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Editors' Introduction: Cultural Becoming and Cultural Sciences

Among several adjectives defining the kind of sociology cultivated by Florian Witold Znaniecki (1882–1958)—e.g. “humanistic,” “systematic,” “interactional,” “interpretative,” “systemic,” “constructionist,” and “cultural,”—“cultural” is an especially appropriate term, one which encompasses all the other terms and properly associates sociology with a wide range of human endeavors for knowledge in the cultural sciences. Znaniecki was one of the first researchers of knowledge as a cultural phenomenon constitutive of the social worlds, and initiated a new orientation in the sociology of knowledge. Reflecting on the social roles of the sociologists of knowledge (Znaniecki 1940), he was keen about sociological craft, demanding first and foremost a good methodology—as discussed in his works, including the “Methodological Note” to *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918–1920) completed with William I. Thomas.

The Method of Sociology (1934) carries out this task most systematically although methodological questions are also dealt with in other works, including *Cultural Sciences* (1952).

Znaniecki’s cultural sociology ranges from the study of the individual as a cultural and social value to such complex phenomena as civilizations which develop as the process of social integration of culture with the focus on agency and social change (Znaniecki 1998). The innovative research potential of his sociology rests on the principle of the humanistic coefficient of all cultural data—their meanings and axiological significance constructed in active experiences of agents. In sociology the humanistic coefficient is characteristic of social actions and social values as put into relief by the

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telling title of the selection of Florian Znaniecki's papers *On Humanistic Sociology*, edited by Robert Bierstedt (Znaniecki 1969). The creative life and work of transnational scholar who worked in Poland and USA has been described (Znaniecka Lopata 1965, 1978; Bierstedt 1968; Markiewicz-Lagneau 1988; Dulczewski 1992; Hałas 2005) and his concepts analyzed thoroughly (Szacki 1986; Dulczewski 1986; Kwilecki, Czarnocki 1989; Hałas 1991a; 1991b; 2000; Gubert, Tomasi 1993). Over the past half a century, Znaniecki's intellectual legacy has influenced sociologists to pursue three avenues of inquiry: life history research such as Elder's life course analysis (Elder 1974, 1999); immigration and transnational research (Lie 1995; Pedraza 1994); methodology, in particular analytic induction (Goldenberg 1993; Markiewicz-Lagneau 1982).

The contributions by Florian Znaniecki to sociology, cultural sciences and philosophy should be further assimilated but the obstacles to the full reception of his works are still to be removed (Hałas 2006). This special issue of the *Polish Sociological Review* is aimed at rediscovering Florian Znaniecki's cultural sociology, especially its relevancy for today's global changes where transnational forces manifest themselves in economic, educational, scientific, religious, political, and indeed, in all spheres of people's lives. The global society—or as Znaniecki has called it, the world-society—is being formed. Znaniecki foresaw it and was one of the first to call for global sociology. Among many of his intellectual contributions, these very bold attempts at exploring the social dynamics of culture for a possible guidance of the processes on the global scale are emphasized in this volume. It includes one of Znaniecki's inedita penned in 1952, "The Evolutionary Approach to the History of Culture," in which major themes continued from *Cultural Reality* (1919) to *Cultural Sciences* (1952) are summarized and the broader horizon for a sociological path is made clear. Written over fifty years ago, this manuscript is still innovative and groundbreaking. It sheds light on issues such as cultural creation and destruction, continuity and change, and the scope and duration of cultural systems including social systems. Some of the earlier concepts unique to Znaniecki, such as the humanistic coefficient, resurface here. We argue that his contributions to the study of cultural and global phenomena deserve greater, rekindled attention today.

The papers in this special issue are achievements presented at the conference, held on April 21, 2005 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where Znaniecki lived and worked since 1940 until his death in 1958. The conference explored his scholarly contributions, following the commemorative event of the Znaniecki Day on September 10, 2004, when the Department of Sociology at Illinois celebrated the 50th anniversary of his Presidential Address at the annual conference of the American Sociological Association (then the American Sociological Society), held on the campus of the University of Illinois in September 1954, by holding a faculty panel discussion of Znaniecki's sociological contributions and their relevance for today's sociology.

