

Transatlantic Voyages and Sociology

The Migration and Development of Ideas

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Chapter 11

From the Methodological Note to the Method of Sociology: Florian Znaniecki's Role in the Methodological Debate in Interwar American Sociology

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The development of modern social sciences is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the changes in our civilization that have been labelled modernity. Despite numerous historical analyses of their expansion in the twentieth century, further investigation is required to enable us to have a better understanding of both the transformations of these sciences and of modernity itself. Such a need was expressed immediately after World War II by the foundation of the International Commission for a Scientific and Cultural History of Mankind, affiliated to UNESCO.¹

An important but still insufficiently analysed period is that between the beginning of World War I and the end of World War II. It was a time of intensified migration of intellectuals and a substantial Europeanization of American social thought that was to be followed by the clear Americanization of European social science after the Second World War. The contribution of Florian Znaniecki (1882–1958) to the transatlantic transmission of ideas in both directions is outstanding and awaits a comprehensive demonstration since Znaniecki, in many respects, remains a latent classic.² He is routinely referred to as an associate of William I. Thomas and sometimes acknowledged as one of the founders of the Chicago School of Sociology. In the 1930s this paradigm of sociology entered a stage of crisis and consequently the methodological debates between its enthusiastic followers and their opponents advocating the statistical method in sociology gained in strength. The recollection of that debate has gradually diminished in the history of the

1 Znaniecki participated in these endeavours close to his idea of a world culture society. See the typescript of a paper prepared for the Commission: "The Evolutionary Approach to the History of Culture", Florian Znaniecki Collection, The Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, published in *Polish Sociological Review*, 2007, 158:2, 223–242.

2 On the legacy of Znaniecki and its relevance for cultural sociology see Hałas 2005, 2006, 2010.

discipline, although it was still alive as late as the 1960s. Albert J. Reiss referred to this debate in his notable entry "Sociology" in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, indicating the unprecedented intensity of these controversies and pointing to the resulting antagonisms between the scholarly communities of different views (Reiss 1968, 10). He listed Pitirim A. Sorokin and Florian Znaniecki as the main players in the dispute. Actually, an ardent debater also belonged to the front rank of the adversaries of the advocates of scientism: Robert M. MacIver.³ Znaniecki's *The Method of Sociology* (1934) remains an outstanding record of the vital problems under debate at the time and still relevant today. The telling circumstances of its publication and the thought-provoking theses it contains are discussed below.

Florian Znaniecki's Transatlantic Journeys

Florian Znaniecki travelled to North America three times. His first journey in 1914 and his last, in 1939, coincided with the epochal events of the outbreaks of World War I and World War II that revealed the crisis of modernity. The first visit to the USA was related to his participation in a research project sponsored by the Hull House and financed by the Helen Culver Foundation that culminated in the publication with Thomas of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Thomas, Znaniecki 1918–1920).⁴ The study of the transatlantic migration from rural and traditional communities to the New World became a landmark of the Chicago School of Sociology. It was a treatise which tested theory against empirical data containing cultural meanings. This work contributed immensely to the understanding of citizenship and to the development of democracy because it uprooted the racist concept of ethnicity (Wiley 2007, 136–137). His third journey, planned as a short sojourn⁵ as a visiting professor at Columbia University, was transformed into a permanent immigration due to the outbreak of the war and the subsequent imposition of the Communist regime in Poland. Working at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign from 1940, in 1942 Znaniecki became a US citizen and remained for the rest of his life in the United States; he was even elected president of the American Sociological Society in 1954.

3 For more on the subject see Hatas 2001a, 2001b.

4 The years 1914–1919 of Znaniecki's first stay in the United States brought some dramatic personal experiences: the death of his first wife Emilia Szejnkowska and his departure with Thomas from the University of Chicago. Eileen Metkley, whom he married in 1916, became his closest collaborator.

5 According to a letter to Theodore Abel dated 1 June 1939 Znaniecki planned to stay in the United States for five to six weeks, starting on 30 June of that year. Writing to Abel aboard a ship detained near the coast of Scotland on 31 August 1939 – one day before the outbreak of the war – he was confident that his return to Poland would be possible. The letters are kept in the Florian Znaniecki Collection, The Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.

