ECHOES AND MEMORIES OF POLAND:
MUSIC AND DANCE IN THE POLISH COMMUNITY OF TOLEDO, OHIO

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ABSTRACT

David Harnish, advisor

Immigrant groups in the United States have been extensively studied by social scientists, anthropologists, and ethnomusicologists. While first and second generations draw attention with their “otherness,” subsequent generations provoke researchers to explore their compound, often blurred, identities. Although immigrants tend to remain committed to their heritage the ways they do it are diverse. Not being provided with an immediate model they are forced to construct their identities from scratch, which often results in an unusual hybrid.

In this thesis I explore multiple ways in which members of the Polish-American community of Toledo, Ohio, craft their immigrant identities. Specifically, I investigate where and how they look for models of Polishness. Throughout the study it becomes apparent that the community is significantly diverse and therefore projects itself on the Toledo map as a colorful mosaic.

In the study of ethnic identity there exists a bi-polar continuum. A primordial view, which takes ethnic identity as biologically given, is countered by instrumentalism, where ethnic identity is not fixed but constantly mediated. Polish-Americans from Toledo tend to constantly mediate, create, and recreate their identities according to specific situations.

I focus on three Toledo’s sites where Polish-oriented activities are especially alive: a church, a restaurant, and a radio show. There, an image of Poland is presented in three different ways. Further, a close analysis of the Echoes of Poland dance group reveals music and dance as powerful tools in performing identities. Understanding dance as a “cultural text” combines in itself ethnochoreographical and anthropological approaches. While dancing, Echoes’ members
perform not only dances from their homeland but also enhance their Polishness, otherwise
hidden.

My research is based on extensive interviews with the members of Polish-American
community in Toledo, as well as my observation and participation in several community
activities.
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GLOSSARY

**Boze Cialo** – Polish ‘Body of Christ.’ A one-day religious celebration in Roman Catholic tradition. Features a ritual outdoors procession. A priest walks first, carrying the Holy Sacrament. He is followed by a crowd of practitioners. Traditionally the procession stops by four decorated altars. Songs and prayers accompany the procession. In Toledo, the procession walks along Lagrange Street, from St. Hedwig to St. Adalbert.

**Dozynki** – a traditional harvest festival celebrated at the end of harvest season. Typically it consists of a mass, procession, and feast with plenty of food, drink, music, dancing. A harvest wreath, that symbolizes the abundance of the harvest, is given a central place.

**Gorzkie Zale** – Polish ‘Bitter Lamentation.’ A Catholic liturgical service of an exclusively Polish tradition. It is held mainly during the Lent. Consists of songs and prayers.

**Kielbasa** – Polish ‘sausage.’ It is considered a staple of Polish cuisine. It is sold in fresh, dry, or smoked forms. Almost always based on pork.

**Kulturkampf** – German ‘culture struggle.’ German policies in relation to the Poles and the Roman Catholic Church, enacted from 1871 to 1878 by the Chancellor of the German Empire Otto von Bismarck. In particular, it had a major impact on the Polish-inhabited regions of Prussia. It was geared towards tearing down Polish culture, language, and Roman-Catholic religion. It caused great suffering among the Poles, but also resulted in a rise of strong national feelings.

**Kuschwants** – German ‘cow’s tail.’ A name for one of the Polish neighborhoods in Toledo created around 1880. It covered the area around Nebraska Avenue. Now, almost all signs of Poland have disappeared from Kuschwants.

**Lagrinka** – a Polish name for Lagrange Street. A name for one of the Polish neighborhoods in Toledo created around 1880. It covered Lagrange Street and surrounded areas. Now, although highly changed, it still represents the Polish-Americans in Toledo.

**Matka Boska Czestochowska** – Polish ‘Our Lady of Czestochowa.’ A painting of the Virgin Mary originally located in the city of Czestochowa (South of Poland). It has been believed that during the Swedish invasion on Poland in 1655 the painting was cut by a soldier and started bleeding. Since then, it has been considered special. Thousands of copies have been made and have found places in almost all churches in Poland. There is also one in St. Adalbertin Toledo.

**Mazowsze** – a name of one of the most famous folk dance groups in Poland, established in 1948. Its repertoire includes dances from all regions of Poland but most importantly from the Mazovian region (Central Poland). The group is well known for touring around the world and performing in front of Polish emigrants.

**Oplatek** – wafers used in Poland during the Christmas Eve supper. Baked from pure wheat, flour and water. Usually rectangular in shape, and very thin. Before the meal family members share the wafers wishing all the best to each other. Symbolizes forgiveness between people, and is meant to remind participants of the importance of Christmas, God, and family.
**Pasterka** – Polish ‘Shepherds’ Mass.’ A Christmas midnight mass, celebrated between December 24\(^{th}\) and 25\(^{th}\).

**Pierogi** – a traditional Polish dish consisting of half circular dumplings of unleavened dough that is stuffed with cheese, mashed potatoes, sauerkraut, cabbage, onion, meat, fish, mushrooms, or with a fruit filling such as blueberry or strawberry. They are typically served with plenty of sour cream.

**Polonia** – Latin ‘Poland.’ Refers to Polish diaspora – people of Polish origin who live outside Polish borders. Polish-Americans are sometimes called ‘American Polonia.’

**Swieconka** – food taken to church for blessing on Easter Saturday. Samples of food, such as a piece of kielbasa, an egg, butter, salt and pepper, bread, and cake, are put into a small basket. The basket is traditionally lined with a white linen or lace napkin, and decorated with sprigs of boxwood.

**Wigilia** – traditional Christmas Eve supper held on December 24\(^{th}\). It begins once the first star has been sighted. Typical traditions of wigilia include: Christmas tree, a bundle of hay placed under the tablecloth, leaving one extra empty plate for a stranger, family members giving gifts to one another, and singing Christmas carols. The number of dishes is traditionally twelve. Traditional dishes include: breaded carp filet, carp in aspic, zurek (sour rye soup), kutia (sweet grain pudding), noodles with poppy seeds, pierogi filled with potatoes, cheese, and cabbage, barszcz (beetroot soup), uszka (small dumplings), dried fruit juice, fried fish fillets, herring in oil, and mushroom or fish soup.
LIST OF INSTITUTIONS

Many institutions and organizations are involved in the Polish-American community’s life. Together, they form a quite complicated matrix. Some are correlated with one another, others function independently. To better orient my readers I provide a short descriptions of the most important institutions.

**Echoes of Poland** dance group – a dance group from Toledo that specializes in Polish folk dances. Started, directed and choreographed by Paulina Tul-Ortyl. Originally was independent and non-profit, since 2000 has been affiliated with Polish Roman Catholic Union of America. Meets and rehearses at PRCUA hall on N. Detroit Avenue.

**Holy Rosary Society** – started in 1908 at St. Adalbert parish. Its goal was to keep together the ladies of St. Adalbert. They were especially devoted to pray the rosary, worship the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to be of assistance in case of someone’s sickness. The society meets every other Sunday at St. Adalbert.

**Lagrange Street News** – a Polish-American newspaper. Established in 1993. Published on the first of every month by The Ohio Theatre, Inc. Distributed in North Toledo area covering 20,000 residents. Edited by Marty Blaszczyk.

**Ohio Historical Theater** – located on Lagrange Street. Built in 1921. At that time it had 1800 seats and was Toledo's third largest movie place. It was a venue where several activities were organized to provide the Polish-American community with cultural continuity. Currently, it has 964 seats and hosts performances of all disciplines, not necessarily Polish-oriented. It is still a place where the Polish-American Concert Band rehearses, and sometimes *Echoes of Poland* performs. It is now being extensively renovated. It is operated by a private non-profit corporation. President – Michael Nelson. The theater serves as home of The Toledo Area Theatre Organ Society.

**Toledo-Poznan Alliance** – an organization based on Toledo-Poznan (Poland) sisterhood. Carries out an exchange in education, technology, sports, and health between these two cities. Each year the Toledo-Poznan Alliance presents Dozynki (Polish harvest celebration) as a fund raising event for the orphanage in Poznan. President – Sr. Ann Francis.

**Polish Roman Catholic Union of America** (abbreviated, and later referred as PRCUA) – established in 1873. It is a nationwide organization that serves Polish-Americans around the country, with the main office in Chicago. It supports cultural activities, education, and sport. Provides funds for school stipends and insurance. It encourages its members to be “good Americans, good Poles, and good Catholics.” In Toledo, PRCUA owns a large building on N. Detroit Avenue, which serves as a rehearsal place for the *Echoes of Poland* dance group, and for Polish language classes.

St. Adalbert Parish – located on Lagrange Street. One of the first Polish parishes in Toledo. The church was built in 1907. There are now 680 families registered at the parish. Two Polish priests reside there. A mass in Polish is held every Sunday at 10 a.m.

St. Hedwig Parish – located on Lagrange Street. One of the first Polish parishes in Toledo. The church was built in 1879.

Stanley’s Five Star Market – located on Stickney Avenue, Toledo. A grocery store that sells Polish food. Owned by Joe Zychowicz.

Toledo’s Sister Cities International – founded in 1992. It links Toledo with cities from around the world, among them Poznan, Poland. Its goal is to support economic, educational, and cultural exchange between the cities. Works closely with Toledo-Poznan Alliance.

WCWA Radio Station – located in the Fort Industry Square building on Water Street, Toledo. It streams on AM 1230. It has been known for a large schedule of ethnic programming (Polish, German, Mexican, and Irish). Every Sunday morning the station broadcasts the Melodies of Poland show.
LIST OF IMPORTANT PEOPLE

During my fieldwork I met numbers of people. Some of them I interviewed, to others just talked, with some I became friends, and I do not even know names of many. All of them I consider important for the final result of my ethnography.

Here are a few names of people who seem to be crucial for the life of the community. Most of them serve an official role. I provide this list for clarity’s sake, as I will be referring to these names later in the thesis.

**Marty Blaszczyk** – main editor of the *Lagrange Street News* newspaper. His office is located in the Ohio Historical Theater. He serves as a kind of focal point for the community and knows almost everyone. He can say a few words in Polish.

**Father Marek Ciesla** – a priest at St. Adalbert and St. Hedwig churches. Resides at St. Adalbert. Was born in Poland. He has lived in Toledo (and in the U.S.) for twelve years. Writes for *Lagrange Street News*. He is fluent in Polish and in English.

**Janet Gawle** – a co-host of the *Melodies of Poland* radio show. She is a former member of the *Echoes of Poland* dance group. She is very active in the community. She travels to Poland often. She can say a few phrases in Polish.

**Father Paul Kwiatkowski** – a priest at Immaculate Conception parish. A violinist. He is an expert on the history of Polish immigrants in Toledo. He does not speak Polish.

**Michael Nelson** – a newly appointed president of the Ohio Historical Theater. He is not of Polish descent. He is highly involved in the community life. He does not speak Polish.

**Jack Sparagowski** – an owner, manager, and cook at the Ski’s restaurant. He can communicate in Polish.

**Lucy Szafranowicz** – a woman that I met at the Dozynki celebration. She is known to have started this annual tradition of fund-raising dinner. She was brought up in a very traditional family. She can communicate in Polish.

**Rob Szczublewski** – a co-host of the *Melodies of Poland* radio show. He is a former member of the *Echoes of Poland* dance group. During local events he usually serves as a master of ceremony. He does not speak Polish.

**Paulina Tul-Ortyl** – a director and choreographer of the *Echoes of Poland* dance group. Was born in Poland. She earned a degree in folk dance choreography at Maria Curie-Sklodowska University in Lublin (Poland). She is fluent in Polish and English.
(1) September 30, 2007, Sunday, Lourdes College, Sylvania, Ohio

A large hall. 200 people sit at approximately twenty tables. I am sitting at one of the tables surrounded by people whom I have never met before. We are here to celebrate Dozynki, a traditional Polish harvest festival. A catering company keeps bringing new dishes to our table. I am enjoying the food. It does not taste Polish, but is delicious nonetheless. Someone is trying to speak on the microphone. Only when I select his voice out from the general noise of chaotic conversations, laughter, and moving dishes do I realize that he is trying to lecture about the history of Polish immigration to Toledo. No one is paying attention. People are busy chatting with each other. Suddenly, an elder women next to me stands up and as loud as she possible can shouts out: “We are all Poles! We are the nation! We are the best nation! The best in the world! The world doesn’t know us yet, but we will show it! We will prove to the world that Poles are the best!!!” The crowd bursts out in an enthusiastic applause. I do not know what to think. I am puzzled...

(2) January 20, 2008, Sunday, St. Adalbert church, Lagrange Street, Toledo, Ohio

A beautifully decorated church, paintings and figures of the Saints, flowers. Cold. Smells like old wood, burning candles, and smoked herbs. I sit in the last row and look at people coming into the church. All of them are old, some very old, some need help to move. The priest walks out. Big sound of organ right above my head. “So far, so good,” I smile to myself, “Out of tune, exactly like back home.” People start singing. All words (in Polish) memorized, amateur wide vibrato,
and characteristic downward glissandos at the end of phrases. Immediately, in my mind, I see a small village church somewhere in Poland. I cry...