The 2005 conference had a full day of scholarly presentations including a keynote speech by Elżbieta Hałas and ten presentations in three topical sessions titled, "The Polish Peasant and Beyond," "Znaniecki's Theory and Methodology," and "Znaniecki's Methodology and Transnational Research." The conference on Znaniecki

was followed by The Illinois Department of Sociology's annual transnational workshop on April 22, 2005, a further exploration of global issues. The six papers in this special issue of the *Polish Sociological Review* include the keynote speech, one paper from the first session, three from the second session, and one from the third session. The selection of the papers was based on the timely completion of the paper and its relevance for today's global sociology.

"The sociologists are uneasy about their science, they want a respectable ancestry and a general relevance" wrote Theodore Abel in his diary (Abel 2000: 354) at the 1954 convention of the American Sociological Society. Even if this observation might have been overgeneralized or exaggerated to some extent, there must have been sufficient reasons to entertain the audience with basic problems of sociology as a topic chosen by Znaniecki for his Presidential Address (Znaniecki 1954). The issues raised were neither transient questions nor unsolvable general problematics, but problems pertinent to investigations of the changes accelerating civilizing processes and bearing upon the tasks of sociologist for the world-society. Whatever the reception of that message at the time, Znaniecki's arguments for doing global sociology through the prism of culture are still robust half a century later. When rival claims for the ultimate truth divide social worlds, Znaniecki's claim for cultural sciences contributing to the understanding of cultural history of mankind, as well as natural history, remains real—so does his guidance on the self-knowledge of humanity and sociology as a crucial part of it.

The global society was only in its infancy as the world culture society but Znaniecki was convinced that the investigation of global phenomena should be the main task of sociologists, as presented in his address at Urbana (Znaniecki 1954: 521). On this occasion, and many others, he expressed concerns about sociology's proper advancement as a science that is able of investigating the growing complexity of social phenomena on the worldwide scale and, what is very important, to analyze the historical background of these phenomena (Znaniecki 1954: 529). The expansion and evolution of social systems (as embodied in relations, roles, and groups) is only a special case of the evolution of cultural systems that may manifest in linguistic, aesthetical, religious, political, technical, economic, or other terms. He was the advocate of the dynamic or processual approach, overcoming the antithesis of social structure and social change as he looked at the social and cultural becoming.

The time is especially ripe for Znaniecki's sociology to meet again with the interest it deserves. His focus on culture does not mean to aestheticize studied phenomena, but to analyze the very powerful meanings, values and symbolism as commented upon by Norbert Wiley and Elżbieta Hałas. Znaniecki's notion of culturalism carries the opposite meaning to the widespread notion of culturalism as an extreme pluralism of incompatible unit cultures and, in this sense, to unlimited relativism. But it is also opposite to the absolutist version of universalism that neglects historical processes not beyond the control of conscious human agents, although this agency is being either creative or destructive. Znaniecki applied the notion of creative evolution introduced by Henri Bergson, in contrast to the later, exclusively for cultural reality.

As emphasized by Norbert Wiley—the neo-Kantian concept of *Kultur* and the pragmatist concept of human action and its symbolism took a new theoretical shape

in Znaniecki's works. The perspective and method of Florian Znaniecki's cultural sociology is being sketched by contributors to this volume following his substantial research on migration, ethnicity, formation of nations, education and science, guided by these premises on culture and interaction. Obviously, the landmark of the Chicago School pursuing after the Hull House emancipatory projects for democracy in America—*The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, co-authored with William I. Thomas—as remarkable as it is, should be perceived in the light of the numerous other works of Znaniecki which preceded and followed it. It stays resourceful in concepts, ideas, methods and data for further explorations, where culture, society, history and biography intermingle—be it a reference for a social and political history of American citizenship, as analyzed by Dorothee Schneider, or data as well as a point of departure for the analysis of individual and collective life trajectories of transatlantic and global migrants, as conducted by Tim F. Liao and Carolyn Hronis.

