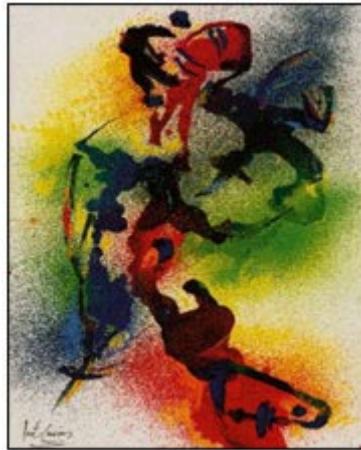# 6th ESA CONFERENCE
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The concept of "social relations" in classic analytical interpretative sociology: Weber and Znaniecki

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Introduction

Sociology has been often defined as a science of "social relations". A the same time, in the social science encyclopedia edited by Edwin R. A. Seligman and Alvin Johnson published during the inter-war period (1930), there is neither an entry for "relations" nor "social relations" (nor "relationships"). Nearly forty years later, in the international social science encyclopedia edited by David L. Sills (1968), there is no entry "social relations" or "relations" ("relationships") either.

Such important fields of social research as sociology of ethnicity, economic sociology, and political science are interested (respectively) in "ethnic relations", "industrial relations" and "international relations". There is a very large number of books on these topics, which proves that the concept of social relations is very vital in social science production. However, what is too often missing in the fields mentioned above is the analysis of the very concept of social relations. Therefore, we actually are not sure what the authors mean by ethnic, industrial, international relations. **The aim of this article is to contribute to the clarification of the concept of "social relations".**

When dealing with the problematic of social ("human") relations, we should face the problem of the ways of conceptualization of similar social phenomena. The phenomenon which is the subject of this article is often conceptualized in terms of "social interaction". Even if we decide to ignore social psychology, we should take into account at least two interactionist traditions within contemporary sociology: exchange theories broadly understood, and symbolic interactionism. In this text, however, I am interested in stable and relatively durable phenomena and these cannot be reduced to "social exchange". Moreover, the sociology of ethnicity, economic sociology, political sciences and other fields of macrosociology conceptualize their problematic rather in terms of "social relations" than in terms of "interactions".

In this short text, I take into account only two classic ideas (out of necessity ignoring many important traditions, like for instance that coming from Karl Marx): those developed by Max Weber and Florian Znaniecki. I present similarities and differences between them. For me, these two ideas are examples of analytical sociology because of the way the authors construct the discipline: they looked for concepts referring to elementary units of the social realm and later built out of them, in a systematic way, concepts referring to larger social systems. Weber strongly influenced the tradition of what then became symbolic interactionism, and the ideas of Znaniecki can be treated as a variety of this interactionism. Therefore, both ideas belong to a kind of interpretative sociology which has been looking not only for a

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[1] Aleksander Manterys, Elzbieta Halas and Wlodzimierz Winclawski read the first draft of this article and gave me there comments. Needless to say, they are not responsible for my interpretation. I am using the terms "relation" and

subjective sense of social phenomena, but also for their causal explanations. Both were developed more or less at the same time. Both were influenced by Georg Simmel, particularly by his "Soziologie" of 1908.

My intention in this article is first and foremost the reconstruction of Weber's and Znaniecki's conceptualization of social relations, and secondly the stressing of ideas which could help analyze relations between social groups on the macro scale.

Weber's sociology of social relations

It is impossible to refer to the whole body of Weberian scholarship. I will limit myself to commenting on three well known examples. In the classic intellectual biography authored by Reinhard Bendix (1962), only Weber's macrosociology is taken into account. In the classic (and reprinted many times) collection of Weber's works edited by Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (1991), only such topics are covered as relations between science and politics; power; religion; and social structure. A well known German Weberian scholar, Dirk Kaesler, devotes, in his book on Weber's biography and work, eleven pages (1998: 191-202) to his "general sociology", including a few pages to social actions (*Soziale Handeln*) and a few sentences to social relations (*Soziale Beziehungen*).

Weber's sociological ideas were presented first and foremost in his main posthumous sociological treatise, "Economy and Society". His ideas of social relationships can be found in its Part One: "Conceptual Exposition" in Chapter I, "Basic Sociological Terms". The concept of social relationships is introduced *via* the concept of "social action", and it precedes the analysis of such concepts as usage, custom, self-interest, legitimate order, conflict, association, power and domination. In Chapter II, "Sociological Categories of Economic Action", we read of economic relationships. The scholar is interested, however, in social relations **within** communities like the household, neighborhood, commune, etc., rather than relations **between** social collectivities or institutions, which would be more interesting in the present article. Bearing in mind Weber's chapters on economy and on ethnicity, I will concentrate here on the "Basic Sociological Terms".

The book's chapter devoted to these terms is a presentation of the Weberian conceptual scheme (in the sense of a system of basic conceptual categories as well as the analytical relationships between them), or definitions of the concrete sociological concepts which are needed by the author. It also contains a broad elaboration of these definitions[2]. It should be stressed that Weber's is very far from a "monopolistic" approach and he states many times that he is interested only in a particular kind of sociology. Beside this kind there are other conceptualizations of this discipline.

What people do, or what they are involved in, is their "behavior – be it overt or covert, omission

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"relationship" as equivalents.

[2] I am aware of the possibilities of misusing quotations but in order to be as close as possible to Weber conceptualization, I will very often use quotations of his work.

or acquiescence". Action is a behavior to which the actor "attaches a subjective meaning". "Action is 'social' insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course" (1978: 4). Social action can be oriented to the past, present or expected future of one's behavior (1978: 22).

The "social" character of human action is not opposed by Weber to its potential "individual" character. On the contrary, Weber is interested first and foremost in the social character of individual action. Social character is ascribed to an action insofar as it takes into account the behavior of other people. In the above citation, Weber is using the plural form but it seems that this form is not important for him. An action of a human individual is of a social character regardless of whether or not it takes into account the behavior of another individual or of an aggregate of individuals.

