

Social Space, Fields and Relationality (SSFR) in Contemporary and Historical Social Analysis. Research Network

Project funded by the National Academic Exchange Agency (NAWA.GOV.PL)



NARODOWA AGENCJA
WYMIANY AKADEMICKIEJ

Carried out at the University of Warsaw, coordinated by the Robert Zajonc Institute of Social Studies in cooperation with the Institute of Sociology of the University of Warsaw.

Foreign partners:

- 1) Alma Mater Studiorum. Università di Bologna, Dipartimento Scienze Politiche e Sociali (Italy).
- 2) Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for sosiologi og samfunnsgeografi (ISS) (Norway).
- 3) Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Institut für Politische Wissenschaft und Soziologie (Germany).
- 4) École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), Centre européen de sociologie et de science politique (France).
- 5) Université de Strasbourg SAGE (Sociétés, Acteurs, Gouvernement en Europe) (France).

Duration of the project: 1 December 2019 – 30 September 2021.

Description:

The aim of the SSFR project is an innovative development of the relational paradigm in social sciences through the creation of an international research network. This network should enable a long-term and institutionalized cooperation between sociologists and other social researchers from Poland, Italy, Norway, Germany and France. The relational paradigm is one of the most important theoretical and methodological approaches in social sciences today. The theory of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has played an important role in its formation. In this project, the relational paradigm will be developed by confronting this theory with other (related and competing) theoretical and methodological approaches. The main conceptual apparatus – social space, field, symbolic power – is applied by researchers from many countries and many disciplines (apart from sociology, in political sciences, history, cultural anthropology, social geography, etc.). An important context for the development of the broadly understood relational paradigm is international, comparative empirical research, carried out either through advanced statistical methods or qualitative field studies, as well as ethnographic case studies and historical analyses. All these studies are dynamically developing in international exchange: in France, Italy, Germany, Norway, and in other West European countries, as well as in North and South America, resulting in numerous breakthrough achievements in the area of social sciences. Polish scholars join and contribute to the development of the relational paradigm, offering a platform for innovative, networked, and thus multilateral cooperation. The University of Warsaw would be the coordinator of such activities, as it brings together scientists for whom relational theory and methodology are tools for the development of their own approaches and research models. The objectives of the SSFR will be achieved by stimulating multilateral cooperation between researchers from six European academic centers. This will be achieved by: a) organization of scientific internships for researchers and

doctoral students in foreign research centers of the Project's Strategic Partners; b) organization of methodological workshops, seminars, and scientific conferences for the network members, including the participation of external specialists; c) coordinating the preparation of joint international comparative research projects.

The research network is designed to provide solutions to two interlinked problems:

- a) theoretical and methodological, referring to the epistemological foundations of the relational paradigm;
- b) institutional, related to the search for the most effective and innovative form of cooperation in scientific endeavors.

The relational paradigm has been shaped for several decades. Its origins can be found in the works of classics of social sciences (G. Simmel, F. Znaniecki, N. Elias, C. Lévi-Strauss). The recent innovations in the frames of the relational paradigm, although promising, are often too limited in character, especially at the level of the enduring divide between theory and empirical research. Thus, either the theory itself is being built or purely methodological issues are in focus. The other shortcoming consists in focusing separately on particular theoretical approaches, often similar, belonging to a common paradigm, without creative confrontation with other approaches.

In recent years, the development of the relational paradigm has taken the form of increasingly close international cooperation. However, this cooperation often takes place only on a bilateral background confined to strictly defined approaches and theoretical and methodological "schools". The participation of Polish researchers representing the broadly understood relational paradigm in this exchange was limited. An inadequate degree of internationalization is an acute problem in Polish science, especially in the social sciences.

The designed network, due to its multidimensional formula, is supposed to solve both types of problems. The network of six research institutions, enabling multilateral scientific exchange (internships, conferences, seminars and methodological workshops), bringing together scientists from different theoretical approaches who carry out their own empirical research, will allow for their creative dialogue. This will give the desired synergy effect, impossible to achieve in simple bilateral exchanges. The confrontation of standpoints on the ground of theoretical and methodological reflection will be of crucial importance. The application of geometric data analysis, one of the important methods in relational studies of social space, will be an especially relevant issue.

