

MARIUSZ ZEMŁO\*

## FLORIAN ZNANIECKI'S SOCIOLOGY OF COMMON-SENSE KNOWLEDGE – AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

Florian Znaniecki is the most recognisable Polish sociologist of knowledge in the world. This simple sentence uttered by the Vistula River seems obvious, however, in the broader context it is not. It may raise two fundamental objections. The first one is related to this question: Is Znaniecki a Polish sociologist? This is the second question: Is Znaniecki a sociologist of knowledge? Speaking of the first issue, proponents of including the scholar among the pantheon of Polish scientists will put forward the following arguments: he did his Ph.D. in Krakow, he is the most distinguished person in the institutionalised Polish sociology, he was actively engaged in popularisation of sociology in Poland, he educated a number of excellent sociologists, he worked in the domain of Polish science until he was 57 years of age. However, the opponents of this argument will stress the following: significant impact of American intellectual trends on his work, the fact that in his mature years Znaniecki worked at American universities, the announcement of majority of his works in English, his dynamic involvement in America's scientific life and sociological organisations on an international scale. From our point of view, the settling of this dispute is not important, although coming across the information that places Znaniecki in the American tradition of sociology of knowledge leads to intellectual anxiety<sup>1</sup>. Even if we suspend the aforementioned arguments, we are well aware of the fact that most of his major texts in the area of the discipline that is discussed in this text, was created in the Polish period of the scholar's work<sup>2</sup>, and

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\* DR HAB. MARIUSZ ZEMŁO – Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II, Katedra Socjologii Wiedzy i Edukacji.

<sup>1</sup> *The Sociology of Knowledge*, in: *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, eds. E.F. Borgatta, R.J.V. Montgomery, Macmillan, New York 2000, p. 2954.

<sup>2</sup> *Przedmiot i zadania nauki o wiedzy*, „Nauka Polska” – 1925; *Socjologia wychowania*, Vol. I – 1928, Vol. II – 1930; *Uczeni polscy a życie polskie*, „Droga” – 1936; *Spoleczne role uczonych a historyczne cechy wiedzy*, „Przegląd Socjologiczny” – 1937 (This work included findings that, after additional work, started to function in English language as a book: *The Social Role of the Man of Knowledge*). Other works were written at that time as well (although, some of them in English): *The Laws of Social Psychology* – 1925; *The Method of Sociology* – 1934; *Ludzie teraźniejsi i cywilizacja przyszłości* – 1934; *Social Action* – 1936.

from the perspective of the examined subject another issue is even more important – the one connected with placing Znaniecki among the authors contributing to enriching the thought on social entanglement of knowledge. This question is not obvious considering the scholar's thoughts presented in his famous book *The Social Role of the Man of Knowledge*. Let us recall the main message of the book on the issue that is of interest to us. As we remember, among systemic reflection on knowledge he distinguishes three main areas of research: epistemology (dealing with the essence of cognition, its borders and standards of recognition), logic (giving the basis to constructing knowledge of the highest standards), the history of knowledge (developing the history of knowledge, with particular emphasis on developmental trends of: conducted subjects, problem solutions, paradigms). He notes that in studies conducted around these areas of research appeared more clearly, in his day, the need to complement and strengthen the theoretical reflection of empirical studies<sup>3</sup>. General tendency to move towards empirical studies of knowledge also coincided with the emergence of reflection on cognition and its effects conducted by psychologists and sociologists. The former ones headed towards the recognition of cognitive function closely linked to “the whole of biopsychological life of an individual”, while the latter ones combined knowledge with the context of broad social phenomena (social order, economic system, nationality etc.)<sup>4</sup>. We are interested, of course, in the research efforts of the latter group. Znaniecki believes that although first steps were made by sociologists in order to incorporate all the issues related to knowledge in the sphere of the discipline, however, they should not be adopted within the range of studies conducted<sup>5</sup>. According to him, the primary subject-matter of sociology are social systems and processes within those systems or between them. Moreover, what constitutes any social system are people who remain in mutual axionormatively ordered interaction. Within the scope of this concept Znaniecki includes the following elements: a) “union relations” occurring between single individuals, b) social roles, c) social groups, d) societies (as conglomeration of many social groups). Thus, anything that does not have such nature should not absorb sociologists' attention. This applies, among others, to language systems, religious systems, and systems of knowledge. Therefore the scholar does not agree to include knowledge in the scope of social research<sup>6</sup>. We may suspect that such statements were not only based on substantive

