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HOLMWOOD, J.: SOCIOLOGIE, VEŘEJNOST, POLITIKA

Filosofia, Praha, 208 p.

The presented publication of 208 pages from the original English version was translated into Czech by Jan Balon. John Holmwood has long been involved in sociology, and the title builds on the previous work of a professor of sociology at the University of Nottingham. His work is generally focused on various aspects of the social science discipline, which he has represented for many years. He understood sociology in his previous work from the point of view of its formation's specific problems, through the general problems of democracy, expert understanding, and the public role of science. The publication from 2019 entitled "Sociológia, verejnosť, politika"¹ ("Sociology, public, politics") is a positive attempt to grasp the modern perception of sociology from the perspective of an expert from real long-term practice. The author's creativity is reflected in systematic thinking on the relationship between sociology as a science and the public, which is a daily part of the scientific discipline itself. The originality of the publication lies in the fact that it is coherently connected both the theoretical side of grasping the issue and the modern form reflecting the current "perception of the world", which gives the reader a comprehensive picture of current issues in sociology from both a theoretical and practical level. The author also evokes a better knowledge of the issue and more precise argumentation for the reader because the work makes it possible to understand the topic to the maximum extent with a link to modern approaches. The publication is divided into two main sections. The first, entitled "Teória, koncepty, argumenty"¹ ("Theory, Concepts, Arguments"), consists of three chapters and presents approximately 104 pages of text. The second section entitled "Inštitúcia, hierarchia, politiky" ("Institution, hierarchy, policies") consists of two chapters with a total of about 50 pages of text. The book's introduction is sufficiently explained in terms of content and presents 18 pages of text, where the author precisely introduces the reader to the issue and discusses essential concepts such as ideas, institutions, frameworks of sociological consciousness, etc. The publication's positive aspect is an exact list of literature, especially the factual and name

¹ The text of the review uses the Slovak translation of the titles of the particular publication chapters due to the text language's clarity and uniformity.

register, directly directing the reader through the most frequent terms and names to the text's parts. It can be argued that the final summary or conclusion is found only in chapter no. 4 and chapter no. 5. Chapters 1, 2 and 3 could also have a brief summary that would select the first section of the present book's essential ideas.

Thus, the only section no. 2 has been wrapped up in this manner. On the contrary, a clear addition of factual data to the text can be evaluated positively, given below the text in footnotes, which supplement the text with sources or real facts from practice on various examples. There are 454 of them in the text, which is an above-average number and the reader will learn much more, while the footnotes do not disrupt the structure and impression of the main text of individual sections and chapters.

The first section of the book, composed of three main chapters, deals mainly with texts focused on developing sociological thinking. From the theoretical point of view, the author discusses reflection, forms of action, and the structure of the public's sociological behavior. It also focuses on the more negative forms resulting from society's behavior, such as radicalism, power, or resistance. The first section is closed by J. Holmwood with a current argumentation problem resulting from theoretical experience about the issue, also about the form of the audience, which is given sufficient attention in modern sociology and the section ends with the author's reflections on the critique of previous research and the future direction of knowledge about sociology.

The second section of the book follows on from the first because the author focuses on a critical interpretation of the current academic structure changes, where he puts the academic environment at the forefront. It also shows the importance of naming current problems that sociology suffers from and links the importance of the scientific discipline itself, where the author realizes that not only the theoretical need to name the problems of society but sociology can realistically help and can better propose changes in the long run which should lead to a practical solution to the identified issues. Overall, the publication is coherently linked from the theoretical level through modern practice and the possible future development of a democratic society, politics and the public.

Overall, the book is a mixture of English original texts by J. Holmwood and each chapter is an expanded version of existing articles supplemented by facts and current issues, which the author seems to discuss with the reader while leaving room for his understanding of the issue.

The publication's content deals with two levels, where the author pays attention to key concepts and sociological arguments, consider the context of past and modern perception of sociology, and how future tendencies may develop. Therefore, in the first part of the book „Sociológia, verejnosť, politika“ (“Sociology, Public, Politics”), J. Holmwood discusses the issues of the structure and representation of power, partnerships, public involvement and criticism. The second

level is a rather critical (but not negative, but rather constructive) formulation of problematic aspects that practice brings. In the second part, the author raises questions about the changing systems of university education, language changes, and professional responsibility up to a kind of audit of universities linked to their marketing.

According to the author, the fear of the future development of university education has two aspects. One is related to the academic environment's internal structure; the other concern is associated with parallel changes in the wider society. The modern audience (society) is more critical and, according to the author, it also results from the changes brought by the modern age, where everyone's opinion is essential. The author discusses even these issues because social changes and times also change the character of sociology itself, which, as such, deals with the public in theoretical or practical terms. The author attaches importance to empirical studies, which mainly depict a real picture of current problems, which solves, whether the academic environment and society as a whole.

The essential question of the publication is how to grasp the topic of power holders with their recipients. As societies change, authorities come under increasing pressure. According to the author, the university environment is also marked by balancing the changes and mechanisms between those in power and those in the university environment without direct decision-making powers. These "power relations" are a reflection not only in the academic environment but also in society. In his essays (which are supplemented in individual chapters), J. Holmwood discusses problems that arise with different understandings of specific situations from different society subjects. Every actor in society perceives the problem from many perspectives, how individuals develop, what their experience, knowledge, etc. it also shapes social tendencies when individuals merge into larger units. The author critically considers the influence in terms of sociology not only of the theoretical level of understanding of society, the public and individual specific public policies but also how practice changes based on the actions of individual segments of society. In each society, according to the author, the "domains of the social self", which are characteristic of specific segments of the public, e.g., in university education. These sociology concepts are already mentioned in many works of other sociologists, with whom J. Holmwood seems to discuss through individual chapters with a link to modern practice and the future development of social events. The author is also aware of the strong connection between the public and the state and the market, where these two variables constantly affect the creation of society's views, the degree of their involvement and the real creation of individual policies. In university education, J. Holmwood still plays a key role for universities in modern democracies. They are institutions that combine modern knowledge with links to current needs and problems in society and help propose adequate solutions in democratic regimes. The author also discusses the independence,

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functioning of public or private education, which shapes the picture of a healthy public sphere's functioning. According to the author, today's mass education is only a continuous connection to society's needs, which sociology has been solving for decades. The university environment is becoming more and more professional; the author discusses how in the past, whether in the 50s or 70s of the 20th century, sociology perceived social problems and how it is nowadays. The future of sociology and democracy as such, at the end of the publication, connects J. Holmwood to the neoliberal perception of society and raises questions about the possible developments of sociology and democracy itself. From this perspective, an extended version of the publication can be expected in the future, which refutes or confirms the author's ideas. The publication is an overall positive example of how modern social science disciplines are evolving and raises questions about both past understanding of the issue and the creation of future trends that can fundamentally affect the very understanding of scientific disciplines such as sociology.

The presented book thus allows the reader to understand a relatively complex issue, which can be understood from different perspectives and can be an inspiration for studying other social science disciplines, not just the subject of sociology.

Barbora Blašková
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius,
Bučianska 4/A, 917 01 Trnava, Slovakia
blaskovabaska@gmail.com