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FILM AND CINEMA AS A SUBJECT OF SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY. BETWEEN TRADITION AND THE PRESENT

Abstract. Relations between sociology and cinema span over a hundred years. The author's task is to reflect on this fact and, as a result, to present her own theoretical and methodological concept. Constructive framing is done in a historical perspective supplemented with methodological reflections using a variety of existing materials, scientific publications (library query) and the author's own analyses. The basic research question concerns the state of the subdiscipline: what methodological, empirical and theoretical proposals have been developed; to what extent are they currently up to date or cultivated by scholars? A look at the broad heritage of the sociology of film and cinema allows us to see the gaps to be filled in in the area of empiricism and theory. This article does not address the reasons for this state of affairs in great detail, but merely indicates that an in-depth study of relationships and embedding data in the light of Bruno Latour's actor-network theory or Pierre Bourdieu's field concept could shed light on the issue from a different angle, in this case – the scope of the sociology of knowledge. One of the conclusions is that the sociology of film has a faint presence in the field of the sociology of art. The author tries to revive the old postulates of the Polish sociologists of culture and film (including A. Kłoskowska, C. Prasek, K. Żygulski), drawing theoretical inspiration from the philosophy of Ernst Cassirer and also using experience from her own research. What emerges as a result is a research model proposal (along with a research tool) in the field of the sociology of film/cinema, aimed at the cognition and comparison of images of reality.

Keywords: sociology of film, sociology of cinema, film, cinema, sociological analysis of film.

Introduction

The aim of this article is, firstly, to trace the historical heritage of the sociology of film and cinema and single out the most important currents of theory and research in order to assess their validity and, secondly – to bring back to life the postulates of the "old" sociologists of culture concerning cinema studies. The text aims to provide a historical overview of the development of the subdiscipline

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throughout the world (see Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2019). It adds to the knowledge of Polish sociology of culture and art, including the diffusions, fashions, schools and processes taking place in the field of film studies. Moreover, the article has significant methodological value, as it presents an alternative proposal of cinema studies. More often than not, those that dealt in sociological film analysis were historians or film experts rather than sociologists.

In the first part of the article, the author provides a historical overview, using a variety of existing[1] materials and scientific publications (archives, library query). She then proceeds to point out a theoretical current, following Bruno Latour, which would allow us to embed the issue in the sociology of knowledge perspective (see Abriszewski 2007). This issue is not addressed fully in the article, as rather than reconstructing the structure of actors' relations in the network, the author strives to identify the major research fields in the sociology of film and cinema; dominant, active, non-active and neglected ones. In the third and fourth parts of the article, she describes a model of comparative reality studies: science versus cinema. Her theoretical inspiration comes from the philosophy of Ernst Cassirer and the work of sociologists of culture and film, as well as from the experience of her own studies. This is not an example of a new middle-range theory or "suitcase science" (see Abriszewski 2016), but rather an attempt to revive certain scientific postulates (for instance K. Żygulski's take on sociologising criticism), the continuation and development of the subdiscipline, and mobilisation in the field (referring to sociology of art). Hence the title of the text, between tradition and the present of film studies. Sociologists rarely addressed the 10th Muse as an art form. The author endeavours to fill this gap, but in an unorthodox way. She works from the ontological assumption that scientific and artistic production are creations of symbolic culture, concerning reality and embedded in it; emanations of their times, culture and political order. Their model juxtaposition allows us to investigate culture and tangible reality (in the current of realism), as well as the one which is constructed intellectually, processed, entangled in various symbolic systems, ideologies and values. Such a theoretical-methodological perspective is situated in the third (in terms of chronology) empirical current of the sociology of art (after the sociological aesthetic and social history of art). Paraphrasing the words of Nathalie Heinich, one could say that the sociology of film art is just sociology (*sociologie tout court*) (Heinich 2010). In this case, an analytical, contemplative type of sociology.

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[1] These issues have been taken up in other articles. Some text fragments are reiterations of author's published conclusions (e.g. Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2017b).

The sociology of film and cinema – a historical overview

Studies of the cinema phenomenon have preceded theories on this matter. What allows us to trace changes in this field is a temporal approach. The first analyses were characterized by sociographic descriptions of cities, cinemas, the economy of the cinema production field and audience. A prominent trend among scholars was moralising and the conviction that cinema has a detrimental effect, especially on young people (see Bevans 1913; Burt 1925; Lewicki 1935; Helman 1994 and the literature quoted therein). Here, it's worth mentioning the Polish photographer and cameraman Bolesław Matuszewski, who toward the end of the 19th century considered "animated photographs" a historical source, proposing to create archives of historical cinematography (Matuszewski 1898, cited in: Bocheńska 1975: 12–18). As early as at the dawn of the cinema he linked reflection on film with history and social science, which was a solitary opinion as during the first half of the 20th century many publications tended to judge and condemn mass culture. Accordingly, the power of American industrial culture was vehemently criticised by representatives of the Frankfurt school (Horkheimer, Adorno 1994). However, it is worth noting that the very first dissertation on the sociology of cinema in the world, *Zur Soziologie des Kino: Die Kino-Unternehmung und die Sozialen Schichten Ihrer Besucher*, defended in 1913 by Emilie Kiep-Altenloh was free from negative judgement. The author, an economist and sociologist, started the current of empirical quantitative studies of cinema as a social institution, an institution of culture. Her take on cinema in the sociological aspect concerned two elements of communication: cinema producers and cinema goers. It wasn't until many decades later that sociologists in Europe started to take more interest in the cinema. However, the first socio-economic monographies of cinemas and their audiences were published in Germany, the USA and the UK (Phelan 1919; Lynd, Lynd 1929; Rowson 1936). Studies on cinema goers became more and more frequent (cf. Box, Moss 1943; Box 1947; Lazarsfeld 1947; Manvell 1946; Mayer 1946; 1948). In Poland it wasn't until the 1950s and 60s that they appeared, although they were not organized as planned, cyclic endeavours. Yet, it is worth noting that in Poland, compared to the rest of the world, original postulates in cinema studies (Bystroń 1919: 1) or film studies (Salzman 1936, cited in: Bocheńska 1975: 278–281; Stępowski 1914, cited in: Bocheńska 1975: 84–95, 303) were being formulated several decades earlier. However, their authors did not live to see any continuators, co-workers or carriers of their ideas.