Who is the subject (actor) of a social action? In the Weberian definition, we read of an individual. When he writes about "subjective meaning", however, we learn that the term may refer "to a particular actor or to the average or approximate meaning attributable to a given plurality of actors; or [...] to the theoretically conceived *pure type* of subjective meaning attributed to the hypothetical actor or actors in a given type of action" (1978: 4). "Understanding", so important in Weberian sociology, "involves the interpretive grasp of the meaning present in one of the following contexts: (a) as in the historical approach, the actually intended meaning for concrete individual action; or (b) as in cases of sociological mass phenomena, the average of, or an approximation to, the actually intended meaning; or (c) the meaning appropriate to a scientifically formulated pure type (an ideal type) of a common phenomenon" (1978: 9).

Therefore, we can conclude that when presenting a sociological approach and when presenting other cases than an action of an individual person, he is interested only in an aggregate of similar (from a given point of view), acting individuals, or in an ideal type of a certain action in a certain situation. For the action, "in the sense of subjectively understandable orientation of behavior exists only as the behavior of one or more *individual* human beings" (1978: 13). In another section of the book (in Volume II) we read: "always [...] 'social action' (*Gemeinschaftshandeln*) is for us an individual's behavior, either historically observable or theoretically possible or likely, in relationship to the actual or anticipated potential behavior of other individuals" (1978: 1376).

Max Weber was obviously aware of the fact that there have existed social entities other than individuals. Examples are states, associations, business corporations, and foundations. Sometimes, they are treated by scholars, says Weber, as individual persons, as "subjects of rights or duties or as performers of legally significant actions" (1978: 13). This is understandable within the frameworks of juristic studies or for practical ends. In sociological analysis, for the subjective interpretation of action, these collectivities must be analyzed *solely* as "resultants and modes of organization of the particular acts of individual persons, since these alone can be treated as agents in a course of subjectively understandable

action""(1978: 13).

However, sociology, even "understanding" sociology, cannot ignore collective concepts, even if they are interesting first and foremost to other social disciplines. There are three reasons for this necessity to deal with collective entities has three reasons. Firstly, it must if interpretive sociology wants to obtain an intelligible terminology. Secondly, the concepts of "collective entities" have a meaning in the minds of individual persons. They orient their actions to them, and they have a causal influence on their course of action. Thirdly, we must not ignore the "organic" or "functional" school in sociology which interprets individuals and their actions as organs of a social body (1978: 14). Therefore, the sociologist, even using the interpretive methodology, should accept collective entities. They are for him a point of departure for the understanding interpretation of individual actions (1978: 15).

After having analyzed four well known types of social actions (instrumentally rational, value-rational, affectual, and traditional), Weber presents his idea about what the topic of this article is: "social relationship". This term is used "to denote the behavior of a plurality of actors insofar as, in its meaningful content, the action of each takes account of that of the others and is oriented in these terms. The social relationship thus consists entirely and exclusively in the existence of a probability that there will be a meaningful course of social action – irrespective [...] of the basis for this probability" (1978: 26-27). Although Weber writes in other contexts about two partners of a social relationship, the citation presented above (as well as in other places in his works) shows clearly that the number of partners is not relevant. It is important in my opinion that social relationship does not have to be considered as a dyad. The dyad is only a simplification of analysis, useful for practical purposes. On the other hand, if there can be more than two partners in a relationship, we could ask the question if , for instance, in a triad we have one relationship or perhaps two or three of them. We could ask if a given person in a triad, taking into account the behavior of one partner, has to take into account the behavior of another at the same time, in order to create a social relationship. All these and many other similar questions were analyzed for instance by Georg Simmel, whose work was well known to Weber.

A "social relationship" is characterized by "at least minimum of mutual orientation of the action of each to that of the others. Its content may be of the most varied nature: conflict, hostility, sexual attraction, friendship, loyalty, or economic exchange. [...] Hence, the definition does not specify whether the relation of the actors is co-operative or the opposite" (1978: 27). It is very important in my opinion to underline that Weber considers conflict or hostility as social relationships (and not, for instance, as the breaking of relationships) because, among other things, this approach must be based on the assumption that social relations appear not only within a unified social realm but can appear between two or more different parties. However, as we will see, Weberian stress on the unified entity is strong.

In the previous paragraph, the parties of social relationships were first and foremost human

individuals. The scholar writes, however, also about other instances. "Even in cases of such forms of social organization as a state, church, association, or marriage, the social relationship consists exclusively in the fact that there has existed, exists, or will exist a probability of action in some definite way appropriate to this meaning" (1978: 27). The context does not make it clear whether the author means relations between the "forms of social organization", within them, or perhaps both.

In the Weberian sense, social relationship does not mean that the partners understand each other very well, that they accept a common definition of situation. "The subjective meaning need not necessarily be the same for all the parties who are mutually oriented in a given social relationship; there need not in this sense be 'reciprocity'" (1978: 27). A social relation can, therefore, be unilateral or "asymmetrical". It still is a social relation, a case of mutual orientation, "insofar as, even though partly or wholly erroneously, one party presumes a particular attitude toward him on the part of the other and orients his action to this expectation" (1978: 27). According to Weber, a social relationship of completely and fully corresponding attitudes "is in reality a limiting case" (1978: 27).

Social relationships in Weberian sociology can be, in my opinion, typologized in various ways. The first typology would depend on the length of their duration. A social relationship can be of a fleeting character or be relatively permanent. In the second case, "there is a probability of the repeated recurrence of the behavior which corresponds to its subjective meaning and hence is expected" (1978: 28). It should be added that it is the outside observer and not the participants who, in Weber's view, judges that the above mentioned probability exists (1978: 28). Therefore, the social relation is a sociological, scholarly conceptual category and not a common sense category:; it exists in the world of the observers, not in the world of the observed.

In the second typology, the subjective meaning of social relationships can be changeable or permanent. When, for instance, a political relationship based on solidarity transforms into a conflict of interests, the problem arises of whether a new relation has appeared or whether the old relation has perhaps acquired a new meaning. It is also possible that the sense of one dynamic relation is partly constant and partly changing (1978: 28). According to Weber, the answer to the above question (regarding the potential emergence of a new relation) depends only on terminological convenience and the continuity of change. Therefore, we can conclude that the decision concerning the character of a particular relation is at least partly in hands of scholars.