(3) January 20, 2008, Sunday, Ohio Historical Theater, Lagrange Street, Toledo, Ohio

Dark. Then bright light. “Please hold the flashlight for me,” says Marty Blaszczyk to me. “We will walk through the stage, then the auditorium, to the foyer. Follow me.” I smell dust. I try to walk carefully in the dark. Finally, Marty finds a central light operator and switches the light on. I can see the beautiful interior of the theater’s foyer. “Let’s sit down and talk.” It is freezing cold. Marty turns on a tiny gas heater. Does not help. I am freezing anyway. Luckily, Marty gets to business fast, he is an editor and a manager of a newspaper, he cannot afford to waste time. “We are on Lagrange Street. This is the heart of the Polish-American community in Toledo. Well, it used to be. Now it is different. Come, I will give you a ride tour around.” It is much warmer in his car. I am happy, and excited...

(4) November 15, 2007, Thursday, PRCUA Hall, N. Detroit Avenue, Toledo, Ohio

“No, no, no! That’s not like that, not at all. I’ve shown you this turn so many times before! You start from your right foot, then lift your left foot, but not all the way up, bend over towards me, then switch your feet, hold me, look at my eyes, keep your arms straight, balance your body, and jump higher.” Kevin is getting angry with me. “Oh, and also bring more slippery shoes next time. These are not going to work.” “Right, right, right. Very funny.” I am getting frustrated. Kevin is the best dancer in the Echoes of Poland folk dance group. I joined them just a few weeks ago. Now I am trying to learn the dances. All of them at once.
Polka, kujawiak, mazur, oberek… That’s sounds familiar. I think I kind of know them. Well, the names. “Why don’t you know the dances? You are Polish. It’s in your blood!” I am embarrassed...

Like many American urban areas, Toledo, Ohio houses a number of vibrant cultures. Ethnic neighborhoods, in which language and other traditions are scrupulously maintained, exist for peoples from Hungary, Germany, Ireland, India, and the Middle East, and other regions. One of the city’s most active groups is the Poles, who first came to Toledo in the 1870s. The pace of Polish immigration has slowed considerably in the past three decades, paralleling a decline in Toledo’s economic opportunities. Even so, new arrivals continue to settle in the city. The 2000 U.S. Census reveals that more than 46,000 Lucas County residents claim Polish ethnicity.¹

The Polish community remains committed to its heritage. There is a Polish-language newspaper, as well as Polish websites, festivals, and churches. Polish music is also alive. There are choirs, instrumental ensembles, and dance troupes. All such organizations are determined to maintain Polish tradition and pass it down to the next generation.

In this thesis I look at ways in which Polish-Americans in Toledo try to preserve their Polish identity. By examining different types of activities, especially musical ones, I investigate the reasons behind their willingness to maintain Polish identity. While attempting to make connections with Poland, the immigrants do not always know what Poland they are referring to: the contemporary one or that of past. I search for the source that they use while crafting this identity, relocated in time and space by Toledo Poles.

Throughout this study I look at several different places, institutions, individuals, and groups of people. The four episodes stories presented earlier continue throughout the thesis.

They serve as points of departures for the four chapters. The first one touches on the issue of ethnic identity. I present a theoretical basis for my further investigation on what, for the immigrants, it means to be Polish. Secondly, I look at the story of Polish immigration to Toledo. In the third chapter, I sketch a map of Toledo, and mark a few points of interests particularly important for my study. Finally, in the fourth chapter, I zoom out to a rehearsal hall where every Thursday *Echoes of Poland* practices their dances.

While I do not attempt to put myself in a focal point for this study, it is inevitable that my being Polish does not remain unnoticed. Not only do I enter the field as an ethnomusicologist, bringing a new scholarly element to the community, I also come to my informants as a Pole, bringing them a piece of their homeland. Also, objective information gathered by “me-scholar” is mixed with confusion, emotions, excitement, and embarrassment faced by “me-Pole” in the field. I hope that I find the right balance to present both.
INTRODUCTION

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1 is theoretical in nature. It provides a necessary background on different approaches and methods of studying ethnic identity. The naturalistic theory, according to which identity is given at a birth and therefore fixed and constant, has fallen out of vogue. Instrumentalism, which states that identity can be chosen and constructed, is now being taken into account. In diasporic settings people often struggle with understanding their own identity. Spatially removed from their homelands, they are likely to develop so-called “hyphenated identities,” composed out of two or more different influences. Further, immigrants’ subsequent generations face not only spatial but also temporal distance from the homeland. Living in such a remote spot, they perform their ethnic identity only occasionally, when convenient and needed.

Chapter 2 presents a history of Polish immigration to Toledo, which followed a typical pattern of Eastern European immigration to American cities. Looking for job opportunities, the immigrants tended to settle down close to industrial centers, such as Toledo. There, they formed small neighborhoods, pioneers being drawn to settlers from other European countries, and subsequent generations following their predecessors. Years of immigration resulted in forming a coherent Polish neighborhood. Toledo’s Polish enclave, Lagrinka, flourished around 1900 and remained alive for many years. Recently, it has faced its decline. I describe both its years of greatness, and look at the present situation.

In chapter 3, I conduct an urban ethnomusicology, a trend that has drawn many scholars and has become an attractive alternative to researching “exotic” music from distant

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“uncultivated” places. I take a bird’s-eye view on Toledo, sketch a map, and mark a few points of interest that I find crucial for my study. I listen to the music coming out from those places. I hear a mixture: rural music from Poland, juxtaposed with Polish folk and popular music, and spiced with international polkas.

In Chapter 4, I direct my attention to the Echoes of Poland dance group. I present Echoes as a sample of a “third existence” of folk dance. It allows the immigrants to display their Polish identity during rehearsals and concerts. It awakens in the dancers otherwise hidden traits of Polishness. I also rediscover and confront my own multiple identities as I join Echoes and step onto the dance floor. As an ethnographer in the field, I face a great challenge of combining roles of analyst, actor, researcher, and performer.

The Field: People and Places

This study is based on fieldwork I conducted in Toledo, Ohio, from September 2007 through February 2008. Although a field defines itself as a physical space, for my research the field constitutes both places and people. Toledo was a place where I was physically going, spending time, observing, having fun, and getting lost. I came across numerous places, streets, and buildings that by themselves were living signs of Polish-Americans. Sometimes I found myself, directed by someone or by a chance, in places that would have been the last on my “Toledo Polish Spots” list. Under “places” I include also several institutions or organizations that function in Toledo and are important for the Polish-American community in Toledo. Here, I mean the church, radio, newspaper, and so forth. These were also my field and are listed, for the readers’ convenience and better orientation, under “List of Institutions.”

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4 For the “List of Institutions” see page X.
Valuable as they might be, Toledo’s places could not alone stand for my field. People that I met, talked to, interviewed, called, and made friends with added an essential part of the field. While I was proceeding in my research, I made connections with more and more people. The network was expanding almost beyond my control. Drawing a line between people from the field and people from outside of the field on the basis of how often I met them would not have been a good solution. Categorizing people by asking, “Excuse me, but how much Polish are you?” would have been even worse. Therefore, under my field I include all people that I met during my research in Toledo, and also those whom I never saw but just spoke with on the phone. Some of them I quote in the text; some I briefly mention. Still others remain totally anonymous. Several people crucial for readers to understand the complex Polish-American network in Toledo are included in the “Important People List.”

The Polish parish appeared to be a focal point of the community’s life, and therefore it also became a focal point of my fieldwork. Many people, especially the elderly, meet there every Sunday to participate in a religious service in Polish style. As I see it, they represent the past that is still alive. Those who do not come represent the future, the long ongoing decline of the community. Both of them, those present and those missing, constitute my field.

The most active, literally, ethnography I conducted among the Echoes of Poland dance group. Originally I aimed to observe and examine how through folk dance the group’s members perform their Polish identity. It turned out, though, that the dance floor became the field where I learned to dance, and reexamined my own identity.

As I was spending time in the field, constantly searching for signs of Polishness and interacting with people who were somehow Poland-related and who talked about it a lot, an image of Poland, as I know it, was constantly present in my mind. I am 100% Polish, and I lived

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5 For the “Important People List” see page XII.
in Poland for twenty-four years. Both rural landscapes and big metropolitan areas are equally familiar and precious to me. I know Polish traditions, those that my grandparents have passed down to me, and I know Poland as a modern capitalist country of the 21st century. The image of Poland, constantly present in my mind, was also my field. While working in Toledo I could not help comparing. My country – Poland – its people and places, and my research place – Toledo – were put next to each other in my mind, and together constituted my field.

I am also aware that my ethnic identity was a vital component of the fieldwork situation. I know that my Polishness was the primary factor in my interaction with the informants and influenced almost everything that happened during my fieldwork. My being Polish allowed my freedom of movement within the Polish-American matrix in Toledo. It was easier for me to gain access, cooperation and trust, conduct interviews, and subsequently develop meaningful interpersonal relationships. I received invitations to events, concerts, rehearsals, and dinners. I was viewed as a representation of a new and young Poland for which they do not have any access but wish they could see. I am sure that my nationality influenced not only the way the people interacted with me but also the data I received during conversations and interviews. My informants were not afraid of being open to me since they considered me as one of them – a Pole. On the other hand, sometimes I could sense that they were trying to impress me and gain my acceptance. I am fully Polish and they wanted to be seen as truly Polish too. Further, since most of them knew I was pursuing a graduate degree at a university, they had the desire to assist me in completing my career. This was apparent in the subtle ways individuals offered all sorts of support: housing, transportation, food, and prayers. Apparently, they were proud that at the age of twenty-five I have achieved so much, and that I, like them, was Polish.
Literature Review

A handful of valuable resources on ethnicity issues have been released so far. Some have concentrated exclusively on the theory of ethnicity, while others have dealt with more specific issues and have brought up problems of particular individuals or communities. A few works have been particularly helpful for my research. Hutchinson and Smith (1996) served as a point of departure. Yinger (1994), Edensor (2002), Romanucci-Ross and De Vos (1995), Gonzalez and McCommon (1989), and McCready (1983) provided me with a theoretical base, ethnic issues as applied to particular social problems, and specific case studies on minorities. They inspired my interpretation of identity constructions among Poles in Toledo. I noticed that some issues can be applied cross-culturally, while others are culture-specific, or even community-specific, and require detailed knowledge about the group and culture under study.

Martin Stokes’s *Ethnicity, Identity and Music* (1994) focuses on the role of music in the construction identities. Music brings people together in specific alignments and facilitates vital community interactions. It serves as a kind of “deep sociality” of participation and affective bond. It is often itself the primary context in which a community reproduces and transforms itself. Musical events might be one of the only occasions in which the community comes together. Among Polish-Americans in Toledo, music plays a vital role: in church, in festivals, in restaurants, and all social gatherings. It is most important, though, in the activities of the *Echoes of Poland* dance troupe. Through music, and especially through dance, members of *Echoes* engage themselves in social activity where their Polish identity is literally “embodied.”

At the end of the 20th century the immigration to the United States reached its peak. The newcomers have faced a challenge of adjusting their native identity to an American way of life.

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Several book editions (Massey [1995], Spickard [2000], Harvey [2001], Waldinger [2001], Gabaccia [2004]), that present immigrant identity as a dynamic phenomenon, have helped me to better understand so-called “hyphened Americans.”

Poles, who started coming to the United States in large numbers during the second half of the 19th century, have been one of the most numerous immigrant groups. A few historians (Thomas and Znaniecki [1909], Włoszczewski [1945], Zubrzycki [1953], Znaniecka-Lopata [1994], Bukowczyk [1996], and Pienkos [1997]) have archived and presented the history of Poles in America. These works helped me to better organize the history of Polish immigration to the Toledo area as I know it from my informants.

Between 1949 and 1969 a series of articles on various aspects of Polish-American culture was published in *Polish American Studies*. Later, the articles were brought together in one volume entitled *Polish Folkways in America* edited by Obidinski (1987), which is now a useful source for both the scholarly community and general readers. By comparing traditions preserved by the Polish-American community in Toledo to those discussed in Obidinski’s work, I can see that many folkways are commonly known, while others can either be found exclusively in Toledo, or are not known there at all.

A Polish-American community should be looked at also from a European perspective. *Returning Culture*, edited by Mark Slobin (1996), brings together studies that deal with the powerful changes in the Eastern Bloc that have been taking place for a couple of decades. During the period of state socialism, the image and perception of culture and music were reinterpreted by those in power, and then imposed on the society. This process also touched Polish immigrants in the U.S. While crafting their identities, they constantly search for models back in the homeland, and often take for granted and imitate what has been presented as “authentic.”

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7 W. C. McCready, *Culture, Ethnicity, and Identity*, 35.
Two articles, Bruno Nettl’s “Preliminary Remarks on Urban Folk Music in Detroit” (1957) and Paula Savaglio’s “Polka Bands and Choral Groups: The Musical Self-Representation of Polish-Americans in Detroit” (1996), present research close in scope to mine. Nettl sees the immigrants’ activities as an integral part of Detroit urban life, and traces the ways in which Polish rural culture was brought to the city. In Savaglio’s work, the issue of a Polish-American dual identity is a central one. She examines Polka bands and choral groups and shows how the balance of being occasionally an American and occasionally a Pole, depending on a setting and situation, can shift as crafted by the musicians.
Lucy Szafranowicz, the woman who during the Dozynki celebration spoke up about her pride of Poles, has never been to Poland. Most of the people who expressed their support and appreciation for her statement were born in the United States and cannot speak Polish. When I looked at them I could not tell the difference between them and other white Americans. I wondered what makes them Polish, or what makes them feel Polish. During my fieldwork in Toledo, I met dozens of people in many different situations. I usually pigeonholed them as “Polish-Americans.” The process of Polish-American identity formation is a complex one. Polish decent, Polish accent, Polish outfit, Polish behavior, relatives in Poland, Roman-Catholic religion... all of these factors can assign you a “Polish-American” label. In turn, lack of them can easily exclude you.