Generally speaking, in the long period after the Second World War the Polish sociology of film was developing heterogeneously and remained under the influence of various film and culture studies (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2017b: 17–46). The historical and geopolitical situation of the country had a great impact in this regard. In the period of Polish sociology's institutionalization, the subjects most often tackled were national matters, such as the social situation of Polish peasantry

and the city proletariat, as well as education and upbringing; these traditions also continued in the post-war period. After the Second World War, in turn, circles of film critics inspired a spurt in the growth of the subdiscipline (cf. Michalewicz 2003: 10–20), but sociology was still conspicuous by its lack of autonomy as a discipline (a bourgeois science). It's difficult to ascertain whether it was due to its genesis or other reasons that Polish film experts tended to address sociological aspects of film (Helman 1994; Kałużyński 1993; 1998; Kossak 1987). The situation was markedly different in Western countries, where film had been a subject of sociological study already before the First World War.

The fact that Western sociologists had got intensely interested in cinema and film before the Second World War was part of a larger trend of interest in mass culture and more often than not stemmed more from a practical than theoretical orientation. During that time in Poland there was no separate sociological stance on the arts (including film) or mass culture. Literature worldwide, however, tended to judge the new mass entertainment and endeavoured to test its influence on young viewers' minds, which as it turned out, gave rise to the systematic interest that sociologists all over the world started to take in cinematography (cf. Blumer 1933a; 1933b; Dale 1933; Peters 1933; Lewicki 1935; Renshaw, Miller, Marquis 1933; Forman 1933; Ford 1939; Funk 1934; Skoczylas 1913, cited in: Bocheńska 1975: 77–84).

Studies on children and adults' reactions to cinema are a subject taken up in a variety of countries. An especial interest in this subject among sociologists world-wide was apparent in the 1940s (Mayer 1946: 58–144 and literature and reports referenced therein) and then in the 1960s and 70s (cf. Tudor 1974; Morin 1975). The best-known works of sociology on the experience of film reception from that era are based on the mechanisms of the individual's projection and identification when viewing a film, as described by the French sociologist Edgar Morin (1975).

From the very beginning scholars were interested in the relations between crime and violence presented in the films of a given era (cf. Darmas 2014: 30). This current of sociological analysis and research is characteristic of past and present alike, due to the development of the media (cf. Sułkowski 2006).

In Western countries, the links between sociology and cinema started from the empirical and then proceeded to the theoretical (especially in the 1970s). Under the influence of structuralism, film analysis became increasingly common as a tool of film study. It contributed a lot to the thought on cinema ideology (cf. Jones 1945; Hughes 1962; Horkheimer, Adorno 1994: 140–188; Turner 2003). This time was also characterized by the psychoanalytical approach to the consideration of art. First, the Freudian version of the theory of the subject emerged, then the Lacanian version, finally resulting in feminist film analysis. Moreover, the 1960s and 70s seemed to be a golden era for the empirical sociology of film and cinema worldwide. Sociological studies were undertaken to realize long-determined tracks, although they mainly concerned the cinema audience and the rules governing it. It was no different in Poland.

In the 1970s Polish People's Republic, the best developed branch of the sociology of culture was the sociology of film (Żygulski). Sociologists' attention was focused on matters of film reception and analysis (Gałuszka, Kowalewicz 1977; Gałuszka 1984; Kowalewicz 1978; 1979; Kłoskowska, Rokuszewska- -Pawełek 1977; Linowiecka 1971; Prasek 1970a and many others). Numerous scholars drew interesting comparisons between the American, West European and Communist industries, including the structural system of film production and distribution, as well as mutual connections, costs, revenues and sometimes also audience characteristics (cf. Jarvie 1970: 56–62; Prokop 1970 and the literature referenced therein).

In the 1980s, interest in the sociology of film visibly waned among scholars. The apparent reason for this was the TV boom and the concurrent changes in cinema attendance (Jarvie 1970: 106–110). In Poland, sporadic publications pertained to analyses of film protagonists and audience preference surveys. The reception of TV series and their content was analysed much more eagerly (see Siemieńska 1981; Gałuszka 1984; 1996; Kościelski 1987; Filiciak, Giza 2011; cf. Dudziński 2017). And in the next decade, sociologists would analyse the TV series culture less and less frequently (cf. Jacyno 1998; Sułkowski 2015), shifting their attention towards the wider, popular audio-visual culture and media (Hopfinger 1997; Godzic 1999; 2004; 2007). On the one hand, this shift stemmed from the changes that took place in Poland after 1989 (cf. Szpociński 1998; Dunaeva 2011), while on the other – it reflected general trends in sociology worldwide. Deviation from the cinema as a subject of study fits into the trends visible in Western (Fiske 1997) and Eastern sociology (cf. Dunaeva 2011: 121). In Polish (cf. Iskierko 1966; Prasek 1970b) and international circles alike, the discontinuity of this study trend in the 1980s could have been caused by some setbacks in this field (cf. Jarvie 1970).

