

Project PN-II-RU-TE-2011-3-0143

Sociological imagination and disciplinary orientation in applied social research. An inquiry into present-day market research in Romania

(Imaginație sociologică și orientare disciplinară în cercetarea socială aplicată. O investigație în cercetarea de piață din România)

Second year of the project - 2012

Scientific report

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Abstract

The project started in October, 2011. After a short period dedicated to organizing the team and structuring the research directions, between October 2011 and December 2011, the research team launched in thorough and in-depth inquiries on the proposed theme: sociological imagination in market research and, broader, in applied social research.

The main activities carried in 2012 include:

- [1] Activities centered on **organizing the research**, administration and reporting;
- [2] **Theoretical investigations**: the theoretical alignment towards the „interactional sociological imagination”, through reading sessions including relevant theoretical texts;
- [3] **Empirical investigations**: conducting the first series of **interviews**; updating and refining the interview guide;
- [4] **Scientific publications**: published papers, as well as submitted papers, to be published;
- [5] **Scientific communication**:
 - a. **Participation in scientific events**:
 - i. The International Conference of the Romanian Sociological Society, „Beyond Globalization?”, May 31st – June 3rd 2012 , Bucharest;
 - ii. Curiosity and Serendipity – a conference on qualitative methods in the social sciences – ESA Research Network 20 Midterm Conference, 20-21 September 2012, Lund, Sweden;
 - b. Elaborating two **Call for Papers**, in collaboration with Compaso – Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology;
- [6] **Public communication and dissemination**:
 - a. Updating the **website**;
 - b. Organizing two thematic workshops at the Doctoral School of Sociology, University of Bucharest (October – November 2011);

Organizing the research

In 2012, the team continued its activity through regular meetings and individual research activities, including field work.

This year, the team also comprised researchers who collaborated on a voluntary basis:

- Roxana Bratu, PhD candidate in Sociology, University of Bucharest;
- Monica Costache, PhD candidate in Sociology, University of Bucharest;
- Alina Petra Marinescu, MA Sociology student, University of Bucharest;
- Maria Miruna Rădan Gorska, PhD candidate in Sociology, University of Kent.

Research activities and results

The main activities that were carried so far, as well as the results that were obtained are logically integrated with the activities from 2011. They are included in the table from Annex 1.

All the expected activities and results were accomplished, with outcomes exceeding the expectations.

Theoretical investigations

In 2012, we explored the concept of „sociological imagination” from an **interactional perspective**, reading and discussing, during regular meetings, texts belonging to theoretical traditions that explore the constitutive role of language (through conversations and dialogues) in the social construction of reality. Among the authors whose texts were read and widely discussed we can mention:

- Theoreticians with backgrounds in Ethnomethodology (EM) and Conversation Analysis (CA): Harold Garfinkel, Harvey Sacks, John Heritage, Rod Watson, Jeff Coulter, Graham Button; precursors of Ethnomethodology: Dorothy E. Smith
- Discursive Psychology theoreticians (DP), analyzing the role of psychological constructs in verbal interactions: Jonathan Potter, Derek Edwards, Margaret Wetherell, Alexa Hepburn, Elizabeth Stokoe, Susan Speer
- Authors discussing qualitative methodology – understanding and interpreting sociological interviews: David Silverman, Stephen Hester & David Francis, Aaron Cicourel.

As a result of these discussions, we detailed the **research questions**, using theoretical concepts characteristic to the above mentioned perspectives:

- How is market research constituted as an interaction structured within organizations and from a disciplinary perspective?
- What are the main interaction areas that contribute to the social construction of consumers’ knowledge within market research? For example, how the following are articulated in organizations:
 - o Interactions between consumers and other actors participating in consumption
 - o Interactions between consumers and researchers
 - o Interactions among researchers, as well as those between researchers and other members of the research team
 - o Interactions between the research team, other departments of the organization, as well as external and internal organization clients
 - o Inter-organizational interactions, such as those specific to membership in professional associations
- What is the role played by technologies and other artifacts in the interactional generation of knowledge in market research?
- How is market research involved in creative processes (advertising)? In what interactions do different aspects of market research appear and are relevant (documents containing numeric results, graphs, qualitative research results, researchers and other research participants, invoking the research process etc. ?)