Definitions and approaches

Poles are described as an ethnic group. Their ethnicity is taken for granted because they share common ancestry: they come from the same country – Poland. But ethnicity is not that trivial. Ethnicity is not simply having a Polish name, going to a Chinese restaurant, or wearing a button that says “Kiss me, I am Irish.” Nor is ethnicity “otherness” either. It is not as simple as “them” – the Poles, the Chinese, the Irish, as opposed to “us” – “non-ethnic,” the generally defined Americans. There have been many approaches to ethnic identity as a theoretical construct. And although they differ from each other, all are concerned with classification of people and group relationships.

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9 Ibid.
Naturalistic understanding of ethnicity deals with biology and ancestry. People who are biologically and historically connected with each other form an ethnic group. They usually share race, language, religion, nationality, and customs. All of those are “givens,” that are received from the ancestors – “bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh, blood of their blood.” Descent and birth, however, while being visible markers easily recognized, are not the only factors determining one’s identity. In fact, they are usually of very little importance.

Besides all the objective factors, such as common ancestry, language, and nationality, ethnic groups usually share a subjective, in-group sense of solidarity. This allows members of an ethnic group to regard members of another as outsiders. There exists the interplay between ethnic groups. Here, biological and ancestral ties are malleable and ethnicity itself is socially constructed. This approach to ethnicity, called instrumentalism, was defined by Anthony Cohen (1985). By choosing to belong to one group, and not to another, members of an ethnic group consciously shape their ethnic identity. The declaration that they want to be viewed as A rather than B makes them belong to the group. This generative stage, declaration, knowing, this rational choice needs to be then followed by enacting and crafting, by doing. The ways to do it are multiple. They might be very outward and apparent, such as food, practiced religion, political or economic interests, or an institution that they create to organize themselves. They may be also very inward and almost invisible, such as values or ways of framing issues and seeing the world.

For the purpose of this study I take ethnic identity as neither fixed nor constant. I look at Polish-Americans in Toledo, who constantly confront, mediate, and construct their identity. I follow Martin Stokes, for whom ethnic identity is “not immutably rooted in a given group’s

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shared heritage, nor does it correspond to any set of biological facts. It is a fluid cultural
construction which shifts over time in response to new social, economic, and political
circumstances.”

**Diasporas**

In a diasporic setting, outside of the state, construction of ethnic identity takes place very
much “inside the people.” Diasporas live their own lives, as little moons traveling on the orbits
around a planet – a homeland. Lives of its habitants are shaped by closeness (physical or mental)
to the planet, and willingness of the habitants to imitate life on the planet (real or imaginative).
There are also external influences: from the orbit – the host land – and perhaps from other moons
on the orbit – other ethnic groups living in the same host land. In diasporas, identities are
inevitably manipulated, crafted, shifted, deconstructed, and reconstructed. The result might be a
unique hybrid – multidimensional, malleable, and lacking one easy-to-define transparent color.
Or, the immigrants may have difficulty even developing an identity at all. Thus, diasporas draw
attention to themselves, and more importance is usually attached to identity issues there than
inside the state.

In the United States, where multiple ethnic groups live next to each other, developing an
identity almost always results in a hybrid. Immigrants position their own national identity against
American society and other neighboring immigrant groups, and develop so-called “hyphenated
identities.” Each of those groups considers themselves special because they feel they are unique.

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14 Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 150.
15 F. Barth, “Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,” in *Ethnicity*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (New York:
On the other hand, being one of the ethnic groups gives them a sense of belonging to a collectivity within the larger society.

Members of the Polish-American community in Toledo see themselves as one of the groups of Polish immigrants that are scattered around the United States. This gives them a sense of pride, since Polish immigrants have been one of the most important and influential groups in the U.S. They also perceive themselves as one of many ethnic communities that live in the Toledo area. This, on the other hand, provides them with a sense of safety and comfort. They feel that they are not the only ones in the area who try to mark their identity on Toledo’s ethnic map.

**Dealing with the Past**

The hybrid nature of identities in America has not only a geographical dimension (homeland/hostland). It is also hybridified in time (past/present). The first generation of immigrants looks to their homeland as they left it and as they remember it. Their children and grandchildren (second and third generations) know the homeland from stories told by their parents and grandparents. If they try to construct their identities based on the image of homeland, it will be the homeland from the past. Maintaining this continuity with the past, they maintain their self-definition and self-identification, and that past is usually imagined and consists of myths that idealize the home country. It is “conveniently cleansed of the complexities from the real past.”\(^{16}\) The old country is far away, and using it to construct part of their identity will not interfere with immigrants’ lives in the U.S. As much as they feel sentiment for the homeland, third or fourth generation immigrants do not take high emotional or nostalgic risk, as people who departed from there do. When taking homeland as a symbol they do not return to it physically, they return to it chronologically. They mentally attend the past they know from their ancestors.

\(^{16}\) Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 152.
Hardly anyone from the Polish-American community in Toledo was born in Poland, and perhaps only half of them have ever visited Poland. The Poland they know is the one from their grandparents’ stories. With full confidence these individuals told me about the beautiful landscapes and paradise-like countryside images that almost none of them has ever seen but which they treasure as a piece of their identity. They are proud that they are the people who have roots in a country where life is nice and peaceful, people work together in villages in order to provide their families with necessary supplies, and after work they get together and celebrate by dancing and playing music. Hardly anyone is aware that this is an image from the past. They have no idea how Poland has changed over the last forty or fifty years, and how similar it is now to the U.S. Most of the people I met make sure they follow rules and traditions that their grandparents taught them. By doing so they provide themselves with the sense of belonging to the ethnic group, reinforce their Polish identity, and have a sense of fulfilling the mission of maintaining tradition.

This is especially apparent during Christmas and Easter time. I found that most of the community members scrupulously follow all of the traditions that are typically Polish. They show up for a Christmas midnight mass (pasterka), share wafers (oplatek), and celebrate a traditional Polish supper (wigilia). On Easter they paint eggs and bring food to church for blessing (swieconka). When asked about the reasons behind doing all of that, most of the people answered: “That is what our grandparents used to do in Poland, and also after they came here. We got to do it too, otherwise the tradition will die!” The priest in the Polish parish confirmed that all the celebrations function for the people on a more traditional than religious level.

People often sincerely desire to “return” to that imagined past. They soon realize, though, that it is impossible, both physically and temporally. But still, they wish to. Consequently, they
may place that wish on institutions like churches, schools, and the mass media, asking them to “recreate a tradition.”

In Toledo, Polish-Americans have a tendency to project their desire onto the church. They expect the parish to provide them with services that will be exactly like those practiced by their ancestors in Poland. When they are given that, they feel comforted for they have fulfilled their desire to feel Polish. In addition, they put a lot of faith in the Polish radio show, *Melodies of Poland*. Over years, it has for many people become a secular ritual to listen to the show every Sunday morning. They trust the hosts that through the music and the news, they will be taken back to Poland.

**Occasional Identity**

In the temporal dimension of constructing identity, homeland serves as a point of reference. Sentiment, love, and nostalgia for the homeland do not have to be felt constantly, though. Neither any patterns of behavior need to be practiced in everyday life. Instead of being a way of life (which might have been the case for the ancestors living in the homeland), the behaviors are transformed to a set of symbols. The symbols are brought up occasionally and usually presented according to a rule: they must be visible and clear in meaning, cannot be too complicated in expression, and must be easy to feel on an emotional level. The nostalgic feelings, projected and rested on, and at the same time enhanced and reinforced by the symbols, might be directed towards a generalized tradition or toward its particular aspects.

Once a year members of the Polish-American community in Toledo come together to celebrate *Dozynki*, a Polish traditional harvest festival. While for the rest of the year all of them lead a common American busy life in Toledo, during the festival the sentiment and nostalgia for
Poland arise and achieve its peak. Like during any other festival, ritualistic behaviors are brought together and the whole event gains a power that can be hardly compared with any other event, even with Christmas or Easter celebrations. The event is full of signs of Poland: art, music, costumes, food, and so forth. Everything is thrown together in a rather chaotic way. But it is present, apparent, very visible, and geared towards the participants’ emotions. The purpose and the way of celebrating Dozynki in Toledo are different than in Poland. Many things are mixed up, overlooked, or exaggerated, but this does not really matter to the participants. This is one day of the year that is not only important because it brings together the whole community, but also because it has its roots in a highly ritualistic celebration; nothing means more than: “We are Polish, and we are recreating Poland here, in Toledo, everything at once!”

CHAPTER TWO
THE STORY OF POLISH IMMIGRANTS IN TOLEDO

When after the Polish mass at St. Adalbert I talked to the priest about Poles in Toledo, our conversation could not help going to the past. The way the community looks now is a result of how it looked thirty years ago, during its years of greatness, years long awaited by the pioneers who had come to Ohio more than a century earlier. I realized that in order to better understand the Polish-Americans from Toledo I had to learn their story.

Generally, Polish immigration to Toledo follows a typical pattern of Eastern European groups that started arriving to America extensively around 1870. This chapter presents the process of settlement, building community, establishing formal institutions, and looking for new identity among Toledo Poles. It is preceded by the history of Polish migration since its beginnings, which shows how Polish people dealt with going abroad and how frequent moving shaped them into people of strong nationalistic feelings and sentiments.

European Emigration: Leaving Occupied Country

Throughout its history Poland faced multiple difficult situations. Between 1772 and 1795 it was partitioned three times, and finally disappeared from maps for one hundred years. Insurrections and uprisings against occupiers failed, thus weakening the country further. Constant migration of people within the country’s borders and also emigration abroad was a result of political and social instability.

In 1772, Poland was partitioned for the first time. The country lost about one third of its lands, which were split between Prussia (now Germany), Russia, and Austro-Hungary (now...
Austria). Another partition occurred in 1775. After the third partition, in 1795, all of Poland’s land fell under the rule of the occupiers. Life in the occupied country was hard. Poland was overpopulated and economic development of the cities was hindered by the policies of the partitioning powers.\(^{18}\) National feelings were gradually dying out. In 1830 an insurrection, into which Poles had put a lot of hope, collapsed. At this point Poles decided to look for opportunity abroad since not much could be done any longer in the territory of the occupied country. In 1831 the Great Immigration began. People who belonged to the intellectual and cultural elite left Poland and began settling in big European cities, mainly in Paris, in order to try maintaining Polish cultural values suppressed by the occupying powers.

**Immigrating to America: Adventurers and Pioneers**

It is known that the first Polish settlers to land in North America were pitch-burners, a group that was brought from Poland by Sir Walter Raleigh. They settled in Roenuck, North Carolina, in 1585. In 1608 a small group of Polish craftsmen arrived at Jamestown, Virginia.\(^{19}\) Those few people coming cannot be really considered a sign of serious immigration and they should be rather called adventurers, who, drawn by curiosity and possessing the courage to follow that curiosity, decided to leave Poland and look for luck in the New World.

Although most of the people who were fleeing occupied Poland in the 18\(^{th}\) and 19\(^{th}\) centuries were settling down in big European cities, some of them came also to America. The first wave of immigrants left from Prussian Poland, Grand Duchy of Poznan, Pomerania, and Upper Silesia.\(^{20}\) There, the policy to suppress Polish national sentiment and wipe out Polish

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\(^{19}\) Ibid., 262.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
language was particularly strong.\textsuperscript{21} This idea, known as \textit{Kulturkampf}, was introduced by German political leader Otto von Bismarck, and was an extremely strong attack on the rights of Poles and Catholics. The Catholic Church, which was identified with Polish national sentiments, was the first target. As a result, Polish immigrants in America had a strong desire to protect their religion, culture, and language. A group of Prussian Poles came to Texas in 1853 under the leadership of Father Leopold Moczygeba. They brought with them their own agricultural implements and their own crucifixes, carved from Polish wood. This group founded a town called Panna Maria (the Virgin Mary). Soon after, two other groups established Polonia, Wisconsin (1855) and Parisville, Michigan (1857).\textsuperscript{22}

Harsh conditions in Russian-occupied Poland, worsened due to a crop failure and a crisis in the textile industry, caused the next wave of Polish immigrants to the U.S. around 1870. Soon after, the third wave, this time from the Austro-Hungarian (Galician) part of Poland, arrived in America.

At this time, the second phase of Polish immigration to the U.S. began. In contrast to the first one, which was political in nature and involved small groups of people rather than a mass movement, this second phase was inspired by economic hardship and involved large numbers of immigrants. Between 1870 and 1914 over two million Poles came to the U.S.\textsuperscript{23} The immigrants’ desire was to find better economic opportunities and higher standards of living. A great majority of them were people from small villages. Coming to America, these countrymen did not speak English and had little idea about American governmental structures, laws, and duties. However, they were intelligent, accustomed to difficult living conditions, of a good health, endurance, stubbornness of character and, most importantly, willing to undertake heavy work. They were

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Zubrzycki, “Emigration from Poland,” 255.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Włoszczewski, “The Polish ‘Sociological Group’ in America,” 143.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Zubrzycki, “Emigration from Poland,” 248.
\end{itemize}
coming from rural Poland, where strict good manners, firm principles of honesty and industry, tough education, and deep attachment to tradition shaped their characters.