Today's blurring of subdisciplines, the joint perspective on film and cinema, does not negate the old program. Cooperation with film historians, critics and psychologists seems an indispensable element, proven not only by the spirit of the times, but also the very path of sociology described here. Today's reflection on cinematic work and image is subsumed within a wider subject of visual (Kaczmarek 2008; 2014) and audio-visual culture (Filiciak 2013). It is rare for lectures to be given on the sociology of film at overseas universities. An Internet query indicates that courses in sociology are gaining some popularity through film classes (Sutherland, Feltey 2013), as well as analyses written according to the proposed strategy (Brym 2006). The discipline seems to be extinct in Poland, although an elective course on the sociology of film for sociology students of various specializations is offered at the Jagiellonian, Łódź and Warsaw Universities. In Poland, the process of the emergence of the sociology of film and cinema as a distinct, autonomous field occurred relatively late (1960s and 70s), whereas abroad this had taken place several decades earlier.

For constructionists, knowledge is not something static, but is rather constantly socially constructed in social processes, in interaction. For the post-constructionist but also anti-essentialist Bruno Latour (2010), it takes place through networks, associations, translations and negotiations. His popular actor-network theory perceives scientific work as a chain of actions producing networks, which are not set once and for all. Actants and actors are all that works. Put simply, on the one hand it will be cinema in all its manifestations, subjects and persons (authors), on the other – scholars of various disciplines, creating knowledge of film, allies, scientific theories and other actants, actors. We could also isolate human and non-human factors. Relationality, which is part of Latour's concept, perceives scholars as tribes (after: Abriszewski 2007: 116). A detailed analysis of the actors-networks relations could indicate what stabilised and what destabilised links in the subdiscipline. According to Latour, a victim or a superactor allows us to explain all the links. Pierre Bourdieu (2001) put things differently, from the perspective of structuralist methodology, investigating the market of symbolic goods, including the field of artistic production, from the angle of historical and genetic research. In the scientific field, like in any social one, he identified conflicts, constant struggles for positions and rules, the dominators and the dominated, actors playing the game in the field. Following scholars ("actors-networks" in Bruno Latour's understanding, agents in the field according to Bourdieu) or even works (a socio-genetic and structural approach) we reveal the entire dynamics of factors and a variety of mutual interactions, logics and rules, a state between the mediation and autonomization of the sociology described here. However, this overview of film sociology history aims to embed the author's own concept within the achievements of the subdiscipline, rather than to reconstruct a kind of sociology of knowledge or a structuring of the field, therefore this aspect will not be addressed any further. However, it is worth noting that both theories seem adequate for thoughtful scrutiny of the field. If, following Bourdieu, the structure of the sociology described here results from the history of the field, for a clear further analysis the (historically determined) areas of sociologists' interest should be indicated.

## Fields and research problems of sociologists

The scholarly achievements of sociologists of film and cinema reconstructed to date can be assigned to three thematic areas: 1) cinema as production and consumption subsumed in a quantitative perspective (e.g. Kiep-Altenloh, Horkheimer, Adorno, Prokop); 2) cinema as a social institution of great influence on the masses, having specific functions (e.g. Morin, Esquenazi, the Chicago school, Żygulski); 3) film as a represented human world, a socio-cultural world (e.g. Kracauer 2009; Ferro 2011; Jarvie 1970; Sorlin 1991; Żygulski 1966). A system of interlocking research fields is presented in Figure 1. Marcin Darmas proposes also singling

out three types of study (cf. D a r m a s 2014: 37–38) which fit into the above areas, addressing analogous fields. The criteria assumed by the author encompass firstly cinema production – this will be Field 1, then film impact and reception (including artistic and lay one) as Field 2, social representations in the world of film – Field 3. Field 4 will be discussed at a later point. This area includes a postulate of the parallel study of images of reality or the representation of social problems in science and cinema.

Another distinction worth making here is between the sociology of cinema and the sociology of film. The former remains an "external sociology", the latter – "internal sociology". Their areas and subfields overlap and interlock, but their goals and research methods are different.

Fields 3 and 4 are the closest, but also the weakest ones. For clarity of argument, they were depicted as separate, taking into account their genesis and history. Field 3 emerged earlier than 4 and its activisation was due to film historians, film experts and critics dabbling in film sociology. In Field 4 covers the sociologists dealing in sociological criticism or film/cinema analysis.
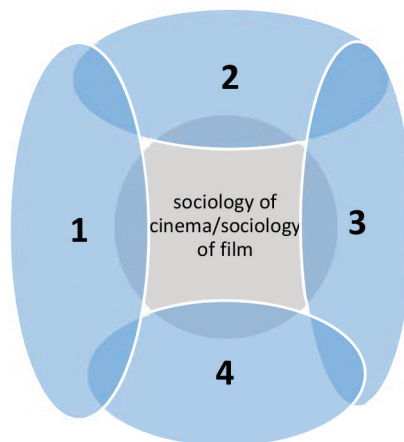
Figure 1. Fields in the sociology of cinema/sociology of film
S o u r c e : The author's own design.

From a quantitative perspective, the majority of European and American papers would concern cinema analysis perceived as an "industry" (the sociology of cinema) and the issue of movie impact on children, young people or adults (the sociology of film), whereas studies on social reality in films, using content analysis, were conducted less frequently by sociologists. In Poland, the quantitative approach also dominated (the sociology of cinema).

Studies of film experience are situated both in the second (2) and third (3) study fields described above. Such endeavours were characteristic for the first cinema researchers (they used gathered biographical materials and documents). With time,

film reception and assessment were measured by analysing the phenomenon of the blockbuster, confirmed by box-office statistics (Jarvie 1970: 188) and viewers' motivations, as described in interviews. These practices could have been derived from philosophy, because a certain "horizon of viewers' expectations" was an important, though heterogenous, concept for theoreticians of artwork interpretation, such as Jauss and Gadamer or Jarvie (cf. Sułkowski 2017; Jarvie 1970).

