

and conflicts, may have been a decisive factor in the regional crisis of the Late Bronze Age.

As I mentioned at the beginning, Breuer does foreshadow one fundamental criticism of the kind that strikes at the very core of Weber's sociology of domination. This happens in the course of a chapter devoted to ancient Egypt, a civilization with an exceptionally long and continuous history. But there were also significant shifts and innovations within its framework, and it is logical to raise the question whether traditional domination replaced the original charismatic pattern. If I am not mistaken, Breuer tends towards a positive answer, but realizes that Weber's typology does not provide a sufficient reason to defend it. As he writes, Weber envisaged the transformation of everyday routines into custom, tradition and ethos; Breuer objects that "an ethos never emerges from repetition and mimesis, only from reflection, distance and explication" (p. 257).¹ This is a far-reaching concession from an author otherwise very inclined to stay the Weberian course, and we should at least note the most obvious implications. Reflection, distance and explication were at work in all the great historical traditions, and they produced very different conceptions of legitimate power; it may even be questionable whether the notion of legitimacy is uniformly applicable. It is not at all clear or plausible that a general conception of traditional legitimacy would make sense. As Breuer notes, the Weberian concept won't do, and neither he nor anybody else has produced an acceptable alternative. The relationship to the sacred is certainly a recurrent theme, but its various articulations are worlds apart (it is enough to think of the Chinese mandate of heaven, the Islamic caliphate, and the medieval Western Christian notion of the king's two bodies). Moreover, a general model of sacral legitimacy would lump these traditions together with archaic civilizations. And there is a further (for our purposes final) comment to add. If reflection, distance and explication were active in premodern traditions, they were doubly so in the modern era. Taking

that as a cue, it quickly becomes clear that the notion of legal-rational domination is far too narrow and covers only one aspect of the problematic that has figured in modern traditions of reflection and debate on the legitimacy of power. We need a broader framework, but here I can only suggest that Shmuel Eisenstadt's bipolar conception of democracy, constitutional and participative, and his analysis of the paradoxes resulting from this combination might prove more useful than the standard Weberian approach. It should be added that both the constitutional and the participative pole can appear in extreme and mutually estranged forms that amount to a negation of democracy. All this is beyond the scope of a review. But we seem to have reached a point where a radical reconstruction of Weber's sociology of domination becomes urgent.

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Marcin Kula: *Kartki z socjologii historycznej*. Warsaw: Scholar, 2014, 253 pages

In 2014 Marcin Kula, a rigorous Polish historian and historical sociologist well known to readers of "Historical Sociology" had already published three books with the term "historical sociology" in their titles. The first one was *Kartki z socjologii historycznej* ("Pages from Historical Sociology"), published by Scholar, a reputable Warsaw publishing house. The second and the third are published versions of his lectures in historical sociology, entitled *Trzeba pracować i produkować. Wykłady z socjologii historycznej* ("It is Necessary to Work and Produce. Lectures in Historical Sociology") and *Trzeba mieć*

¹ I take the liberty to note that I argued along similar lines in an essay on Max Weber [Arnason 2012].

pieniądze (“It is Necessary to Have Money”), co-published by the Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego and Instytut Studiów Iberyjskich i Iberoamerykańskich UW. What makes the books interesting is the way in which the author uses the very notion of “historical sociology”, a term that does not often appear in the titles of Polish scholarly books. When it does, the respective publications deal at most with certain concepts of historical sociology, and rarely offer studies in it.

Here I would like to deal only with the former book, which – as the title suggests – is a collection of papers that have been previously published elsewhere. It opens with a brief introduction which explains the author’s concept of historical sociology. For him historical sociology is a meeting place of history and sociology and an alternative (or rather an indispensable supplement) to the historiography that concentrates on sources in order to reconstruct “what really happened”. Hence, it deals with broader research issues, attempting to acquire knowledge that reaches beyond the phenomena being studied (p. 8). Although such a disciplinary program may seem obvious, it is not at all clear whether any social science is able to do accomplish this. In my personal opinion the essential service that history may offer to sociology is a clear demarcation of spatial and temporal limits of analysis – ergo, the necessity to narrow the range of possible generalizations. Thus, Kula’s idea of historical sociology is probably more challenging than it looks, and one may wonder to what extent the author himself is really ready to follow it ...