Although the Poles found in America what they were looking for—easy money, good living conditions, and new opportunities—half of the original wave of immigrants returned to Poland. Back home they told stories about the “promised land,” “boundless fields of good earth ready for cultivation, land that looked as if it could support half the population of Europe and still have plenty to spare.” Driven by curiosity and eagerness to explore, relatives and friends of the “pioneers” started leaving Poland and coming to America. They outnumbered those who had returned to Poland. Polish immigration to the U.S. was growing rapidly.

The Poles were one of the most urban of the immigrant groups in their manner of settlement. About 80% of the immigrants settled down in big cities and shaped two large groups: one near the belt of the Great Lakes (Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin), and the second in the North-East (New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

**Poles in Toledo**

Toledo, Ohio, was one of the cities where large numbers of Poles started settling around 1870. Like all of the immigrants around that time, Poles come to Toledo in search of employment. Toledo, although not a big and rich city, was quite attractive for Polish workers, who were industrious, strong, untiring, and also cheerfully accepting of the most dangerous and most unhealthy jobs. Many of them took jobs in Toledo’s factories, for example in the Jeep

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Chrysler factory. Others found work in building railroads and digging ditches, iron and steel making, coal mining, construction work, copper mining, smelting, and oil refining.\footnote{J. A. Wytrwal, \textit{America's Polish Heritage. A Social History of the Poles in America} (Detroit: Endurance Press, 1961), 84.} Simply, they took the same jobs they left behind in Poland: dirty, dangerous, and hard.

Poles tended to quickly earn the respect of employers due to their competency, conscientiousness, strong muscle power, and willingness to work.\footnote{Ibid.} Many of them excelled in their careers. They soon left the factories and moved into more ambitious and independent business, starting saloons or grocery stores.\footnote{P. Fox, \textit{The Poles in America} (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1961), 75.}

Immigration to Ohio flourished around 1900. By 1910 there were 200,000 Poles living in Ohio, constituting 5\% of the population.\footnote{Fox, The Poles in America, 63.} While settling down in Toledo the Poles followed the German and the Irish paths. They formed small groups composed of one or several dozen of relatives and friends. These groups grew into bigger communities and neighborhoods. Many Poles coming from Prussian Poland actually settled close to the Germans. Most of them already knew German, which was declared an official language of institution in all Polish schools in 1873.\footnote{Zubrzycki, “Emigration from Poland,” 256.}

Already around 1880 two big important Polish neighborhoods emerged and they flourished around 1900: one on Nebraska Avenue and the other on Lagrange Street. The former was called \textit{Kuschwants} – from a German word for “a cow’s tail,” a shape which is supposed to resemble the area. The latter – a bigger and more important one – was called \textit{Lagrinka} – from a Polish name for Lagrange Street.
Lagrinka was like a little town. It was a self-sufficient neighborhood. Everything was there; you did not have to leave the area to satisfy your needs. There were numerous Polish stores, covering practically all branches of business; grocery stores and barbers on each corner. Some of these Polish business enterprises (e.g. the store on Junction Avenue or Malczewski’s grocery store on Pulaski Street) rivaled in variety, quantity, and quality of stock and prices with some better up-town American stores.32

People from the neighborhood knew each other. Those who ran businesses were the same as those you would meet at church, in a grocery store, or on a street. People saw each other as neighbors, customers, parents, spouses, earners, participants in religious ceremonies, and leaders in local associations.33

There was a strong desire for frequent “getting together,” visiting each other in order to talk and have a good time. Moreover, there was a cultural ambition formed under the influence of nostalgia for deeply rooted customs and traditions. This required a suitable place for its realization.34 Polish-American halls, bars, clubs and saloons of a hospitable nature were built as efforts towards social self-sufficiency within the neighborhood. A big hall for social and cultural events was provided by Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA). Although located outside of Lagrinka (on N. Detroit Avenue) the hall served as a gathering place for the local Poles, who organized dancing events, darts competitions, or Polish language classes. Still today the hall is a place for rehearsals of Echoes of Poland, an annual Pierogi Dinner, and fund-raising events.

32 Fox, The Poles in America, 75.
33 Znaniecka-Lopata, Polish-Americans, 55.
34 Wloszczewski, “The Polish ‘Sociological Group’ in America,” 146.
In 1921 the Ohio Historical Theater was started by a Polish person. With 1800 seats available at that time, the Theater served as a performance venue for the Poles. A number of concerts, movie screenings, and dance events were organized. Thus, the immigrants felt that even here, far away from Poland, it was possible to keep the Polish spirit alive.

Figure 1. Ohio Historical Theater, Lagrange Street, Toledo.
In addition to the cultural institutions that emerged around that time on Lagrange Street, many business-oriented organizations were started by former factory workers who had decided to undertake more independent work. Old-age care, insurance companies, and health centers along with funeral homes arose on Lagrinka. Their owners quickly became very rich people and joined grocery stores’ owners as the community leaders. Those institutions provided the first framework of social structure for this human mass, which had been torn by the roots from its native environment and transplanted to foreign conditions of existence. Most did not speak English yet and were unfamiliar with the local protective institutions, but were in deep need for help in case of illness or death.

God in America: Polish Churches

After satisfying and insuring the basic needs of health, money and death, the greatest collective need of the immigrants was to have a Polish religious institution. They had a deep desire to recreate the religious experience that was so important and strong back home. Those who came first received letters from those who stayed in Poland asking if “God was in
America,” if “there were any churches there,” and if “the services were the same as in Poland.”

Although there had been some Catholic churches in Toledo, none of them had services in Polish, so the Poles attended German-speaking churches at first – St. Mary and St. Peter and St. Paul – which satisfied their needs temporarily, especially for those who spoke German. But they did have a deep longing, a strong desire for a church in a more Polish style, a church echoing with Polish hymns, litanies, and rosaries, with Polish sermons, and with Polish traditions. As the first Polish church they built St. Hedwig on Lagrange Street, then St. Anthony on Nebraska Avenue and St. Adalbert, again on Lagrange Street, very close to St. Hedwig. All of them were located in the north part of the city. In the South, St. Stanislaus, Nativity and St. Hyacinth were built. The new big church buildings, often in the architectural style of European gothic cathedrals, were some of the most beautiful of local shrines.
Figure 3. St. Adalbert Church, Lagrange Street, Toledo.
Figure 4. St. Adalbert Church (interior).

Dedication of the new church, April 22, 1928
The occasion coincided with Father Wachowski's jubilee as a priest, 1903-1928
The banner across the aisle reads "Tys Kaplanem Na Wieki" - You Are A Priest Forever.
Note Father on the left in the sanctuary.
Churches were very important for Polish immigrants; they were symbols of community, tied them together, and gave them dignity and self-respect. The services were highly nationalized by this rural Polish population, who had escaped rational Protestant reformation and cultivated an almost medieval religion marked by everyday faith and ritual moments of their lives.\textsuperscript{35} They had masses in Polish language, sang the same songs that they used to sing in Poland, and cultivated traditional Polish liturgical forms: devotion to God in the Blessed Sacrament, “bitter lamentation” (gorzkie zale), blessing of food before Easter (swieconka), and Christmas celebration (wigilia) with baked wafers (oplatek).\textsuperscript{36} A special place was given to the Blessed Virgin Mary – Queen of Poland, known also as Black Madonna or Our Lady of Czestochowa. An image of the Virgin Mary took a central place in every Polish church and special services were held in front of it at least once a week.

The establishment of Polish churches in Toledo played a double role in the development of the community. First of all, the religious services brought the families together, and transformed what might have been separated and isolated into one group. They provided the immigrants with a piece of their homeland, which most of them still remembered and looked back upon with nostalgia. Secondly, in a more practical manner, the life of the Polish community was consolidated by the foundation of a parish as an organizational unit. Having created their own diocese, Poles began to establish themselves seriously and firmly on American soil. A Polish parish, with its centralized power, was definitely the foundation for all the further efforts of the architects of the social structure later to be called Polonia.\textsuperscript{37} Parish houses became centers for social and cultural activities. Local neighborhoods inevitably organized themselves around a

\textsuperscript{35} J. J. Bukowczyk, \textit{Polish Americans and Their History: Community, Culture, and Politics} (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), 40.
\textsuperscript{37} Fox, \textit{The Poles in America}, 920.
parish. Sunday meetings at church allowed direct contact between the community members, personal knowledge of the lives of others, and the use of gossip as an informal method of social control and social integration. In addition, a priest was an important individual. He played a big role in education and spiritual support, and served as a mentor, leader, and authority.

The Story Goes On: Polish-Americans

In 1914 some Toledo Poles went back to Europe to rescue Poland in World War I. During World War II many Polish immigrants fought for America. After they won the war, the sense of being important and influential increased. They no longer felt like Polish people living in America, but they became Polish-Americans, and wanted to be considered as such. Now, since they had experienced being winners, they believed they could achieve more than just working in a factory or owning a grocery store. Lagrinka Poles started moving away from the neighborhood, and eventually from Toledo, in search of better life opportunities. Some of them became famous politicians, others influential businessmen.

As years passed, new generations of Poles were born in Toledo. Very few of the first generation, who had come from Poland, were still alive. Unlike their parents and grandparents, those born here had no memories of the old country. The ethnic community was their home, the Polish enclave – Lagrinka – their environment of nurture. The next generations had to face the tensions between the non-ethnic expressions offered by American society and the Polish identity that had been given to them by their parents and grandparents. The interaction between these two inevitably led to a modification of their definition of Polishness. On the one hand, parents imposed on them the importance of traditional Polishness; on the other, they encouraged them to

seek new cultural, educational and career opportunities offered by the American society.\textsuperscript{39} Many followed the latter and moved out from the city.

Toledo immigrants wanted to make sure their children were well educated. Education took place at home, at church, and at school. Especially important was language education. The first three years at a parish school were taught in Polish, the following years in English. Most of the families spoke English at home. For them, to be Polish meant to be proud of their heritage but to speak like Americans, to fit in, and not to stay behind. Parents really wanted their children to be well educated and well prepared to live in the American society. They were sending the children out of the city so they might get a better education and find better job opportunities.

One would assume that in a Polish neighborhood the first generation – the pioneers – preserve Polish culture entirely; the second – a new Polish-American synthesis, a hard-to-define hybrid, conversant mostly in English while knowing a few phrases in Polish – drift away from their heritage; the third abandon it, driven by so-called “occasional identity”; and the fourth is completely assimilated. This is sometimes the case. But, there can be also an alteration, cyclical in nature, between assimilation and preservation, with a tendency among next generations to explore and study traditional culture.\textsuperscript{40}

\textbf{Decline or Rebirth: Present Situation}

In recent years, the Polish-American community in Toledo has faced a rapid decline. Very few Poles still live on Lagrange Street, and even fewer on Kuschwants. First and second generations of immigrants have died, young people have moved out from Toledo, and it is an extremely rare occasion when new immigrants from Poland settle in Toledo. Most of the Polish

\textsuperscript{39} Galush, \textit{For More Than Bread}, 177.
\textsuperscript{40} Bukowczyk, \textit{Polish Americans and Their History}, 145.
churches have been closed or rented out to other ethnic communities. Only St. Adalbert and St. Hedwig are still in use. Funeral homes have either gone bankrupt or have abandoned their Polishness to serve people from the whole Toledo area. All Polish grocery stores, except for one, have closed down, and very few bars still exist. Polish language was taken out from schools’ curricula many years ago. It is nearly impossible to meet people who are fluent in Polish.

For an outsider-observer, Toledo’s Polish-American community simply no longer exists, and should be referred to as the past. Yet, when looked at closely, the community is trying to counter its own extinction. Efforts are made to preserve Polish tradition, and to keep the community alive and together. It is not the same as it used to be thirty years ago, yet people are trying to bring some traditions back. Accordingly, a few new initiatives geared towards community rebirth are taking place. There is a mass in Polish held every Sunday at St. Adalbert, and there are events organized by people involved in the parish’s life. The Historical Ohio Theater, which was close to extinction a couple years ago, has a new president and is currently being renovated. The *Echoes of Poland* dance group rehearses twice a week in PRCUA hall. They also perform occasionally during local events, and every third year travel to Poland to compete against Polonia’s dance groups from countries around the world. The Polish-American Concert Band has just hired a new young conductor; although they do not have their own venue to rehearse, they keep playing and give a concert at least once a year. The *Lagrange Street News* Polish newspaper is still published, and currently has about two hundred subscribers in the area. Although almost no Polish people live on Lagrange Street, the Polish-American Festival is still annually held there in July. The *Melodies of Poland* radio show is broadcast every Sunday morning, and has recently changed its format, putting more attention on music from contemporary Poland. A new Polish restaurant – Ski’s – was opened in 2007 on the outskirts of
Toledo. The owner claims that the food is prepared according to his grandmother’s receipts that she brought from Poland. He hires musicians to play Polish music. Polish language classes are also offered there for those who are interested.

All of these efforts to preserve Polish culture and traditions are not spectacular and almost invisible even for people from within the community. The results are usually mixtures of recreation of Toledo’s Polish-American community from the past, Poland known from great-grandparents’ stories, contemporary Poland, and new original ideas.
CHAPTER THREE
(RE)MAPPING TOLEDO – ETHNOMUSICOLOGIST IN THE CITY

I am sitting in Marty Blaszczyk’s warm car. He is driving around Lagrange Street neighborhood. “This is the Polish neighborhood.” (Most of the people whom we are passing are African-American; some are Asian.) “This is the last open Polish grocery store. Here used to be a bar, and here a youth club. Here is the church that you already know, and here is another one. Most of the funeral homes are still in use.” “Is there anything Polish-related outside of Lagrange Street?” I inquire. “Definitely. You need to see the Melodies of Poland, the radio show. The radio station is not far away from here, right next to the river. Oh, have you been to the newly opened Polish restaurant? It is kind of far away, but you got to go! To me, it looks like everything has now moved there,” states Marty.