Let us return to relations with a permanent subjective meaning. This permanent sense, or content, can be formulated "in terms of maxims which the parties concerned expect to be adhered to by their partners on the average or approximately" (1978: 28). Participants of a relation with a permanent sense can orient their actions on the belief in the existence of legitimate order. If one's behavior is oriented toward "determinable maxims", if the order is "in some appreciable way regarded by the actor as in some

way obligatory or exemplary to him", the order will be called valid (1978: 31). Also in cases of evasion or disobedience, "the probability of their being recognized as valid norms may have an effect on action" (1978: 32). However, says Weber, when evasion or contravention of the meaning of an order becomes a rule, the order is valid only to a limited degree or even not valid at all.

In the third typology, the sense of a social relation can emerge in a spontaneous way or can be agreed upon by mutual consent. Weber is interested first and foremost in the second possibility. When we have to do with incidences of this mutual consent being agreed upon, the rational participants of the relationship count "in some degree on the fact that the other will orient his action to the meaning of the agreement as he (the first actor) understands it" (1978: 28).

The fourth typology divides relationships into communal and associative. A social relationship is communal when the orientation of social actions of its participants "is based on a subjective feeling of the parties, whether affectual or traditional, that they belong together" (1978: 40). A social relationship is associative, when the orientation of social actions of its partners "rests on a rationally motivated adjustment of interests or a similarly motivated agreement [...]. It is especially common [...] for the associative type of relationship to rest on a rational agreement by mutual consent. In that case the corresponding action is, at the pole of rationality, oriented either to a value-rational belief in one's own obligation, or to a rational (*zweckrationale*) expectation that the other party will live up to it" (1978: 41). Most real social relations have, according to Weber, a partly communal and partly associative character.

We can ask now what the place in this typology of social "conflict" and "hostility" is, to which Weber devoted much of his interest. Let us start with conflict. "A social relationship will be referred to as 'conflict' (*Kampf*) insofar as action is oriented intentionally to carrying out the actor's own will against the resistance of the other party or parties. The term 'peaceful' conflict will be applied to cases in which actual physical violence is not employed. A peaceful conflict is 'competition' insofar as it consists in a formally peaceful attempt to attain control over opportunities and advantages which are also desired by others. A competitive process is 'regulated' competition to the extent that its ends and means are oriented to an order" (1978: 38. Now we can answer the above posed question: "conflict and communal relationships are relative concepts" (1978: 42). This phrase was explain a little later by Weber: "The communal type of relationship is [...] the most radical antithesis of conflict. This should not, however, be allowed to obscure the fact that coercion of all sorts is a very common thing in even the most intimate of such communal relationships if one party is weaker in character than the other. [...] Associative relationships, on the other hand, very often consist only in compromises between rival interests, where only a part of the occasion or means of conflict has been eliminated, or even an attempt has been made to do so. Hence, outside of the area of compromise, the conflict of interests, with its attendant competition for supremacy, remains unchanged'"(1978: 42). According to Talcott Parsons, conflict is, in Max Weber, the third, beside

communal and associative, basic type of social relationship (see 1949: 653).

The last, fifth, Weberian typology of social relations divides them into open and closed. It is valid in case of both communal and of associative relationships. "A social relationship [...] will be spoken of as 'open' to outsiders if and insofar as its system of order does not deny participation to anyone who whishes to join and is actually in a position to do so" (1978: 43). A social relation is "'closed' against outsiders so far as, according to its subjective meaning, and its binding rules, participation of certain persons is excluded, limited or subjected to conditions. Whether a relationship is open or closed may be determined traditionally, affectually,or rationally in terms of values or of expediency" (1978: 43).

When discussing open and closed relationships, Max Weber presents another interesting characteristic of social relations. An "organization" (V*erband*) is such a closed relationship, in which "regulations are enforced by specific individuals: a chief and, possibly, an administrative staff [...]. 'Organized action' is (a) either the staff's action, which is legitimated by its executive or representative powers and oriented to realizing the organization's order, or (b) the members' action as directed by the staff" (1978: 48). It seems to me that in this sentence we have a presentation of one of the determinants of "collective action".

Znaniecki's idea of social relations

Florian Znaniecki's sociological theory, as much as Max Weber's theoretical system in this discipline, is based on the concept of "social action" and the concept of "actor" (in Znaniecki – "agent"). Both scholars continued the German tradition of the anti-positivistic current in the humanities, as represented for instance by Wilhelm Dilthey, Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert. Both worked, at least for a short time, in the same period, but relatively independently from each other. Weber (who died in 1920) hardly had a chance to know Znaniecki's theoretical work. Weber is not quoted in Znaniecki's "Wstep do socjologii" (Introduction to Sociology) of 1922, in "Laws of Social Psychology" of 1925, in "Socjologia wychowania" (Sociology of Education) of 1929-30, in "Ludzie terazniejsi i cywilizacja przyszlosci" (Contemporary People and the Civilization of the Future) of 1935, or in "Modern Nationalities" of 1952. He is quoted is "Social Actions" of 1936 twice, in relatively unimportant matters. He is mentioned (after Leopold von Wiese) in "Cultural Sciences" of 1952 as a scholar who introduced the concept of "ideal types", who stressed the importance of the analysis of social actions in sociology and who, unlike von Wiese, did not develop a general theory of interaction between social agents (see 1971: 658). He is quoted three times, again in unimportant contexts, in the posthumously published "Social Relations and Social Roles". It is interesting that in the context of social relations, Znaniecki quoted (not very often, though), Leopold von Wiese and Georg Simmel in "Wstep do socjologii", "Modern Nationalities", "Cultural Sciences", "Social Actions" and in "Social Relations and Social Roles".

There is a very large number of books and articles devoted to Florian Znaniecki's sociological theory. This is particularly true in Poland (see, recently, Halas [ed.] 2000). These works on Znaniecki rarely refer to his sociology of social relations, but much more often to his sociology of social actions. Unlike Zbigniew Bokszanski (see 1972) but like for instance Mariola Flis (see 1978), I will treat Znaniecki's theories of social actions and social relations here as a coherent whole, in spite of some evolution of the scholar's ideas. This evolution, and particularly the emergence of new ways of interpretation, will be taken into account in this article.