In contrast to the more frequently mentioned first⁶ and last journeys, Znaniecki's second transatlantic voyage (1931–1933) has not attracted particular attention, although the years he spent at Columbia University represent a very important period, both in his biography and in the history of social science. Znaniecki was affiliated as Visiting Professor of Education for 1931–1932 and later at Teachers College for the following academic year, he also lectured at the Summer School of Columbia University. As was the case during his first stay in the US he was involved in a project of great importance for American democracy.

The former project – at Chicago – dealt with immigration and citizenship problems whereas, the latter, conducted during his second visit, involved him in the preparations of the reform of the education system under the auspices of the Committee on Education and Social Change at Columbia University.⁷ He led that project at Teachers College as one of the world's most eminent scholars and a pioneer of the sociology of education.⁸ Simultaneously, during his stay at Columbia, Znaniecki prepared *The Method of Sociology* (1934). It was the outcome of his constant inquiries into the nature of cognition, knowledge and science. Hence methodological questions are one of the distinguishing features of his whole output, beginning with early philosophical works in Polish, up to *Cultural Sciences* (1952) and numerous articles on the methodological status of sociology published during his last years.

Znaniecki's second and third journeys to the United States can be better understood in the light of the journal of one of his first students in Poznań, later professor at Columbia University, Theodore Abel, who was involved in bringing Znaniecki back to America⁹ in the early 1930s. A great deal of information on Znaniecki's participation in many ardent sociological debates can be found in this diary (Abel 2001). These were an excellent opportunity to present his theoretical and methodological arguments on various occasions, be it at the New York Club of Sociologists, at seminars conducted by MacIver – then Head of the Department of Sociology at Columbia University – or other seminars like that of Edward Sapir's

6 The reasons for the first journey to the United States of the young Polish doctor of philosophy (Znaniecki studied at the Sorbonne, in Zurich, Geneva and obtained his doctorate at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow in 1910), employed as a secretary of the Polish Emigrants' Protective Association in Warsaw, the course of his collaboration with the famous sociologist Thomas, his lectureship at the University of Chicago and later participation in a Carnegie Corporation project – also with Thomas – are worthy of further and more exhaustive examination.

7 For information on this project, see Znaniecki 1998.

8 In its 19 September 1931 issue, *The Weekly Bulletin* (Teachers College, Columbia University) announced Znaniecki's arrival: "Professor Znaniecki is recognized as one of the leading sociologists of the world. He comes to Teachers College from the new University of Poznań in Poland where he has organized a department of sociology and an Institute of sociological research and publication".

9 Theodore Abel's letter to Dean William Russell, 6 January 1931, Columbia University Archives.

at Yale University. In December 1931 he took part in the meeting of the American Sociological Society where he challenged William F. Ogburn and other followers of scientism (Abel 2001, 37). Znaniecki presented his innovative views on analytic induction, or analytic inductive reasoning, published soon afterwards in an article where the concept appeared probably for the first time in a printed version (Znaniecki 1933, 39). The concept was developed in *The Method of Sociology*, regarded as the most concise presentation of Znaniecki's theory (Bierstedt 1981, 196). This work undoubtedly maintained a polemical tone against a strengthening methodological orientation¹⁰ that adopted the statistical techniques as a basic and almost exclusive method of research and the foundation of a new paradigm.

The Paradigmatic Change in American Sociology

In the 1930s the conflict of paradigms in American sociology began to intensify. It was a time when Columbia and Harvard joined Chicago as major centres of sociology (Kuklick 1973, 8). Their importance was related to the activity of scholars who opposed the growing a-theoreticity, extreme quantification of research and operationalism, mainly Maelver at Columbia and Sorokin at Harvard. Nowadays the change of paradigm in American sociology is generally spoken of in a simplified and distorted way as if it consisted in the replacement of the field-study-oriented and supposedly a-theoretical orientation of the Chicago School with functionalism developed by Talcott Parsons at Harvard and Robert K. Merton at Columbia, cooperating respectively with Samuel Stouffer and Paul Lazarsfeld. At least two preceding decades are skipped as if insignificant in comparison to grand theory – or even middle-range theory – as well as refined quantitative research in the mid-twentieth century.

