

**FORTHCOMING
AND CALL FOR PAPERS**

“Savoir c’est prévoir,” to know is to predict, declared Auguste Comte, the self-proclaimed priest of the Religion of Humanity. Despite these roots, sociology has abandoned this optimistic vision and speaks about the future reluctantly, by separating empirical knowledge about the past and present social world from futurology, which is based on speculation. As a result, sociology distrusts its own abilities to predict the future. In the name of value-free science, sociology has also withdrawn from designing the future social order, thus rejecting the inspiration of the great utopias. The pressing social need to anticipate the future is fulfilled by practices from beyond the bounds of sociology, or on its edges: from science fiction and post-apocalyptic fictions to futurology, technology assessment, trend analysis and modelling, to scenario planning and road mapping for particular organizations. The academic social sciences tend to disregard the applied methods of anticipating the future that have been developed at the request of governments, military agencies, and corporations rather than by academia.

However, in recent years, the theme of possible futures has entered the debate with new intensity: the division between science fiction and the near future falters. On the one hand, we witness billionaires’ plans to create Martian colonies and human-machine hybrids – is this for real, this time? – and on the other hand, we hear prophecies about the climate apocalypse and the advent of non-human time in the Anthropocene, an epoch when human actions alter the planet for hundreds of thousands of years. We may say after John Urry (*What is the Future?*, Cambridge 2016) that the times call for social science to enter the discussion about possible futures – hence, to reveal the political and performative dimension of the collective imagination of the future. Sociology might thus look for new inspiration in futurology or science fiction, but it also might enrich reflection on the social future with new approaches and solutions. Sociology might then also ask questions that were previously left unstated.

**2018 /// *The Polish Peasant from the perspective of a century*
Special issue of the academic journal *State of Affairs* [Stan Rzeczy]**

There are not many works to which sociologists owe as much as to *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. Although a hundred years have passed since the publication of the first two volumes of this extensive book, it remains not only one of the most influential classics of sociology but also a mysterious work, in part forgotten and underutilised. Today there can be no doubt that the analyses contained in the book were constitutive for such subdisciplines as the sociology of migration, deviance, and social change. The work also played a fundamental role in establishing the methodology of qualitative research, including the biographical method, and in particular, the analysis of letters, official documents, and press clippings. The appearance of *The Polish Peasant* changed how applied sociological concepts were defined and to a large measure determined the critical nature of the contemporary social sciences. As Norbert Wiley observed, it was the first sociological work to have a clearly democratic and egalitarian character, and to treat ethnicity methodically as a cultural and not biological category. Eli Zaretsky, the editor of a popular, abridged version of the book, noted that *The Polish Peasant* was the first work to treat ethnicity as a worthy object of systematic study. It also contained the elaborated concepts of values, attitudes, and personality that lie at the basis of many theories claiming to provide a multidimensional explanation of the nature of human beings and the complexity of social control mechanisms. At the same time, William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's book remains enigmatic; the authors' real input into their joint publication, their manner of connecting the work to their earlier research, and the problematics they formulated are all in dispute. The significance for theory of *The Polish Peasant* is overshadowed not only by the professional difficulties Thomas encountered while working on the book but also by the appearance of competing sociological theories, such as symbolic interactionism and the voluntaristic theory of action, which for long years dominated American and European sociology.

Today, ongoing revisions of the above-mentioned theoretical currents as well the growing role of the qualitative method of social research in creating sociological theories could be an opportunity to revive interest in *The Polish Peasant*.

In inviting scholars to send texts inspired by the work of Thomas and Znaniecki, we are seeking answers to the following questions, among other topics:

- How did the earlier work of the two authors affect their collaboration and joint research undertaking?
- Can Thomas and Znaniecki's theory and methodology still be a valuable source of sociological knowledge today? How can it contribute to expanding the techniques of social theoreticians and researchers?
- How was *The Polish Peasant* received in Poland and elsewhere in the world?

Aside from texts concerning interpretation of the work, we are interested in all articles inspired by the ideas of Thomas and Znaniecki, or referring to their roles in social theory in general.

/// Please submit your proposal including all authors' names, email addresses and affiliations and an abstract of around 500 words to redakcja@stanrzeczy.edu.pl by **23 July 2018**. The editors will decide upon acceptance or rejection of the proposals by **31 July 2018**.

/// Selected authors are invited to submit their manuscripts (max. 40,000 characters, including tables, figures, and references) until **7 January 2019**. All manuscripts will be peer-reviewed. Publication is planned for June 2019.

/// For any queries, please contact Prof. Michał Kaczmarczyk (wmsmka@ug.edu.pl), the guest editor of the issue.