

Elżbieta Hałas, Andrzej Kojder (eds.), *Socjologia humanistyczna Floriana Znanieckiego. Przesłanie dla współczesności* [Florian Znaniecki's Humanistic Sociology: A Message for Contemporaneity]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2010, pp. 196
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This collective volume was prepared towards the 50th anniversary Florian Znaniecki's death. As reflected in the subtitle, the papers collected in the volume focus on the message left by this classic author in Polish and American sociology, one that may represent an important inspiration for reflection in contemporary sociology. In her introduction to the volume, Elżbieta Hałas writes: 'among the theoretical controversies in contemporary studies of culture and society, solutions proposed by Znaniecki come across as a distinctive stance on issues which are still relevant today and still await a resolution' (p. 7). This theme is taken further by different authors in the publication.

In his "Portrait of Florian Znaniecki in Miniature," Andrzej Kojder points out that certain core questions that Znaniecki sought to resolve still remain valid today, even though our answers differ somewhat from those given by the renowned sociologist many years ago. Tim F. Liao stresses that Znaniecki's methodology, based on what he termed the 'humanistic coefficient', in many ways went ahead the inquiry undertaken by the sociologists who tried to overcome the limitations of research methodology resulting from the following assumptions: that sociology may be neutral or free from values, that research in natural sciences may rely on facts even more strongly than in social sciences, and that one should support both deductive reasoning and enumerative induction (*ibidem*, p. 18). The role of the 'humanistic coefficient' is viewed similarly by Andrzej Sitek, who presents it in the context of important contemporary theoretical deliberations over the dichotomy between methodological normativism *versus* historical cultural relativism.

Another set of questions analysed in the volume relates to the notion of nation in Znaniecki's writings. In his paper on Znaniecki's theory of nation, Jerzy Szacki analyses that author's contribution to contemporary analysis of issues related to nation, nationalism and national culture while stressing his own belief that the most valuable

element of Znaniecki's theory was to view nation as a process. On the other hand, Joanna Kurczewska emphasises the contemporary relevance of Znaniecki's work in the context of the recent 'cultural turn' in modern-day sociology, with a focus on the concept of borderlines and thresholds of modern nations in the face of erosion of nation states and hybridisation of contemporary national cultures.

A somewhat different theme from Znaniecki's work is analysed by Piotr Gliński. He points out those elements of Znaniecki's writings that link with the modern idea of civil state. While the question of associations, gatherings and civic collaboration was not the main focus of the Polish-American sociologist, Gliński emphasises that those themes are clearly present in his work and that many arguments put forward by Znaniecki may provide inspiration for their contemporary development.

Krzysztof Gorlach makes an attempt at applying Znaniecki's classic conception to analysing issues in rural sociology, finding an opportunity of complementing the notion of sustainable development and the related neo endogenous development mechanism with Znaniecki's deliberations on types of human personalities published in *Ludzie terażniejsi a cywilizacja przyszłości* [The People of Today and the Civilisation of Tomorrow].

The volume ends with two articles demonstrating that Znaniecki tackled subjectivity, a theme which is highly relevant today. Elżbieta Hałas emphasises that Florian Znaniecki offered breakthrough thinking on the relations between the individual and the society by introducing the concept of social and cultural systems, viewed as dynamic systems of actions and values. In doing so, neither the individual nor the society *per se* were his points of departure but, rather, Znaniecki started off by reflecting on the reality of culture with systems of actions and values that such reality forms. In the same spirit, Marek Ziółkowski emphasises that Znaniecki's thinking fits into the deliberations in contemporary sociology concerning the objectivism versus constructivism dilemma, stressing human agency in creating knowledge and indicating many points of similarity between Znaniecki's writings and the works of Karl Popper or Margaret Archer.

This short synopsis of the newly releases volume has attempted to demonstrate that Znaniecki's thinking remains a source of inspiration for our contemporaries, sometimes startlingly relevant despite the passing years. Moreover, his writings bring themes that are highly useful for analysing the contemporary globalising world which would complement many specific subdisciplines of sociology. As such, both the volume under review and its inspiration, i.e. the original writings by Znaniecki, are well worth (re)reading.

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