

INTRODUCTION

"Between Institutions and Everyday Life" - such was the name of the Conference organized in November 1987. Its participants were Finnish sociologists from the University of Tampere and Polish sociologists from the University of Lodz. The Conference was to offer an opportunity for presentation of research problems and approaches in both Universities, and give an insight into peculiar ties between institutions and everyday life.

It seems equally justified to speak about ties and about an antagonism.

Institutions mean stable rules of activity aimed at satisfaction of definite social needs. Such most general definition will not suffice to show the theoretical and methodological wealth of studies on institutions in which we live. It is usually believed that the main characteristic of institutions and of an institutional approach is a formal character of rules resulting from their permanence and from the contemporary trend to register and legalize the rules of social life. This is closely related with studies concerning the other side of the problem, i.e. very constant customary rules as well as all modes of non- and extra-institutional activities.

Everyday life as an important sociological category belongs to ethnomethodology. With this category there are also connected key call-words such as social actor, social practices transcending the instrumental logic of institutions, interpretation of everyday life with its ways of interaction and search for sense in situations which create an environment of these social actors. Sociologists being observers of everyday life are also its participants. And this prompts both methods of observation and interpretation.

The perspective of everyday life seems to be especially useful for investigation of the above mentioned "other" side of social institutions. That quite often happens, but it not often serves the "encounter" of analyses, because the research approach and the theory of choice of research problem tend to differ. There appear however various attempts at interpretations between institutions with their formal and functional approach and the classical phenomenological approach to everyday life.

The texts contained in this collection constitute more or less deliberate attempts of this kind. Several research areas could be distinguished here.

The first of them deals with institutions of work and everyday experience. M. Czyżewski and K. Konecki suggest a new methodological approach, which results just from investigations of everyday life. In turn, W. Jaśkiewicz and H. Melin show the institution of work and activists of trade union organization. The second research trend is focussed on life cycle and identity. It is represented by the Finnish texts dealing with identity of students, problems of elderly and dying in hospitals people. There have been presented institutional frames, in which social identities are shaped and undergo changes, in which the meaning of social situations and actions is shaped. It could be added that M. Tolkki-Nikkonen presents results of comparative studies in relation to Z. Bokszański's study of identity of Polish students. Further articles are devoted to community ties developed within the framework of institutions. These are social ties in a village and ties among teachers in a school. M. Żelazo's article sheds light on the scope of our everyday involvement in various institutions. The fourth part of the book contains deliberations dealing with institutional frames of communication and experience of an individual. Thus, D. Duraj focusses her attention on the way in which the daily "Trybuna Ludu" (an organ of the Polish United Workers Party) presents industrial reality. In turn, J. Przybyłowska and K. Kistelski point at an institutional context of sociological studies based on communication. The collection ends with I. Rajanti's essay on social space in an individual's experience.

The articles contained in this collection are an outcome of

research experience. For their most part they present results, sometimes projects. Unfortunately, we cannot present the course of the conference discussion. It would show also the scope of a possible encounter "between" institutions and everyday life, because the Conference was, first of all, a meeting of researchers with different orientations and from different countries, a meeting in which the participants were talking about society and people with one another and not impersonally. In the life of research institutions a direct contact of researchers plays an important role and deserves to be consolidated.