Polish sociologists, unlike their American counterparts, rarely employed qualitative methods when scrutinising the functional aspect of cinema or film reception (cf. Rudzki 1967; Kulik 1968; Osiński 1985; Godzic 1996), such as the analysis of the reception and content of documents (e.g. biographical). Receptive studies of various auditoria and audiences in the previous decades were based on surveys, interviews and written texts analyses (essays). They rather failed to provide expected results, both when it comes to verifying theories or formulating new laws of film reception (cf. Iskierko 1966). The scholars usually deemed the material sparse and the largest deficiencies were evident in analyses of the way the respondents recreated movies. This still remains a difficulty specific to this field of study for theoreticians and researchers throughout the world (cf. Sułkowski 2017).

The area marked 1 in Figure 1 is at the same time the oldest field of empirical study for sociologists, characteristic more of the empirical practices of the past than those employed today. In the first (1) and second (2) fields, historically constituted later, what took place was the mobilisation of scholars due to the invention of the cinema. Then, in the second (2) and third (3) field scholars began to cluster in certain communities, schools of film and cinema sociology, which could be called a process of a subdiscipline autonomisation. The circles gathered around certain authors, texts, conferences, polemics, theories, etc. And at the same time, they would base their activity in institutional contexts (research committees, reports for institutions, grants). They publicised their findings and briefings (interviews, visible media presence), also highlighting the usefulness of their studies, for instance for cultural policies. The conceptual content of the science, in other words theory, would come up in a variety of the areas discussed (cf. Latour 2010: 113–148). Already at this stage these roughly presented mechanisms from Bruno Latour's circulatory model of science could point to the weak fields and provide some explanation as to the regression of the subdiscipline. Looking from a different perspective, numerous empirical problems can be seen. Selectiveness, aesthetisation, arbitrariness in movie choice, and the focus on cinema's impact (especially on the young), film reception and audience structure (cf. Tudor 1974), were the "major sins" of Western film and cinema sociologists.

Interestingly, aspects of the threats posed by film, as well as by film education, were highlighted by pioneers of film thought, inventors, pedagogues, psychologists and, last but not least, film sociologists all over the world. It was typical to think that films have a great influence on viewers, but the reasons for this were not investigated too closely. Later researchers of the impact of cinema or TV stressed

the role of the environment, habit and custom on the reception of film content. This field was rightly annexed by psychologists of film. It seems that sociologists have quite a limited means of investigating film impact, be it cumulative or subconscious (Morawski 1977: 45–46). In the case of the direct impact of film on viewers, which can prove useful is sociological interview and observation. However, the respondents' declarations about a given movie still remain the main object of analysis. This problem was present also in the author's own studies, conducted in various circumstances and locations (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2017a; 2017b).

Compared to other representatives of the subdiscipline, Polish sociologists (cf. Jarvie 1970; Prokop 1970; Żygulski 1966; Darmas 2014) did not concern themselves with analyses of production organisation and film distribution, or the role of film institutions in society, their activities and developmental conditions (Field 1). Polish film experts and film historians (Adamczak 2010; Zajiček 2015) have only recently started to explore this direction, although it Kazimierz Żygulski had already included it in the program of film sociology 50 years ago. The four areas of film sociology research were, according to Żygulski, the audience, creators and producers, cinematic work, and the organisation of film production and distribution (Żygulski 1966). It is worth stressing that already in the 1970s it was suggested that the field of theoretical and empirical scrutiny should be narrowed down to the issues of audience and cinematic work (Prasek 1970b). For Żygulski, a film sociologist should first and foremost deal in sociologically oriented film criticism (which in Figure 1 is covered by Fields 3 and 4). Yet, in the times of the Polish People's Republic film sociologists failed to do so (Michalewicz 2003: 42) and in free Poland it is either a rarity (Prasek 2014) or part of a larger field of TV or TV series study (Bogunia-Borowska 2012; Łaciak 2013; cf. Kurz 2008: 281–302). Polish film experts[2] (e.g. Konrad Klejsa, Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska, Iwona Kurz, Natasza Korczarowska-Różycka, Małgorzata Radkiewicz et al.) frequently engage with sociological and social theories and address key issues, such as different aspects of audience study, the links between film culture and history, socio-historical memory in film, images of history in film, film and gender and images of men and women in TV series. In this case it is difficult to speak of a common trend or shift, as these are rather individual research projects. One could also deplore the lack of a wider cooperation between sociologists and film experts.

It should be noted that although film is also considered art, the sociologists of film usually would not refer to the concept and theory of the sociology of art. Going to the movies was seen as taking part in a certain social or cultural institution. The idea to isolate the sociology of art and sociology of entertainment in the sociology of film appeared in some conceptions of the subdiscipline (cf. Esquenazi 2007; Jarvie 1970).

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[2] Here I am not citing the works of Polish film experts, historians and theoreticians. That is a topic for a separate study. What I am trying to draw attention to in this passage is the soft interlocking of research fields of film sociologists and film experts.