Slowly, in my mind, I am sketching a map of Polish-Americans in Toledo. Lagrange Street is the main thing, then some other points of interest elsewhere... Lagrange is the center, the heart of the community. Is that what he said? “Marty!!! Wait!!!” He is gone. I go and check myself...

Urban Ethnomusicology

In 1970 Mark Slobin wrote an article that presents a typology of Northern Afghanistan towns on the basis of their musical life. He discussed general patterns of urban life in relation to their musical behaviors. His article was followed by Adelaida Schramm’s studies entitled “Ethnic Music, Urban Areas, and Ethnomusicology” (1979) and “Explorations in Urban Ethnomusicology: Hard Lessons from the Spectacularly Ordinary” (1982). Schramm explored how ethnic groups function within a city, and how they add to an urban landscape. She also
investigated how ethnomusicologists should approach the field of a city. Those two articles helped give birth to what is now called “urban ethnomusicology.”

Since the 1970s many scholars have undertaken fieldwork in cities. They stood in opposition to those before them who had explored either villages, hoping to find authentic roots of traditional music, or remote areas, that had attracted them as geographically and culturally exotic. Urban ethnomusicologists abandoned long distances. They looked for resources as close as in their hometowns. Sometimes they would take the urban setting as extrinsic to the music-object that they studied, therefore doing “ethnomusicology in the city.” Other times, though, they would take the urban as essential, intrinsic to the study-object, coming closer to “ethnomusicology of the city.” In either case, in the cities they found unlimited sources for their research.

**Changing Soundscape**

Cities appear to scholars as a rich soundscape. Here, postmodern voices of media mix with traditional dance music coming from ethnic neighborhoods, professional sounds from large concert halls come together with amateur efforts of street musicians, and dub-bass from cars compete with massive sounding church organs. Industrialization, technological development, growing numbers of cultural institutions, dynamic flow of people moving in and out, and other social processes make cities an irresistible field for researchers.

In the urban mix change is an omnipresent phenomenon. The style of city life changes faster than people can comprehend it. Music, as an integral part of humans’ lives, can be first to change or fade away. A soundtrack designed for a decade of a city’s life would show how fast some musical styles are forgotten or replaced by others. On the other hand, music can be also a

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means of preserving culture. While living in the fast lane makes nothing stable, music can remain unchanged.

This is especially apparent among immigrant groups living in cities. Some immigrants’ neighborhoods tend to remain unchanged for years and make efforts to preserve their traditions, among which is music. In turn, since very often immigrant neighborhoods are located close to each other, their music becomes unique hybrid. Whether a means of cultural preservation or a subject to change, music among immigrants draws scholars’ attention.

Rural/Urban Music in Toledo

In the United States the numbers of immigrant communities in most cities has provided American ethnomusicologists with fieldwork sites on their own doorstep. As one of many, I decided to do urban ethnomusicology among immigrants in a city. I chose Toledo, Ohio, as my fieldwork site, and the Polish-American community as a group of immigrants. Their musical activities are scattered around the Toledo area, form sort of a network that can be placed on the city map, and therefore appeared as an integral part of the city’s culture. Their music can be called urban. It is practiced, performed, enjoyed, learned, and taught in the city. It is shaped by the city, and it reshapes the city. It is not city music, though, in the sense that it expresses the culture of the city and would not exist in rural surroundings. In fact, the music is rural. It is rural in origin and spirit. It is music from the countryside, from Polish villages. It is rural music that has been transplanted and changed in accordance with the principles of urbanization. It has been reshaped so that it may serve the immigrants who treasure great sentiments for their rural roots but live their lives in an urban environment. This rural-urban music helps in the construction of

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43 B. Nettl, “Preliminary Remarks on Urban Folk Music in Detroit,” *Western Folklore* 16 (1957): 42.
the rural-urban migrant identity. It reinforces the recreation of rural identities but it fits well to be performed in urban settings.

Throughout the 20th century the Toledo urban environment has been transformed by Polish rural immigration. The pioneers were settling down wherever possible. Sons followed in the footsteps of their fathers, finding housing close to them and building a community neighborhood. As more and more newcomers poured into the area and the earlier immigrants moved upward socially, neighborhood expansion occurred. Children of the foreign-born moved outward from the communities surrounding the core into newer residential areas attracted by expanding employment opportunities.4 In this way the Polish-Americans created a network marking their presence on the Toledo map.

From the beginning several immigrants’ cultural activities were alive, and still are today in various points of the city. And, the rural music that the immigrants brought with them has been always present as they were establishing the community. Today, even with the Toledo Polish-American community in decline, their music still reflects heritage. And, as the immigrants themselves, the music adds to the cultural vitality of the city.

In this chapter I sketch a map of the Polish-American community in Toledo as it looks now. I present Lagrange Street – the birthplace of the community – in its current shape. A special point of interest on Lagrange Street is St. Adalbert Church and parish. It was originally built for Polish immigrants and still serves as a place where they gather for religious and social purposes. Then, I move towards the Maumee River to observe a Polish radio show that is broadcast from a studio on Water Street. Next, I move even more outward to show some recent activities that are done by the immigrants on the outskirts of Toledo. I explore Ski’s restaurant, which opened on in

Sylvania in 2007. While visiting all those places I pay special attention to music that is played there. I show how the rural music that the immigrants brought with them has been reshaped and functions now in the urban environment. I also explore how this rural-urban music shapes the immigrants’ identities.

**You-Are-Here: Lagrange Street**

Lagrange Street (*Lagrinka*) is a birthplace of the Polish-American community in Toledo. It was here where around 1880 the first settlers built their houses, started families, made friends, and set up businesses. Lagrinka grew up very fast, and around 1920 developed into an independent and self-sufficient neighborhood. Stores, bars, clubs, and restaurants that emerged around that time served the immigrants well, and for a long time. Around the 1970s and 1980s, when subsequent generations of the immigrants were moving out from the neighborhood, or even away from Toledo, and new immigrants were coming in a very small numbers, Lagrange Street started losing its original shape, and now the Polish-American spirit is hardly present.

Along the street there are still Polish flags hanging here and there. Though the “Witamy/Welcome” sign has not been removed, all “Polish Village” signs have been replaced with “International Village” signs. Polish people still live in the neighborhood but they are a minority. Most of the houses in Lagrange Street are now occupied by African-Americans, as well as immigrants from China and the Middle-East. The spirit of Polishness, and sense of community that Lagrange Street used to be proud of, is now almost entirely gone. The only traits of the past are Stanley’s grocery store, the Ohio Historical Theater, a couple of funeral homes, and two Polish churches.
Stanley’s Five Star Market has always been one of the widely known Polish stores in the neighborhood. Owned by the influential Zychowicz family, it still sells some products imported from Poland, among which the most common and desirable are kielbasa and pierogi.

The Ohio Historical Theatre, which is located in the very center of the neighborhood between two churches, was built by Polish immigrants. For many years it served as a venue for concerts, performances, rehearsals, and other events organized by the community. Currently, the theater’s building is being renovated after some years of under-maintenance. It serves as a rehearsal place for the Polish-American Concert Band.

Funeral homes are immediately noticeable buildings on Lagrange Street. There are quite few of them and all have Polish-sounding last names in their names (e.g. Urbanski, Sujkowski, Wisniewski). They are proud of a good reputation and long tradition. Most of them were established almost one century ago. Originally they were meant and designed to serve only Polish immigrants taking care of their deceased. Since the Polish funeral tradition is very rich with meaning, the owners wanted to make sure that the immigrants would receive everything they needed to feel like at home during those sad times. Wakes were sung, the rosary was said, and decoration included all possible signs of Polishness and Catholic religion. Now, a few of those homes have been closed down. The remaining ones have readapted their services to the changing community. Nonetheless, they remain recognizable signs of the Polish-American community that used to live on Lagrange Street.

Icons of Poland: St. Adalbert

Out of many churches that were built by Polish immigrants in Toledo, two are still active: St. Hedwig (built in 1879) and St. Adalbert (built in 1907). Both of them are located on Lagrange
Street, not far apart from each other, with Park Street as a boundary line between the two parishes. Two Polish priests (Father Marek Ciesla and Father Richard Philiposki) reside at St. Adalbert to serve the needs of the parishioners from both churches.

There is one mass in Polish every Sunday at St. Adalbert. Usually around fifty people come to this mass. Most of them are the elderly, in their sixties or seventies. I attended the mass a few times and noticed that all of the participants could say the text in Polish. As I talked to some of them and to Father Marek, it turned out that they have the text just memorized and that actually very few are fluent in Polish. Some know a couple of phrases in Polish, some cannot speak it at all. Despite of the lack of native language knowledge, which usually dies out first in the process of assimilation, there are many Polish church traditions that are still practiced among the parishioners.

One of the most prominent is the worship of the Virgin Mary, whom they call Our Lady of Czestochowa. In the church there is a copy of the original painting from the Czestochowa sanctuary in Poland. At least once a week they gather together in front of the painting to say the Novena to Our Lady of Czestochowa. In addition to that paining, there are also other visual signs of Poland in the church, for example the figures of the two patrons of Poland: St. Stanislaus and St. Adalbert.
Figure 5. Painting of Our Lady of Czestochowa, and worship candles, St. Adalbert Church.

Figure 6. Figure of St. Adalbert – patron of Poland, St. Adalbert Church.
Polish Catholics like praying the Rosary almost as much as worshiping the Virgin Mary. As in every parish in Poland, at St. Adalbert there is the Holy Rosary Society that gathers together mainly to pray but also to organize social events for the parish, such as Soup, Salad, and Sandwich Day or Fish Dinner.

Throughout the year there are a few church holidays that provide the Polish-Americans with an opportunity to bring up Polish traditions. This is especially apparent during Easter and Christmas celebrations. Typically, Polish traditions of food blessing take place at St. Adalbert on Easter Saturday. On Christmas Eve, a traditional Polish meal (wigilia) with baked wafers (oplatek) is followed by Christmas midnight mass (pasterka). Even those who do not come to church on a daily basis usually attend this mass. A big procession is held in June for the Corpus Christi (Boze Cialo) holiday. The priest carries the Blessed Sacrament, and is followed by the
parishioners. They walk from St. Hedwig to St. Adalbert, stopping by four decorated altars set up along Lagrange Street.

Figure 8. Parishioners in front of St. Adalbert main entrance.

Music is also an integral part of the parish life. There are two organists hired in the church. Although neither of them speaks Polish, they both can sing well in Polish. There is a small choir that sings during the Polish mass. They know many Polish religious songs. As Father Marek told me, their favorite song is “Serdeczna Matko.” They sing it on every occasion: for Sunday mass, during processions, for funerals, and for weddings, whether it is liturgically appropriate or not.
A highlight of parish life are trips to Poland that Father Marek organizes every summer. He makes sure that each year they visit different places in Poland. He told me that over the years he has noticed that what the participants like most is to visit those villages where their grandparents lived. Sometimes they form subgroups, go to the villages, and just stay there for a few days. The countryside life seems to interest them more than visiting historical sites in big cities. As some people confirmed, when they return to America they feel as if they had been reborn as more Polish.

The parish life at St. Adalbert seems to flourish. The Polish-Americans see their church as a place where they can renew and also exhibit their Polishness. In all the activities they try to follow the tradition, try to do everything the way it was done years ago in Poland. Participating in the Corpus Christi procession or the Christmas midnight mass reinforces their Polish identity, and this, I believe, is more important than the religious meaning behind those rites. Those who go to Poland every year come back with the countryside landscape in their minds and “freeze” it there for the next year. “Serdeczna Matko” is the only song that they will always associate with
Polish church music. It has become a musical icon the same way the figures of St. Stanislaus and St. Adalbert and the painting of Our Lady of Czestochowa serve as visual icons of Poland. They themselves, with their frozen traditions, will become icons for their children. One lady told me after the mass: “My grandfather has not missed a mass at St. Adalbert for sixty-one years. Every Sunday he sits at the same spot.”

**Melodies of Poland**

A couple blocks away from Lagrange Street, right on the bank of the Maumee River, WCWA radio station broadcasts *Melodies of Poland* every Sunday morning. Streamed for the first time over sixty years ago, the show has been hosted by Janet Gawle and Rob Szczublewski for seven years now. It has had several different formats depending on the hosts’ ideas and resources available, but it has been always geared towards Polish-Americans from the Toledo area.

*Melodies of Poland* is professionally prepared and run. Szczublewski has a degree in communication and professional training in media leadership. He and Gawle are an adorable host couple; they feel very relaxed and energetic behind the microphones. They know their roles very well and feel comfortable talking about serious matters as well as playing trivial jokes on each other.

The show lasts an hour and it is meant to both entertain and inform. There is a lot of music, some interviews with guests, and a few documentary stories. The hosts make sure to find some time for newscasts, community calendars of events, advertisements, and announcements. This helps to inform in an easy and inexpensive way the 6,000 listeners that constitute the
audience of *Melodies of Poland* about what is going on in the area. The community is scattered over large areas and word of mouth is not always an efficient way to spread the news around.

