

**THE POLISH PEASANT IN  
EUROPE AND AMERICA;  
MONOGRAPH OF AN  
IMMIGRANT GROUP**

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The Polish Peasant in Europe and America; Monograph of an Immigrant Group by William I. Thomas & Florjan Znaniecki

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**WILLIAM I. THOMAS & FLORJAN ZNANIECKI**

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**THE POLISH PEASANT  
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MONOGRAPH OF AN IMMIGRANT GROUP

*By*  
**WILLIAM I. THOMAS**  
*and*  
**FLORIAN ZNANIECKI**

VOL. V  
ORGANIZATION AND DISORGANIZATION  
IN AMERICA



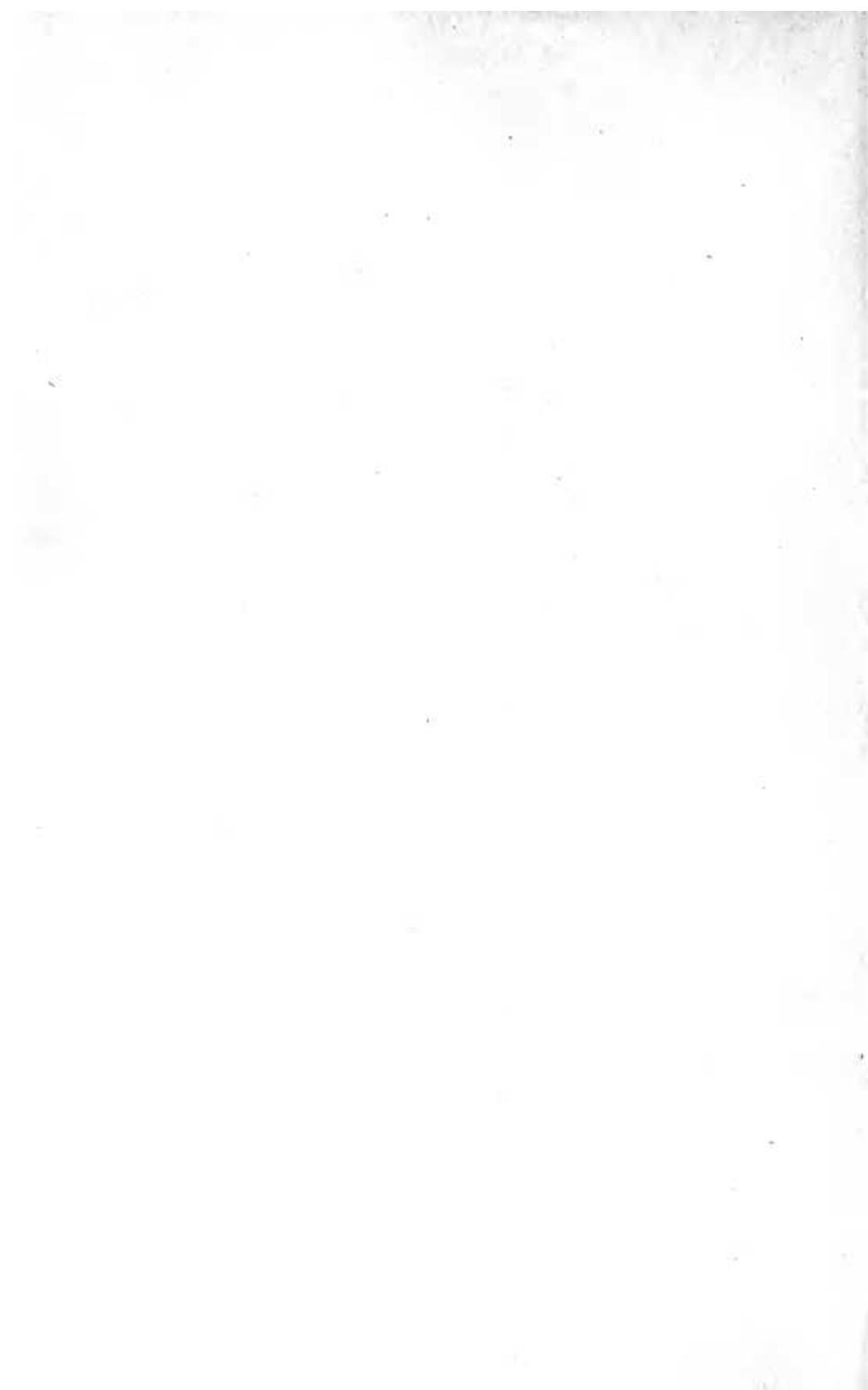
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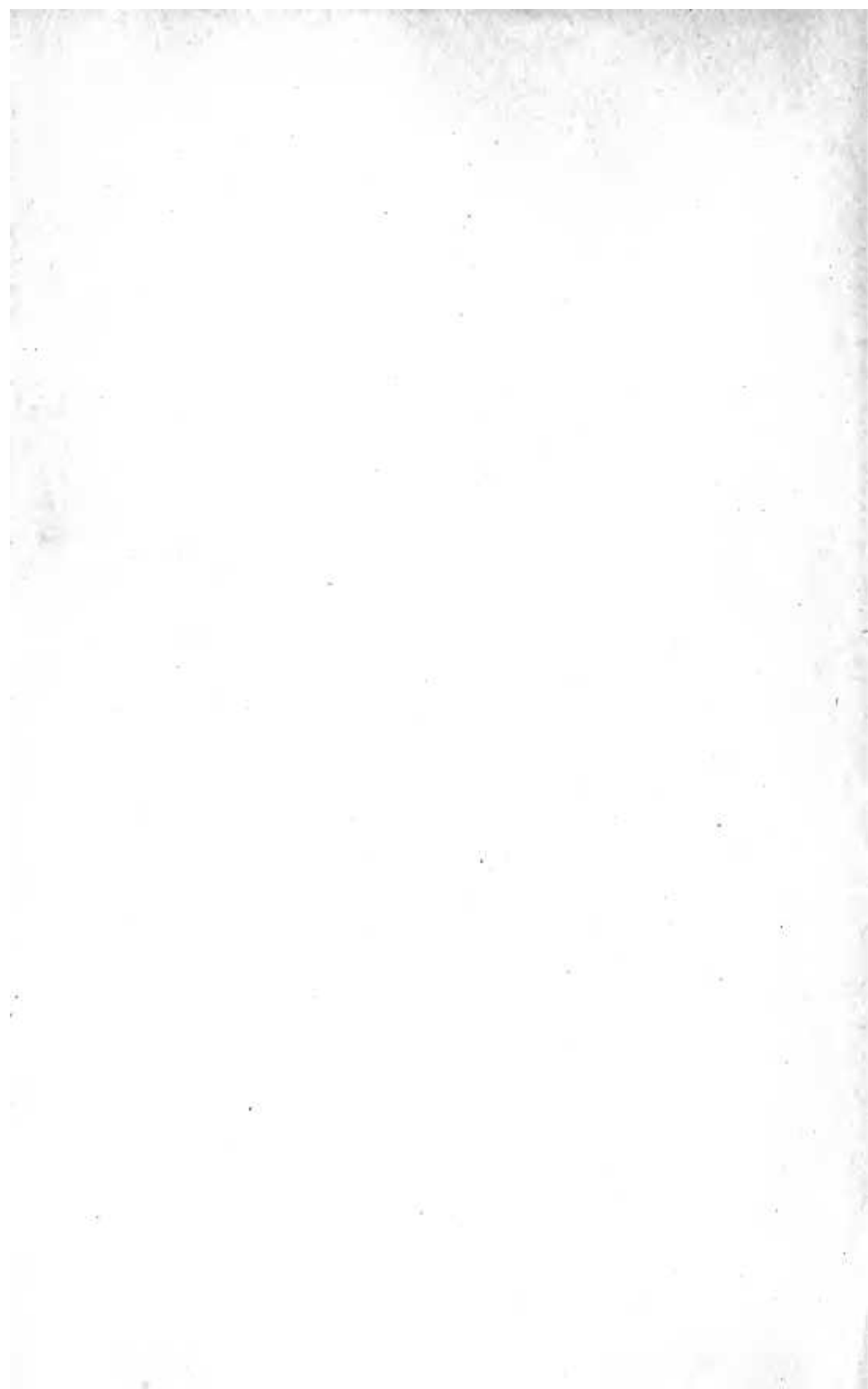
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PART III  
ORGANIZATION AND DISORGANIZATION  
IN AMERICA





