>66</sup>. Physical types were

held to be mainly congruent in time and space inside each of the autonomic Russian republics. The first monograph devoted to what is »race« appeared in reaction to Hitler's monstrous fascist concept about »superior« and »lowest« races, as determined by cephalometry<sup>67</sup>.

In 1937 Victor Bunak<sup>16</sup> wrote on »Race as a historical concept.« He was a supporter of the »geographical concept« of race<sup>18</sup>, and viewed it as changing in place and time. An individual actually never reflects the features of the race to which he belongs, racial variability is at the population level, as seen in Alekseev's<sup>68</sup> »The Geography of Human Races.« The Russian race concept was shaped in the struggle with racism. According to Yablonsky<sup>69</sup> in order to struggle with racism and win it is necessary to have strong weapons, and so it seems necessary to teach students about race and its ethno-genesis and how they connect. This reaction to Nazi racism continued and is seen in the introductory text by Mikhail Nesturkh: *The Origin of Man*<sup>70</sup>. In the section on »The Races of Mankind« races were »analogous to but not homologous to a subspecies group in zoological classification«. »There is no one race of mankind that is biologically superior to any other race.... Studies made by Soviet anthropologists show that there is no significant difference in the brain structure of representatives of the various races«.

The 1998 conference in Moscow on »Race: Myth or Reality« was previously mentioned. After discussion the participants at the conference approved the following positions: (1) According to the old anthropological tradition big human morphological variations which are the result of polymorphism united by common origin in certain geographical areas had been given the name »races.« (2) Reality of the racial subdivisions of *Homo sapiens* are supported by the totality of the scientific data investigated on the different le-

vels of human organism: morphological, physiological and genetical. Racial classification created with regard for morphological criteria clearly enough reflect the phylogeny of the separate populations and groups of populations. (3) Negativism to the race concept which became apparent during the last decades, in many respects might be explained by the psychological shock which all progressive humanity had felt in the epoch of Hitlerism. The interest in racial analysis was lost and focus of attention of the physical anthropological investigations was concentrated on the genetic structures and genetic markers. The result we can see on the popular level and in scientific meetings is a substitution or mixing of such concepts as race, ethnos, nation, language, culture has taken place that actually is very dangerous because it results in the different pseudo-scientific insinuations.

In addition to the report of the above conference, Professor Yablonsky declares that voting on scientific issues cannot resolve them. Also, it is possible that some colleagues vote without knowledge of what is meant by race, or lose interest in it because of the current political situations. It should also be noted that there is an apparent contradiction between paragraph 2 above referring to the »reality of the racial subdivisions,« and Yablonsky's summary of the status of the race concept<sup>69</sup> that: »the lack of covariation among morphological traits provides strong support for the Russian position that the 'human race' cannot be subdivided into any biologically meaningful taxa«. Therefore, as stated above, Russian anthropologists view races as populations with differing morphology and phylogeny but not at the level of subspecies taxa.

The most recent publication on race in Russia is written by eight physical anthropologists<sup>71</sup>. It reaffirms the distinctions made above on the reality of races (without subspecies labels) as a result of

dynamic historical and adaptive processes and lacking hard borders, but with racial characteristics expressed more clearly in the center of a large race. Existence of transitional forms supports species unity but does not deny the existence of races proven by different anthropological methods including craniology, dermatoglyphics, odontology, physiology, auxology, and genetics.

### *China*

According to Frank Dikötter<sup>72</sup>, a textbook written by the first professor of anthropology in China<sup>73</sup> stated that »anthropology studies all races, from the Chinese and the English down to the dwarf slave [i.e., the Japanese] and the black slave«. In 1920, after the 1911 foundation of the Republic, one primary school textbook presented a chapter on »human races«: »Among the world's races there are strong and weak constitutions, there are black and white skins, there is hard and soft hair, there are superior and inferior cultures... they are not of the same level«<sup>72</sup>. In 1937, Y. Chen, Director of the Medical College of Tongji University proposed that cranial weight was the valid indicator of the degree of civilization, stating that: »If we compare the cranial weights of different people, the civilized are somewhat heavier than the savages, and the Chinese brain is slightly heavier than the European brain«<sup>72</sup>.

Scientists have continued to promote racial identity in China by tracing the »Mongoloid race« to its descent from Peking Man in Zhoukoudian<sup>72</sup>. Population groups have been studied using sociological techniques. Genetic distances have been calculated showing that racial differences within China between Tibetans, Mongols and Uighurs are relatively small. Serologists also claim that the »Negroid race« and the »Caucasian race« are more closely related but are more distant from the »yellow« race, with the »Han race« as

the core group<sup>74,72</sup>. »Modern anthropology [in China] defines the human community by race, nationality, region, age and sex, declaring that there exist difference[s] among the same social members<sup>75–77</sup>.

Race is a reality in Chinese science. Dikötter's<sup>72</sup> review of the concept in China reaches three conclusions about the concept and its social context. First, race is central to beliefs about Chinese identity. Belief about biological blood and descent is a powerful and cohesive source of common identity necessary because of the vast diversity of religious practices, family organization, languages, and regional cultures. Second, »racial discourse thrived largely thanks to, and not in spite of, folk models of identity, based on patrilineal descent... which were widespread in late imperial China« and were re-adopted beginning in the late 19th century by scientists. Third, the complexity of discourse about race was not due to influence from Westernization. Despite the borrowing of the language of science the Chinese »invented their own versions of identity«.