<sup>3</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Przedmiot i zadania nauki o wiedzy*, in: ibidem, *Spoleczne role uczonych*, PWN, Warszawa 1984, pp. 4–7.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 8–10.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, in: ibidem, *Spoleczne role uczonych*, PWN, Warszawa 1984, p. 283; ibidem, *Teraźniejszość i przyszłość socjologii wiedzy*, in: ibidem, *Spoleczne role uczonych*, PWN, Warszawa 1984, p. 489; ibidem, *Spoleczne role uczonych a historyczne cechy wiedzy*, in: ibidem, *Spoleczne role uczonych*, PWN, Warszawa 1984, pp. 520–522. Let us stress that Znaniecki presented other arguments against sociology's interest in knowledge: a) he thought that if sociology

grounds (as mentioned above), but also resulted from the fact that Znaniecki had an ambition to create, or (only, or else) to initiate the theory of knowledge – an empirical discipline that would: a) provide generalisations concerning knowledge by carrying out comparative studies, b) determine the cognitive value of systems of knowledge, c) systematise cognitive functions (cognitive experience, cognitive idealisation, cognitive systematisation), d) enquire into causal dependency of the results of cognition on the conditions in which it occurs<sup>7</sup>. Regardless of submitted argumentation Znaniecki saw in numerous places the presence of knowledge in social systems. At one point he expressed this in general terms by saying that “between social systems and other types of cultural systems there are many dynamic relationships of unilateral or mutual dependence”<sup>8</sup>. Such a statement clearly leads to the recognition of the fact that there is a link between knowledge and social systems and that knowledge impacts their condition. Elsewhere, he notes that: “[...] there are two kinds of relationships between knowledge and social life. On the one hand, man’s participation in this or any other system of knowledge often determines his participation in one or another social system and the way he operates within this system. [...] On the other hand, man’s participation in one or another social system often determines (although not absolutely and completely) in which systems of knowledge he will operate and what his participation is going to be”<sup>9</sup>. Such statements undoubtedly show that there is an element of knowledge integrated in social systems and even if the subject-matter of sociology is strictly limited to social systems there is still the place to analyse this element of culture.

Regardless of individual statements aimed to provide arguments leading to the recognition or rejection of the position of the speaker, or Znaniecki’s work, in the sphere of declaration, this position can be assigned to sociology of knowledge. In the undertaken project we will try to get a closer look at Znaniecki’s scientific decisions centred around themes related to knowledge, in order to answer the question whether in the case of his scientific achievements it can be proved that it contributes to multiplying reflection on social entanglement of knowledge. We can also go one step further and ask: can a more or less coherent concept be constructed out of his decisions that is within the tradition of sociology of knowledge?

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as a science creates a system of knowledge, its attempts to encourage reflection over other forms of knowledge would lead to the fact that it would become the knowledge about knowledge – and thus it would go beyond its competence (F. Znaniecki, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, pp. 284–285; *ibidem*, *Spoleczne role uczonych a historyczne cechy wiedzy*, p. 522), b) being interested in knowledge it would relate to testing knowledge (ruling on the validity of knowledge systems), which is not the responsibility of sociology (*ibidem*, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, pp. 285–286).

<sup>7</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, p. 385; *ibidem*, *Przedmiot i zadania nauki o wiedzy*, p. 17 and the following. H. Dudkiewicz, *Problematyka socjologii wiedzy w dorobku myśli teoretycznej Floriana Znanieckiego*, „Studia i materiały z dziejów nauki polskiej” 1973, E series, book 5, pp. 344 n.

<sup>8</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, p. 284.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289.

In the sociological work of Znaniecki we notice strong presence of reflection conducted around two types of knowledge: scientific knowledge (this current is particularly exposed in the environment of scholar's interpreters<sup>10</sup>) and common-sense knowledge (to a lesser extent identified with the author of *The Social Roles of the Man of Knowledge*, although clearly present in many of his works<sup>11</sup>). In this text we will examine the second theme. We will seek to identify the most important elements of Znaniecki's position on common-sense knowledge and, on the basis of these, we will make an attempt to construct as complete a picture of sociology of common-sense knowledge as his statements allow it.

It should be noted, however, that the purpose of the text is not to present such an image in a comprehensive manner, but only to indicate essential points that define its basic features. Because some objections in relation to practising sociology of knowledge in the spirit of Znaniecki's declaration were signalled we will strengthen this discourse with references placing the threads picked up by the author of *The Method of Sociology* in the tradition of the discipline.

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After what has been said above it is clear that sociology of common-sense knowledge was not expounded by Znaniecki in one dissertation or a book, but the scholar left a lot of information in different publications for his descendants to make an attempt to read it and to present it in a concise form.

According to Znaniecki common-sense knowledge is "a collection of unprofessional messages about the language, religion, magic, economic processes, habits, customs, people and groups"<sup>12</sup>, and, finally, it is the ability to evaluate social facts in accordance with accepted standards (indicating what is good and what is bad, what is beautiful and what is ugly, what is wise and what is foolish, what is harmful and what is right, what is noble and what villainous etc.)<sup>13</sup>.

