

## **The Polish bourgeoisie and its symbolic heirs: The genealogical roots of the Polish and Jewish economic elite and its ideological heritage in the contemporary social space of the intelligentsia**

The project aims to study the social circles involved in the cultivation of the memory of Jewish heritage in Poland in its various forms and aspects. We assume that variously defined heirs of Jewish traditions, especially those who cultivate the memory of former Jewish elites in Poland, form an important sector of the broadly understood Polish intelligentsia elite. Learning about the origins, ways of functioning, and diversity of these circles provides an important contribution to understanding the contemporary Polish intelligentsia's social roles. Our analysis will be carried out using a sociological approach inspired, in particular, by the methodological school of Pierre Bourdieu, which is currently driving a dynamically developing field of studies on social elites. This approach is significantly different from the classic historical methodologies used in studies of the given topic and different from the generally presentist studies on elites dominating traditional sociology or studies on attitudes towards Jews, antisemitism, etc. One of our main hypotheses is that circles cultivating the memory of the Jewish legacy in Poland, either on a family or institutional level, play the role of an internal intelligentsia substitute for the non-existent Polish bourgeoisie, especially in the sense of historical continuity and multi-generational understanding of that social class. In such a context, we posit that the identity and social status of parts of these circles, as regards the intelligentsia elite, are partly built on their ability to take on the symbolic roles of the former bourgeoisie. This is especially related to their aspirations to propose social modernization visions and produce cosmopolitan variants of social identities, including national ones. Therefore, we plan to verify the hypothesis that some of the circles mentioned above play an almost totemic role. In particular, this means that the heirs of broadly understood Jewish and bourgeois traditions may be seen as largely naturalized ideological and personal models for a large part of the Polish intelligentsia elite.

To study the given community and its social roles thoroughly, we will undertake various empirical studies and analyses of the existing data. The research will primarily involve interviews with representatives of the communities and organizations concerned in their full diversity. The analysis of the existing data, in addition to the study of the extensive literature on the subject, will include several quantitative studies. The first is a genealogical analysis, i.e., building a database of members of the families of the turn-of-the-century Polish and Jewish bourgeoisie and its descendants. The second is a database of the ancestors of the post-war intelligentsia elites. The analysis of a given database will allow us to assess the sustainability of the great bourgeois families and evaluate to what extent and in what ways the milieus that can today be considered as continuators of the bourgeois tradition are connected with their ancestors. The broader plan will be to analyze the genesis of the social field we are interested in, which will make a significant contribution to the research on contemporary Polish intelligentsia. We are also planning to study selected historical Polish cemeteries, especially those with a high number of graves of famous bourgeois families and their descendants. This analysis, combined with the study of obituaries, will allow us to trace the historical evolution of an important faction of the elite in Poland and will give us the ability to evaluate its continuity. At the same time, it will allow us to gain insight into the nature of the social recognition that heirs of traditions of the Jewish-Polish bourgeoisie enjoy. This will be possible by reconstructing the nature of the reverence given by the intelligentsia elite to specific historical figures. Combining methods of analysis of genealogical data, cemetery data, and obituaries with qualitative methods, especially the so-called prosopographic analysis (extended, contextual biographical analysis) of selected figures and families, will constitute a significant innovation in the study of traditional social elites and their evolution. It will make it possible to reveal both material and symbolic factors behind the reproduction of the given social space and illustrate this vital part of the Polish intelligentsia's diversity.