

SAGE Research Methods Foundations

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Pub. Date: 2020

Product: SAGE Research Methods Foundations

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526421036909821>

Methods: Chicago School, Social structures, Social interaction

Keywords: sociology

Disciplines: Sociology, Science, Psychology, Anthropology, Education

Access Date: December 29, 2022

Publishing Company: SAGE Publications Ltd

City: London

Online ISBN: 9781529749854

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A creative, groundbreaking scholar Florian Znaniecki (1882–1958) developed humanistic sociology built on the philosophy of cultural reality and the concept of cultural systems of actions and values. His seminal epistemological ideas helped advance the logic of cultural sciences and the method of sociology. This entry begins with a brief look at Znaniecki's academic upbringing and career, which was influential internationally due to his studies and work in Europe and the United States. The entry then provides an examination of Znaniecki's publications and his methodological contributions to philosophy and sociology, most notably in humanistic sociology.

Life Course and the Transatlantic Circulation of Ideas

Znaniecki was born on January 15, 1882, in Świątniki near Włocławek, Poland. He died on March 23, 1958, in Champaign, Illinois. He was one of the most creative sociologists and philosophers of culture in the 20th century, active in America and in Europe. He formulated an original program of humanistic sociology, comprising the concept of social systems constituted by social actions and social values.

Znaniecki studied in France at Sorbonne University and in Switzerland at the University of Zurich and the University of Geneva. In 1910, he obtained his doctoral degree at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland. He worked at the University of Chicago (1915–1919), University of Poznań (1920–1939), Columbia University (1932–1933; 1939), and the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign (1940–1958). He became a U. S. citizen in 1942 and was elected president of the American Sociological Society in 1953.

The Social Role of the Man of Knowledge, which he published in 1940, confirms his status as one of the founders of sociology of knowledge and science. His continuous interest in epistemological and methodological problems and the logic of research culminated in *Cultural Sciences. Their Origin and Development* (1952), which contains pertinent ideas on the nature of scientific cognition. The culturalistic philosophy developed in Znaniecki's early works in Polish was elaborated upon in English in *Cultural Reality* (1919), where science as a new historical mode of cultural knowledge is envisaged as a decisive factor in the processes of changes conceived as cultural becoming.

Znaniecki traveled to the United States thrice. These journeys proved significant for the history of social and cultural sciences. The first (1914) and last (1939) voyages coincided with the outbreak of two World Wars. Years later, Znaniecki pointed out the relevance of cultural sciences for solving international conflicts and building peace. His first stay in the United States resulted in the publication (with William I. Thomas) of *The*

Polish Peasant in Europe and America, paradigmatic for the Chicago School (1918–1920).

Znaniecki's second visit to the United States, which involved a stay at Columbia University (1932–1933), is equally remarkable. In the early 1930s, the Chicago School paradigm entered a stage of crisis. As disputes between its followers and opponents advocating the statistical method intensified, Znaniecki took part in ardent methodological debates and presented his arguments in favor of a cultural approach in *The Method of Sociology* (1934). His research carried out at the University of Chicago dealt with immigration and citizenship problems, whereas at Columbia University Znaniecki, who authored two volumes in Polish on sociology of education (1928, 1930), led a project under the auspices of the Committee on Education and Social Change (Znaniecki, 1998). He subsequently discussed the results in his masterpiece published in Polish, *Ludzie terażniejsi a cywilizacja przyszłości* [*The People of the Present and Civilization of the Future*] (1934).

At Columbia University, Znaniecki worked on *The Method of Sociology* (1934), the fruit of his constant inquiries into the nature of cognition and scientific knowledge. Methodological questions are one of the distinguishing features of his whole output. He challenged William F. Ogburn and other advocates of quantitative methods (Abel, 2001), introducing the concept of analytic inductive reasoning. Analytic induction was further discussed in *The Method of Sociology*, regarded as the most concise presentation of Znaniecki's sociological theory (Bierstedt, 1981). The issue articulated as opposition between quantitative and qualitative methods was actually a broader methodological question, including fundamental assumptions about social reality. It was an argument between naturalists and proponents of the cultural perspective, the latter advocated by Znaniecki along with Robert M. Maclver and Pitirim A. Sorokin.