## INTRODUCTION

The preceding parts of this work, though far from exhaustive, give a general outline of the psychology and organization of the peasant communities in Poland and of the evolution by which these communities, formerly almost isolated, became integral parts of the Polish national body. We have found that, except for the higher forms of cultural productivity (literature, art, science, large-scale industry and commerce) in which the peasant class did not appreciably participate and for the maintenance and development of a state system, of which Poland was deprived, our study has involved nearly all the sociological problems which can be raised with reference to a concrete, ethnically homogeneous society which has occupied a certain territory for many generations and come into the possession of a set of social values either originally produced or completely assimilated during its historical existence.

But during the last three-quarters of a century, numerous isolated components of the peasant (and lower city) class—individuals, marriage groups, sometimes fragments of large families and primary communities—have been leaving their original milieu and settling in America, intentionally or accidentally grouping themselves into colonies of various sizes scattered over the territory of an ethnically and culturally different society. The evolution of these fragments separated from their social whole presents a series of new problems, in-

teresting not only from the practical standpoint of the relation of the immigrants to American society but also in view of their general sociological significance.

The situation is really much more complicated than most of the popular American literature concerning immigration and Americanization sees it. It would seem *a priori* and it is generally assumed that the main problems concerning the immigrants can be stated in terms of individual assimilation or non-assimilation. Since the immigrant is no longer a member of the society from which he came, since he lives in the midst of American society, is connected with it by economic bonds and dependent on its institutions, the only line of evolution left to him seems to be the one leading to a gradual substitution in his consciousness of American cultural values for Polish cultural values and of attitudes adapted to his American environment for the attitudes brought over from the old country. This substitution may be slower or faster and various factors—among others living in racial groups—may influence its pace; but the immigrant (or the immigrant's descendant) is considered as still a Pole in traditions and attitudes, or already an American, or somewhere on the way from Polonism to Americanism, and it is supposed that the essential thing to be studied in relation to him is, how he makes this passage.

But in fact, if we look at the Poles in America not from the standpoint of Polish or American national interests but from that of an objective sociological inquiry, we find that the problem of individual assimilation is at present an entirely secondary and unimportant issue. Of course there have been many Poles—a few of the first, many more of the second generation—who have become individually absorbed in American society and