### **Discussion**

The rejection of race as a valid concept is present to varying degrees in all of the regions reported here except China and Russia. This rejection varies from high to low with highest rejection of race occurring amongst physical anthropologists in the United States, other English speaking nations (mostly Canada), and Poland; moderate rejection of race in Europe; and sizeable, though quite low, rejection of race evidenced in Poland and Cuba.

Several qualifications are necessary. The rate of rejection by Polish physical anthropologists is listed as both high (62 percent<sup>11</sup> as of 1999) and sizeable (25 percent<sup>12,13</sup>). As reported above, this is the result of different questions being asked in the two studies. And therefore amongst

current Polish anthropologists there exists a small tendency to abandon the concept of race in general (by any of its meanings), but a strong tendency to reject the concept when race is defined as subspecies. The rejection of racism in Russia was reported from a conference resolution in Moscow (1998), but it also seems to support the use of race although without taxonomic status. If the conference on race in which the document was adopted also had participants from Byelorussia, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Mongolia, and Poland then it is unclear to what extent the document represents attitudes of *Russian* anthropologists. In most of the studies cited here, the response rate and numbers in the population of possible respondents was quite low. The response rate in Martinez Fuentes<sup>52</sup> multinational study was 47 percent. In the 1999 study by Lieberman and Kirk<sup>6</sup>, only 46 percent of physical anthropologists responded. In the 2002 multinational European survey of Kaszycka et al.<sup>14</sup>, the response rate was about 50 percent. In the 1999 study by Kaszycka and Štrkalj<sup>11</sup>, the response rate was almost 70 percent, while in a follow-up 2001 study the response rate was very high – 94 percent<sup>12</sup>, and that was the only exception.

We cannot know the views held by those who did not respond. However, we propose the following possibilities for low response rates. (1) First, there were complaints that race was not defined and that statements were ambiguous or unclear about »biological race«, as well as complaints that only one particular meaning of 'race' was used, i.e., »subspecies« and not others. We believe this is likely to always be the case. After centuries of study and discourse there is no consensual agreement on what is meant by race, therefore the participants should be asked about what *they* mean by 'race,' and whether they believe their definition is

valid and useful in research. (2) A second reason is »political correctness« in which it is feared that almost any use of the term »race« may be labeled as racism<sup>11</sup>. As a result, some physical anthropologists whose discipline has a history of supporting the race concept may prefer to avoid the subject. (3) Thirdly, still another anthropologist may perceive the questionnaire as anti-race and hold that »ignoring of the racial differences that do exist in our species is dangerous because it disarms us in our struggle to fight racism and racial intolerance«<sup>69</sup>. (4) Fourthly, the method of distributing and gathering the data. Lieberman and colleagues, for the American studies, mailed their questionnaires (low response rate among physical anthropologists, though much higher among cultural anthropologists). Martinez Fuentes used e-mail (reporting a low response rate); in Kaszycka and Štrkalj's<sup>11</sup> 1999 study participants were expected to return the questionnaire after the meeting, or, as in 2002 Kaszycka and colleagues<sup>14</sup> European survey, after the session, and there was respectively – a 69 percent and an almost 50 percent response rate, while in the 2001 Kaszycka and Strzałko<sup>12,13</sup> study, two people stood at the exit doors collecting the questionnaires with a response rate of 94 percent. (5) Fifthly, some physical anthropologists may believe that the race concept is irrelevant to their specialization<sup>78</sup>. (6) Sixthly, an unwillingness to answer questionnaires (as it might be used against the respondent), or an unwillingness to mail them back/ return them, or viewing questionnaires as lacking validity.

The above discussion impels us to conclude that the time has *come to discuss* the race concept again in special international meetings taking into account all the scientific and political changes which have occurred in the world in the last decades.

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## KONCEPT RASE U ŠEST REGIJA: VARIJACIJA BEZ DOGOVORA

### SAŽETAK

Rasa, koja je nekada širom svijeta smatrana središnjim konceptom fizikalne antropologije, danas varira u shvaćanju u raznim regijama. Ovdje prikazujemo trenutno dostupne informacije o konceptu rase u SAD-u, španjolskom govornom području, Poljskoj, Europi, Rusiji i Kini. Odbacivanje koncepta o rasi varira u opsegu s najvišim stupnjem odbacivanja među antropolozima u USA (i Kanadi). Odbacivanje koncepta rase je umjereno u Europi, prilično veliko u Poljskoj i Kubi, a najmanje u Rusiji i Kini. Ovdje je prikazana rasprava o znanstvenim i kontekstualnim razlozima koji utječu na ove varijacije. Razlika između znanstvenih dokaza i socijalnih utjecaja razlikuje se od regije do regije. Metode koje se koriste u proučavanim studijama uključuju upitnike i analize sadržaja. Postotak odaziva na upitnike iznosio je oko 50% (s iznimkom studija u Polj-

skoj). Prezentirana je rasprava o razlozima tako niskog odaziva. Iako je poželjna jedinstvena metoda prikupljanja podataka, moguće je da ona ne odgovara znanstvenicima koji rade u različitom tradicionalnom i znanstvenom okruženju. Kao zaključak, napominjemo da je vrijeme za raspravu o konceptu rase na međunarodnim sastancima gdje bi se promatrale sve znanstvene i političke promjene koje su se događale u svijetu zadnjih desetljeća.