Comparative reality perspective

Polish sociologists used to be criticised for neglecting analysis of the plot in terms of its connection with social reality. This is the task that Ewelina Wejbert-Wąsiewicz set for herself, choosing to address two social problems, two taboos – of ageing and abortion (cf. Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2017b). Her main field of interest is the social nature of film, that is, the social representations of a problem reflected on screen. To a lesser degree she investigated the perception of films and their functioning in culture (perception experiments, post-screening talks). The author employed a film sociology research program formulated by Kazimierz Żygulski, which involved the description of social situations illustrated by a movie and a comparison of the social issues depicted in movies with social reality. In line with Kazimierz Żygulski's conception of the sociology of film, a researcher can analyse a movie from 2 angles: (1) as an autonomous analysis of the film reality contained in the plot of the film; (2) as an analysis of the relations between the actual social reality and the fictional film reality (Żygulski 1966: 49). Wejbert-Wąsiewicz proposes connecting the analyses of the actual and fictional. It should be noted that in Lotman's approach, the perception of involved a juxtaposition of a cinematic image with the respective actual phenomenon or object. Such "comparative modelling" stood out in works of the sociologist of film Cezary Prasek (cf. 1970; 2010), who made a certain "mobilisation" in this regard in the 1970s, but had no one to follow in his footsteps, and remained on the fringes of the "world of science".[3] "Comparative modelling" took place in regard to arts other than cinema as well, like comparative studies of fiction literature in the West (Coser 1963; Lowenthal 1957). Meanwhile, in the circle of Polish sociologists, similarly oriented comparative studies were called for much later, for instance in literary studies (cf. Szczepański 1973: 687–702) or painting (Matuchniak-Krasuska 2005).

International studies on the representations of reality in the world of film, socio-logically unpopular as they were, would focus on the so-called "visible society" (Sorlin 1991; cf. Sklar, Musser 1990; Murphy 1989). A key methodological issue here is the analysis of film work, which technically and historically belongs to the toolkit of a film expert. Therefore, some sociologists saw the need to develop sociological methods of analysing films (Denzin 1989; Brym 2006; Sutherland, Feltey 2013). The authors, combining in their perspective sociology and film, let us focus on how society, the individual, the social world, social phenomena, processes and selected problems are seen through film. Analyses of individual cinematic works (fictional and documentary) are more popular than studying entire

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[3] In a TV interview (TVP Kurier Warszawski 30.07.2010) Cezary Prasek, Doctor of Sociology, stated that the subject of the book and the concept of research had always been with him, since his early days. As a 28-year-old sociologist he initiated a discussion (Prasek 1970b) which no one in Poland has responded to. At the end of his life, he published two books (Prasek 2010; 2014) which turned out to be a development of the concept from 40 years before. The author worked as a journalist.

collections of films. It is worth noting that sociological analyses of movie collections are a time-consuming, long-term task, more suited for larger interdisciplinary research teams. In Poland, a failed attempt in this regard was the work of a team headed by Kazimierz Żygulski (see Żygulski 1973).

The method of analysing an image of reality (films and science) requires a specific analytical model (see Brym 2006; Denzin 1989). An alternative proposal will be presented below. According to Ewelina Wejbert-Wąsiewicz, it is partially justified by the theory and methodological approaches of the sociology of art, for example in the socio-genetic vision of Pierre Francastel (1970) and Arnold Hauser (1974), or the communicative conception of Umberto Eco (2008: 31–43). Eco viewed a work of art as an artistic organism that feeds on the entire culture of its time. Similarly, the art historians Francastel and Hauser also argued that there are systemic links between art and society. One could pose the question: what else gives sociologists the authority to compare the realities (scientific knowledge vs. art)? In the system of Cassirer's symbolic forms or Antonina Kłoskowska's universe of culture, art and science (humanities) are close on the syntagmatic axis (Kłoskowska 1981; 1997). Both are systems of communication and statements about reality, but their goals and functions are allocated differently. They organise human experiences. Artists and scientists alike discover things. Perhaps science denotes abstraction, in the sense that it reduces reality to certain formulas and laws (cf. Szczepański 1995: 9). Whereas when the same phenomenon is depicted through art, it turns out that things have an infinite number of aspects. As a rule, art never generalises nor simplifies, but rather complicates things (cf. Cassirer 1998: 240–241). Therefore, it should be especially looked into by sociologists. On the other hand, the foundations for this concept are laid by Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms (1998). Art and science are separate types of knowledge which perceive reality in a different yet similar way, since they are both based on symbols. Both are creations: scientific and artistic. Art changes images of reality and gives a vital insight into its formal structure, while science offers general empirical concepts (cf. Cassirer 1998: 275–279). Science looks for truth, and while the goal of art can be truth, it is first and foremost pleasure (Cassirer 1998: 264). Ernst Cassirer was of the opinion that art is not a recreation or imitation of reality, but its discovery; one of the ways of looking at human life objectively (Cassirer 1998: 239).[4]

The language of science describes the real world through certain fragmentizations (disciplines, problems, issues, etc.), but it doesn't create a general concept of "the world". The results of scientific cognition form a coherent system of concrete, independent academic disciplines. Depending on the subject, this makes the researcher employ various theories, materials, reports and scientific publications to reach a diagnosis, a synthetic take on reality. However, it's always a certain "condensation of reality". Art introduces order to our sensory perception of things,

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[4] For more on the imitative function of art see Cassirer 1998: 232–239.

as well as variety, richness and depth, but our "reading", the interpretation of an artwork is also an condensation of sorts. Therefore, what remains at the basis of this theoretical and methodological conception is the ontological conviction that absolute knowledge of reality as well as artwork is not possible.

One point of view is scientific, and is focused on the transmission and analysis of reality in rational categories, while the other – cinematic, artistic – sheds light on an examined problem from the perspective of the imagination, intuition and knowledge of art creators. The challenge in the context of the presented research program of the sociology of film is both the analysis of film (the uncertain and selective use of the film expert's toolbox) and the depiction of the "real social reality" (either that contemporary for the sociologist, or that now in the past).
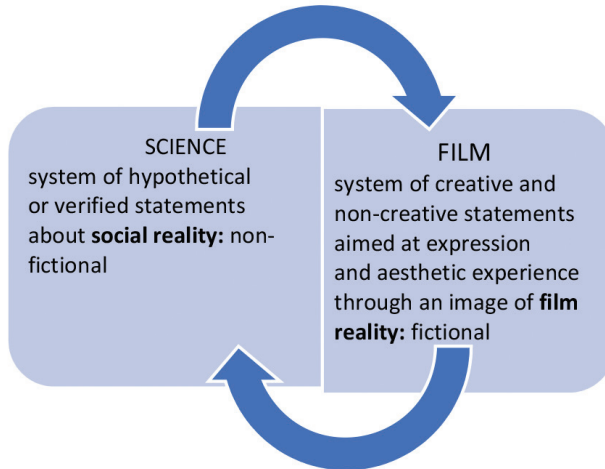
Figure 2. Field 4. Film vs. science – research model
Source: The author's own design.

