

Volume Editor's Preface

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This volume of the journal comprises of a number of texts whose aim was to consider the methodological condition of the history of sociology, as well as its characteristic institutional and organisational features. It should be pointed out that the discussion did not bring any definite conclusion and is far from being over. Therefore, the question whether the history of sociology is, or should be, a professional and beneficial part of sociology still needs to be answered, which the readers of this volume are encouraged to do.

The debate opens with my and Jultia Pieńkosz's text entitled "The history of Sociology in Poland. Assessing the current state of affairs," where we try to separate the history of sociology proper (contextualist) from systematics and sociological theory. This task proved to be extremely difficult, and it was only partially solved because both currents (i.e. contextualism and presentism) are mixed in the Polish historiography of sociology. Radosław Sojak's remarks and guidelines pertained to the reflection on the history (especially of applied sociology) within the framework of the sociology of knowledge, which Jarosław Kilias subsequently criticised. Marta Bucholc, in turn, indicated the common feature of all the scholars who investigate the past of sociology, namely reading, thereby underscoring the textual character of the activity of the fringe group.

We must admit that the history of sociology has always been a specialised discipline, and hence it has faced the need for demonstrating its usefulness. It results from the fact that the precursors of the discipline, struggling for the research field with other human sciences, each time tried to show their distinctness, citing their unique intellectual background. In fact, the first records of sociology are a legacy of thought which would always make them closer to the history of ideas than to the history of sociology.

Therefore, we do not know all the necessary methodological parameters that allow us to isolate the history of sociology which can be equally well understood as: the management of the collective memory of science, empirical work in archives, simplified introduction for neophytes, as well as the sociology of knowledge or social studies of science. Ultimately, we realise that all sociologists, consciously or not, remain bound to at least one organisation of intellectual life, which largely determines their research choices, ranging from the theoretical approach to methodology, narration and stating the research problem. However, the question of sociology's awareness of its own determinants remains open.

Apart from the authors, there were many people involved in the preparation of these works for the publishing process, whom I would like to thank for cooperation, including the translators: Monika Boruta-Żywiczyńska, Marek Placiński and Paulina Habas.

Ewa Bińczyk (2015) also participated in the discussion. Her text, however, was only a summary of the debate which at the time comprised three papers; therefore, despite the fact that some authors occasionally make references to her text, the editorial board of the journal has decided not to include it in this volume.

Translated by Monika Boruta-Żywiczyńska.