Also, the theoretical investigations lead to the creation of the publications listed below, in which interactional theoretical perspectives are applied in order to understand different social situations.

Empirical investigations

In 2012, we conducted 10 interviews with market research professionals working in the following organizations:

- GfK Romania (Bucharest and Iași)
- Mercury Research
- Orange

- Unlock Market Research

The empirical research is currently ongoing, as well as the activities related to interviews' transcription and interpretation. So far, we have transcribed interviews with 3 respondents (approximately 6 hours of conversation).

Scientific publications

The research team, along with its collaborators, completed a series of publications in various stages:

- Articles published in IDB indexed journals/publications:

* Cosmin Toth, „Rationality and irrationality in human behaviour”, to be published in Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology – Compasso, 1/2013

* Monica Costache, 2012, „Fat, fire and fluids: a research note on the objects in the everyday life of a beauty salon”, in Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology – Compasso, 1/2012

* Alina Petra Marinescu, Review essay – „When stuff gets covered in fluff in order to build up a paradoxical existence”, in Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology – Compasso, 1/2012

* Alina Petra Marinescu, Review essay – „Saleem Sinai – Number one of the 1001 Midnight’s Children”, to be published Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology – Compasso, 2/2012

- Books:

* Cosima Rughiniş, 2012, Measurement in Sociology. Theories and Practices of Quantification (Măsurarea sociologică. Teorii și practici ale cuantificării). Iași: Polirom.

Scientific communication

In 2012, we presented papers in the following conferences:

Conference	Presentation
„Discourse – Conversation – Communication”, Loughborough University ¹ , martie 2012	[1] Humă, Bogdana, Rughiniş, Cosima, „A discursive approach to impression formation”
The International Conference of the Romanian Sociological Society, „Beyond Globalization?”, May 31st – June 3rd 2012 ² , Bucharest	[2] Humă, Bogdana, Rughiniş, Cosima, „Second chances for first impressions” [3] Toth, Cosmin, „Professional theories and practices in school counselors’ discourses” (Teorii și practici profesionale în discursul consilierilor școlari) [4] Deliu, Alexandra, „Happiness as a discursive practice” [5] Costache, Monica, „Science and skin” [6] Bratu, Roxana, „Lay theories on happiness” [7] Matei, Ștefania, „Peasant objects as indexical presence of Romanian legacy in a changing world”
Curiosity and Serendipity – a	[1] Rughiniş, Cosima; Humă, Bogdana, „Making sense and

¹ The abstracts are available at URL <http://homepages.lboro.ac.uk/~ssca1/DCconf2012/DCCAbstracts.pdf>

² The conference programme is available at URL <http://www.beyondglobalization.ro/conference-programme>

Conference	Presentation
conference on qualitative methods in the social sciences. ESA Research Network 20 Midterm Conference, 20-21 September 2012, Lund, Sweden ³	rhetorical use of agency in social research debates” [2] Humă, Bogdana; Rughiniș, Cosima (Distributed paper) „Theorizing interview conversations: what’s at stake?” [3] Matei, Ștefania, „Narratives of virtue. Rhetorical accounts of knowing historical memorable figures”

Also, within the project we redacted calls for publications, in collaboration with Compaso, Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology:

- The Call for issue 2 / 2012, „Ways of understanding, misunderstanding and not understanding people”;⁴
- The Call for issue 2 / 2013, on „Vocabularies of motive”, currently being finalized⁵.