Actually, the Chicago centre was already becoming more differentiated in the 1930s and, despite the presence of Herbert Blumer, the successor of George H. Mead and later a fierce supporter of the interpretative stance, the leading role was played by Ogburn, the "prophetic spokesman of the quantifiers" (Lengermann 1979, 190). Besides George Lundberg and Stuart Rice, Ogburn contributed the most to the spread of quantitative research in sociology, through the use of the New Deal policy of the Federal Administration. The theoretical and methodological resistance to that direction of changes by excellent theoreticians is scarcely mentioned. The strong opposition to the emerging coalition of quantifiers included Maelver, Sorokin and Znaniecki (Lengermann 1979, 192). Norbert Wiley raised the question of methodological debates and competition between the sociological centres of Columbia and Chicago (Wiley 1979, 47) and he rightly stated that at different times the competition resulted from the distinct intellectual identities of those centres.

10 The followers of the statistical method predicted in 1929 that it would become the basis of sociological research (Lundberg, Bain, Anderson 1929, 51).

The complete analysis of these methodological debates in the 1930s would obviously require a broad presentation of the positions of other scholars, such as Charles Ellwood¹¹ or Charles H. Cooley. Nevertheless, focusing attention on scholars from Columbia and Chicago is particularly justified, as these centres were dominant in American sociology (Shils 1948, 7) and competed against each other. Thus the rivalry that started at the time of Albion Small and Franklin Giddings continued when the latter's student, Ogburn, joined Chicago and Maelver succeeded Giddings as Head of Department at Columbia. The severe opponent of Maelver was another student of Giddings, Lundberg,¹² in whose publications of that time there is evidence that the issue, although frequently articulated as an opposition of quantitative and qualitative methods,¹³ actually involved much wider issues which include fundamental assumptions about the reality being researched. It was an argument between naturalists and the proponents of cultural sociology, advocated unanimously – despite all the differences in their theories – by Maelver, Sorokin, and, first and foremost with regard to culturalism, by Znaniecki. Therefore, it was obvious that Znaniecki belonged to Maelver's "camp" when he visited Columbia University in the early 1930s. The focal issues that put these scholars in opposition were questions concerning sociology as an intellectual vocation rather than as a technique which required practical application. They also concerned the humanistic or cultural approach set against a sociology seen as an ersatz version of the natural sciences. Sorokin, Maelver and Znaniecki fought against the extreme empiricism of quantitative methods on the grounds of the humanistic heritage of European thought, as philosophically minded social scientists. As pointed out by Robert Nisbet (1970, 40), they substantially contributed to the reception of the European tradition of social thought by the Americans at that time. The concept of method as discussed by the opposing parties in the dispute thus covered much more than just questions of procedures and research techniques. Hence, it is appropriate to speak of a unique methodological awareness of that generation of sociologists. As Leon Bramson put it, "prior to the Second World War sociologists had become increasingly conscious of methodological problems" (Bramson 1971, 79).

11 Floyd N. House (1936, 383 ff.) mentions Ellwood and Znaniecki as the main opponents to the uncritical supporters of the statistical method. On Ellwood's outstanding influence in the context of international sociology see the chapter by Stephen Turner in this volume.

12 Leon Shaskolsky characterized Lundberg unambiguously as a neopositivist: "This accent on the necessity to reject its philosophic antecedents and to ally itself completely with the natural sciences reached its culmination in the 1930s in the work of Lundberg and his co-workers" (Shaskolsky 1971, 13).

13 Actually, this argument brought about the division into quantitative and qualitative methods, where the latter ones were earlier called the method of "insight" (Lundberg 1936a, 40; 1936b, 709–710).

Znaniecki's Standpoint in the Methodological Debate in the 1930s

Although the concept of analytic induction attracts attention, which is presently fuelled again by the revival of qualitative research,¹⁴ while the biographical method evokes the principle of the humanistic coefficient, Znaniecki has not received recognition as a methodologist from historians of science. Although *The Social Role of the Man of Knowledge* (1940) continues to remind scholars of him as a sociologist of knowledge, it should be remembered that the author of *Cultural Sciences* transmitted fecund ideas on scientific cognition, the methodology of sciences and especially on sociological method (Sztompka 1986; Lüschen 2007).

