

Since the fifties economists have been using the notions of *centre* and *peripheries* to describe the relations in the world economy. According to this concept the economic development of peripheral countries depends on the so called *core*. The division into the centre and periphery seems, however, to have more universal application – e.g. in explanation of the phenomena existing in science as such. In this context we would define core countries as those which because of their dominant position impose the current scientific paradigm, generate theoretical concepts, set acceptable methodological standards and indicate worthwhile fields of research. In social sciences the United States and to some extent UK and other Western European countries should be considered to be such centre. The Anglo-Saxon hegemony can be illustrated by one of the essential indicators used for assessment of scientific accomplishments: citations. Among 20 universities of whose researches are the most frequently cited there are 18 US and 2 British institutions. Other countries – including Poland – are the peripheries or semi-peripheries which follow the patterns set by the scientific mainstream.

In our project we elaborate on the dependent development of science basing on the example of local government research – a field gathering lawyers, specialists in public administration, political scientists, sociologists, economists, urban geographers and planners, thus a broad spectrum of social sciences. In particular we will be interested in the presence of academic research on the Polish local government in the international mainstream. By the “international mainstream” we mean recognized, prestigious journals and the “presence” is defined as publications and citations of articles on the Polish local government, especially authored by Polish scholars.

Apart from several exceptions the history of the presence of Polish local government studies in the international mainstream began in the last decade of XX century with the political and economic transformation and decentralization process. The time frame of the project encompasses therefore over 25 years of research activity. Our objective is to answer the following questions:

- how the interest in the Polish local government (measured with publications in reputable international journals) has been changing throughout this time?
- who has authored these publications – local researchers or rather “colonizers” from universities of the core?
- has the presence of the publications authored by Polish scholars in reputable international journals become more noticeable?

In addition we will analyse the strategies devised by researchers from peripheries. The so far identified attitudes are:

- *insiders* – meaning scholars who are widely recognized by the scientific centre, actively participate in its life thanks to having a very well developed network of academic contacts in the universities of the core area.
- *imitators* – meaning scholars who adopt the scientific standards of the centre in order to be present in the international academic circulation, however, unlike *insiders*, without becoming the part of it.
- *separatists* – meaning scholars who distance themselves from forms and themes imposed by the centre, and withdraw or have never made an attempt in order to be present in international journals and decide to publish locally.

We will answer the question which of these strategies prevail, if there have been any changes in time and how institutional (i.e. criteria for assessment of academic performance) and individual (such as age, academic position and experience of research stays abroad) factors influence the choice of strategy.

Our analysis will be enriched by the introduction of comparative background: the history of “coming out of shadow” of the Polish local government research and the strategies of the Polish scholars will be compared with the situation in the selected countries from North-Western Europe (considered to be the most central region), Southern Europe and Central-Eastern Europe (as the most relevant control group).