Apart from the introduction the book contains seventeen, mostly short, papers on a wide range of topics, from individual social and historical phenomena to more general ideas. They do not seem to be arranged in any particular order, neither by the subject material, nor by chronology of writing. Two texts concern migration – the opening one, entitled “Nations and migrations”, and the fifth one, dealing with various rulers’ attempts to limit their populations’ international contacts. The paper on factors that influence spatial organization of cities is supplemented by the essay on moving of capital

cities, while the more general piece on students as rebels – by the paper on the Polish “March” events of 1968. Other texts deal with such subjects as Polish rock music, sport (especially great international sport events), violence in history, and the feeling of fear (including public fears). The second paper in the collection is an essay on work and national stereotypes related to it, while the fifth one deals with the idea of modernization and modernization programs in Polish history. A thirty page essay deals with the twentieth century as the supposed age of thinking people. For a student of nationalism the paper entitled “Is national culture national?” may appear interesting. Two of the texts seem more personal, one containing a list of issues for a possible book on Marshal Piłsudski (that the author does not intend to write himself), and a three page reflection on the Polish cult of Pope John Paul II. Interestingly the collection contains one text already familiar to “Historical Sociology” readers – a variation of the paper on the Communist sociotechnics published in the 2/2011 issue.

To assess such a wide-ranging collection of papers is by no means an easy task, especially when they are – as in case of the Kula’s book – impressionistic essays rather than systematic studies. Of course, certain criteria apply even to essays, while the brief yet programmatic introduction enables us to pose the question whether the author managed to follow the approach he proposed.

The general impression after reading the essay is mostly positive. One must appreciate the author’s erudition and his broad yet detailed knowledge on such distant subject as Polish political life during the interwar period or urban development, both in Europe and overseas. The most interesting texts seem to be those dealing with topics best suited for the essayistic form, such as the reflection on the idea of modernization, or suggestions for a possible book on Piłsudski, which exemplify Kula’s qualities as a remarkable figure of Polish intellectual life – his ability to see things ignored by the dominant (i.e. right-wing and nationalist) perspective and his disregard for nationalist mythology. On the other hand, sometimes – as in the case of the text on rock music – Kula seems to be reaching

the very limits of his professional expertise. All in all, as a collection of historical (I would not dare to say: historical-sociological) essays the book is indeed attractive and worth reading.

The question of the actual relation of the essays to historical sociology and in particular to the ambitious program outlined in the introduction is quite another matter. In my opinion the answer to it is positive in the case of those papers that concentrate on concepts and ideas, such as the already mentioned pieces on the idea of modernization. Those dealing with “harder” phenomena, such as migration and urban development still offer interesting, sociologically relevant observations, and often illuminating impressions. But do they add to more general knowledge, as the author’s concept of historical sociology suggests? In my opinion in order to offer sociologically relevant knowledge on those “harder” phenomena one should use precise conceptual instruments and employ careful, disciplined analysis. An example of a text in which the author’s approach turns out to be counterproductive is the essay on national culture. The very idea of “national culture” purposefully conflates a few different concepts: the word “culture” as a symbol of usually abstract and rarely well-defined spiritual values, culture as production and consumption of art (mostly perceived as a supposed transmitter of the former), as well as culture as a medium of communication. In the case of academic writings they all blend with the all-embracing, anthropological concept of culture typical for mid-twentieth century cultural anthropology. As a result, any serious attempt to deal with the national culture issue must start (and may probably end) with disassembling the concept. Otherwise – as in case of Kula’s essay – it turns into an idle presentation of examples that prove the obvious fact that the term “national culture” is a mere political symbol. Using examples from various epochs and region, disregarding temporal and geographical diversity and without taking into account their specific social contexts, which appears in some of the papers, including those on capital cities movements or migrations, was by no means problematical in their original publication or conference context. I have the

impression that some conceptual refinement would turn the reflection on the twentieth century as an age of thinking people into an entirely different text too. Still, what seemed appropriate in individual texts, published individually, among more conventional studies in scholarly journals or conference proceedings, looks much more problematic in a collection of essays entitled “Pages from Historical Sociology” – even when the reader employs a less ambitious idea of historical sociology as a social science discipline that respects particular historical contexts of the studied subjects and realizes the spatial and temporal limits of its own findings.

All in all, Kula’s book forms a fine collection of well written and insightful historical essays, full of novel facts and observations, often offering the readers interesting and sometimes not at all obvious thoughts and insights. On the other hand its title seems to be to some extent misleading, and the readers do not get what they are expecting. This is not because “Pages from Historical Sociology” are not sociological enough, but rather because some of the topics would better serve a more intellectual discipline and more analytical approach – at least when they are dealt with not in dispersed papers, but in one, more or less coherent book.

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Jan Čermák: *Kalevala Eliase Lönnrota a Josefa Holečka v moderní kritické perspektivě*. Prague: Academia, 2014, 1116 pages

During the last two decades science has entered into a wide interdisciplinary – one could almost say post-disciplinary – phase. Many topics of study form part of more than one scientific discipline, leading to a differentiation in the original sciences. The recently reviewed edition of *The Kalevala* can be placed not only at the intersection between literary science and folklore, but also the sociology of literature, or possibly historical sociology of text. Other areas that could be considered are general narratology or the sociology of knowledge (in this case