According to Mariola Flis, Znaniecki's model of action refers first and foremost to individual human acts. She says, however, that this model can also be used when studying group dynamics. Collective (group) action is not, for Znaniecki, a sum of individual actions, but it does consist of them (Flis 1978: 42). Flis writes that Znaniecki did not present anywhere a coherent and consistent idea of collective (group) actions but that he outlined a general sketch of theory. Whereas a social action of an individual is a system which ties together a subjective attitude and an objective social value, a social group action is a synthesis of individual actions which ties together two objective elements of culture: an ideological model of attitudes and social value (Flis 1978: 42-44; see also Znaniecki 1971: 463-478). In the present article, I would like to stress that Znaniecki refers to collective (group) actions *expressis verbis,* that he shows clearly what their basis is and suggests what the nature is of the above mentioned synthesis of individual actions in collective (group) action.

The concept of action as presented in "Wstep do socjologii" is "idealistic" in character in the sense that every human act has a mental character, and "every ideal act brings, in a direct way, some real consequences" (Znaniecki 1988: 83). Since every action is ideal and brings real consequences, it is always creative (1988: 90). The human action is of a social character when its object is another human individual or a social group and if the purpose of this action of the subject (agent) is to exert influence on the action's object. Every subject of action (agent) can also be an object of somebody else's action and the other way around (1988: 278, 280; see also Znaniecki 1973: 322-373). Therefore, there is no reason to question the possibility of a social group's being an agent. Moreover, a social group cannot be reduced to an aggregate of individual actions because, the scholar writes, "more complex systems cannot be reduced to less complex systems [...], since every higher system is something more than a combination of lower systems" (1988: 285). One of the proofs of the subjective reality (and it is only the subjective reality that is interesting for Znaniecki) of social groups is the fact that people give them names (see, Znaniecki 1971: 256-257). A group can "act and experience in a collective way"; being a "collective will", it is a social agent (1988: 310-11). In "Cultural Sciences" of 1952 we read that what can be said about individual social actions, can also be said, although with some modifications, about collective actions which are "cultural forces". In the posthumous "Social Relations and Social Roles" the author says that "a social

action can be performed individually or collectively" (1965: 16).

If we look at the problem from the point of view of the agent, we see, says Znaniecki, that " a general determining characteristic of a social group [...] is its very ability to act collectively, to present itself as one entity, to focus individual actions into one common action – whether performed by all group members at the same time or divided among them or, finally, performed by a representative of the group, whose action is supported by potential actions of the remaining members" (1988: 315). Therefore, group action can have various shapes. It can be (a) an action of all members at the same time, (b) a common action being a result of the division of labor among the members, or (c) an action performed by authorized representatives. Regarding the first point we can ask, however, if it is necessary that ALL members of the group agent act; perhaps it is enough if only a part (though not authorized representatives), acts. In sum, the author's conclusion is that the total "activity of a group is a permanent synthesis of the social actions of its members" (1988: 316, 317). In "Social Actions" of 1936 we read that a "collective action , an action performed together by two or more individuals who have a common purpose, is a social action only if the purpose itself is social, i.e., if the action bears upon some other individual or collectivity as a social object and tries to provoke a social reaction by the use of social instruments and methods" (1967: 168).

In the course of its action, a social group undergoes some transformations. A "collective task" is an element determining the group from the point of view of its future (and the pursuit of some ideal introduces a "temporal aspect" to its nature). "In the conscious collective attempt to perform its task a social group adapts to it its own way of functioning, normative demands directed to its members, and eventually, sometimes, its own composition and its form" (1988: 321).

After this introductory presentation of social actions, and particularly group actions, we can move to the subject matter of this article – social relations. As I have already mentioned, according to Znaniecki, in social life the acting subject can be also an object of social action: "social value to which the action refers, i.e. individual or group who is the action's object, in this character in which this object is given to the agent. [...] object of action is at the same time an agent" (1988: 280). This idea leads us directly to the problematic of social relations. "A relation [...] is a combination of two series of dynamic social acts of two individuals or groups, or a group and an individual, as partners of the relation; each partner is a subject of its own series of acts and an object of a series of acts of the second partner" (1988: 280-281). Let us pay attention to the fact that the author has in mind the social relations between one individual and another individual, a group and another group, and finally between an individual and a group. In my opinion it is an important observation. It should also be mentioned that according to Znaniecki we have to do with a social relation when three additional conditions are met. They are as follows: (a) normative regulation of both series of social acts, (b) relative permanence, and (c) such a connection between these acts that "activity of an individual or group A is a *ratio* of activity of an individual or group B, and the other way around"

(1988: 281; see also, for the analysis of normative regulation and permanence, 1971: 660-665). In "Socjologia wychowania" of 1928-30, the definition of a social relation is only slightly different. This relation is a "closed system" consisting of four elements. They are as follows: (a) two partners of relation (individuals or groups), (b) the partners' obligations, (c) a link or social contact between them (Znaniecki means first of all some common values which are, for both partners, a necessary and sufficient condition of their mutual interaction), and (d) the partners' duties. The difference between obligations and duties is interesting to me. A partner's obligation is his conduct towards the second partner according to the norms, whereas duty is "the producing of some schematically regulated situations which would enable the second partner the performance of his obligation, or prevention or removing of some situations making this performance impossible" (Znaniecki 1973: 135). Let us return to "Wstep do socjologii", though.

Independently of other similarities, Znaniecki's theory resembles the Weberian model in the fact that a social relation is considered to be a system of (first and foremost) two acting partners and the fact that this relation is basically a part of a larger concrete social collectivity. In Znaniecki's opinion it does not have to be so, but it usually is so, which has important consequences. "A particular social relation can be unisolated and belong to a more general system of organization of a social group; in fact, majority of permanent and recurring relations is in this way included in a larger entity. In this case, to the above mentioned elements of this social system we must add the sanction which is to induce an individual (or smaller group) to unconditional realization of conditions that are to be a real base of the activities of the second partner; the same demand is posed by the sanction on the second partner" (1988: 282). It should be stressed that the common base of a relation, which is made up of the larger collectivity can, but does not have to, exist. When it does not exist, the norms regulating social relation are "empty", which means that there are no sanctions to support them. I will return to this issue. What is also important (but does not appear in the above citation), Florian Znaniecki clearly distinguishes between a social and a legal relation. The difference lies in the fact that a legal relation can be based only on agreement between the partners, whereas the social relation demands a real interaction between individuals or groups.