The culturalistic perspective presented in Znaniecki's early works in Polish and later explicated in English in his *Cultural Reality* (1919) assumed the concept of science as a new form of human knowledge that, according to Znaniecki, is a decisive factor in the historical processes of social change described as "cultural becoming". Helena Znaniecki Lopata emphasized this fundamental aspect of his theoretical constructions (Znaniecki Lopata 1976). Znaniecki's publications that can be called metascientific and metasociological are numerous. Undoubtedly, the creative evolution of his thought embraced basic principles forming a solid framework for a comprehensive and coherent theoretical system. Only some concepts will be discussed here – those that came to the fore in the context of controversies about paradigmatic changes in sociology in the 1930s.

Apart from *Social Actions* (1936) preceding Parsons' work,¹⁵ *The Method of Sociology* seems to have been of unquestionable significance for that period. It shows Znaniecki's consistency in approaching the conceptualization of cultural and social phenomena as the subject of various sciences and indicating the tasks of sociology as a distinct science against that background. Earlier, Znaniecki discussed the method of sociology in the introduction to *The Polish Peasant*. There is substantial evidence that the *Methodological Note* was included in this work on Znaniecki's initiative, and its content in relation to his earlier and later publications leaves no doubt that Znaniecki was the major if not the only author, although his is not the sole name on it.¹⁶ A different stance from the one formulated by Émile Durkheim was emphasized (Thomas and Znaniecki 1927, 44) and the key issues were articulated as: a proper conceptualization of the social fact; the interplay of its individual and collective dimension; and the place of the social fact in cultural reality.

The *Methodological Note* contains numerous other concepts developed around the crucial question of the possibility of applying a rational technique to social

life during the growing conflict of cultures and nations that revealed itself for the first time on a global scale during World War I, when the work of Thomas and Znaniecki was elaborated. It is this trait of Znaniecki's legacy and, on the other hand, the issue of global culture that remain particularly current (Liao, Hatas 2007, 127–132).

Among the theoretical concepts formulated in the *Methodological Note*, the most frequently discussed were the attitudes and values bringing together the subjective and objective factors of social life without any danger of psychological reductionism since the culturalistic approach to attitude ruled out their articulation as subjective states of consciousness (Thomas and Znaniecki 1927, 23). Thus the development of cultural social psychology and its close relation to sociology, understood as a special science of culture, was initiated together with the social theory composed of these twin disciplines (Thomas and Znaniecki 1927, 32–33). The notion of social theory covered both objective and subjective (not psychological) aspects of social phenomena and their analysis was to yield a theory of social change comprehended as social becoming (Thomas and Znaniecki 1927, 36).

Secondly, social theory implied another methodological problem – that of a form of analysis that would not be limited to "practical" sociology and subject to current problems of social life. The widespread "practical" or "common sense" sociology (Thomas and Znaniecki 1927, 14) based on the conviction that we know reality because we live in it – the sociology that evaluates phenomena as normal and abnormal – was contrasted with social theory as a proper foundation for the future rational management of social processes, when the existing philosophical, religious or moral principles lose their regulative power. Znaniecki never ignored the practical application of the social theory; theoretical sociology and cultural sciences. This is expressed in the first sentence of *The Methodological Note*: "One of the most significant features of social evolution is the growing importance which a conscious and rational technique tends to assume in social life" (Thomas and Znaniecki 1927, 1).

The third fundamental methodological assumption refers to the object-matter of sociology as a theory of social organization in terms of "the totality of institutions found in a concrete social group" (Thomas and Znaniecki 1927, 33).

The cultural perspective introduced in the *Methodological Note* was concurrently elaborated in Znaniecki's *Cultural Reality*, a sophisticated philosophical discourse published in 1919 during his first stay in the USA. The work includes a more detailed presentation of the methodological problems taken on in the *Methodological Note*, especially in the fifth chapter of the book, "The Theoretic Orders of Reality", where the method of sociology is discussed. *Cultural Reality* includes both the analysis of problems taken up in the *Methodological Note* and premises for the further elaboration of Znaniecki's methodological and theoretical views. These were soon to be expressed by the formula of the humanistic coefficient: "The imperfect and multiform organization of reality super-constructed by practical activity upon the world of concrete historical objects serves in turn as a foundation

14 For the significance of analytic induction to grounding a qualitative methodology, see the comments by Thora Margareta Bertilsson (2009, 21, 106) and Barney Glaser (1965).

