

The Institute of Sociology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań  
The Florian Znaniecki Scientific Foundation  
The Haverford Institute of Public Sociology

Patronage over the Conference:  
Polish Sociological Association

Call for Papers

**A Centennial of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*:  
Inspiration of Thomas and Znaniecki's Work for Sociological  
Scholarship on the Contemporary Globalization Processes**

Symposium  
May 24-25<sup>th</sup> 2018, Poznań, Poland

The centennial of the publication of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, by Thomas and Znaniecki, presents a unique occasion to commemorate the monumental work like not many others. This special commemoration emanates from the breadth and complexity of the book and the extent of influence it exerted over sociology, philosophy, anthropology, social history, and social psychology. The book has inspired analyses of societies, closely connected with the social justice, informed social policies, remained debated and critiqued by opponents and those who considered themselves as 'internal critics'. Twenty years after the publication of the first volume of the book, the Social Science Research Council surveyed historians and social scientists to inquire which works "had made the most significant contributions" to their respective disciplines. Sociologists selected *The Polish Peasant*. In its aftermath, H. Blumer produced an extensive, book-length analysis of the book, which became the first volume in a series of Critiques of Research in the Social Science.

So what is significant about this multi-faceted book? In E. Zaretsky's assessment, "*The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* is the single most important work establishing sociology as a distinct discipline in America." It replaced biological concepts of evolution with specifically sociological and cultural mechanism of change. The book made valuable contribution to the methodological development of the social sciences in the United States by beginning a shift from theoretical research into one grounded in empirical data. *The Polish Peasant* is considered the founding and most representative work of the Chicago School in sociology, which advanced a model of socially-embedded, reflexive and intentional man; emphasized the interplay between the subjective and objective factors, advanced analytical theory of human volition and of symbolic meaning as constitutive of actions, practices and institutions in society.

A specific social issue of the massive migration flows of Poles and other Eastern Europeans to America, which prompted a general concern over social unification of the

American society, motivated the work on *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. The authors aimed to discover what holds society together and to uncover the general ways in which social change occurs, including the possible forms and loci of social reorganization. Focusing on the immigration wave of Poles, the authors dealt with the system change - the early 20th century transformation to organized capitalism. In their voluminous and rich in empirical material work, they mapped supranational/global forces, transnational connections, depicted the process of immigrants remaking their world through rational and purposeful actions, and elaborated for us the disorganization and reintegration theory.

The co-authorship of *The Polish Peasant* by the American and Polish sociologists, Thomas, and Znaniecki, signifies international root of the knowledge production in American Sociology. Their work also vividly points out that its subject matter, the American society, at the dawn of the 20th century, had the global boundaries. It also shows that the Americanization process, on the level of changing attitudes and values, entails persistence of ethnicity and complex and changing ethnic identities of its members.

The organizers of this conference believe that to commemorate the centennial of the towering *The Polish Peasant*, as a representative of Chicago School, is not just to celebrate the legacy of it. Instead, the celebration of the book best establishes its lasting contribution to global social sciences if we demonstrate the persistent relevance of its multi-leveled theoretical-conceptual framework and its distinct methodological method by applying them to study the contemporary social issues. Furthermore, we celebrate the work by not considering it as a closed repository of knowledge, but instead as an inspiration for the ongoing theoretical reconstructions and extrapolations in context of the new social problems challenging us in 21 century.

Present day brings a renewed concern over the social issues that Thomas and Znaniecki focused on in their work. Precipitated by the Solidarity movement in Poland, the 21century system change--the transformations of state socialism to capitalism in the Eastern Europe-- generated the post 1989 globally felt massive political, economic and cultural consequences. The system change affected present day Europeisation process, on the level of European nation-states, organizations, and individuals. It also unleashed unprecedented migration waves and revived social concerns over societal integration that accompanied massive waves of immigrations, meaning and boundaries of nationhood, ethnicity and ethnic identity.

The conference organizers invite the submission of abstracts related, though not limited, to the themes below:

\* *The Polish Peasant* and Beyond; the Chicago School--extensions of, and departures from the Thomas and Znaniecki's classic in the development of sociological theory;

\*The methodological approach of *The Polish Peasant* and the ethnographic approach to study the contemporary globalizing processes, with the particular focus on the regional globalization--Europeization process;

\*Sociological Practice and Public Sociology; the authors of *The Polish Peasant* as precursors of transcending the dichotomy of scientific and public knowledge?

\*Social Justice issues and Policy Implications stemming from *The Polish Peasant* and their relevance for the current social interventions and immigration policy formations;

\*The attitudes and values as the key concepts in *The Polish Peasant* & the post 1989 Big Change in the Eastern Europe and beyond, in the collective imagination and behavior, on the national, organizational and individual levels;

\* *The Polish Peasant* theory of disintegration and reintegration & contestations over the European integration, challenges to democratic consolidation projects, and the formation of new collective identities, and inter- and intra-ethnic relations;

\*The early 20<sup>th</sup> century global capitalism in *The Polish Peasant* & the late capitalism unbound: uneven development, segmentation of labor markets, spatial mobility, and migratory movements;

\**The Polish Peasant*'s thesis on the shift from affective to purposive and rational form of action & the contemporary scholarship on ethnicity, ethno-national identity formation in the age of economic individualization;

\* The disintegration theory in *The Polish Peasant* & the contemporary scholarship on the social costs of regional globalization in Europe—brutalization of daily lives, crime, primary groups brake-down

The conference will take place in Poznań, Poland, at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (AMU). The country is inseparably tied to the genesis of *The Polish Peasant* and to the contemporary massive migratory movements associated with the post-1989 Europeization processes. Poznań, a major city in the Western Poland, is particularly suited as a site of the centennial commemoration of *The Polish Peasant*. It was in Poznań, where Florian Znaniecki wrote his major scholarly works upon the return from the US, after collaborating with Thomas on *The Polish Peasant*. It was also in Poznań, where Znaniecki institutionalized sociology as an academic discipline in Poland by establishing the first sociology department (referred to as the Institute of Sociology) at the Poznań University.

Submissions:

Respondents are expected to upload a file with a 300-word abstract of the proposed paper and the CV by **February 28th, 2018**. Submissions without the attached CV will not be

considered. Presenters will be notified by March 30<sup>th</sup> and should register to attend the conference by April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

Abstracts must be submitted in English via the official conference e-mail:  
[polish.peasant2018@gmail.com](mailto:polish.peasant2018@gmail.com)

The conference fee is EUR 90 for all presenters and attendees, payable at the registration time (comprising conference materials, meals, cocktail party and banquet, prospective publication). Reduction of fee is possible in individual cases.

See conference webpage: <http://socjologia.amu.edu.pl/new/aktualnosci/60-english/139-polish-peasant-symposium-2018>

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