I have already written that an important feature of social relations and of the uniformity of many (meaning not all) of them are norms. They determine the activity of partners. Social norms have a reciprocal character. As we remember, they can be enforced by sanctions. Norms, the observation of which is demanded from a concrete partner, are social obligations. When the observation of norms is not enforced, they stop being "actual". Obligations, however, last even when an agent does not follow them, "if other elements of social relation exist. On the other hand, obligation ends when the social relation ends, while the norm, although it ceases to be actual, never does end and always can be resumed" (1988: 293). Every social relation contains at least two obligations which are different for different partners. They are, however, always obligations of all the parties.

As it turns out, according to the author of "Wstep do socjologii", a social relation does not have to imply a real interaction between the partners. Social contact is necessary, however, and it is this element of the platform (base) common to both partners which enables and determines the interaction and which makes their mutual obligation actually observed. It is social contact which creates a permanent, purely social unity between individuals and/or between groups which enter a social relation (1988: 297-299).

In "Socjologia wychowania", published a few years after "Wstep do socjologii", Znaniecki's ideas are formulated in a slightly different way. Now he stresses the problematic of the educational relation, a relation between an individual and a group to which he belongs. In this book, the concept of relation is introduced not so much by the concept of social action, as by the concept of contact. The latter concept has a slightly different meaning than in "Wstep do socjologii". In the chapter devoted to social groups we read that social contact (direct or indirect) occurs when one group "performs a collective action (either in the form of action of all its members or by its representatives) which influences the social content of the second group, thereby modifying its value system and causing its reaction" (1973: 62). If this kind of situation takes place, we have to do with "co-existing groups". Sometimes, between such groups there is not a loose and fleeting contact but a permanent social relation regulated by social norms. In this latter case, each group has some obligations toward the other group, "which means that it accepts the fact that it should perform toward it some collective actions and refrain itself (or make its members refrain) from some other actions and that it expects that the second group observes other or similar obligations toward the first group. In this situation, we are saying that the groups are *related to each other*; the social content of each of them is under a permanent influence of the social content of the other group and it, itself, influences that other group" (1973: 62).

The permanent influence of the groups on each other and their obligations toward each other can be symmetric or asymmetric. When they are symmetric, we have to do with a relation of equality. The scholar gives the examples of nation-states united by a treaty, relations of a state and the Church (when regulated by the concordat). It seems to me interesting that in this model of the group there is a relation of equality between groups only when they are "positively" tied with each other. Znaniecki does not take into account a potential "equal" relation of conflict. In the second of the cases presented above (asymmetry), "when one group fully or partly determines both its own obligations and obligations of the second group", we have to do with relations of "domination/subordination" (1973: 62-63). Relations between a state and the public schools, between the state and its constituent communities, between the Church and a religious order are examples given here by Znaniecki. As we can see, subordination is discussed in this context when one group can be considered a part of another group.

Like Max Weber, in the 1920s Florian Znaniecki was interested first and foremost in intra-group relations. However, when he gives examples of social relations, he lists, in addition to the marital relation,

the relations between employer and employees, relations between a group and its members – also a "treaty between two nation-states" (1973: 134). In the latter case, he does not say that this relation takes place within a larger social arrangement, like a union, federation, or other superior entity consisting of these nation-states. This idea was not developed by the author, though. In a short essay "Potrzeby socjologii w Polsce" (Needs of Sociology in Poland), published simultaneously with "Socjologia wychowania", intergroup relations are closed within a larger collectivity. Here, the author lists "marital relations, relations between the older and the younger generations, relations between employer and employees, between leaders and followers, etc." (1984: 138).

As I have already mentioned, what "Socjologia wychowania" is mainly concerned about is a relation between a group and its member(s). The author stresses that in this situation the group is the dominating partner and it "naturally presents much higher demands to the member than to itself" (1973: 213). The group member is obliged to do for the group everything that this group considers, "traditionally or rationally", necessary for its own functioning, while the group is obliged to do toward its member only as much as in the group's own view is necessary "to enable the member to perform dutifully his obligations toward the group" (1973: 214).

In "Socjologia wychowania", the author suggests a possibility of a typology of social relations according to the common intentions of the partners (1973: 136). This suggestion was never realized, though.

In the above mentioned book ,"Social Action", the concept of a social relation is introduced first and foremost by the concept of action, but also by the concept of social contact. The content is, however, different than in the contexts analyzed earlier in the present article. The social contact is characterized in the following way. One agent, performing his actions, intentionally or unintentionally modifies a certain value which has been, or becomes, the object of the attitude of another agent. The first agent, though, does not intend to influence the second agent. Simultaneously or subsequently, the first agent, the second agent, or both agents experience the fact that the activity of the first agent modifies a value which is significant for the second agent. "We call this value the *vehicle of social contact*. If, however, the purpose of the activity is to influence the other agent by modifying his values, we should then speak no longer merely of social contact, but of social action" (1967: 56-57).

Social contact can occur not only between individuals, but also between collectivities. There is no contact between collectivities, though, when what one of them does with its own values, does not influence the values of the second collectivity, meaning when the values of the first are not the values of the second. According to the author of "Social Action", for a social contact to exist, there must be values common to both collectivities, but the significance of those values is different for both collectivities. Each of them tends to do something different with them, if one of them is to become interested in another, as a social object.

This difference in the significance of the value is most obvious when it appears as opposition. Therefore, the collective interest in other collectivities appears most easily in cases of conflict. The opposition must assume, however that there is a social contact on the basis of common values. On the other hand, a difference between the collective attitudes toward the same value is not an opposition if these attitudes are considered not as mutually exclusive but as mutually supplementary (1967: 63-64). War is an example of collective opposition toward a certain collectivity. It is interesting to note that for Znaniecki the "collective acts of opposition against collectivities do not always and necessarily express antagonistic tendencies of the individuals participating in them" (1967: 450-451). Therefore, a collectivity is a superindividual body.