According to Znaniecki common-sense knowledge is acquired by means of socialisation whose mission is to implant a specific set of standardised behaviours and tendencies in the consciousness of the socialised generations so that these

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<sup>10</sup> H. Dudkiewicz, *Problematyka socjologii wiedzy w dorobku myśli teoretycznej Floriana Znanieckiego*, pp. 331–369; J. Szacki, *Wstęp*, in: F. Znaniecki, *Spoleczne role uczonych*, pp. XVII–XVIII; J. Goćkowski, *Epistemiczna i techniczna funkcja socjologii*, in: *Teoria socjologiczna Floriana Znanieckiego a wyzwania XXI wieku*, red. E. Hałas, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin 1999, pp. 138–139; J. Goćkowski, *Ludzie „systemu” i ludzie „problemu”. Wieczna wojna w teatrze życia naukowego*, Wydawnictwo i drukarnia „Secesja”, Kraków 2000; A. Chmielewski, *Socjologia wiedzy Floriana Znanieckiego*, „Zagadnienia Naukoznawstwa” 2009, no. 2, pp. 223–331.

<sup>11</sup> I know not of any attempts to the legacy of Znaniecki aimed at comprehensive reconstruction of his sociology of common-sense knowledge.

<sup>12</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, p. 344.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 346–347.

become a point of reference in every undertaken routine action<sup>14</sup>. This is done by means of impact that is supposed to trigger, curb or modify the behaviour of individuals in the course of which they would accept all the necessary parts of the group achievements that contribute to its proper functioning<sup>15</sup>.

The socialisation is done in two contexts: in the context of unplanned actions as a result of which formation of the individuals takes place, but it is not accompanied by reflection or performed within strictly defined organisational framework. The basis for such actions is pure routine, habit, tradition, natural course of events<sup>16</sup>. It occurs in the social environment of an individual. In this context, the most basic elements of the environment, according to Znaniecki, are: family (natural parents, close and distant cousins), the neighbourhood (different people of the older generation, performing significant social functions or mere acquaintances), peer groups (individuals of the same generation with whom it shares: common interests, values, emotional elation, sensing the world, time etc.)<sup>17</sup>.

The second socialisation context is associated with the area of planned actions<sup>18</sup>. In this case we are dealing with a well thought out and planned series of activities aimed to prepare individuals to fulfil social functions and thus develop certain temperaments, abilities, skills, knowledge, etc., which a regular environment is not able to develop in a spontaneous way. In order to accomplish this task society appoints from among its members individuals or social groups whose aim is to exert educational influence in the desired direction. Therefore, it will be teachers – acting alone, and educational institutions – offering collective teaching. The power of school influence is much stronger than the practice of a teacher acting alone. This creates specific educational environment, which influences pupils with its full potential<sup>19</sup>. The power of its impact will be greater, as any external stimuli disrupting the educational process are going to be eliminated. The ideal is to create a closed system that does not absorb undesirable influence (today this demand is impossible to satisfy, however, it was widely promoted in the intellectual climate in which Znaniecki worked – similar message is found in the views of Durkheim or Dewey)<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 540.

<sup>15</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Socjologia wychowania*, vol. 1: *Wychowujące społeczeństwo*, PWN, Warszawa 1973, pp. 3, 8, 10–11.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Socjologia wychowania*, vol. 1, s. 89. The question of primary socialisation is the central process of sociology of knowledge by George H. Mead. While discussing sociology of knowledge Znaniecki stresses the agendas responsible for this process, Mead however, focuses on the results of this process – reaching the self and acquiring meanings (knowledge) by individuals participating in the process (M. Zemło, *Socjologia wiedzy w tradycji interakcyjno-fenomenologicznej*, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin 2003, pp. 64 nn.).

<sup>18</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Socjologia wychowania*, vol. 1, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Znaniecki broadly discusses features of this environment in: F. Znaniecki, *The Scientific Function of the Sociology of Education*, “Educational Theory” 1951, no. 2, pp. 6–78.

<sup>20</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Socjologia wychowania*, vol. 1, s. 90–93. Berger and Luckmann devote a lot of space to socialisation (primary and secondary) in the famous treaty on sociology of common-sense

Znanięcki also distinguished the third type of educational institutions, which in his lifetime did not play as important role as they do today, namely institutions of indirect education. From among these institutions he ascribed the most important role to literature, art and technology. They used various measures, ranging from: popular books, magazines, textbooks to movies and theatre. These institutions were, of course, to pursue pedagogical objectives – strengthening individuals' adaptation to the standards of culture developed in given communities, although Znanięcki was aware of the possibility of other influences<sup>21</sup>. Contemporary ways and means of indirect education are incomparably greater than they were in the scholar's times, the power of their socialising influence is far stronger, and the direction of their influence is, in many cases, contrary to the achievements of societies' spiritual culture.

Acquiring common-sense knowledge, which is the effect of work of socialisation institutions (especially the three mentioned above by Znanięcki) is, according to the classic of sociology, a necessary condition for making a socially immature individual become a rightful member of society, able to play distinguished roles in this society<sup>22</sup>.