The musical repertoire played during the show is crucial. It reveals the hosts’ musical preferences and shows their perception and understanding of Polish music. It also shapes the tastes of the listeners. The musical image of Poland is created by the hosts and imposed on the listeners who take it uncritically.

The personal goal of Szczublewski and Gawle is to play music that really comes from Poland. When Gawle goes to Poland she buys many CDs of Polish music. The fact is, however, that most of this music would not be consumed by the general audience in Poland. The party and wedding hits that are played during *Melodies from Poland* are out of date, usually of mediocre quality and recorded by minor artists in small, rather than professional, studios. In contemporary Poland these recordings are considered cheap and cheesy. Sometimes Gawle plays music by more famous pop artists such as Maryla Rodowicz or Urszula. Both singers are regarded rather highly in Poland. Their times of greatness passed some ten years ago.

Instead of listening to *Melodies of Poland*, the Polish-Americans in Toledo can choose to listen to another Polish radio show – *Sharon and Chet’s Polka Radio Show* (both shows are broadcast on Sundays at 8 a.m.). The main difference between these two shows lies in their musical repertoire. As the name itself indicates, *Sharon and Chet’s* plays mainly polkas. When I asked Gawle and Szczublewski what they thought about the differences in the repertoires they expressed ignorance toward the music played by *Sharon and Chet’s*. They disagreed that polka music is traditionally Polish, and disliked that it is presented to listeners as the only type of music from Poland.\(^{45}\) Szczublewski and Gawle are convinced that Polish-Americans should be exposed

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\(^{45}\) Polka is a Bohemian (Czech) dance. First presented in a stylized version in Prague in 1837, it was later performed in the theaters of Paris and London, reaching the New York stage in 1844. Polka gained an extraordinary population
to music from contemporary Poland, and not only folk, but also pop, rock, and classical music. They think that listening only to polkas is a “cheap way” of being Polish, which should be more a source of embarrassment than pride for the Polish ethnic group.

The audience for Melodies of Poland consists mainly of the members of the Polish-American community. Also, the audience itself creates a community.46 Among the most dedicated listeners of Melodies are the elderly from the community, who have lived in Toledo for many years. For these individuals, it has become a Sunday ritual to listen to Melodies at 8 a.m. and then come to church at 10 a.m. They never miss the show, and they never miss the mass.

All minority mass media content could be analyzed from the perspective of what is revealed about ethnic identity.47 Through media, immigrants seek how to portray themselves48 and express and manifest their otherness.49 Melodies from Poland presents a very modern urban image of Polish-Americans from Toledo. It avoids outdated rural portraits of Poland full of polkas and wedding hits. Instead, the show provides the listeners with contemporary Polish music, thus facilitating their identification with present-day Poland.

among the laboring classes of 19th century Europe. The dance gave expression to the utopian vision of an oppressed working class. It is very often mistaken for Polish traditional music. (J. E. Kleeman, The Origins and Stylistic Development of Polish-American Polka Music, Ph.D. Dissertation [Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, 1982], 13.).

48 Browne, Ethnic Minorities, 5.
Flavors of Poland: Ski’s

Language, religion, music, dance, performance, and art can all be studied as a communicative or semiotic system.\(^{50}\) In the same way, the meaning of food, as one of many aspects of culture, can be grasped from a symbolic and metaphorical point of view.\(^{51}\) Our taste for food is culturally shaped and socially controlled.

Of course, food can be studied, and usually is, from a purely nutritional point of view. But food is never “just food,” and its significance can never be purely nutritional.\(^{52}\) Scholars have too often left the study of foodways to antiquarians and recipe collectors. In the 1960s, with the rise of structuralism, some anthropologists (e.g. Levi Strauss and Mary Douglas) began to write about food to understand it as a cultural system. A famous saying – “We are what we eat” – points toward food as a part of people’s culture.\(^{53}\) Food choices serve as powerful metaphors and concrete symbols of group identity. Food makes a culture unique. Eating habits both symbolize and mark the boundaries of cultures.\(^{54}\) Preparing, eating, serving, forbidding, and talking about food provide a whole area of performance in which statements of identity can be made.\(^{55}\)

This is especially true for immigrant experience. For immigrants food is not just a question of regular consumption for “maintenance purposes.” It plays multiple roles in the social, political, economic and cultural lives of both new immigrants and those who become long-time settlers.\(^{56}\) By combining tradition, continuity, adaptation, and innovation of an ethnic group, food

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 32.
\(^{56}\) Kershen, *Food in the Migrant Experience*, 2.
maintains a distinctive place in the public arena.\textsuperscript{57} Many ethnic foodways are practiced in the private domain: among family members or in-group members, at home, in the neighborhood, or church hall. Certain public arenas have also developed for the public display of ethnic foodways, for example holidays, restaurants, and festivals.

Ski’s is a newly opened Polish-American restaurant in Sylvania.\textsuperscript{58} The owner – Jack Sparagowski – and his wife (both of Polish origin), decided to open the restaurant because, as they say, “the community deserves Polish food more often that just for funerals and weddings.”

Ski’s is located in one of the shopping plazas in Sylvania, Ohio. It has a very modern interior design, is spacious and clean, and is decorated all in read and white – Polish national colors. There are many pictures of famous Polish-American actors, musicians, politicians, businessmen, sportsmen, and celebrities hanging on the walls. There is a special place separated as a dance floor. Every weekend Sparagowski invites musicians to play polkas. Every Tuesday in the restaurant a group of people attend Polish language classes. On Wednesdays, once in a while, Sparagowski organizes lectures that deal with Polish history, traditions, music, or art. The restaurant is also available for food delivery.

Sparagowski says that the Polish-American community in Toledo seems not to exist anymore. The reason, he finds, is that there is no place for people to gather. He believes that provided with a place to meet, the Polish-Americans will come and reunite as a community. Ski’s fulfills this mission. It provides a nice place full of Polish symbols, it offers many interesting activities, and on the top of that it serves Polish food. For those people, eating


\textsuperscript{58} The name – Ski’s – refers to the most common ending of Polish last names – ”ski,” for example Kowalski, Wroblewski, Wacinski, Sparagowski.
together creates a feeling of group belongingness, and implies kinship. It is not only the restaurant’s space and the people that remind them of their homeland, it is also the Polish food that seems to be most important for getting together. For the immigrants to abandon traditional food for the foods of Americans would be to abandon community, family, and religion.

Food patterns seem to be among those most resistant to acculturation and change. They are believed to stay among immigrants even when everything else has become blurred with American culture. A recognizably Polish dish is what brings back immigrants’ memories and enhances their Polishness. Sparagowski told me that some of his customers cried during dinner because the food for them was charged with emotions and resembled their past.

Ski’s claims to serve “authentic Polish meals.” For some people authentic food implies that products are prepared using the same ingredients and processes as found in the homeland. This is partly followed by Ski’s. Although they do not import ingredients from Poland, all the dishes are prepared according to recipes that Sparagowski’s grandmother brought from Poland.

On the other hand, authenticity does not have to be that objective. It can be socially constructed and linked to expectations. Ski’s customers expect to see on the menu names that sound Polish, and those that they remember from their grandparents’ stories. The original recipes are not as important as the fact that a dish “looks” Polish or at least has a Polish-sounding name. The “Polish Noodles and Cabbage with Meatballs” (Kluski z kapusta i klopsiki) that I ate at Ski’s definitely looked and sounded more Polish than it tasted. (And, by the way, I see no reason in serving this dish on a daily basis; in Poland it is eaten only during Christmas!)

60 Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, 54.
61 Mussel and Brown, *Ethnic and Regional Foodways*, 44.
63 Ibid., 535.
The culinary culture of Ski’s restaurant seems to work well for the Polish-Americans. By providing food, a place to gather, and some activities Sparagowski makes the community reunite. Polish food, music, and symbols of Poland make people want to visit Ski’s. It does not really matter that the food might not be prepared as it is in Poland, that the polkas played on an electronic keyboard are not Polish traditional music, and that a poster brought from Poland exposed on a wall is a commercial for Pepsi. What truly matters is that the community stays together, that the members do not feel abandoned in their searching for ethnic identity.

Chapter Conclusion

For my research, Toledo served as an urban field. My goal was to sketch a map of Toledo’s soundscape, particularly as it has been shaped by Polish immigrants. I have tried to explore how rural traditions, among them music, that the immigrants brought with them many years ago have been transformed, and function now in the urban environment.

The center of the community is located on Lagrange Street. Although recently significantly changed, Lagrinka still functions as a symbol of Polishness in Toledo. With the few remaining sites (the theater, the store, the church, and the funeral houses), Lagrange Street reminds the Polish-Americans about the good past years and maybe prompts them to keep the community alive.

St. Adalbert parish has always been one of the main gathering places for the community. It still maintains most of the traditions brought by the immigrants from Poland. Worshiping Our Lady of Czestochowa, saying the Rosary, participating in the Corpus Christi procession with decorated altars, and singing “Serdeczna Matko” all originated in Polish villages. Now, they are practiced and treasured in Toledo, among Polish-Americans, while they have almost disappeared.
from villages and cities in Poland. These rural traditions have been transplanted to the city and function now as urban.

The radio show *Melodies of Poland* serves as a typically urban medium to inform and entertain people. It plays an essential role in providing the immigrants with a portrait of contemporary Poland. The show tries to keep up with current Polish music trends. And, although the songs that are played are either slightly out-of-date or not on the highest artistic level, at least the show does not try to impose on the audience the idyllic image of rural Poland that might have been true fifty years ago but is definitely not now. By bringing music from Polish cities to the urban environment of Toledo, the show contributes to bridging the diasporic community with its homeland.

Ski’s restaurant extends the borders of Polish-American activities’ zone to the outskirts of Toledo. In some ways it has replaced, or will do so soon, Lagrange Street as the heart of the community. It is a place where the immigrants get together to reunite. Although meant as a family oriented traditional Polish dining place, Ski’s does not look like a typical Polish household or a restaurant. It has been adjusted to the modern American urban setting. Yet, its role has been preserved. The Toledo immigrants can come together, eat, talk, dance, laugh, and cry the same way their grandparents did back in Poland.
Figure 10. Map of the Toledo area with marked important points.
CHAPTER FOUR
FOLK DANCE PERFORMANCE AND PERFORMING IDENTITY

Every time I came to a rehearsal of the Echoes of Poland dance group I had multiple feelings. Yes, that was my field site and I had to do my research. Yes, I wanted to know the group from the inside. Yes, I liked dancing very much. Yes, I wanted to learn the dances. Yes, I am Polish. Yes, I am a musician. It seemed like a perfect situation. Yet, these ingredients did not want to come together. I was torn: was I a student, a scholar, a dancer, a musician, or a Pole? And, on top of that, it was that style of dance, that staged folklore that I never liked before. For many years I knew that there were folk dance groups among Polish-Americans around the world. Now, here I was - a new member of one of them: learning dances and researching folklore.

Folklore as Ethnographic Source

Ethnic folklore is a significant indicator of a group’s identity. That has been especially apparent for immigrant groups whose development of ethnicity has always been a “living” laboratory for both social scientists and folklorists.\(^{64}\) Although relatively new in America (ethnic folklore research started here in 1950s), numerous European scholars have worked with ethnic groups and developed the notion of folkways, which function as multiple signs chosen as expressions of ethnicity.\(^{65}\)

In general, American immigrants’ identities gradually evolve towards so-called “Americanization.” Thus, many of their ethnic folkways disappear entirely. More,

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\(^{65}\) Ibid.
though, are transformed rather than entirely forgotten. Some folkways not only survive but also may develop into commercially significant signs apart from their original homeland meaning. In one way or another, folk traditions are vital. From a scholarly point of view they stand for ethnographic sources of an immigrant group history. Scholars look at folkways as survival signs from a group’s distant past and indicators of how the group survived the migratory process.

**Folklore in Eastern Europe**

Folklore, as labeled broadly, connotes “manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc. of the old time.” It is sometimes called vernacular folklore, and is contrasted with a more specific definition of folklore: staged performances of folk music and folk dance, by people dressed in special types of folk costumes. This stage-adjusted folklore is usually performed within the framework of a spectacle, and sometimes called “folklorism” or even “fakelore.”

In Eastern European countries the notion of folklore has been especially complex. A strong political manipulation in those countries aimed to cover the difference between traditional functional culture and folklore, a fixed form of artistic significance. The authorities’ goal was to present folklore as a deeply rooted authentic tradition. Thus, folklore started to be perceived as real traditional culture, and, subsequently, a symbol of national identity for the Eastern European nations.

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68 Ibid.
Folk Dance: Two Phases of Existence

Traditional dances in Eastern Europe constitute an example of adapting functional culture into pompous staged folklore. Several dance types were selected, stylized, and developed into symbols of “national character” of a given country.\(^69\) Eastern European ethnomusicologists, folklorists, and choreologists observed dance events in their traditional setting and then, along with dance instructors, brought them on stage in a supposedly authentic version. Presented in urban locations by professionally trained dancers, the dances soon turned into public entertainment. The idea was to show the “roots” of the nation supposedly found in the original dances of the village people as brought on stage and made available to everyone. By watching the dance groups performing, people were supposed to identify with this “authentic folklore” and see it as a symbol of their national identity.