Znaniecki's contributions to the study of culture and society through culture are grounded in his methodology that builds a new scientific culture and in particular—as epitomized by Günter Lüschen—sociology as culture. In this introduction, we pay attention to one particular aspect of his sociological method, which may be called the dialectic one. This dialectic methodological approach is aimed at overcoming various forms of dualism and antinomies like: quality–quantity, interpretation–explanation, among others, and it is reflected in three important areas: in data, knowledge, and logic.

Znaniecki (1934) described two kinds of data, the natural and the cultural. Natural data are generated by natural systems, which are objectively given as if they existed independently of the observer; cultural data are produced by cultural systems, which are dealt with by students of art, literature, religion, science, social organization and so on. Because the data produced by cultural systems are always somebody's data, and never nobody's data, Znaniecki proposed the humanistic coefficient for a proper understanding of cultural systems. With our current knowledge of the sociology of science, we can also apply the humanistic coefficient to the proper understanding of natural data (in that Znaniecki preceded Bruno Latour' in the theory of science, as Znaniecki included science as one of the cultural systems). Therefore, the two types of data coexist in all systems (that is, in cultural systems there are also natural data, and vice versa), and the humanistic coefficient makes it possible to properly understand both of them together.

Znaniecki (1934) also discussed two types of knowledge: historical and generalizing (or classificatory and nomothetic), which are both essential knowledge though they are in complementary directions to scientific research. While both are about movement from concrete reality to abstract concepts and from abstract concepts to concrete reality, generalizing knowledge without historical contextualization would be weakened, and historical knowledge without generalizing features would lack scientific power. Thus, they complement each other and together they offer a more complete knowledge of society.

When Znaniecki wrote about logic, he referred to the two types of scientific logic of deduction and induction. For him, according to the deductive mode of reasoning, the

final test of a new “truth” (or making a new knowledge claim) is whether logically this new “truth” agrees with a “truth” already established, and according to the deductive type of reasoning, the final test of a new truth is its validity in theoretical application to empirical facts or data (1934: 219). For Znaniecki, the best form of scientific induction combines deductive and inductive reasoning into a dynamic unity where both are required and they complement each other. Therefore, hypothesis testing is integrated with literary (deep and thick) description in Znaniecki’s methodology, offering a precursor to today’s mixed methodology (Morgan 1998) where formal hypothesis testing can be combined with qualitative thick descriptions, with the two general approaches complementing each other’s strengths and weaknesses. Sociological research will benefit from a serious consideration of Znaniecki’s analytic induction by inducing theory from a deep analysis of typical individual instances even by those distanced statisticians as portrayed by Jacques Tacq in his essay.

Sociologists have found analytic induction useful, and successful applications include Howard S. Becker’s (1953) study, which is classic in itself. Znaniecki’s analytic induction can be viewed as a dialectic of comparison and generalization. The steps of conducting analytic induction involve initially an abstraction of those characteristics that are more typical and those that are less typical and using them in hypotheses, and based on these abstractions are a constant generalization of those more typical and less typical characteristics and a constant comparison of the two types, thereby achieving a better understanding of the particular social phenomenon under investigation. The ultimate goal of analytic induction, then, is to specify the individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions of a certain type of social life, and it requires the progressive and thus dynamic redefinition of the phenomenon to be explained and of the explanatory factors until a perfect (or universal) relationship is maintained. The researcher examines more individual cases with regard to those characteristics by engaging the abstraction, thus generalization achieved. The process is at once dynamic and dialectic: generalization is achieved through abstraction while abstraction is supported and assisted by the expectation of typical characteristics, a crucial feature of generalization. Therefore, for Znaniecki generalization would not be possible without abstraction, and abstraction would not function without generalization.

Znaniecki’s methodology is merely one of his many contributions to sociology, and contemporary reexaminations of Znaniecki’s works are definitely not solely important for the reconstruction of the past developments of science. As Znaniecki intended, they also lay down problems for the next generation. His questions about the future of sociology, the future of culture, and the future of the world-society may be answered by taking into consideration the conceptual tools and equipment of his cultural sociology.

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