Social roles are central category around which Znanięcki builds deliberations related to sociology of knowledge<sup>23</sup>. By "social roles" he understands the cultural model that normatively regulates lasting relations between individuals and the social environment in which these individuals function<sup>24</sup>. It is obvious that to play any role correctly it is crucial to have the knowledge that is necessary to do it in a way that is in line with social expectations. This is because only having the right competence enables one to effectively fulfil the tasks that society gives its members – performers of specific roles<sup>25</sup>.

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knowledge *The Social Construction of Reality*. They treat socialisation as a process responsible for shaping subjective reality with all the corresponding parameters (P. Berger, T. Luckmann, *Spoleczne tworzenie rzeczywistości*, transl. J. Niżnik, PIW, Warszawa 1983, R. III).

<sup>21</sup> F. Znanięcki, *Socjologia wychowania*, vol. I, pp. 93–95.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, p. 344.

<sup>23</sup> It should be noted here that presenting the case this way falls within the framework of discipline of sociological research, which Znanięcki opted for. He strongly emphasised the fact that sociology can only deal with social systems, i.e. research units whose essential components are people remaining in mutual relations. Knowledge as such is not a social system (Ibidem, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, p. 283). But this is what a social role is (Ibidem, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, p. 298). In addition to union relationship between two people (teacher – student, husband – wife, doctor – patient etc.), organised social groups (teachers, doctors, vendors etc.), multi-function society (local community, the state) he included it in the category of "social system" (ibidem, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, p. 481). Let us notice that the category of a social role occupies an important position in the sociology of common-sense knowledge of Berger and Luckmann (P. Berger, T. Luckmann, *Spoleczne tworzenie rzeczywistości*, p. 121 nn.).

<sup>24</sup> F. Znanięcki, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, p. 299.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, *Relacje społeczne i role społeczne. Niedokończona socjologia systematyczna*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2011, pp. 409–411, 427 nn.; ibidem, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, p. 304.



At the level of general reflection on the proposed perspective Znaniecki made several key findings. They relate to: the conditions that must be met for the role to be played well in terms of knowledge and other personality features of the actors; external conditions affecting specifications of the performed roles, the category of "social circles" is of key importance here; isolating supportive roles from practical roles – advisers, priests, wise men, technologists, etc.; the way experts in various subject areas emerge. Depending on the tasks performed he made a historical review of the roles of: kings, priests, warriors, men of science; the functions carried out by scientists in relation to knowledge; roles that emerged among scientists in the course of historical development. According to the adopted research convention the sociologist's analyses were carried out on a grand scale and were developed multi-dimensionally; they cover a wide spectrum of issues in the perspective he proposed. What is the most important is the fact that the analysis made by Znaniecki in many aspects maintain lasting relevance even today.

We mentioned that social circles are an important factor actively involved in shaping social roles. They are characterised by Znaniecki as teams of people, in the context of which roles are played. Values are the constitutive element of the relationship between an individual and a circle. Among these, for example, the following can be distinguished: economic values – in trade relations, ethical values – in different religions, knowledge – in school relations, victory – in the circles of militant society, pleasure – in the circles of consumer society and so on. Social circle forces those who just entered it to respect given priorities; first of all to recognise the adopted axiology and get involved in the implementation of the tasks that confirm it<sup>26</sup>. This is done by: opinions loosely directed towards individuals, showing help or posing obstacles by various participants in the circle while they are performing their activities, publicly exposing signals that enforce adaptation to the standards of the circle, the use of institutional instruments and group sanctions to provide an outlet for improper activities<sup>27</sup>.

In connection with what has been said it is clear that there is no such thing as "objective activity", "objective knowledge", "objective values". Each of these facts belongs to somebody, i.e. it has the meaning corresponding to: the plan implemented by the actors of performed actions themselves, the ethos of the circle the actor identified himself with, the environmental context and the times in which these facts occurred. Applying our concept of cognitive values to the cognitive values in the Middle Ages is a nonsense; just like it is a nonsense to think that life has the same meaning for everyone. Implications of this type, being an important contribution to sociology of knowledge, are a message that arises from the idea of

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<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, *Ludzie terażniejsi a cywilizacja przyszłości*, PWN, Warszawa 2001, p. 96; ibidem, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, pp. 294-297; ibidem, *Basic Problems of Contemporary Sociology*, „American Sociological Review” 1954, vol. 19, no. 5, p. 522.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, *Ludzie terażniejsi a cywilizacja przyszłości*, p. 97.

“humanistic coefficient” developed by Znaniecki – another key category from the perspective of the discussed discipline<sup>28</sup>.