Earlier, in the context of the sociology of education, Znaniecki wrote about such inter-group relations as domination and subordination. That context suggested groups independent of each other. These groups do not have to be independent, though. Sometimes we have to do with cases of voluntary, collective, participative submission of a community or group to a small dominant body composed of its own members. Znaniecki is of the opinion that this kind of situation is difficult to study and has not been adequately analyzed yet. Individual active submission to a collectivity is a phenomenon easier to study (1967: 255-156). As we remember, the latter issue was analyzed in detail in "Socjologia wychowania".

In the previous paragraphs, I have mentioned the relation of opposition. Now, I would like to discuss the problem of hostility. This system of actions is not called by him a social relation. I think, though, that it meets the conditions presented earlier. The scholar does not say if hostility occurs only between individuals or also between collectivities, but the examples suggest that the latter was also taken into account by him. Moreover, these examples are important also from the point of view of the aims of the study of social relations, as suggested at the beginning of this article.

Znaniecki distinguishes four kinds of hostility and discusses some of them. First, there are actions tending to prevent social contacts between the agent and the social object, by *avoiding common experiences*. This case is called "avoidance". Avoidance of communication, as the scholar explains, is a mark of hostility when one agent does not wish to share experiences with somebody whom he values negatively despite the fact that he does not expect any definite harm from him and even knows that he could draw some benefits from the communication. Avoidance of communication can coexist with practical interaction in impersonal matters. This happens, according to Znaniecki, in cases of race and class relations. He points particularly to relations between Jews and Christians. The second kind of hostility is actions which tend to *eliminate the attitudes* of the social object from the agent's sphere of valuation. This kind of hostility is called "aversion". Aversion implies that the agent, aware of some sentiments of the social object, evaluates them negatively as a psychological phenomenon. Sometimes both the agent and the social object appreciate the same value positively or negatively, but the sentiments on the part of social object provoke an aversion in the agent and make the value undesirable to him. Thirdly, there are actions

which tend to *frustrate activities* of the social object by counteracting them. It is here, according to Znaniecki, where the term "hostile fighting" is the most appropriate. Fourthly, there are actions deliberately *destroying* the social object's system of values not because of what he can do to the agent but because of what he has already done. Such a situation can be called "revenge" (1967: 569-573).

The problem of conflict was interesting for Znaniecki also in his "Cultural Sciences" of 1952. As in Georg Simmel, we read here, for instance, about situations when a collective conflict against a hostile group influences the group's solidarity. The most interesting conflicts, from this point of view, are religious ones (1971: 605). The problem of conflicts between cultural groups was a subject of Znaniecki's studies even earlier. It is visible not only in "Cultural Sciences" and in "Modern Nationalities" (of the same year) but also in his "Studia nad antagonizmem do obcych" (Studies of Antagonism to Strangers) of 1931. Let us look at the problem chronologically, without going into unnecessary details.

In "Studia ...", we find an interesting (and important in a somewhat different context) analysis of the nature of the relation between a social group and the "stranger". This is the problematic of relations between the group and the individual which is well known to us. In my opinion, we do not find here, unfortunately, significant, new, or more general ideas concerning this type of relation, but we read about unilateral and bilateral contacts, intentional and unintentional influences, about a contact between the agent and the social object and about the crossing of their own spheres of activity, and about contacts which appear based on common or divisible systems of values. We learn here that at least part of the value system must be common to the partners in order to have a contact. We find the important observation by Znaniecki that the human object, "who does not belong to the same social group to which the agent belongs, is experienced by the agent as a 'stranger', whenever he presents itself to him as actually or potentially entering by his action (intentionally or unintentionally) the space of this group, which is a closed system of social values" (1990: 303), but on the other hand, when the contact is based on common value systems, the same social object will not be treated as a "stranger" (1990: 309).

I have already written about antagonism to strangers as a relation between the individual and the social group. Znaniecki pays attention, however, to the fact that both the agent and the social object in this relation can be not only individuals but also social groups. In his opinion, the negative "intentions, the object of which is a strange group, differ from those, which refer to the individual considered to be strange, since they manifest in indifferent actions" (1990: 327-328). In the same place we read, however, that the difference, even if real, "became by many sociologists exaggerated and at the same time obscured" (1990: 328). We learn about these differences that they do not refer to the nature of action, that they can appear or not, and that the collective antagonism is sometimes less reflexive and more spontaneous than the individual antagonism, but on the other hand it "sometimes contains in the eyes of participants the character of objective ethical justification, a specific 'loftiness'" (1990: 328-329).

There is also an intermediate type between collective antagonism to an individual and antagonism to a collectivity. It is represented by situations in which "although antagonistic activity refers to one or a few individuals, but rather to them not so as to individual persons, but as representatives of a certain (ethnic, class) group" (1990: 328).

When we take into account the fact that antagonism can have an individual or a collective character, we can point out its four types, distinguishable only analytically. Firstly, we have antagonism in which the agent and social object are of a collective character. An example is a relation between a tribe, a sect, or a nation and another tribe, sect, or nation. Secondly, we have antagonism in which the agent is an individual and the object a collectivity. An example is hatred of an individual for a strange group by which the individual was, in his opinion, harmed. Thirdly, there is antagonism in which the agent is a collectivity and the object is an individual. Examples are the relation of villagers to a strange newcomer, of the ancient Greek aristocracy to the populist tyrant, and of Englishmen to Napoleon Bonaparte. The last, fifth type of antagonism is that between an individual agent and an individual object (1990: 330-331). We can note that antagonisms, as presented by Znaniecki, are not strictly speaking social relations, because we do not have here bilateral courses of actions. However, it was worthwhile to discuss them here, since in the scholar's opinion they are important bases of social relations. When he writes, for instance, about "collective defensive antagonism", he presents it as a non-reflexive antipathy to the meeting of strangers, as "an attempt to react against any trial of contact on the part of others" (1990: 337). Therefore, we have here a kind of bilateral and practical "collective intention". Similarly, we read about group prejudices (which cannot, obviously, be considered social relations) that they are not false judgements and unjustified evaluations resulting from inadequate knowledge of a strange group, but are active defensive intentions, directed against potential spiritual ties with the strange group. Group defensive antagonism, we read later, passes into "aggressive" antagonism, when the strange group acts in such a way as to suggest its attempt to break such defensiveness down (1990: 349-351).