American sociologists practicing symbolic interactionism seem to be free of such prejudices and successfully employ various techniques for film content analysis, focusing on the narrative structures of film and the concept of ideology (Denzin 1989; 1991; Sutherland, Feltey 2013 and the literature quoted therein). In their analyses, the form of the film is omitted. The multitude of film interpretations (Sutherland, Feltey 2013) or the mutual overlapping of various film readings (e.g. hegemonic, oppositional and focused on negotiation), essays and reviews of sociological orientation answers the following interconnected questions: how do cultural representations (films) shape life experiences, and how do these life experiences shape their own cultural representations (cf. Denzin 1989; 1991: 15)? Various researchers of the qualitative orientation refer to film as a case study. Accordingly, their reviews, sometimes called sociological reviews, have a descriptive-evaluative form.

In the proposed conception of the sociology of film, the author's position does not derive from sociological theory or any key concept (e.g. voyeurism, ideology), but rather from the sociology of art and philosophy of culture, drawing on Kazimierz Żygulski's vision of the subdiscipline.

The sociological analysis of films

Cezary Prasek's take on model analysis (1970a: 31) referred to the concept in which reality (the model) was supposed to be a means for the indirect cognition of film. Thus, the author's method boiled down to checking the film. Since social reality is described through sociology, in Prasek's mind it has to provide a description. However, we do not always have access to sociological generalisations for a specific film. In the case of an incomplete diagnosis, we can make use of additional sources (e.g. memories, diaries, historical monographs). Prasek was of the opinion that some sociological concepts are clearly reflected in film (e.g. generation, family or human types). He transferred generalised conclusions from a collection of Polish films about the confrontation of generations to the field of sociology, looking for a confirmation of certain conclusions or the existence of correlations (Prasek 1970a: 32). First, he grouped the films and then dissected them according to a developed scheme (qualitative and quantitative), in each of them looking for sociologically significant qualities and elements (Prasek 1970a: 32). Such sociological analysis goes from film to sociology and back.

Another kind and direction of analysis (from sociology to film) is suggested by Sutherland and Feltey, the authors of *Cinematic Sociology* (2013). They propose investigating social life through film analysis, because film both reflects and creates culture. According to them, a sociologist should discern and illustrate important theoretical concepts (e.g. theories of conflict, functionalist theories or symbolic interactionism), which would make it possible to teach sociology through cinema. The method, which is used and recommended by American sociologists, in the first stage involves identifying research questions, next – conducting a sociological literature review concerning a specific social problem, and then reviewing the material through a film sample analysis (Sutherland, Feltey 2013: 12–13). The final stage of this procedure is assigning meaning to films and reconsidering the assumptions adopted in the literature. The implications for the next research questions are supposed to come from comparing the two types of conclusions – based on science (literature review) and film (film analysis). The creator of the concept used in the guidebook is Robert Brym (see Sutherland, Feltey 2013: 14). According to him, what matters to the sociologist are the following questions:
1) How does the movie reflect the social context?
2) How does the movie distort social reality?
3) To what degree does the movie shed light on common or universal social and human problems?

4) To what degree does the movie provide evidence for or against sociological theory and research?

5) To what degree does the movie connect biography, social structure and history?

Choosing one of the above questions fixes the entire film analysis or sociological review of a film. Writers should use their sociological imagination to discern problems and topics which would allow them to see the world in a new way.

The second theoretical and methodological strategy adopted in *Cinematic Sociology* involves "the reading of film", its interpretation, sometimes several times within the framework of symbolic interactionism, and specifically the five steps drawn from Norman Denzin (1989: 40–46). In a nutshell, these are: a) choosing a movie and viewing it multiple times; b) outlining the narrative themes of the film and looking for significant research issues (such as social conflict, social control, etc.) and for what is not represented; c) conducting a film reading from the perspective of hegemonic, realistic interpretation, including the ideological meaning; d) developing an alternative, oppositional, subversive interpretation; e) comparing the different "readings". In every "reading" of the film, the fundamental categories are the those of culture, race, social class, ethnicity, sex and gender.

The former and latter methodological approach of American sociologists treat cinema like a "reading material". The authors write about films as "text" in the broad sense of the word, which goes hand in hand with a structuralist-semiological conception of culture and art studies. As such, the method is well-suited for classroom and workshop purposes, it helps sharpen sociological imagination, better understand social studies or illustrate a given theory. On the other hand, visual sociologists who treat movies like "paintings" view film analysis in a completely different way. An example here may be a film analysis scheme, as employed by the French researcher Laurent Gervereau (2000). It consists of three main layers: descriptive, contextual and interpretative, which highlight the form, technical aspects, style, media, etc. of the film.

The sociological approach to movies proposed by Wejbert-Wąsiewicz is closer to the first of the approaches highlighted here – the one by Prasek. One could also discern certain affinities with the authors of *Cinematic Sociology*, or Brym (2006) and Denzin (1991),[5] even though the author did not draw her inspiration from them. Her research is focused on social issues (problems) and the mutual modelling of sociology and film. She highlights various functions of cinema, including: revealing the era, but at the same time documenting it; reflecting reality and social problems, as well as distorting reality (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2017b). The authors quoted thus far draw attention to these issues, but read films from a specific problematising and theoretical position (symbolic interactionism), whilst ignoring form. Sociologists often conducted their analyses in relation to plot and the moral lesson of the film. Meanwhile, form and content complement each other, creating a whole.