This important in Znaniecki’s system of sociology category carries not only epistemological message (suggesting proper directives on research conduct) but also the ontological one (characterising the constitution of a cultural being and its nature), which is particularly important in the discussed text<sup>29</sup>. That mentioned feature saying that the facts which belong to the world of culture are somebody’s suggests that they cannot be discussed as idiopathic reality, functioning independently of any subjects, but they cannot be called universal either. All the elements of this world are produced by the joint action of particular people, they are kept alive by those people, and finally, modified and amended in accordance with particular image. Thus, each component of culture is the reference point (of both mental and practical experience and actions) for defined individuals representing specific groups (linguistic, ethnic, national, professional, social) as well as communities living in particular historical space. By this, each of them is appropriately valued, subordinated to particular logic, functions within certain truths and theories, and performs appropriate functions. In a word, it is a world of particular “consciousness” – as it is described by the scholar<sup>30</sup>.

By accepting such perspective Znaniecki admitted that all the elements of the world such as: rituals, works of art, language, tools, legal systems, political systems etc. are not only constituted through individuals as natural facticity, but they also gain constituting meaning through individuals – they become cultural facticity. Without this particular human factor the mentioned objects are annihilated – they not only lose their content, but the form as well; their characteristics, which are the base for the meanings they carry, cease to be perceptible; there is also the interruption of relationship between the phenomena. In such circumstances, rituals change in chaotic sets of gestures, works of art become chaotic patchwork of multicoloured spots filling a part of a flat surface, language takes the form of uncoordinated sounds, tools become a piece of solid matter, legal acts – pages blacked up with stamps, social system – uncoordinated movement of human organisms. Reality devoid of the social factor, in other words, treated as nobody’s, not only becomes

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<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, *Podmiot i zadania nauki o wiedzy*, pp. 17–18, 22–23; cf. M. Kuszyk, *Teoretyczne podstawy socjologii wiedzy w koncepcji Floriana Znanieckiego*, in: *Socjologia wiedzy i jej wrogowie*, red. J. Mizińska, J. Kociuba, Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin 1995, pp. 105 n.; cf. M. Kuszyk-Bytniewska, *Floriana Znanieckiego socjologia wiedzy i nauki – przesłanki ontologiczne i założenia epistemologiczne*, in: *Teoretyczne podstawy socjologii wiedzy*, red. P. Bytniewski, M. Chałubiński, Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin 2006, pp. 162 nn.

<sup>29</sup> J. Szacki, *Znaniecki*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1986, p. 91.

<sup>30</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Wstęp do socjologii*, PWN, Warszawa 1988, p. 24; ibidem, *The Methods of Sociology*, Farrar & Rinehart, New York 1934, pp. 36–37; ibidem, *Socjologia wychowania*, vol. 2: *Urabianie osoby wychowanka*, PWN, Warszawa 1973, pp. 33–34; ibidem, *Podmiot i zadania nauki o wiedzy*, pp. 17–19.



unreadable, but one can easily say that it ceases to exist. Znaniecki puts it bluntly by saying that if we treat it as such, "everything disappears without a trace"<sup>31</sup>.

Going back to the idea of the role an obvious thing should be noted – a man plays many different social roles in his life, which is equivalent to the fact that many different social circles leave a mark on his personality and knowledge – which is particularly interesting for us. This is done by the following circles: family, school, peer, social, professional, religious, state. Hence the store of knowledge which is accumulated in consciousness is dynamic. Every single experience of a new role introduces new cognitive qualities that need to agree with the existing ones. Znaniecki believes that the experience gained in the early stages of human life lasts definitely the longest; it is also when it comes to strengthening the foundations of personality (intellectual) and becoming immune to radical modifications. Whatever is consolidated during childhood and adolescence period it gives general direction to the development of man. Of course, there may be some unexpected turnabouts, but they belong to the group of exceptions to the general rule<sup>32</sup>. Generally, looking at the store of an individual's common-sense knowledge it is clear that the knowledge is the result of one's experience accumulated through participation in various social circles<sup>33</sup>. In the context of the category of "social circles" a vertical axis appears which focuses individual knowledge.

Taking into account the issue of social determinants of knowledge one should also refer to the scholar's views associated with "cultural systems". By cultural system Znaniecki understands "an objective field of culture, such as technology, art, religion, science, household, legal structure etc., each of which contains in itself a multiplicity of objective, more or less compact and established systems of objects and systems of operations, more or less associated with each other in every individual field through partial commonality of essential functions in this field"<sup>34</sup>. Every age, or every civilisation circle produces its own collection of cultural systems with particular characteristics. Therefore every man, like it or not, takes part in cultural systems present in the collective life of the community in which he operates. Each of them has its own organisation centred around certain values and activities. In the religious system these are the values associated with faith and moral actions contained in the creed of this religion; in the system of scientific knowledge these are the values and actions connected with discovering facts, relations, principles in the selected area etc. A participant in the specific systems must comply with the binding standards. Thus, he must acquire the skills, knowledge and other intellectual competence which the system requires<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, *Wstęp do socjologii*, p. 25; ibidem, *The Methods of Sociology*, pp. 38–39; ibidem, *Social Action*, Farrar & Rinehart, New York 1936, pp. 13–14.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, *Ludzie teraźniejsi a cywilizacja przyszłości*, pp. 100–102.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>34</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Wstęp do socjologii*, p. 177.