15 The action theory of Parsons (see the chapter by Victor Lidz in this volume) should be interpreted in the adequately reconstructed context of interwar sociology.

16 According to some opinions, the masterpiece was written by Znaniecki who only consulted with Thomas as to the content (Wiley 1986).

for a new superstructure, the rational order which knowledge imposes upon its object-matter" (Znaniecki 1983, 230).

Essential for the analysis of cultural reality is the differentiation of its various orders: natural, psychological, sociological and ideal one. These exclude various forms of reductionism – naturalism, psychologism, idealism as well as sociologism.

After 1918 when Poland regained independence, Znaniecki returned to his homeland and in many respects carried on the programme of the Chicago School. However, as far as methodology and theory is concerned, he followed an individual and creative path leading to a new synthesis. In his *Wstęp do socjologii* [*Introduction to Sociology*] published shortly after (1922), Znaniecki stressed the importance of methodological inquiries in sociology regardless of the views of "pure empiricists" who claimed that the proper scientific method does not involve much more than thorough research of concrete social phenomena (Znaniecki 1988, 5). In this respect, the concept of a social phenomenon becoming a social fact is crucial in research.

In *Introduction* Znaniecki pointed out that his striving for a systematic approach to the "full scope of sociology" (1988, 7) resulted not only in expanding and deepening, but also in some changes of views expressed in the *Methodological Note*. Those changes did not in any way affect the severe criticism of common sense sociology. While not abandoning the programme of the social theory, Znaniecki concentrated on the development of theoretical sociology (1988, 10). He enhanced and modified the concepts related to the object-matter of sociology, which he projected beyond the study of institutions – as social systems of growing complexity (1988, 5) with the humanistic coefficient.

The Method of Sociology provided yet another advancement of Znaniecki's philosophical, methodological and theoretical inquiries as well as research experiences. Furthermore, in contrast to the *Methodological Note*, Znaniecki advanced the development of theoretical sociology based on the principle of the humanistic coefficient. He started with human actions and active experience of values. According to this cultural approach the object-matter of sociology is constituted by systems of social actions and social values. In the elaboration of his system theory, expounded for the first time systematically in English and questioning the programme of Émile Durkheim, which he criticized earlier in the *Methodological Note*, the inspiration derived from the concepts of other French thinkers played an important part. To express the idea and a dynamic view of the world of culture, Znaniecki adopted Bergson's term of "creative evolution", but he applied it in a new way in his study of cultural systems, including social systems and their constitutive agencies. Znaniecki modified and developed the conception of closed systems borrowed from French methodologists grouped around *Revue métaphysique et de morale*. In this manner the French methodological and philosophical thought of Frédéric Rauh, Émile E. Boutroux, Henri Poincaré, Pierre

Duhem and Édouard Le Roy (Znaniecki 1991, 251 ff.) has been disseminated in the US, indirectly and through numerous creative modifications.¹⁷

The conception of relatively closed systems assumes that reality is composed of various systems of elements, which are more closely connected to each other via internal relations than to other objects that do not belong to the system. Each one of them has its specific internal structure that isolates it in certain respects from outside influences.

The application of the humanistic coefficient was often misunderstood as introducing into sociology a "soft" style of research with limited intersubjective control. But sociology, according to Znaniecki, 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 humanistic coefficient leads to some methodological distinctiveness of cultural sciences. The symbolic character of the cultural world opens for a researcher sources of knowledge that are unparalleled in natural sciences because it is a universe of discourse (Znaniecki 1934, 187) and the experience of meanings can be shared through communication.

