

Abstract

- Special Session 9: From STS to SSH: Translating STS concepts for the study of social sciences and humanities (SSH)

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The object of my research is a Hungarian sociological survey study and participatory action research on prejudice against the Roma minority. This topic has been in constant focus of Hungarian politics and social science and has received wide public and media interest as well. In my presentation, I will analyze a few key axioms underlying the structure of causal reasoning in the studied research. These axioms are e. g.: Most Hungarians are prejudiced against Roma; there are massive conflicts between the Roma and non-Roma Hungarian population. These constitute *no* research findings, but axioms that influence the very making of the research, the selected strains of argumentation (Kitcher).

On one hand, I will draw on my anthropological study (Latour-Woolgar) how the raw data were handled during the process of data analysis with computerized statistical software, how new variables were constructed in alignment with the axioms; and on the other hand, I will analyze how the discourse on causes of attitudes/prejudice towards Roma is structured in one article written by the research heads about their findings. I will speak about the status of hypotheses in the research and how they try to be verified by the researchers, using, e.g. ad-hoc explanations (Meehl) where needed.

Literature:

Meehl, Paul E (1967): Theory-Testing in Psychology and Physics: A Methodological Paradox.

Bruno Latour - Steve Woolgar (1986): Laboratory Life.

Kitcher, P. (1989): Explanatory Unification and the Causal Structure of the World