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, *Ludzie teraźniejsi a cywilizacja przyszłości*, pp. 89–90.

A man engaged in collective life becomes a participant in many cultural systems. However, Znaniecki emphasises that, as it usually happens, generally, one of them acquires special significance in the life of an individual. Then, full attention is focused on this system. Mainly it manifests itself by engaging in various actions and doing it with high intensity. Of course, this practice is combined with pushing other systems into the background and perhaps subordinating them by the accepted dominant. A man of science is mainly interested in the field of science he is expert in and: political, economic, civilisation matters revolve around it. The consequence of this situation is a particular state of consciousness. The knowledge associated with the cultural system that is dominant in the life of an individual will be of significantly higher quality (extent, precision, knowledge of detail) than the knowledge corresponding to other systems<sup>36</sup>. Znaniecki's deliberations centred around cultural systems are more like the ideas of Alfred Schutz related to "interest" by means of which an individual's attention is focused on a selected kind of experience. With that, according to Schutz, virtually anything can be the object of this attention, and Znaniecki created a specific sociological category – a cultural system. This gives completely different analytical capabilities. We can say that in the aspect mentioned above we are dealing with the horizontal axis focusing individual knowledge.

Znaniecki thinks that man's cognitive practices in the dimension of common-sense knowledge are neither systemic nor harmonious. Therefore, the knowledge that results from them is of special specification. Among its features he lists: fragmentation (it includes pieces of information from different fields: mathematics, economics, history, natural science etc.), the lack of logical systematisation (usually there is no relation between its elements), and what is more, he pays attention to the dynamism (expressing itself: in mutual influence of individual elements of knowledge, as well as in its subsequent increase in new experience)<sup>37</sup>.

The above-mentioned parameters relate to the characteristics associated with the structure of knowledge. In order to characterise the primary category in more detail one can still look at it from the perspective of the functions it performs. In this aspect, Znaniecki emphasises its pragmatic character. Valuable knowledge is the one that allows for realising practical goals. Actually this realisation is crucial for the proper performance of social roles, or for finding oneself in specific social situations that require resolution. Ineffectiveness of measures taken makes us see the knowledge which is their basis as useless. When it receives such an assessment it ceases to be treated as a point of reference in everyday practice and it is pushed from awareness<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 90–92.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 90–91.

<sup>38</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Społeczne role uczonych a historyczne cechy wiedzy*, pp. 531–534.

A participant of everyday life uses positively tested knowledge in an automatic way. If there are no circumstances that force reflection and the use of combinations, in routine tasks he will refer to well-known patterns of both interpretation (allowing for proper consideration of the objects that make up the situation as prerequisite for reading its essence), and problem-handling schemes. Both of these schemes operate as norms – forcing themselves on a person as guidelines for desired activities. As they passed the exam in the past, the author of the activities expects that in the current circumstances he can also count on their effectiveness. It is only when he encounters a situation that is far from the norm, which is not uncommon in everyday practices, that automatism and confidence disappear from his practice, and reflection aiming to scrupulously weight new circumstances appears in their place. In the course of this weighing one seeks to determine the uniqueness of the situation and to select unstandardised scenario that will allow one to deal with the situation effectively<sup>39</sup>.

Not always are we able to face all the difficult cases that life brings us on numerous occasions. They often require knowledge of facts or possession of abilities we do not have. Znaniecki stresses that we then have the opportunity to refer to people called experts, who have deeper insight into the situations that are: exceptional, unique, special. Of course there are no experts on everything. The presence of many different thematic areas within everyday practice caused the appearance of individuals who watch them more attentively than others (study them, analyse them in detail, consider numerous cases, experiment in their field, etc.). This has become the basis for the emergence of specialists in different fields. In situations in which our competence is not enough to overcome the obstacles we encounter in practical actions we use their help. When the scholar picks up this thread he clearly stresses the fact of knowledge distribution in the social space and its importance in the context of common-sense knowledge<sup>40</sup>.

In relation to this aspect another important question is raised – the question of social stock of knowledge. The knowledge that has proven effective in solving

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<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, *Spoleczne role uczonych a historyczne cechy wiedzy*, pp. 533–534. In this viewpoint, we can clearly see analogies with the viewpoint represented by Georg H. Mead on the functioning of common-sense consciousness (G.H. Mead, *Social Consciousness and the Consciousness of Meaning*, “Psychological Bulletin” 1910, vol. 7, pp. 397–405). Another researcher in the area of common-sense knowledge – Alfred Schutz – devoted a lot of space to tracking actions taken by an individual in which he showed their course with the greatest attention, and which were very briefly outlined by Znaniecki (A. Schutz, *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, ed. R.M. Zaner, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1979).