In the 1931 essay "Sily spoleczne w walce o Pomorze" (Social Forces in the Conflict over Pomerania) we find an important thesis regarding concrete social relations. The author writes that with other conditions stable the expansive group always wins in its conflicts with the exclusive, closed group (1990: 380).

If we look, from the point of view of the theory of social relations, at the book quoted above, "Modern Nationalities", we find equally interesting ideas. Let me begin with an "editorial" issue – the arrangement of the material. Znaniecki discusses conflicts between nationalities earlier than the cooperation of societies with national cultures, even if the substantive importance seems to be the opposite in his theoretical system. He devotes nearly identical space to these issues. In the following analysis, I will briefly begin with the latter issue. Cooperation within nations, says Znaniecki, results from the necessity of defense

against an enemy (1990: 206). The scholar stresses cooperation between various nations in different areas of culture, but he links this cooperation with the universal intention of cultural expansion (1990: 208-209).

As in other works, in "Modern Nationalities" Znaniecki also does not present conflicts between nations as social relations, which is difficult to understand in the light of his most general theory of actions and of relations. The scholar says that sociologists should study "relations" occurring between nations in the times preceding the outbreak of mutual hostilities (1990: 166). He is of the opinion that all nations intend to expand (which differentiates them from, for instance, tribes or rural communities). Expansion can be of a creative character, by means of the development or enriching of national culture, or of a populational character, by means of gaining new members out of those people who, according to ethnic criteria, belong to the national group but were not aware of this fact. Expansion itself does not have to raise conflicts as understood (but barely mentioned) by Znaniecki. Conflict occurs only in situations when a given nation intentionally expands at the cost of another nation or when expansion of one nation is an obstacle to the expansion of another nation (1990: 166-168). This kind of expansionist intention is called "aggression". It is not clear if both the above conditions formulated by Znaniecki must be met; it is not clear if conflict can be said tooccur when a nation expands unintentionally; it is not clear if it occurs when expansion of one nation is not an obstacle to the expansion of another. It seems to me that conflict occurs, for Znaniecki, only when both groups undertake overt actions directed against each other. Only in this sense, in my opinion, does expansion or aggression not have to be considered a conflict.

There are, in Znaniecki, four types of aggressive expansion. It has, firstly, a geographical character, when group members migrate to other territories on which the native population still lives. The resistance of the latter will be a source of conflict. Separatism of both groups is not conflict, but it makes its occurrence possible. Aggressive expansion can be, secondly, described as economic, when it depends on the exploitation of the property and work of another group. Znaniecki discusses examples of such exploitation with the help of coercion, but he is of the opinion that it can also occur without coercion. What is called in other literature colonialism and neo-colonialism are examples given by Znaniecki. Conflict occurs when the nation subordinated by expansion realizes this and becomes united in its active intention to alter this state of affairs. Aggressive expansion can be, thirdly, of an assimilationist character. This is actually a continuation of population expansion. The author means here assimilation by a nation of a population which, according to ethnic criteria, does not belong to this nation. As a result of this expansion, resistance and conflict can occur. Conflict is also possible when two different nations wish to assimilate a population which does not belong to either of them. Very important, in my opinion, is Znaniecki's idea that serious conflicts occur when a group culturally assimilates another group but does not want to allow it to take advantage of all the privileges to which the members of the assimilating group are entitled. Aggressive expansion can be, finally, of an ideological character, when one nation wants to draw to its side the cultural leaders of other nations

to win them over to its own ideas. Here, too, conflicts can occur (1990: 168-195.

I will move now to those Znaniecki's ideas regarding social relations, which were presented in the large book "Social Relations and Social Roles" posthumously published in1965. From the point of view presented at the beginning of this article, that is from the point of view of the analysis of inter-group relations of various characters, "Social Relations and Social Roles" seems to me much less useful than the books discussed above. Although in the opening fragments we read a suggestion that "sociology is a science of human relations or social relations, in the sense of relations between interacting human individuals or groups" and that there are two basic kind of interaction -- cooperation and conflict (1965: 15-17; see also 19, 85) -- soon after these sentences we read that social relations are first and foremost interactions between individuals and that they are of a cooperative character. Znaniecki is interested mostly in relations within social collectivities and much less in relations between collectivities.

As the above citation shows, the concept of social relation is introduced here by means of the concept of interaction. Therefore, we have to look at the discussion of interaction. "When social interaction between two individuals occur, usually one of them, A, initiates it by performing asocial action intended to influence another, B; then B 'reacts', i.e., performs an action in consequence of A's action. Sometimes each of them independently starts a social action bearing upon the other, and each reacts to the other's action [...]. In any case, the connection between a particular social action and the reaction to it is an elementary fact of social interaction, though it may also be a component of a more or less complex system" (1965: 86). It seems to me that for Znaniecki of this period, as in earlier periods, interaction is a social relation when it is permanent, organized, and normatively regulated.

Znaniecki is of the opinion that social thinkers have devoted more attention to social conflict than to social cooperation. In modern times, however, they might find objective reasons for the priority of cooperation, since the latter is essential for the very existence of human collectivity. "Moreover, investigation of the origin of interindividual conflicts indicates that many of them are dues to external influences which disturb such cooperation as already existed, while intergroup conflict presupposes close cooperation within each conflicting group. This means that, without adequate knowledge of social cooperation, no scientific generalizations about social conflict are possible". Therefore investigations of social cooperation is the primary task of sociology, and investigation of social conflict is its secondary task (1965: 17-18).

Let us return to the characteristics of social relations, of cooperation, and of conflicts. As I have already mentioned, Znaniecki pays much attention in "Social Relations and Social Roles" to the cooperative relations in communities. He is aware of the fact that in each community there is a lot of conflicts which interfere with the normatively regulated course of social relations. "Such conflicts have a disorganizing influence [...] on social relations as organized systems .." (1965: 91-92). Again, we can see

17

that conflicts are not social relations. The author devotes to them much attention in the chapter on social relations in communities, and in the chapter on the impact of social conflicts on social relations. He says that "within certain relations some conflicting interaction is not only considered compatible with positive valuation of the individuals involved, but is required by the cultural pattern of the relation, as in competitive companionate play – sports, games of chance, and intellectual contests" (1965: 92). Conflict itself can be based on some standards and norms which are common to its parties. Conflicts do not have to engender disorganization. They can be anticipated by leaders, who cooperate to check or counteract them. As a result, they can bring the development of new standards and norms regulating social interactions (1965: 93-94). This idea is similar to the well known discussion by Georg Simmel at the turn of the 20th century about the positive functions of social conflict (see, e.g., Simmel 1964).