Public communication and dissemination

The public communication activities included:

- Updating the project’s website: <http://igel.ro>
- Organising two thematic workshops at the Doctoral School of Sociology, University of Bucharest:
 - o “Questions and answers in sociological research”, 22.10.2012
 - o “Measurement in Sociology”, 29.10.2012

³ The abstracts are available at URL:

<http://www.esamidterm2012.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Abstracts-ESA-RN-20-Midterm-2012.pdf>

⁴ The Call is available at URL <http://compaso.eu/2012/07/13/cfp-understanding-people/>

⁵ The preliminary version of the Call is available at:

https://dl.dropbox.com/u/3222251/Temp/Compaso_CfP_Motives_v1.pdf

Annexes

Table 1. Activities and research results, 2011-2012

Activity	Period (M1-36)	Results 2011	Results 2012
Analyzing the relevant theories	1-36	<p>A draft article on the rationality of professional action – using also a previous case study regarding school counselors</p> <p>Translation into Romanian of an important article from the scientific literature</p>	<p>Exploring a series of discursively oriented theoretical and analytical perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discursive Psychology - Conversation Analysis - Rhetoric of inquiry <p>Finalizing the article on the perspectives on rationality in the analysis of the professional action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cosmin Toth, 2013, “Rationality and irrationality in human behaviour”, to be published in Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology – Compaso, 1/2013
Establishing the research universe and selecting the respondents	1-6, 13-14, 25-26	Propositions regarding the selection of respondents	Putting together a preliminary list of respondents from Bucharest and Iași
Developing the research instruments	1-6, 13-14, 25-26	Identifying the main areas to be explored through interviews	Writing an updated interview guide, after conducting the first interviews
Empirical research	3-9 15-21 27-30	<p>Conducting an exploratory interview</p> <p>Elaborating research notes on the exploratory interview</p>	conducting interviews with 10 specialists (sociologists, as well as people with different backgrounds) involved in marketing research, research institutes and organizations from Bucharest and Iași
Organizing, analysing and interpreting the data	4-10, 16-22, 28-31	<p>Development of a Wiki document for collaborative work:</p> <p>http://igel.wikispot.org/</p>	Transcribing the first 3 interviews
Organizing 6 thematic workshops	1-3, 5-8, 13-15, 17-20, 25-27, 29-32	A thematic workshop called “Professional reflexivity” was organized (December 2011)	<p>Two thematic workshops at the Doctoral School of Sociology, University of Bucharest:</p> <p>“Questions and answers in sociological research”, 22.10.2012</p> <p>“Measurement in Sociology”, 29.10.2012</p>

Activity	Period (M1-36)	Results 2011	Results 2012
<p>Scientific reports and publications - one theoretical article - two research articles - a curriculum guide</p>	<p>4-36</p>	<p>Two scientific articles were published: Ana Maria Borlescu (2011) Being a homeopath. Learning and practice in a homeopathic community. Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology, 2(2), 11-31 Ștefania Matei (2011) Media and migration. Layers of knowledge in Romanian written press. Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology, 2(2), 85-102</p>	<p>Presentations at scientific conferences: - Romanian Sociological Society 2012, Bucharest - Conference on Discourse-Conversation-Communication, Loughborough - Conference on Curiosity and Serendipity, Lund</p> <p>Scientific articles/books published: - Articles published in IDB indexed journals/publications: * Cosmin Toth, „Rationality and irrationality in human behaviour”, to be published in Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology – Compaso, 1/2013 * Monica Costache, 2012, „Fat, fire and fluids: a research note on the objects in the everyday life of a beauty salon”, in Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology – Compaso, 1/2012 * Alina Petra Marinescu, Review essay – „When stuff gets covered in fluff in order to build up a paradoxical existence”, in Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology – Compaso, 1/2012 * Alina Petra Marinescu, Review essay – „Saleem Sinai – Number one of the 1001 Midnight’s Children”, to be published Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology – Compaso, 2/2012</p> <p>Books: * Cosima Rughiniș, 2012, Measurement in Sociology. Theories and Practices of Quantification (Măsurarea sociologică. Teorii și practici ale cuantificării). Iași: Polirom</p>

Activity	Period (M1-36)	Results 2011	Results 2012
Project management	1-36	Organizing the research project Reporting the 2011 phase	Organizing the research project Reporting the 2012 phase
Communication and dissemination	1-36	<p>We elaborated a first version of the project's visual identity, with the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -siglă -color scheme - doc template -ppt template -wordpress template for the website <p>Aquiring the http://igel.ro domain name (with the financial support of the Research Center for Human Resources, Management and Marketing)</p> <p>Placing the website online at: http://igel.ro</p>	Updating the website of the project: http://igel.ro