The Method of Sociology shows Znaniecki's consistency in approaching the conceptualization of cultural and social phenomena and indicating the tasks of sociology as a distinct cultural science. Earlier, Znaniecki discussed the method of sociology in *Methodological Note to The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*.

Znaniecki's third journey to the United States in 1939, as a visiting professor at Columbia University and subsequently at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, turned into permanent immigration when Poland was invaded by Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

Methodological Note and Cultural Reality

There is evidence that *Methodological Note* was included in the coauthored classic work *The Polish Peasant*

in Europe and America at Znaniecki's initiative, and comparisons with his earlier and later output indicate that Znaniecki was the major, if not the only author (Wiley, 1986). It emphasized a different stance from that of Emile Durkheim and articulated three key issues: a proper conceptualization of the social fact, the interplay of individual and collective dimensions of social phenomena, and the place of the social fact in cultural reality.

Among core theoretical concepts formulated in *Methodological Note* were attitudes, values, and the definition of the situation bringing together the subjective and objective factors of social life. The culturalistic approach to attitudes ruled out their articulation as individual states of consciousness. A new perspective of culturalism in social psychology and its close relation with sociology understood as a special cultural science was initiated, as well as the social theory composed of these twin disciplines. Znaniecki further developed his pioneering ideas of cultural perspective in social psychology in *Laws of Social Psychology* (1925). In his view, social theory has to provide solid foundations for rational and reflexive management of social processes.

The cultural perspective initiated in *Methodological Note* was concurrently elaborated in *Cultural Reality*, a sophisticated philosophical discourse. It includes a more detailed presentation of the methodological problems mentioned in *Methodological Note*, especially in the fifth chapter, "The Theoretic Orders of Reality," which discusses the method of sociology. *Cultural Reality* also portends the further development of Znaniecki's methodological and theoretical views that would later become expressed in the principle of the humanistic coefficient. Briefly, analysis of cultural reality requires differentiation between its various orders: natural, psychological, sociological, and ideal. These orders exclude various forms of reductionism: naturalism, psychologism, idealism, as well as sociologism.

After the First World War, when Poland regained independence, Znaniecki returned to his homeland and in many respects continued to develop the program of the Chicago School, but as far as methodology and theory are concerned, he followed an innovative path leading to his theory of social systems.

The Humanistic Coefficient of Cultural Data and the Method of Sociology

In his *Wstęp do socjologii [Introduction to Sociology]* (1922), Znaniecki emphasized the importance of methodological inquiries. He considers social action the elementary social fact. In English, Znaniecki's *Social Actions* (1936) preceded Talcott Parsons's work and presented a different, interactional standpoint.

Znaniecki added the humanistic coefficient to concepts related to the object-matter of sociology viewed as

emerging social systems of growing complexity. He begins with an analysis of human actions and active experience of values. In this cultural approach, the object-matter of sociology comprises systems of social actions and social values, and these values are primarily other persons. Znaniecki's theory of social systems, expounded for the first time in English in *The Method of Sociology*, was significantly inspired by French thinkers. To express a dynamic view of the world of culture, Znaniecki adopted Henri Bergson's concept of creative evolution, applying it in a novel way in his study of cultural systems, to which social systems belong as more complex ones, composed of social actions, social relations, social roles, and social groups. Later, Znaniecki developed the concept of national, political, and religious societies as social systems, as well as the world culture society discussed in *Cultural Sciences* (1952) and in the posthumous work *Social Relations and Social Roles. An Unfinished Systematic Sociology* (1965). Znaniecki developed the concept of a relatively closed system. Thus, he creatively modified the French methodological and philosophical thought of Frédéric Rauh, Émile E. Boutroux, Henri Poincaré, Pierre Duhem, and Édouard Le Roy (Znaniecki, 1934).