<sup>40</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Spoleczne role uczonych a historyczne cechy wiedzy*, pp. 534–535. Again, it is worth noting that the indicated topic became an important element of Alfred Schutz’s sociology of knowledge. Despite the fact that the topic repeatedly appeared in many of his writings, he gave it attention in one of his key essays from the point of view of common-sense knowledge. (A. Schutz, *Well-informed Citizen*, in: A. Schutz, *Collected Papers II*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague 1964, pp. 120–134).

problems encountered in everyday life is not only stored in private resources to which individuals who personally had the opportunity to positively verify it, have the access. If it often happens that specific schemes of action (preceded by certain patterns of interpretation) work in practice, the information about them finds its way to the social stock of knowledge, with the option to be used by anyone interested in it. For example, proverbs, functioning in social circulation, containing some cognitive generalisations with practical message, make popular „truths” manifest. They are also often preserved in a more formal form, among other things, in all kinds of policy documents: legal, political, ethical or theological. But as it is emphasised by Znaniecki, socially accepted knowledge does not necessarily take the form of words. In most of the cases it is present in practised rules which we have access to through observation. We encounter such eventuality in habits, customs, rituals. Generally we do not contemplate these rules (we do not ponder over them, we do not weigh their attractiveness, we do not combine them with alternative patterns etc.), but by presence in the contexts of their functioning, they are absorbed by us by imitation<sup>41</sup>.

Two conditions determined by Znaniecki that must be met in order for some knowledge to find its way to the social resource remain to be mentioned. The first one has already been partly commented upon above and is associated with social recognition. It is not enough that patterns of actions work in individual cases, that they gain universal approval. In order for them to become as such they need to gain “collective support” i.e. become a point of collective reference in different contexts<sup>42</sup>. The second condition that needs to be met is connected with the agreement of the newly introduced to the generally accepted system element of knowledge with the elements already existing in the system. Such agreement must be present in general belief of those for whom this system is a point of reference<sup>43</sup>. Introducing the second criterion Znaniecki explicitly goes beyond the principles of pragmatism that clearly resounded in previously presented points. Current findings are in no way related to the pragmatic conception of truth. Thus he moves away from the pragmatic model of sociology of knowledge represented by George Mead, Alfred Schutz, Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann and other scholars who represent micro-sociological

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<sup>41</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Spoleczne role uczonych a historyczne cechy wiedzy*, pp. 535–536; *ibidem*, *Basic Problems of Contemporary Sociology*, p. 521.

<sup>42</sup> Similarly – elimination of some aspects of knowledge from socially accepted stock of knowledge requires universal disapproval. If selected individuals go against these aspect of knowledge society will consider them deviants and troublemakers fighting generally accepted norms (*ibidem*, *Spoleczna rola uczonego*, p. 347).

<sup>43</sup> F. Znaniecki, *Spoleczne role uczonych a historyczne cechy wiedzy*, p. 536. Alfred Schutz takes up also the question of conditions of inclusion of individual knowledge into the social stock of knowledge. He stresses the importance of two conditions that ought to be met in order for this to take place: universal importance of such knowledge and its recognition by social authorities (A. Schutz, T. Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World*, Heinemann, London 1974, pp. 304 nn.).

perspective<sup>44</sup>. He, however, approaches the viewpoint associated with the coherent concept of truth, represented even by the functionalist Emile Durkheim<sup>45</sup>.

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This is how in general terms the collection of the most important issues can be traced, that allow for reconstruction of fairly consistent position of Znaniecki on the sociology of common-sense knowledge. The issues raised were found in the rich legacy of sociological writings of the scholar and summarised in a compact form, according to the tradition present in the studies dealing with the social entanglement of knowledge, which has been repeatedly highlighted in the footnotes. Of course, we did not present these threads with the intention of full explanation, this was not the aim of this short text. We were rather aiming to prove that it is possible to practise sociology of knowledge without going beyond sociological frameworks of interpretation, contrary to what Znaniecki taught about such projects. It seems that our findings met the challenge. Is not knowledge the key result of the socialisation process? Do not social circles define priorities that affect the standards of knowledge of individuals functioning in them? Is not knowledge a necessary condition for the functioning of a social role? etc. In each of the indicated cases, knowledge is an essential element of specified categories of facts - indisputably belonging to social systems<sup>46</sup>. If we agree that the presented disquisition is convincing, then, by the same token, it must be recognised that we were able to show that Znaniecki – a strong opponent of sociological studies on knowledge – has left in his work several important findings that strengthen the achievements of the discipline he criticised<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> M. Zemło, *Socjologia wiedzy w tradycji interakcyjno-fenomenologicznej*, pp. 347–348.