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[5] E.g. Denzin (1991), analysing American films between the years 1932 and 1989, refers to his former studies on American alcoholism.

A cinematic work of art is a creation of symbolic and mass culture, and is thus more than just a text (highlighting the content) and an image (highlighting the form). For a sociologist, film art or mass art remains art preceded by an adjective; art in a broader aspect. Art with a capital 'A' refers to a narrower scope of this term. The empirical point of view can unite these two perspectives (Prasek 1970b: 30). The sociology of film art failed to develop perhaps mostly due to the "genetic impurity" and inferiority of this art form, i.e. straddling the area between mass culture and Art. On the other hand, a certain tendency to judge films has arisen in many sociological papers (e.g. choosing to analyse only great, canonical movies).

Wejbert-Wąsiewicz (2017b) advocates analysing the content (plot) of movies, but without neglecting their form. She is interested in the creations of culture (symbolic, artistic) and the content itself more than in numerous or various interpretations. Wejbert-Wąsiewicz is trying to reduce the sociology of film to the sociology of art, meant mostly in the sense of conducting analysis of the movie. It should be noted that although this refers to feature films, sociological analysis can be applied to various types of films. An art sociologist's perspective shouldn't disregard the formal layer of the film. This allows us to discern a variety of formal practices (e.g. grotesque, exaggeration, deformation or simulation of reality). A film researcher is also obliged to recognize the language of the film (Płażewski 2008). Simultaneously, film narrative (content and form) shouldn't dominate the entire research process, but rather lead to reconstructing film reality from the perspective of sociology (cf. Brym 2006). The descriptive technique, that is, reviewing the film through determining its descriptive, contextual and interpretative features (Gervereau 2000; Aumont, Marie 2011), is but a means (technique) for a proper sociological analysis, which in Figure 3 constitutes the last subsection (3).

Several epistemological rules of the concept should be mentioned here:

1) It is essential to analyse films, and not just their reviews (film experts' analyses and reviews). The latter practice can be justified only in the case of lost, inaccessible movies (old ones).

2) It only makes sense to analyse images, texts and films within the culture in which they exist, function and fulfil needs. Therefore, it is crucial to learn the social and historical context of the artwork which is being analysed (external analysis).

3) Film is not a text or image, but a creation of symbolic and mass culture, sometimes a work of art, a masterpiece. Yet, it is not up to the sociologist to decide. Aesthetic evaluation should be left to aestheticians, film experts or critics. Thus, a researcher should refrain from aesthetic valuation both when choosing the film and analysing it (the author's own aesthetic judgements).

4) Analyses written by film experts are full of in hermetic vocabulary. Sociologists should refrain from this practice, using simple sentence structures and a limited number of sociological terms.

5) When analysing a film, we should place the characters, phenomena, events, stories, dialogues and plot in significant sociological contexts, taking into account basic social categories: sex, age, race, social class, nationality, etc.

The analysis scheme presented here (Figure 3) can be applied to collections and individual films alike. The direction of analysis is discretionary. A researcher can settle on a parallel review of symbolic creations of culture or opt for a certain order (e.g. first conduct a scientific sociological analysis of a given issue, phenomenon or problem, or, alternatively, first decide to analyse the movie/movies). Only the right part of the scheme, referring to film review, will be briefly described, since scientific sociological review (the left arrow) is bread and butter to sociologists.
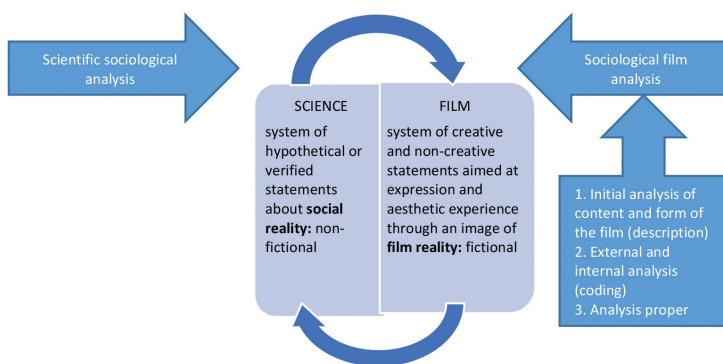
Figure 3. Sociological analysis – research model
Source: The author's own design.

When analysing one film, the review is qualitative, whereas a researcher of more cinematographic works (a large collection of movies) is forced to create qualitative-quantitative reviews. In the case of creations as complex and symbolic as films, and even more so in the case of entire film collections, it is not possible to review the material any further without this process (constant notetaking, open qualitative coding). An external and internal analysis results in creating a typology and connecting common elements.

As shown in the above model, a film/films analysis endeavour consists of three main phases, which are: 1) initial analysis; 2) external and internal analysis; 3) analysis proper. In each of them a series of activities and decisions takes place, whose thorough description would go beyond the scope of this outline. The result of the initial film analysis (subsection 1, Figure 3), is a technical description. It can be carried out in accordance with the established schemes used by film experts (see Aumont, Marie 2011; Gervereau 2000; Sorlin 1991) or based on the researcher's own model, which would take into account the descriptive, analytical and interpretative elements of the movie.