That source of knowledge making the point of view of the experiencing agent available should be privileged. Hence, the personal experience of a sociologist, original or vicarious, is considered to be the primary source of knowledge. This is not to be understood as a postulate for radical subjectivism. The goal is to reconstruct meanings and values of a system from the point of view of the members of a specific group (Znaniecki 1934, 173). The vicarious experience of a sociologist is a *Verstehen* that is approached specifically – an ideational recreation of an action in a manner similar to that of the phenomenological method.¹⁸

The second source of knowledge is found in the experiences of the social life of the participants themselves, made available through verbal expression in an interview, a questionnaire, an autobiography or the written history of a group. Autobiographies or, in a broader sense, personal documents – the type of material recommended boldly in sociological research by Znaniecki – is merely a secondary source (1934, 191). The use of personal documents, according to the principle of the humanistic coefficient, becomes fully legitimate. The researcher is concerned with studying values and meanings, not with investigating the subjective aspect of social life. The goal is to recreate a social-cultural system, not the psychological experiences of an individual (1934, 186).

The third source of knowledge is observation of the social life of participants recorded in written form, especially in literature (1934, 194). The methodologically

¹⁷ Contrary to the German influence, the question of the French influence on the development of the humanities and sociology in America has not been given adequate attention. Znaniecki has discussed the inspirations of French philosophers of science in his *The Method of Sociology* (1936, 30).

¹⁸ Only in such a form and as a complementary source does Znaniecki accept *Verstehen*. Such an ideational reproduction is not satisfactory (Znaniecki 1934, 167–172).

perfect sociological study, according to Znaniecki – as opposed to the exclusiveness of the statistical method – should be based on comprehensive sources and procedures (1934, 225–235). Nowhere does Znaniecki say that enumerative induction and questionnaire techniques are not acceptable, but they do not allow sociology to develop fully as a cultural science and limit the broad spectrum of research possible with the humanistic coefficient based on the communicated intersubjective meanings of values and systems they form, in particular social systems.¹⁹

The methodological consequences of the humanistic coefficient principle leads the researcher beyond the common sense knowledge of participants in social life, already criticized in the *Methodological Note*. Znaniecki's anti-psychologistic position was confirmed in the concept of the humanistic coefficient, and also when approaching culture as a set of meaningful systems, including the social systems that exist in the active experience of participants. Consequently, because it serves to reveal the autonomy and objectivity of culture as a system of meaningful actions and values, his conception can be best epitomized as culturalistic. Znaniecki's position as such was strongly articulated into the methodological debate in the 1930s.

Finally, in *The Method of Sociology* there appeared the innovative concept of analytic induction that served as the basis for criticizing both the new methodological paradigm of survey research and the traditional ethnographic approach to case study. Znaniecki maintained that analytic induction had been employed in *The Polish Peasant*. In enumerative induction one reaches abstraction by generalization; in analytic induction one generalizes by abstraction (Znaniecki 1934, 250–251). The history of that method stems from antiquity (Plato) through the beginning of modern natural sciences (Galileo) and their development, where great masses of superficial observations are not collected, but the laws are derived by induction from a deep analysis of experimentally isolated examples. Znaniecki commented upon the great disproportion between the methodological perfecting of enumerative induction that took place in the 1930s, and the very weak reflection on analytic induction.

Znaniecki also opposed analytic induction to the case method when it consists only in a comprehensive and exhaustive description of specific individual data, because his concept was to lead to processual and systemic analysis. He very clearly confronted his position with such authors as Lundberg or Rice who questioned the research conducted by the Chicago School. However, this does not imply that Znaniecki was an apologetic defender of the Chicago School paradigm; on the contrary, he pointed out the weaknesses of the case study method, to say nothing of the theoretical sociology that – unlike that variegated programme – he developed.

19 Though Znaniecki does not discuss the communication process itself, the full realization of this methodological programme assumes semiotic analyses in a broad sense.

Conclusions

Znaniecki intended *The Method of Sociology* to guide the development of sociology as a discipline, and in this way was just as ambitious as Durkheim in his *Les règles de la méthode sociologique*. As far as the approach to social facts is concerned, Znaniecki's position is completely different since his culturalism rejects that form of reductionism in approaching the world, man and culture advocated by Durkheim's sociology.²⁰

There are in his work issues inspired by various traditions of European thought, including the Neo-Kantian thread – especially Wilhelm Dilthey, as well as ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer, from whom he took the concept of value as the most general category for the description of cultural reality that attracted a lot of attention and had been subject to numerous commentaries (Hatas 1991, 217–218). Phenomenology, approached by Znaniecki with a critical reserve, should not go unnoticed (Grathoff 1994), but Znaniecki's conception cannot be reduced to the problematics of understanding, and even less to the trends of modern interpretative sociology that derive from such an understanding of hermeneutics that it is subversive in relation to science seeking general knowledge and rules. This last question could not but cause consternation because Znaniecki's position cannot simply be described in opposing categories of naturalism and anti-naturalism, nomothetic and idiographic sciences, or induction and deduction and many other popular and simplifying dichotomies that are used schematically to sort out theories, meta-theories and paradigms.

