

## *From the Editors* |

This is the second issue of *Societas/Communitas* dedicated to a selection of key problems in sociology of law. The previous one (1(7)2009), which commemorated Leon Petrażycki (1867-1931) and Adam Podgórecki (1925-1998), investigated the intellectual legacy of Leon Petrażycki, one of the most original thinkers in theory of law and, in the words of Adam Podgórecki, the unrecognized founder of sociology of law. The present one focuses on the future of this discipline, the term “discipline” itself being controversial in our times of acknowledged porosity of borders and fluidity of concepts. More than a dozen of senior and junior sociologists of law, as well as academicians active under other banners but dealing with the law sociologically or anthropologically, were asked to present their views. With this collection of papers in mind, they were invited to the anniversary celebrations of the Chair of Sociology and Anthropology of Custom and Law at the Institute of Applied Social Sciences at the University of Warsaw where for two days academic debates took place. The written record thereof, published here after being edited by the contributors, is preceded by the keynote speech by one of the outstanding contemporary sociologists of law, Roger Cotterrell. Both his lecture and the following debates were multifaceted. Two observations nonetheless appear certain. Firstly, neither sociology in general nor sociology of law in particular will remain the same after the current profound transformations in the social life, slowly reflected in the academic thinking. Secondly, the law as such is more and more open beyond the national and professional borders, and its social features are increasingly being acknowledged.

The second part of this publication consists of reports prepared for the 2009 Tokyo Conference on Traffic Accidents and Divorce, representing two opposites in terms of the use of courts. The conference aimed at verifying, in international comparative research, T. Kawashima’s theory of Japanese conciliatory dispute culture. His argument seems to assume that legal attitudes evolve into legal behaviour. In the research by Masayuki Murayama et al. however, it was established that individuals tend to seek solutions, and they actively respond to circumstances in trying to find them. Traffic accidents still only rarely end in court, but – as demonstrated by Tomohiko Maeda – the Japanese do in fact take this step when they find it necessary. The same may be said about Poles, as pointed out by Jacek Kurczewski in the conclusion to his study of disputes related to car accidents. Tejiko Tamaki, Mavis

Maclean, Marijke ter Voert and Małgorzata Fuszara describe the divorce process, using statistics as well as qualitative evidence with reference to Japan, England and Wales, the Netherlands and Poland.

The third part contains mainly the contributions by young scholars focusing on social aspects of law, power and power symbols such as the car. The issue ends with a review of three recent books dealing with functioning of law in Poland, an announcement of a socio-legal conference being held in Japan, and an obituary of our longtime friend Lester Mazor, who assisted out team in editing the previous English-language issue of *Societas/Communitas* devoted to sociology of law.