

1. research project objectives:

The scientific goal of the project is to build a model for the interpretation of certain dimension of Polish policy towards Russia after 1989. It will be based on the analysis of press discourses created by representatives of the main factions within the Polish elites, as well as on the analysis – in line with Pierre Bourdieu's field analysis – of actors and institutions producing these discourses. The starting point for my research is the conviction that the dominant interpretations of Polish policy towards Russia over-focus on cultural-political issues (such as "prejudices and stereotypes," "difficult history" or "imperial mentality"), while at the same time they do not sufficiently take into account the influence of Poland's and Russia's place in international hierarchies and structures. Therefore, the proposed model seeks to take account of existing global hierarchies. In the theoretical dimension, I'm inspired by Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems analysis and a concept of "peripheral field of power" – proposed by Tomasz Zarycki. Wallerstein presents a model of the world-system, which in modern times took the form of the world-economy. In the economic sphere, the international system (world-economy) is an integral entity regulated by rules of capitalism, while in the political sphere it has a shape of a system of nation states. At the same time, because of the uneven benefits from international trade, world-economy consists of a core, semi-periphery and periphery. In my model of analysis of discourses of Polish policy towards Russia I would also like to use Pierre Bourdieu's concept of field analysis. In this context, following Tomasz Zarycki, I adopt the concept of peripheral character of the field of power in Poland and Russia. It argues, that the peripheral field of power in Poland and Russia is organized around the main cleavage concerning attitude towards the core (the West), which produces pro- and anti-core camps within the elite.

2. basic research to be carried out:

The general plan for research in frame of the proposed project consists of the two main parts. The first one is the analysis of the current state of research on the position of Poland and Russia in the international system in order to reconstruct a model in which Poland and Russia are seen as peripheral states towards the Western core. In this part, my work will include a critical analysis of existing literature and consultations with experts, in particular economists and specialists on Central and Eastern Europe.

In the second, main part of the project I will examine discourses on Polish-Russian relations, which were generated by representatives of the main groups within the Polish elite (and to some extent also in the Russian one) after 1989. In my work I will not only focus on the analysis of texts, but also on actors and institutions that create them. Drawing inspiration from the work of Eleanor Townsley and Ronald N. Jacobs, I intend to use the concept of an "opinion space" in which actors from different fields (journalist, political, academic or think-tanks) publicly discuss important issues. In my project I will therefore strive to reconstruct the shape of Polish space of opinion, including in particular the space of opinion on foreign policy and Polish-Russian relations. This includes among others analysis of career paths of leading actors, including collecting and analyzing biographical data and conducting in-depth interviews. After reconstructing the outlines of this space of opinion, I intend to analyze the press discourses produced by the actors I investigated, using a program for qualitative analysis of NVivo discourse.

3. reasons for choosing the research topic:

The main justification for carrying out the presented research project is the assumption, that a perception of relations between Poland and Russia as relations between peripheral countries is relatively rarely used. At the same time it allows to reinterpret many aspects of these relations, thus developing their understanding. Moreover, adopting the perspective of world-systems to analyse social production of foreign policy of European countries is a relatively new idea (usually such an approach is applied to countries of the Latin America or the Middle East), which creates an opportunity to contribute to the development of the core-periphery approach, including through an analysis of elite discourses on relations between (semi-)peripheral countries. The presented project also contributes to the development of research located on the borderline of sociology of politics and IR - also through the use of discourse analysis as a research method (for analysis of foreign policy issues). In addition, my model of sociological analysis of the discourse can be used to study debates in other peripheral countries.