Among these traditions, an important position is occupied by Polish philosophical and social thought, especially the logical and methodological tradition of the so-called Lvov-Warsaw School after World War I. Znaniecki assumed a dissenting position but he was undoubtedly close to that trend of logical research in science. His culturalism, which he described earlier as humanism, makes him an exponent of pragmatism, although this term remains extremely ambiguous.

Insufficient attention has been paid so far to Znaniecki's role in transmitting the tradition of French thought to America,²¹ including the critical reception of Durkheim's work. Znaniecki's interpretation of Poincaré's conceptions and his affinity to French epistemological conventionalism has passed almost unnoticed.²² There are some common elements in the pragmatism of Znaniecki and Henri

20 Znaniecki's book published in 1934, long before Anthony Giddens' *New Rules of Sociological Method* (1976), presents in a systematic manner the specificity of social and cultural reality and the problems of research that takes into consideration meanings and values given in human experience.

21 A more detailed study would require tracing his earlier European travels via Switzerland to France and back to Switzerland and the influence of scholarly circles at the Sorbonne and in Geneva (Dulczewski 1992).

22 Znaniecki refers to Poincaré's *Science et hypothèse* (1902), *La valeur de la science* (1905), and *Science et méthode* (1909).

Bergson to whose conception of creative evolution he refers;²³ however, he does not come anywhere near Bergson's irrationalism and extreme anti-scientism.

In *The Method of Sociology* Znaniecki offered a thorough analysis of the research logic of the Chicago School, not in the outline form of a *Methodological Note*, but set forth in an extensive discourse.²⁴ The debate in 1938 under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council was conducted on *The Polish Peasant*, conceived as the most significant work for the development of sociology at that time. In his evaluation of this work Blumer (1939), the main reviewer, did not take into consideration the arguments put forward by Znaniecki in *The Method of Sociology*.²⁵

The issue still remains crucial and Znaniecki's theses maintain their value and relevance, as does his cultural approach in general, articulated in full during the interwar period and developed later on to a broader scope of cultural sciences, crossing the boundaries of sociology. As an erudite, travelling across Europe and to America, he forged his ideas, elaborated and discussed them in the most creative circles of scholars. The currents of neo-Kantianism, pragmatism and French epistemological conventionalism have been transformed by Znaniecki into the original view of his culturalism. A comprehensive approach to cultural and social phenomena in their processuality on the one hand and systemic order on the other, grounded in the meaningful active experience of interacting human beings and in the study of the historical relativity of their world-views, still remains an outstanding achievement. It is founded on the principle of the humanistic coefficient, particularly relevant for the study of a world which is becoming more and more pluralistic and multicultural. This principle springs from Znaniecki's philosophy of culturalism expounded in English during his first visit to the USA. This philosophy was transformed into the cultural approach in sociology already introduced in the *Methodological Note* and further elaborated in *The Method of Sociology* written during his second visit. This approach reached a culmination in his late works after World War II. Drawing on both European and American currents of thought Znaniecki navigated in his own theoretical direction and took a firm stance with regard to methodological issues.

23 Znaniecki translated Bergson's *Évolution créatrice* into Polish. The relationship of these two scholars deserves a more detailed study.

24 At that time Floyd N. House expressed the following opinion: "In the following year (1934) appeared Florian Znaniecki's *The Method of Sociology*, which is, in some respects, the most profound discussion of sociological methodology that has been developed to the dimensions of a fair-sized volume in the English language up to the time of its publication. Particularly notable are Znaniecki's general defence of inquiry into theoretic methodology and his principle of 'closed systems'" (House 1936, 384).

25 Later on Blumer was to get involved in yet another methodological debate as the main critic of the logic of variables analysis.

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