<sup>45</sup> E. Durkheim, *Elementarne formy życia religijnego*, transl. A. Zadrożyńska, PWN, Warszawa 1990, p. 417. Józef Niżnik discusses in more detail the pragmatic and coherent concept of truth in the writings of Znaniecki (J. Niżnik, *System wiedzy a problemładu: Niektóre uwikłania teoretyczne socjologii wiedzy Floriana Znanieckiego*, „Kultura i Społeczeństwo” 1988, no. 3, pp. 61–69).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. F. Znaniecki, *Nauki o kulturze*, pp. 404–405; cf. ibidem, *Basic Problems of Contemporary Sociology*, pp. 520 nn.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. J. Niżnik, *System wiedzy a problemładu: Niektóre uwikłania teoretyczne socjologii wiedzy Floriana Znanieckiego*, p. 61.

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### Summary

Despite the fact that Florian Znanięcki was adamantly opposed to the sociology of knowledge, he provided many fundamental principles thanks to which he, on academic reflection, had strengthened its position. The following text provided the ideas thanks to which this founding father of sociology enriches the way in which we perceive how knowledge is connected with society. In this fashion we try and discover, the scholar, whose texts are analysed in the article and who brought a constructive research scenario for sociology using the very same approach with which he opposed it. Those who interpret Znanięcki's views by studying his achievements within the sociology of knowledge mainly focus on his scientific knowledge considering that it was in these fields that he made the greatest discoveries (which is true nonetheless) albeit concluding that other kinds of knowledge do not necessarily find their place in his interests. The main focus of the author of the article however was not concentrated on scientific knowledge but on common sense knowledge with the aim to prove that even for scholars it is meaningful. Through his achievements as per himself, Znanięcki uncovered aspects connected with this kind of knowledge and on the basis of him failing to create a somewhat mutual picture of his sociology of common-sense knowledge. This image was not supposed to be decisive as it was not the intention of the author of the article, but it was supposed to show the defining key points. Given that Znanięcki himself critiqued many sociologists who were involved in the sociology of knowledge, his criticism was strengthened with references made by the author in *The social role of the man of knowledge*, to the goals of the tradition within the discipline itself to avoid any doubt as to the fact that we are dealing with blurred boundaries in the sociology of knowledge. Above all, it is worth mentioning that all of the key elements mentioned, do not extend beyond the boundaries of sociological interpretation, in spite of Znanięcki's thinking that through this manner of approach we are dealing with what gives them their unmistakable sociological character.

Key words: Florian Znanięcki, sociology of knowledge, common-sens knowlegde

### FLORIANA ZNANIECKIEGO SOCJOLOGIA WIEDZY POTOCZNEJ – ZARYS PROBLEMATYKI

#### Streszczenie

Florian Znanięcki mimo że był zdecydowanym oponentem socjologii wiedzy, poczynił wiele ustaleń, dzięki którym przyczynił się do umocnienia jej pozycji w refleksji naukowej. W niniejszym tekście wyłowiono wątki, dzięki którym klasyk socjologii wzbogaca namysł nad społecznym uwikłaniem wiedzy. W ten sposób starano się dowieść, że uczonego, którego teksty poddano analizie realizował konstruktywny scenariusz badawczy dla socjologii wiedzy wbrew nastawieniu, jakie w stosunku

do niej eksponował. Interpretatorzy poglądów Znanickiego, badając jego dorobek związany z socjologią wiedzy, głównie skupiają swoją uwagę na wiedzy naukowej – uznając, że w tym obszarze poczynił największe odkrycia (co jest poniekąd słuszne), lub też, wychodząc z założenia, że inne rodzaje wiedzy niekoniecznie znalazły się w orbicie jego zainteresowań. Natomiast uwaga autora artykułu skupiona została nie na wiedzy naukowej, ale na wiedzy potocznej, celem pokazania, że także i wokół niej namysł uczonego jest znaczący. Z dorobku, jaki po sobie pozostawił Znanicki, wydobyto aspekty związane z tym rodzajem wiedzy i w oparciu o nie poczyniono próbę zbudowania w miarę spójnego obrazu jego socjologii wiedzy potocznej. Obraz ten nie miał być wyczerpujący, nie było to zamiarem autora opracowania, ale wiodącym celem tekstu było jedynie wskazanie punktów wyznaczających zasadnicze jego dominanty. Z racji, że sam Znanicki wysuwał wiele zastrzeżeń pod adresem socjologów zajmujących się wiedzą, prowadzony wywód wzmocniono odniesieniami mocującymi podejmowane przez autora *Spolecznych ról uczonych* wątki w tradycji dyscypliny, by nie było wątpliwości, że mamy do czynienia z rozważaniami mieszczącymi się w granicach socjologii wiedzy. Nadto należy dodać, że wszystkie wspomniane dominanty nie wychodziły poza socjologiczne ramy interpretacyjne – wbrew obawom Znanickiego, że przy tego typu przedsięwzięciach mamy z tym do czynienia – co uprawomocnia ich socjologiczny charakter.

Słowa kluczowe: Florian Znanicki, socjologia wiedzy, wiedza potoczna