Scientific problem: Over recent years, the measures and evaluation procedures have deeply penetrated our lives. We encounter them in the workplace, in the public sector and private life. However, measures and evaluation procedures are not entirely neutral, but they affect the institutions and people working in them - they influence the way they behave and how they set their goals. Therefore, in addition to providing us with information about processes taking place in a given area and their assessment, the evaluation procedures have also become a powerful tool for transforming and shaping different domains of reality in accordance with the objectives adopted by their creators.

Also, in science, evaluation systems have become the primary tool for distributing resources and pursuing science policy goals, by indicating favourable behaviours and effects. We know that both local and national evaluation systems can shape how scientists communicate with each other (how and what they publish), and even what topics they undertake in their research.

Therefore, in the research on the impact of evaluation on scientists, two sides of communication are assumed - on the one hand, those who set goals and criteria, on the other, those who are measured and have to adapt to the established standards. The Polish system of higher education and science, however, allows to complicate this picture and to rethink the relations connecting those two groups.

Objective: This project assumes that since the preservation of this rigid division in the Polish case is not possible, due to the involvement of the academic community in co-creating the system of evaluation of science, we need a dynamic way of understanding the evaluation system that looks at the relationships that form it. The dynamics of these relations is recognized through a conflict between different modes of valuing academic activities by scientists and creators of evaluation systems. Therefore, this project aims to develop a framework, which allows us to trace and explain the dynamics of these relations.

Description: To study this process, I use an example of evaluation in biological sciences in the years 1990-2020. As part of the research, I will look at the debates and discourse around the evaluation of research and conduct 30 interviews with representatives of the discipline, deans and members of intermediary bodies responsible for the evaluation of scientific research. During the interviews, I will ask the scientists about ways in which they ascribe value to activities they perform and how this value is represented in the evaluation system.

Expected results: My research will help us better understand how systems of evaluation of scientific research shape the landscape of the academic discipline – which fields are recognized and which ones are neglected. Because of this, we will be able to understand better the influence that research evaluation systems have on the discipline’s ability to reproduce itself in its diversity.