Social Systems With the Humanistic Coefficient

The term "humanistic coefficient" was first used by Znaniecki in Polish in *Wstęp do Socjologii [Introduction to Sociology]* (1922) and in English in *The Object-Matter of Sociology* (1927). The basic feature of cultural data is that they are always "somebody's" and not "nobody's." The constitution of cultural objects depends both on their conscious experiences and on action toward them. The principle of the humanistic coefficient assumes that cultural data belong to the active experiences of human beings (Znaniecki, 1934). The humanistic coefficient concerns the composition and structure of cultural systems created and recreated in active experience as values. Value is a sister concept to the humanistic coefficient. Cultural data are endowed with meanings and axiological significance in active experience.

Social systems with the humanistic coefficient are dynamic systems of social actions and social values, selected and organized by agents. Znaniecki claims that social values comprise a distinct class, separate from hedonistic, technical, religious, aesthetic, cognitive, and other values. Human beings as objects of social actions are primary social values, and all kinds of values become secondary social values if they are included in the system of social action (Znaniecki, 1936).

The concept of the humanistic coefficient concerns both the ontology of cultural data and the epistemological aspects indicating the specific cognitive situation of an investigator of culture: The objects of his study are

already given in somebody else's experience and actions. The concept of relatively closed cultural systems assumes that reality is composed of various elements, more closely linked by internal relations.

The principle of the humanistic coefficient was sometimes misunderstood as favoring research of limited intersubjectivity and objectivity. But according to Znaniecki, sociology as an inductive, nomothetic science is subject to all canons required by proper observation, classification, and induction. However, the peculiarity of cultural data expressed by the principle of the humanistic coefficient leads to some methodological distinctiveness of cultural sciences, including sociology. The symbolic dimension of the cultural world opens sources of knowledge unparalleled in natural sciences. Because the cultural world is a universe of discourse (Znaniecki, 1934), the experience of meanings can be shared through communication. That source of knowledge is privileged, making available the viewpoint of experiencing agents. Hence, a sociologist's personal experience, either original or vicarious, is the primary source of knowledge. This should not be understood as radical subjectivism. The goal is to reconstruct meanings and axiological significance from the viewpoint of social system participants. A sociologist's vicarious experience is a uniquely viewed *Verstehen* or understanding: ideational recreation of an action in a way reminiscent of the phenomenological method. Znaniecki only applies *Verstehen* in this form, as a complementary source (Znaniecki, 1934).

The second source of data are the experiences of participants in social life, made available through verbal expression in interviews, questionnaires, autobiographies, or in written histories of groups. An autobiography or a broader selection of personal documents (the type of material advocated in sociological research by Znaniecki) is merely a secondary source. The principle of the humanistic coefficient considers the use of personal documents fully legitimate. The researcher studies meanings and values, rather than purely subjective aspects of social life. The goal is to reconstruct social or cultural systems, not the psychological experiences of an individual.

The third source of data are recorded observations of social life, especially in literature. According to Znaniecki (1934), the methodologically perfect sociological study should be based on comprehensive sources and procedures. Nowhere does Znaniecki say that enumerative induction and questionnaire techniques are unacceptable but they limit the broad spectrum of research possible with the humanistic coefficient and based on communicated intersubjective meanings and values, not allowing sociology to develop fully as a cultural science. Implementation of this methodological program requires semiotic and pragmatic analyses of active experiences and social systems.

The methodological consequences of the humanistic coefficient lead the researcher beyond commonsense reasoning. Znaniecki's antipsychologistic position was confirmed in the concept of the humanistic coefficient and his approach to culture as a set of meaningful systems of actions and values, including social systems. Because it reveals the autonomy and objectivity of culture as systems of meaningful actions and values, his concept is best epitomized as culturalistic.

Analytic Induction

The concept of analytic induction is epistemologically linked with the principle of the humanistic coefficient. It specifies the problem of definitions in sociology. According to Znaniecki, defining terms before research is erroneous, although it remains important for the communication of achieved knowledge. He emphasizes the comprehension of terms, not their logical extension: the descriptive sense, rather than the indicative one. Like Herbert Blumer, Znaniecki postulated the tentative, provisional use of terms as indicative of classes. He proposed analytic induction as a way of creating definitions of object classes. Znaniecki contrasts analytic induction with enumerative induction, employed in quantitative research. Enumerative induction abstracts by generalizing, whereas analytic induction generalizes by abstracting (Znaniecki, 1934). Analytic induction is also the method of typical cases or eidetic cases. If a specific case is being analyzed as typical or eidetic, one assumes that its essential, defining traits are common to a distinctive class.