A bulk of professional, semi-professional, and amateur folk dance troupes mushroomed in the 1960s and 1970s and they soon developed to a worldwide phenomenon, crossing Eastern European borders. Although each of those ensembles claimed that their versions of the dances were the closest to the “dances in the field,” they presented highly stylized and carefully choreographed versions of the dances.\(^70\) Because it was technically impossible to move village dancers directly onto a professional stage, members of the groups were urban-born individuals, often from the capital city, who just learned the repertoire from dance instructors in a classroom-like environment. They would quickly become professional folk dancers and were usually paid to perform.


Hardly any of them would have been to “the field” and observed, not to mention, participated, in a village dance event. What would have been seen on stage was truly far from the participatory field version of the dances. Due to strong political propaganda, though, people tended to see the dances as “originated in some primordial source of the nation’s purest values that date from some prehistoric period.” In essence, what was shown on stage was seen as good, innocent, pure, unspoilt, wholesome, and optimistic. It was a nice image of a village that became a symbol of traditional ideals and values for a whole nation.

In short, folk dance can be seen as having two phases of existence. The first one takes place in the original setting, in villages. The dances are highly participatory and improvisatory, learned in a functional way. The emphasis is on how it feels to dance. In the second phase of existence, the folk dances are presented by professional dance troupes on stage. Their choreography is fixed, and the dancers are taught by professional teachers. The emphasis on how the dances look.

**Immigrants’ Folk Dance: The Third Phase of Existence**

For many years in immigrant communities all over the world, folk dance groups have been organized. They were meant to present stage performances, and have often attracted quite large audiences. In the U.S., where the number of immigrants from Eastern Europe is prominent, folk dance troupes have existed virtually in every city where ethnic communities remain active.

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71 Ibid., 35.
In the past, most of the Eastern European immigrants came from the countryside. They knew that folk dance had been originally a village activity, and therefore they were very much interested in cultivating this tradition. They felt like here, in the American urban setting, while performing folk dances, they were preserving something most indigenous, something that was still in their blood and deeply in their hearts. Today, the members of the dance groups are mostly second, third, or fourth generations. They have never lived in their homeland and have never participated in village dancing. The only thing they associate folk dance with are the groups from their country (those of the second existence). In the perception of the groups’ members, their own involvement in dance is something that can be equated to the “second existence” dances in their homeland. But the folk dance they perform is located somewhere beyond that. Since it has been transplanted to the immigration setting, it is therefore influenced by all the circumstances there. The willingness to perform national identity abroad is greater, and also greater is the involvement and dedication to perform the dances. By dancing, immigrants do not only connect past and present (by performing something that originated and flourished in the past), but also bring a piece of their homeland to the U.S.

The immigrant dance groups are third existence of folk dance, and parallel the second existence abroad. The third existence is not only different because it is happening away from the home country, as the dance floor is geographically moved, but also because it is characterized by greater involvement of the members whose motivation comes from their willingness to perform their identities through performing the dances.

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73 J. Zubrzycki, “Emigration from Poland,” 255.
Echoes of Poland

History

The Polish folk dance group *Echoes of Poland* was started forty years ago in Toledo, Ohio, by Paulina Tul-Ortyl. So far, she has been the only instructor to teach dance to the group. Tul-Ortyl was born in Poland and got a degree in dance choreography at Maria Curie-Sklodowska University in Lublin. She arrived to the U.S. in her twenties, and settled down in Toledo and worked in a factory. In 1967 she was asked to prepare a group of young people to perform some of the traditional dances at the Polish Christmas celebration. She gathered some of her friends from Lagrange Street and Nebraska Avenue. Shortly after their first appearance, they were asked to perform at some local festivals and church celebrations. At the beginning there were just a few couples but soon more and more people from the Polish neighborhood were interested in joining the group. During the 1970s and 1980s, Tul-Ortyl went to Poland four times in order to take folk dance summer classes. The courses were offered by folk institutes affiliated with major universities in the country. The instructors were selected out of dance teachers from the best folk dance groups in Poland, including the instructors of the well-known *Mazowsze*. Every time she came back from Poland, she brought folk dance costumes that served *Echoes*’ performances.

The group was growing and becoming popular among Polish immigrants in the Toledo area. In 1980s *Kapela*, a live band developed, and often accompanied the dancers. *Echoes* was well established and good enough in performance to start competing with other Polish immigrant groups from the U.S. and countries around the world. Soon, they started going to Poland for the international folk dance festival and competition organized
every third year in Rzeszow (South-East Poland). In 1980 *Echoes* won the first prize for their *Dozynki* (Harvest Celebration) program competing with sixty-four other folk dance groups from all around the world.

Since the mid-1990s there have been fewer and fewer dancers performing in the group. When I met them in 2007, there were about ten people in the older group, and about eight children between three and ten years old in the younger group. The group does not perform much any more in Toledo, and if they do it is rarely to live music. They still try to go to the Rzeszow festival. Since the time that they won the first prize, they have not missed a single festival. It is very doubtful that they will go during the summer of 2008, however. In order to participate they need at least eight people and there are far too few interested in going. Once in a while the group organizes open rehearsals in order to draw new members. They have not had good luck, though; in September 2007, I was the only “new member” who showed up – and my intention was not to join them. I was not even aware they were looking for new people!

Until as late as 2000 *Echoes* was an independent group, not affiliated with any formal institution. They were also non-profit. The dancers were not paid for their performances, and the instructor taught them voluntary. In 2000 the group was absorbed under the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA). Now, the dancers are formally hired by the organization, insured and paid for each performance. Further, Tul-Ortyl very recently started selling to the PRCUA all the folk costumes that she had brought from Poland. The costumes are now lent out to the group members for each performance.
Rehearsals

Echoes consists of two separate groups. Each of them rehearses once a week: the adults’ group on Thursdays, and the children’s group on Tuesdays. The rehearsals take place in PRCUA hall that normally serves as a place for social events organized by the local Polish-American community. By the hall there is a bar where members of one of the Polish-American clubs meet to talk and drink beer. There is also a classroom where the Polish language is taught. The rehearsals last about an hour and never start on time. The dancers tend to arrive late. Then they usually talk to each other, clean up the hall from tables and chairs, write checks to pay for their insurance, and take their time to put on their sports clothes. When the rehearsal is over, people stick around for a few minutes to talk, joke, gossip, and discuss upcoming events. When most of the people are gone, Tul-
Ortyl usually talks to the dancers who have well-established positions in the group about how everybody in the group is doing, who is improving with the steps, who is being lazy, whose technique is good, and who is not a good dancer.

Figure 12. *Echoes of Poland* during rehearsal. Although the dancers rehearse in sports clothes, the men often wear boots. This helps to do loud stomps that are an integral part of many Polish folk dances.

For many of the dancers, the rehearsal hall serves as nothing more than a gym. They bring their best sports shoes, stretchy comfortable clothes, knees and elbows protectors, and hydrating drinks. Each rehearsal starts with a warm-up that resembles a ballet group getting ready for a performance. After rehearsals the hall is full of the smell of sweat and the dancers long for a shower. In the process of teaching, Tul-Ortyl is very careful and detailed about movements and steps. She expects everybody to perform well
during rehearsals. She usually shows everything very slowly and the dancers follow her. When she thinks they are ready with the steps, she lets them dance to music from a CD. If a dance is going well they will also work on a spatial organization as if the dance floor was a stage to perform on.

Some of the dancers have been in the group for fifteen years or more. They have mastered the dances to such a degree that coming to the rehearsals does not seem useful for them anymore. They still do come, and help the less experienced dancers with the steps and movements.

Figure 13. *Echoes of Poland* during performance. Note a physical effort visible on the dancers’ faces.
Dance as Cultural Text

In their research on dance, European scholars have emphasized the choreographic material itself as primarily taken into consideration and analyzed on a conceptual and artistic level. 74 American anthropologists, on the other hand, have looked closer at the dancing people. They are interested in social interaction between dancing individuals, what dance means to them, and how it might change their perception of the world and of themselves. When brought together, the ethnochoreographical and anthropological perspectives on dance direct us toward a definition of dance as “cultural text.” 75 The contrast, and at the same time the relationship, between the two semiotic levels of dance – form and meaning – give us a full spectrum of how to look at dance.

For all the members of *Echoes of Poland* dance serves as entertainment and an aerobic exercise of high intensity. They also develop their artistic and showmanship skills while getting ready for performances of a quite spectacular character. Further, they acquire good knowledge about Polish folk dances that are taught by a well-trained teacher. Coming to the rehearsals is also a way of making friends and socializing with other Poles in the area. Rehearsing and performing together strengthens in-group ties and unifies them as Polish-Americans. The dance movements are very important and performing them in the best possible way is something they can be proud of. But the choreography also functions to support and reinforce other expressive elements of meaning that the dances carry. The members of *Echoes* perform their Polishness while performing the dances. Dance has always been an important instrument in cultural

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context in art events, in social communication and political action.\textsuperscript{76} It is a very powerful tool and is not reducible to any other form of human activity. Thus, dance is a tool in performing and displaying identities for the Poles. The members of the group differ very little or not at all in their everyday life from other American people. But when they come to the rehearsals, or even more, when they perform on stage in the costumes, their Polishness is brought up onto the surface. Dance becomes an instrument of change and for a few minutes they become more Polish.

Outside the *Echoes*’ rehearsals and performances, the dancers often organize social events with modern music and dance. They annually hold a *pierogi* dinner and a fund-raising ball. Usually, they hire a Polka band or a DJ who plays Polish music. During those events they also recreate themselves as Poles, but the folk dances are more powerful and more strongly connected to the idea of national representation. Much can be said about what the dancers are doing with folklore. It can be forever speculated how close they come to folk dance groups from Poland, and how far they go from original village dances. It can be asked how well their movements display all the details and express the hidden messages that are “packaged” in the dances. But it is probably more important to see what folklore is doing with them, with the people who for this short amount of time become Polish in their appearance, acting and mentality.\textsuperscript{77}

Poles and “Non-Poles”

Almost all of the people in *Echoes* are of Polish descent, most of them of the third or fourth generations. But, there are also a few people in the group who themselves have

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 110.
\textsuperscript{77} Ronström, “Folklor: Staged Folk Music,” 75.
no connections to Poland. Some of them are spouses of Poles; others do not have even that. It would seem that for the non-Poles, who do not have it “in their blood,” it would be harder to learn those dances. But it is more important to behave as Poles, which in this case means doing all those steps correctly, than to actually be Polish by birth. It does not matter who you are but how well you perform. The required competence takes over any inherited competence and it is no longer apparent who is Polish and who is not. Everyone is.

Dancing Myself

Unlike the non-Poles who at first would seem total strangers, I entered the group as a Pole, as someone from the same ethnic group. It was initially my intention to just observe the Echoes’ rehearsals. Although I am very interested in dance generally, I had never done Polish folk dance before. I lived for twenty-four years in Poland and had numerous opportunities to watch folk dance groups on stage. I never wanted to join them since those state controlled and funded groups seemed fake to me, too pompous, too showy, and not really natural. Over years I became ignorant toward folk dance from my home country and no one would have been able to convince me to change my mind.

The day that I first came to Echoes’ rehearsal was the day of their open rehearsal, and they were looking for potential new members. When they saw a new person they were sure that I was interested in joining the group. After they found out that I am from Poland, and that I am a musician, they viewed me as a perfect candidate for becoming a new member. Little did they know that I was there to study them, that I was an ethnomusicologist in the field doing my research in order to gather information needed
for my Master’s thesis. Therefore, at our initial encounter, they perceived me as a potential contributor to the group rather than an exploiter. My presence as a scholar was unnoticed. Their behavior did not change as it usually changes among members of a cultural group in the presence of an ethnographer.

After some weeks, though, I informed people why I was there and what I was actually looking for. This only changed my status a little. Now I was a girl from Poland, a musician, a potential member of the group, and a university student who wished to study them. These multiple identities put me in an ambiguous position in relation to the Echoes’ dancers. I was an outsider – a researcher trying to study them. But I was also an insider, and an insider on two counts: as a Polish person I shared their ethnic identity, as a musician I shared their appreciation for dance. Thanks to that, I was in a different position than most ethnomusicologists who have been engaged in research among people whose cultural background differed from their own.78 Luckily, I got to avoid the “general aura of suspicion that frequently surrounds the researcher studying outside his own culture.”79 I was born in Poland and lived there for many years so they took for granted my “cultural competence” that was, according to them, simply inherited, just in my blood. Therefore, they assumed that I knew all the folk dances very well. So when I asked if I could stay at their rehearsals, I was answered with a request to teach them Polish dances. These people, who are masters in Polish folk dances, were asking me, who had no idea how to do the steps and movements, to teach them how to dance!

Czekanowska was right, although she was describing a situation regarding scholars studying outside of their cultures, when she noted that “a researcher who knows well the

artistic level and quality of the music and dance he is studying is rare.80 I was like most of the researchers. I did not know the dances I was studying.

But, despite my anxieties, I just could not refuse and joined them in dancing. They were slowly showing me the steps and I was concentrating to do well. I was embarrassed at the beginning, but I was gradually making progress. As I was coming to later rehearsals, I was getting more and more involved. I was also really impressed with the abilities of the dancers, how well they knew the dances, and how dedicated they were to do well all the time, though they had been doing it for years. As I began to learn more of the dances, I really wanted to be as good as they were, to be a part of they group and perform with them on stage. It was at those moments that I transcended my researcher role. I was constantly balancing in the “back and forth movement between experience and consciousness.”81 On one hand, I kept thinking that I was there to study them and how I could get the best information for my thesis. On the other hand, I almost always failed to remember my scholar role. I just wanted to dance and be good at it. And I also wanted to be accepted among them, to be one of them, not only as a Pole, but also as a dancer.