However, an essential task in the context of the sociology of film project sketched in the previous chapter (a comparative reality perspective) is scouring the film content

for traces of recognisable social reality (facts, phenomena, processes, problems, persons, etc.). A thus focused qualitative lens of a film sociologist is concentrated on two important aspects: the research questions and the eclectic research model formed from them (because it is both socio-genetic and functional). A researcher, on the basis of an initial and internal analysis, discerns and describes films (open coding) in accordance with basic variables that he or she finds significant. These can be open content codes (such as the take on the subject, characters, scope of problems), technical codes (film genre, time and place of the narrative, etc.), formal codes (e.g. referring to style, narration, diegesis, etc.), sociological codes, codes of interpretation, codes referring to the relation of the film and reality (e.g. facts, metaphor and metonymy) or film communication (e.g. communication strategies and truths) and others, according to the needs of the researcher (cf. Wejbert--Wąsiewicz 2017b).

However, it is mostly the internal analysis (of the content) and external analysis (of the message) that poses significant questions. External analysis leads to establishing the place of the film in the culture, and its social functions, read both on the level of the production/creator as well as on the level of the reception/viewer. It takes place somewhat outside of the film itself, based on the review of documents and testimonies of creators and recipients (e.g. prizes, festivals, critique and reception).

On the denotive level of internal analysis, in turn, what matters is what the film presents (the main and secondary themes, central issues, important film situations, images of characters, etc.). The main issues comprise not only what is directly presented in the movie, but also what is not shown, what is left unsaid. For the author of the film analysis technique reviewed here, what proved more useful than "ideology" turned out to be terms such as: SEP processes, mythologizations, communication strategies, truth (truths). On a denotive-connotative level, what matters is how a given social problem was illustrated in film (the content and form of the film) and by whom (the original creative context, creative motivations). The problem of the author is analysed from a sociogenetic perspective of art studies using existing material (interviews, documents). What becomes a key issue is the creators' attitude toward the problems they tackle. Moreover, as was already mentioned before, a central research problem is the relation of films and social reality (a broadly understood social-cultural-historical context). This is related to the belief that film is a "rental store" of other people's narratives (real, personal and actual) and an archive of reality (of people, phenomena, ideas or history).

The third and last stage in the procedure presented in Figure 3 is the analysis proper, reflective and holistic. It is based on the previous stages of the work on film, denotation and connotation, as well as descriptive-analytical-coding actions. Its aim is the juxtaposition of an image of reality or social problem provided by science (in this case sociology) and cinema (a film or sample, a collection of films). This way an image of their mutual feedback is revealed, and more often than not their symbolic relation.

Conclusion

Sociologists all over the world became interested in cinema when, a dozen or so years after its invention, film entered into socio-cultural circulation. After a hundred years of cinema, some sociological research traditions and theories have been exhausted and replaced by other ones. Films can and should be treated as sociological data. This is the common denominator for all the authors of the approaches to sociological analysis outlined here. Film has always been one of the arts, even though its Muse is the youngest. Neither the sociologists of film nor the sociologists of art considered this fact a vital methodological foundation. The sociology of film art (the sociology of artistic film or sociology of film as art) was underdeveloped. Its networks, links, relations and fields failed to stand out for their activity. The author's own proposal for the sociology of film/cinema presented here stems from the problem of the social reality visibility in art. Numerous questions arise, among them the main one being: do cinema and science offer us different perceptions of reality? The conception presented here was prompted by the work of Polish sociologists of culture, i.e. Żygulski, Kłoskowska and Prasek. This technique of sociological analysis of films/cinema has a number of advantages and disadvantages alike, which have not been addressed in this text. Moreover, it is not a ready-made recipe. It is, rather, an outline of a certain process, in which every step requires taking informed decisions (i.e. pertaining to film selection, sample creation or the analysis of the path taken). The author treats this article as a process of establishing and stabilizing the consensus around her own standpoint.

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FILM I KINO JAKO PRZEDMIOT BADAŃ SOCJOLOGICZNYCH MIĘDZY TRADYCJĄ A TERAŹNIEJSZOŚCIĄ

Abstrakt. Związki socjologii i kina trwają ponad sto lat. Zadaniem autorki tekstu jest refleksja nad tym faktem, a w efekcie prezentacja własnej koncepcji teoretyczno-metodologicznej. Konstruktywne ramowanie dokonuje się w perspektywie historycznej uzupełnianej o refleksje metodologiczne z wykorzystaniem różnorodnych materiałów zastanych, publikacji naukowych (kwerenda biblioteczna) oraz własnych analiz. Podstawowe pytanie badawcze dotyczy stanu subdyscypliny: jakie propozycje metodologiczne, empiryczne i teoretyczne zostały wypracowane; na ile są one współcześnie aktualne, czyli uprawiane przez uczonych? Spojrzenie na szerokie dziedzictwo socjologii filmu i kina pozwala dostrzec „białe plamy" w obszarze empirii i teorii. W niniejszym artykule nie podejmowano szerzej powodów tego stanu rzeczy, jedynie zasygnalizowano, iż dogłębne zbadanie relacji i osadzenie danych w świetle teorii aktora-sieci Bruna Latoura czy koncepcji pola Pierre'a Bourdieu mogłoby rzucić światło na zagadnienie z innej strony, w tym przypadku – z zakresu socjologii wiedzy. Jednym z wniosków jest nikła obecność socjologii filmu w polu socjologii sztuki. Autorka próbuje ożywić stare postulaty rodzimych socjologów kultury i filmu (m.in. A. Kłoskowskiej, C. Praska, K. Żygulskiego), czerpiąc inspirację teoretyczną z filozofii Ernsta Cassirera, a także wykorzystując doświadczenia z własnych badań. W efekcie wyłania się propozycja modelu badań (wraz z narzędziem badawczym) z zakresu socjologii filmu/kina zorientowanych na poznanie i porównanie obrazów rzeczywistości.

Słowa kluczowe: socjologia filmu, socjologia kina, film, kino, socjologiczna analiza filmu.