The innovative concept of analytic induction attracts attention fueled by the revival of qualitative research. It was the basis for criticizing both the paradigm of survey research and the traditional ethnographic approach to case studies. Znaniecki maintained that analytic induction had been employed in *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. The history of that method reaches from antiquity through the beginnings of modern natural sciences, where laws were derived by induction from an analysis of experimentally isolated examples.

Znaniecki also contrasted analytic induction with the case method when the latter only represents a comprehensive description of specific data, because his concept was to lead to processual and systemic analysis. He confronted his position with authors such as George A. Lundberg, who questioned research conducted by representatives of the Chicago School. However, Znaniecki was by no means an apologetic defender of the Chicago School paradigm. He pointed out the weaknesses of the case study method in contrast to his own theoretical sociology.

Znaniecki intended *The Method of Sociology* to guide the development of sociology as a discipline just as ambitiously as Durkheim did in his 1895 work *Les règles de la méthode sociologique* [*The Rules of Sociological Method*]. However, Znaniecki's approach to social facts is completely different, since his culturalism rejects that form of reductionism that Durkheim's sociologism advocated. Znaniecki's book published in 1934, long before Anthony Giddens's *New Rules of Sociological Method* (1976), which opposed positivistic epistemology, systematically presents the specific character of sociology as a cultural science but argues that the problems of research that takes into consideration the meanings and values given in human active experience do not hamper the development of objective scientific knowledge.

His work deals with issues inspired by various traditions of European thought, including the neo-Kantian thread, Wilhelm Dilthey's philosophy of life, as well as Friedrich Nietzsche's and Arthur Schopenhauer's ideas, from whom Znaniecki borrowed the concept of value as the most general category for the description of cultural reality. Znaniecki appreciated pragmatist philosophy, especially that of John Dewey. Hence, he treated phenomenology with reserve, and his approach cannot be reduced to the problematics of understanding nor to the trends of modern interpretative sociology that derive from a notion of hermeneutics that is subversive toward science seeking general knowledge and laws. This last question inevitably caused consternation because Znaniecki's position cannot simply be described in opposing categories of naturalism and antinaturalism, nomothetic and idiographic sciences or induction and deduction nor many other simplifying dichotomies used to categorize theories, metatheories, and paradigms.

Among intellectual traditions that shed light on Znaniecki's stance, especially important is the logical and methodological orientation of the Lvov-Warsaw School, which emerged after the First World War. Znaniecki assumed a dissenting position but was undoubtedly close to that trend of logical investigations in science. His culturalism, which he described earlier as humanism, also makes him an exponent of a version of pragmatism, symbolic interactionism, and relational sociology stemming from Georg Simmel's analytic approach shared by Znaniecki.

In *The Method of Sociology*, Znaniecki presented a thorough analysis of the research logic of the Chicago School, expounded in extensive discourse (House, 1936). A debate in 1938 under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council was conducted on *The Polish Peasant*, viewed as the most significant sociological work at that time. Blumer, the main reviewer of this classic work, did not take into consideration Znaniecki's arguments presented in *The Method of Sociology*. Later on, Blumer was to participate in yet another method-

ological debate as the main critic of the logic of variables analysis that neglects processuality.

The issue still remains crucial, and Znaniecki's theses on the social fact and cultural data retain their relevance, as does his cultural approach in general, articulated in full during the interwar period and later developed more broadly in *Cultural Sciences* (1952). The currents of neo-Kantianism, pragmatism, and French epistemological conventionalism became transformed by Znaniecki into his original perspective of culturalism. His comprehensive approach to cultural and social phenomena in their processuality and relationality on the one hand, as well as emerging orders of social systems on the other, grounded in the meaningful active experience of interacting human beings and in the study of the historical relativity of their worldviews, remains an outstanding achievement. They are founded on the principle of the humanistic coefficient, particularly relevant for studies of the social world, which is increasingly marked by cultural pluralism.

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