With time, I came to realize that the dance steps and movements were actually quite complex, not as simple as I had thought before. Somehow, I gained a totally new outlook on the dances and folk dance groups. What I disliked before, now, after I tried it by myself, I not only learned to appreciate, but adopted as part of my interests, musicianship, and Polish identity. I did not associate Echoes with the folk dance groups that I used to watch when I lived in Poland. I viewed them as my people here, in

America, who accepted me because I was Polish and a musician, and despite the fact that I did not know dances from my own country.

My initial intention was to study *Echoes of Poland* in order to achieve a certain outcome of fieldwork. I wonder, though, what was more valuable in this case: the actual fieldwork results or the analysis of my field experiences. Being in the field I was gathering information about the group and its members, but also, and more importantly, I could see myself changing. In my fieldwork I was a critical variable in the process of data gathering and evaluation.\(^82\) I am a Pole, a musician, and a scholar. I am a product of specific social, cultural, and intellectual contexts. I am not free from my own biases. I used to dislike Polish folk dances and people performing them, and I became interested in *Echoes* only because I need to do my ethnography. For all those reasons I was not able to produce an objective study. Objectivity was not what guided me in “gathering data to produce conclusions which accurately represent the musical culture under study,” as Nettl wanted a long time ago.\(^83\) The ethnography, which is a product of my fieldwork, is highly reflexive. It reveals elements of my personal biases and it shows the gradual change that I was undergoing while being in the field. I believe that Freilich was mistaken when he stated, shortly after Nettl, that fieldworkers “receive rewards for keeping their errors and their personalities hidden.”\(^84\) My ethnography does contain errors. I was wrong judging *Echoes* by what I knew from Poland. I was wrong originally planning to just observe the group and draw objective conclusions. I was wrong when I imagined that my Polishness would not matter to anyone in the field. Nettl corrected himself, noting in 1983 that

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\(^83\) Nettl, *Theory and Method*, 97.

“insider and outsider interpretations are different but both valid.”85 My interpretation is a mixture of the insider and outsider’s views. Being an outsider, a scholar, I became an insider because of my Polishness and musicianship. Subsequently, then I became an outsider when it I revealed that I did not know dances from my own country, but I returned to being an insider as I was learning them.

I was always amazed at how quickly Echoes’ dancers can move their feet, change steps, and form different patterns on the floor. Only when they slowed the tempo down was I able to break everything down and see it more clearly. While in the field, my identities were shifting fast, beyond my immediate comprehension. Now, when I reflect back and analyze my field experiences, I can slow down, come closer, and try to identify those shifts.

CONCLUSION

An object can be seen in many different ways when observed through different lenses. As you switch lenses the color, focus, sharpness, depth, and width change, yet the shape remains the same.

The Polish-Americans from Toledo observe Poland. They take it as a model for crafting their identities. Not all of them look through the same lens, though. Using different lenses results in multiple images. Thus, the community is too diverse to be uniformly described.

Not surprisingly, the lenses of St. Adalbert’s parishioners have a color of religion. They are a little bit fatigued, covered with dust, and used mostly by the elderly. Through these lenses the parishioners see several Polish religious traditions and scrupulously follow them. Long outdated in Poland, here, in Toledo, religious life gives the Polish-Americans from St. Adalbert a sense of continuity and belonging.

In turn, lenses used by the hosts of Melodies of Poland radio show are new, transparent, and functional. Through them, contemporary Poland can be seen. The hosts pick out news and new music from Poland, and present the material to their listeners. Sometimes the real image gets refracted due to long distance and time delays. Yet, the Poland seen is the least blurred.

In designing his restaurant, Sparagowski uses compound bifocal lenses. In Ski’s, on one hand, he tries to create a family atmosphere enhanced by the taste of Polish food. On the other, he spices it up with modern American setting. Nonetheless, it seems to
work, since more and more people visit his restaurant and the community is getting reunified.

The *Echoes’s* dancers’ lenses are focused, and equipped with a close-up filter. Through them, the dancers see folk dance groups in Poland, and follow them. The more mastery in dancing they achieve, the more Polish they feel. The costumes, steps, choreography, and the music are what matters to them during rehearsals, on stage, and in performance of identities.

I looked at the Toledo Polish-American community through field lenses. As scientists locate field lenses between their eyes and the objective, I placed all my theoretical knowledge, ethnographic experience, and logistic abilities between myself and my informants. This helped me to see a fairly clear image of the community. Field lenses, though, in order to work properly, “should have no dust and scratches”; otherwise these will become visible in the final image. Inevitably, the image of the Polish-American community in Toledo that I have presented in this thesis contains some dust and scratches. They are results of my imperfect scholarly knowledge, fieldwork mistakes, and my own biases as a Pole. Yet, I hope the study contributes to the field of ethnic identity, minorities, urban ethnomusicology, and folklore research.

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86 Field lens refers to a positive lens located between the objective and the eye-piece. It bends rays that would miss the eye-piece lens (or the next lens in a multiple lens system) back towards the axis, so that they pass through the next lens instead of continuing off into space. (www.colorado.edu/physics/phys1230/phys1230_fa01/topic43.html, accessed 5/14/2008.)

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<tr>
<th>date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/13/2007</td>
<td><em>Echoes'</em> adult rehearsal</td>
<td>PRCUA</td>
<td>7:30 – 9:30pm</td>
<td>My fieldwork starts, my first encounter with <em>Echoes of Poland</em>. I do not dance yet, just observe. I talk to many people, try to make connections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/20/2007</td>
<td><em>Echoes'</em> adult rehearsal</td>
<td>PRCUA</td>
<td>7:30 – 9:30pm</td>
<td>My second rehearsal, I dance Polish folk dances for the first time in my life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/25/2007</td>
<td><em>Polish-American Concert Band</em>’s rehearsal</td>
<td>Ohio Historical Theater</td>
<td>7:30 – 9:30pm</td>
<td>I arrive early, before the musicians. By a chance I run into Michael Nelson, a newly appointed president of the Theater. We talk while the musicians start coming and setting up for the rehearsal. I watch the whole rehearsal. Although it is just September the band rehearses Christmas carols medley. American Christmas carols are mixed with Polish ones. Afterwards, I talk to the musicians, and the conductor, and join them for pizza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/27/2007</td>
<td><em>Echoes'</em> adult rehearsal</td>
<td>PRCUA</td>
<td>7:30 – 9:30pm</td>
<td>I come to a rehearsal as a still new but “real” member of <em>Echoes</em>. I change my clothes, and fully rehearse with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/30/2007</td>
<td><em>Dozynki</em> (Harvest Festival)</td>
<td>Lourdes College</td>
<td>noon – 4pm</td>
<td>I attend a mass at noon. After mass we walk in a procession to the dinner place. Before the dinner there is another procession, this time indoors. After the dinner <em>Echoes of Poland</em> perform a couple of dances. There is also a silent auction where people can buy things from Poland. I meet many people, and make new connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/9/2007</td>
<td><em>Echoes'</em> children rehearsal</td>
<td>PRCUA</td>
<td>6:30 – 8:30pm</td>
<td>I observe seven girls rehearsing dances. They are coached by Paulina Tul-Ortyl, and her assistant. I talk to Jacek (Polish) and Maria (American), parents of one of the girls.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/11/2007 (Thursday)</td>
<td>Visit at Tul-Ortyl’s house</td>
<td>Tul-Ortyl’s house</td>
<td>6:00 – 7:00pm</td>
<td>I come to Tul-Ortyl’s house before a regular <em>Echoes’</em> rehearsal. She lives with her husband, and her mother. We have dinner together. The conversation is mainly in English, sometimes we switch to Polish. We talk about her life story, and about the group. She shows me many things she brought from Poland, for example an award that <em>Echoes</em> won in 1985 at the International Folk Dance Festival in Rzeszow. She also shows me some dance costumes that she keeps in her attic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/11/2007 (Thursday)</td>
<td><em>Echoes’</em> adult rehearsal</td>
<td>PRCUA</td>
<td>7:30 – 9:30pm</td>
<td>Regular rehearsal. Tul-Ortyl and the dancers are trying to organize a trip to Poland for the International Folk Dance Festival. That would be their tenth time there. (Later, I find out they ended up not going. They could not get enough people to meet the requirements.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/18/2007 (Thursday)</td>
<td><em>Echoes’</em> adult rehearsal</td>
<td>PRCUA</td>
<td>7:30 – 9:30pm</td>
<td>Regular rehearsal. They are organizing a group of a few people to go to Chicago for a folk dance workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/1/2007 (Thursday)</td>
<td><em>Echoes’</em> adult rehearsal</td>
<td>PRCUA</td>
<td>7:30 – 9:30pm</td>
<td>Regular rehearsal. After a rehearsal I notice I no longer refer to the group as “they” but as “we.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/8/2007 (Thursday)</td>
<td><em>Echoes’</em> adult rehearsal</td>
<td>PRCUA</td>
<td>7:30 – 9:30pm</td>
<td>Regular rehearsal. I am learning more and more dances. I can dance almost the entire choreographed polka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15/2007 (Thursday)</td>
<td><em>Echoes’</em> adult rehearsal</td>
<td>PRCUA</td>
<td>7:30 – 9:30pm</td>
<td>Regular rehearsal. Two <em>Echoes’</em> alumni, who now live in Poland, come to visit. They rejoin the group for a couple of dances. Then, they spend the rest of the time updating each other on their lives and careers.</td>
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<td>11/22/2007 (Thursday)</td>
<td><em>Echoes’</em> adult rehearsal</td>
<td>PRCUA</td>
<td>7:30 – 9:30pm</td>
<td>Regular rehearsal. The dancers are getting ready for the upcoming <em>Pierogi Dinner</em>, an annual fund raising event. Almost the entire rehearsal is taken up by bringing food from the cars, and dealing with tickets distribution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/6/2007 (Thursday)</td>
<td><em>Echoes’</em> adult rehearsal</td>
<td>PRCUA</td>
<td>7:30 – 9:30pm</td>
<td>Regular rehearsal. I do not get to dance since the group is getting ready for a performance, and only the people performing are rehearsing. I sit and watch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/20/2008 (Sunday)</td>
<td>Mass at St. Adalbert</td>
<td>St. Adalbert church</td>
<td>10 – 11am</td>
<td>The mass is held in Polish and in English simultaneously. The priest says the text in Polish, and then translates it to English. The organ is used, and there is a small choir that sings in Polish. After the mass I talk to many people in front of the church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/20/2008 (Sunday)</td>
<td>Conversation with Fr. Marek Ciesla, Polish priest in the parish</td>
<td>Fr. Marek’s office at St. Adalbert parish building</td>
<td>11am – 1pm</td>
<td>I talk to Fr. Marek. We talk about the parish’s life, religious services, holidays, and trips to Poland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/20/2008 (Sunday)</td>
<td>Visit at Ohio Historical Theatre</td>
<td>Ohio Historical Theatre</td>
<td>1 – 2pm</td>
<td>I talk to Marty Blaszczyk, an editor of the <em>Lagrange Street News</em> Polish newspaper. His office is located in the theater. We talk in the foyer since it is too cold in the office. From him I get a lot of information about past and current situation of Polish-Americans in Toledo. He directs me to important people and provides me with several important phone numbers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/20/2008 (Sunday)</td>
<td>Tour around Lagrange Street neighborhood</td>
<td>Lagrange Street</td>
<td>2 – 3pm</td>
<td>Marty offers to drive me around the neighborhood. We drive slowly so that he can explain everything in details. He shows me many significant buildings and venues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/26/2008 (Saturday)</td>
<td>Visit at Ski’s restaurant</td>
<td>Ski’s restaurant</td>
<td>5 – 8pm</td>
<td>I arrive at the restaurant at dinner time. I sit by the table with Lydia Ebersole. She leads Polish language classes at the restaurant. I eat. Jack Sparagowski arrives soon, and we talk. He introduces me to some of his customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/27/2008</td>
<td>Participation in the <em>Melodies of Poland</em> radio show</td>
<td>WCWA radio station</td>
<td>7:30 – 9:30am</td>
<td>I arrive at the radio station at 7:30am, half an hour before the show starts. Janet Gawle and Rob Szczublewski are waiting for me. They ask me if I don’t mind if they interview me during the show. I agree (although it was not in the plan). During the show I sit in the next room and can hear everything that is going on in the show. Then the interview me live. After the show I talk to Szczublewski and Gawle for a few minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/27/2008</td>
<td>Mass at St. Adalbert</td>
<td>St. Adalbert church</td>
<td>10 – 11am</td>
<td>I go to the mass with Rob Szczublewski. Before the mass we stand in front of the church. Many people come and ask if it was me the “young lady” on the radio today. Right before the mass Szczublewski leaves me to join the choir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/27/2008</td>
<td>Brunch meeting in Zychowicz family house</td>
<td>Zychowicz family house</td>
<td>12 – 2pm</td>
<td>I get invited for a brunch. I drive with Rob Szczublewski to Zychowicz family’s house. Besides the members of the family, a few other people join us, among them John Henry Fullen, a president of Toledo’s Sister Cities Alliance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


“The Field Lens.” www-optics.unine.ch/education/optics_tutorials/field_lens.html,


Thomas, William and Znaniecki, Florian. The Polish Peasant in Europe and America. 1909.