In "Social Relations and Social Roles", Znaniecki intended (which is very clear in Chapter Four) to present a general typology of all possible social relations, but he had no time to do it. He presents, however, his own conclusions of his discussion. He says that social relations within communities are in fact permanent social processes. All the time new social relations emerge, since newcomers enter communities, and individuals already there become partners in relations in which they earlier did not participate; former social relations come to an end. Moreover, in the course of this "evolution" new patterns of relations cross the communities' borders and reach neighboring groups.

Summary

The classic, analytical concepts of the social relation which were presented in this article seem to me only partly useful for the analysis of ethnic, racial, industrial, and international problems. These concepts are first and foremost systems of ideas referring to interactions within social collectivities, and not between them. To the extent to which the problems mentioned above occur within collectivities (and, obviously, we usually can find a social system that is an umbrella "covering" them), these theoretical models can be useful. To the extent to which we have to do with issues between collectivities and when it is not reasonable to look for an "umbrella" system, it is more difficult to take advantage of them.

In the declarations of the authors Max Weber and Florian Znaniecki the most important partners of social relations are individuals and not social groups. The concept of the social relation was introduced by both scholars first of all by means of the concept of individual social action. What is common to Weber and Znaniecki (I mentioned the differences earlier in this text) is the concept of intentionality and the subjective sense of action. The actor/agent is mostly an individual person. However, in Max Weber the actor can be also a plurality of similar (from a given point of view) individuals or even collective bodies like states, communities, etc., consisting of (in a way difficult to reconstruct) individual actions having a subjective sense. In Florian Znaniecki, social actions are always directed toward individuals or groups and are

intended to modify the attitudes of their social objects. The social object can be the subject of another action and the other way around. Collective action can also be conceptualized, and it is a synthesis of individual social actions which rests, as it seems to me, either on the simultaneous action of all members of the group or on the division of labor between the members or, finally, on the action of the authorized representatives of the groups. Collective action in the third case is similar to Weber's idea of action performed by the "administrative staff" of a social group.

In Max Weber, a social relation takes place when the social actions of a number of people are oriented toward each other in such a way that there is a chance that the social action of one actor will be met by the reaction of the other. There can be more than two partners in a social relation (although the author writes most of the time about two partners and does not explain how to conceptualize the relation if there are more partners). According to Weber, social relations do not have to consist in cooperation. Potentially we have here the base for investigation of various kinds of relations (cooperation but also conflict; within a social entity or between social entities) between various partners, but the German scholar limits himself to suggestions regarding social relations within communities or associations. Social relations are enacted, in Weber's model, first and foremost between individual partners, but he allows the possibility of relations between collective bodies like states, political parties, economic organizations or churches. It is not clear, however, how he would like to conceptualize these relations. Partners in a social relation do not have to accept the same definition of situation; that would be only a limiting case of the relation. Social relations in Weber's model can be typologized in various ways. In the present article the following typologies were presented: permanent or fleeting; organized or unorganized; keeping their particular sense all the time or changing the subjective sense; emerging spontaneously or agreed upon; communal, associative, or conflictual; open or closed.

In Florian Znaniecki, social relations are systems of actions in which each partner is a subject of one course of actions and object of the second course of actions, and each of these actions is a *ratio* for the second. Relations can occur between individual and individual, group and group, or between an individual and a group. Relations do not have to be symmetrical in the sense that the influences of partners upon each other do not have to be equal. Social relations are always relatively stable and subject to normative regulation. Social relations are, in this conceptualization, subsystems of a larger whole, even if they are inter-group relations. We find here, however, the important idea of relations between one group and a strange group, and between a group and a strange individual. The opposition between individuals, between groups, or between individuals and groups is always based on a common value system. Znaniecki analyzes in detail various situations of conflict and hostility between partners and devotes a lot of space to them, but in his conceptualization they do not constitute social relations. Social relations seem to be here always of a "positive" character. Florian Znanicki discusses four types of antagonism, but again it does not

seem to me that, literally speaking, they are social relations in this conceptualization. They seem to be rather mental aspects of not very clear ties between individual and collective partners. When the author writes about aggressive expansion, which is typologized by him and elaborated in detail, he does not present it as a social relation.

Despite the initial stress on the individual action as the basic social system, in Znaniecki's sociology of nationalities and in his sociology of culture we find an analysis of collective action, and, what follows, collective relations. In spite of the fact that the Polish-American scholar declared that social relations are only "positive" systems of actions, in fact he investigated in an interesting way many aspects of conflicts between cultural groups.

We can ask here where to locate the ideas presented above on the continuum "individualism-holism" and continuum "micro-macro" sociology. Weber's model, particularly in his own declarations, is very individualistic, although he did not deny the real existence of collective entities. Znaniecki's theory is rather holistic. Despite the stress on the significance of individual social action, the scholar showed clearly that this was itself a social system. The ideas of both scholars overcome, in my opinion (or perhaps ignore), the distinction between the macro and micro spheres of social life. The stress is put on individual relations, but examples are given most of the time from such social entities as the family, churches, local communities, and nation-states. I did not see here any methodological discussion of the problem of distinction between micro and macro. Both models have, in my opinion, a relational character (see Ritzer and Gindoff 1992, Emirbayer 1997).

If we follow *expressis verbis* the individualistic aspects of Weber's model and the analytical aspects of Znaniecki's theory, it would be difficult to base empirical investigations of social relations as presented at the beginning of this article on them. The situation changes when we depart from the classics' ways of construction of the concepts of social relation and concentrate on the implication of the concept presented by the same authors. Fortunately, the research practices of both scholars encourage us to abandon a literal interpretation of their models. They present a variety of interesting typologies of social relations and social objects between which these relations can exist.

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