The project will be addressed to two target groups. First of all, to scientific employees and collaborators of the Applicant (in particular, the Professor Robert Zajonc Institute of Social Studies and the Institute of Sociology of the University of Warsaw) and of the Project's Strategic Partners, conducting research activities based on the relational paradigm, willing to become committed to interdisciplinary projects of international scope. Secondly, there will be master's degree students interested in this subject and PhD students preparing their dissertations in accordance with the assumptions of the relational paradigm of social sciences.

Due to the fact that the relational paradigm in social sciences is treated quite broadly in this project (it concerns both Pierre Bourdieu's relational analysis, similar approaches and competing ones, as well as various methodological, qualitative and quantitative orientations), researchers participating

in the project will apply various approaches. This gives an opportunity for a broad, mutually enriching exchange of ideas, and provides more chances for achieving an innovative effect contributing to the dynamic development of the relational paradigm.

The Scientific Council of the Project has been established, including representatives of the Applicant and all the Project's Strategic Partners.

From the Applicant's side:

- prof. dr hab. Tomasz Zarycki (Robert Zajonc Institute of Social Studies, University of Warsaw),
- prof. dr hab. Elżbieta Hałas (Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw),
- dr hab. Marta Bucholc (Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw),
- dr. Hanna Dębska (Robert Zajonc Institute of Social Studies, University of Warsaw),
- dr. Tomasz Warczok (Robert Zajonc Institute of Social Studies, University of Warsaw),

From the side of Alma Mater Studiorum. Università di Bologna, Dipartimento Scienze Politiche e Sociali: prof. Sergio Belardinelli (Italy),

From the side of Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Institut für Politische Wissenschaft und Soziologie: prof. Jörg Blasius (Germany),

From the side of École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), Centre européen de sociologie et de science politique: prof. François Denord (France),

From the side of Université de Strasbourg SAGE (Sociétés, Acteurs, Gouvernement en Europe): prof. Vincent Dubois (France),

From the Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for sosiologi og samfunnsgeografi (ISS): prof. Magne Flemmen (Norway).

The Scientific Council of the Project is a body acting as a forum for communication and exchange of experiences. A representative of the University of Warsaw as a Project Applicant will assume the function of a Coordinator in the Scientific Council of the Project, responsible for the implementation of the Project, in particular for the disbursement of the granted financial resources in accordance with the Project budget. The Coordinator of the Scientific Council as a Director of the Project on the side of the Applicant has the decisive voice in all matters related to the realization of the project. The Director of the Project cooperates in organizational and scientific matters with the Scientific Council, in particular with the representatives of the Project's Strategic Partners.

All members of the Research Network are obliged to cooperate for the achievement of the project goals. A number of events (conferences, seminars, workshops) are planned within the Project in order to strengthen cooperation between all members of the network. These events will be co-organized by the Project's Strategic Partners, with the proviso that their funding (in the absence of other contractual provisions between the network members) will be provided entirely by the Applicant. The Project's Strategic Partners substantively participate in scientific events (e.g. by developing the programs of those events). The Project's Strategic Partners are under the obligation to accept project participants for scientific internships. All financial costs of the internships

(transportation, accommodation, per-diem) will be covered by the Applicant from the financial sources granted in the NAWA Program.

The realization of the project will lead to the achievement of the following objectives: integrating the international milieus of scientists and researchers applying the relational paradigm, as well as establishing a platform for communication and the development of research cooperation between the Project's Strategic Partners. For detailed information, contact the Director of the Project, prof. Tomasz Zarycki.

Prof. dr hab. Tomasz ZARYCKI

Director & Professor of the Robert Zajonc Institute for Social Studies (ISS)

University of Warsaw (UW), ul. Stawki 5/7, 00-183 Warszawa, Poland

[e-mail: t.zarycki@uw.edu.pl](mailto:t.zarycki@uw.edu.pl) tel. +48-22 - 831-51-53

<http://www.iss.uw.edu.pl/zarycki>