

Social Sciences in Contexts of Contemporary Geopolitical Challenges

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Abstract

The world of social sciences is similar to the world of peoples and reflects similar geopolitical problems which are in global movement among nations. For instance, there is a problem of “ideological booking” for social scientists. “Ideological booking” is deriving from state or lobbying some other political forces requirement to social sciences and social scientists to construct and approve some ideology which justify the actions of state (or some other political forces), - in spite of principles of scientific ethics and disinterest. “Scientific ideology” is impossible; this concept is oxymoron, meaningless combination of words. Social scientists must reject some “ideological booking” and oppose the ideological pressure with help of “cognitive resistance” and “scientific compulsion”.

“Cognitive resistance” is specific type of counteraction to something or somebody based on using of advantage in knowledge, intellect, and rationality. “Scientific compulsion” is very highest type of “cognitive resistance” when social scientists, using their advantage in knowledge, intellect, and scientific rationality, not only resist to external political and ideological pressure, but also, consolidating themselves as specific social group, force ruling subject to take decisions, advantageous both for social sciences and sciences as whole.

Contemporary geopolitical challenges in most cases divide the world of social sciences on the “northern” social sciences and the “southern” social sciences. For instance, southern social theory is opposed to northern social theory in sociology and other social sciences (e.g. in social and political philosophy). This opposition was researched, for instance, R.Connel. Another geopolitical context can be considered through the problems of social ontology. For instance, we have introduced the notion of “ontological fact” which embraces geopolitical contexts. Ontological fact is empirical knowledge about processes and interactions occurring in society, which is epistemologically, ideologically and geopolitically selected, filtered and interpreted by a particular ontological program (or by a particular social ontologist) which serves as an “empirical base” of evidence for any social ontological concept. Therefore, different

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geopolitical vectors and trends saturate with all massive of social sciences. Social scientists should not accept geopolitical challenges passively but they react actively on them. Above-mentioned "cognitive resistance" is such basic principle for this reaction.

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There are two fundamental oppositions in interrelations of three types of sciences: natural, social and humanitarian. The first opposition (natural sciences *versus* social sciences) played a leading role in philosophy of science of the second half of XX century. Else Fritz Machlup in his brilliant work "Are the Social Sciences Really Inferior?" (Machlup F. *'Are the Social Sciences Really Inferior?'* // Philosophy of Social Science: Reader. New York. 1963. P.158-180) pointed at nine key points in accordance with a lot of researchers supposed social sciences were inferior in relation with natural science (invariability of observations; verifiability of hypothesis; exactness of findings, etc.). But following discussions on "quality" of research in social knowledge are developed in light of discovering of new horizons "exactness" and "objectivity" of social sciences which radically were different from "exactness" and "objectivity" in natural sciences. Naturally we should not state "this problem has gone to the past", this problem also exists in present times, but now (in the first third of XXI century) it becomes only (not more than!) a starting-point for reflection on another key opposition "social sciences *versus* humanitarian sciences".

Social sciences - it is the sciences studying a society, whose main signs are: 1) orientation to construction of social knowledge on model of natural sciences - mathematicians, physicists, biology; or, speaking differently, "imitation" natural sciences in methodology and theory; 2) accent on studying of social interaction and social communications, - in a counterbalance to personal, individual, especial characteristics of the individuals entering these interactions and communications; 3) an emphasis on studying of objective characteristics of social interaction, - thus the subjective component of these interactions is rather minimized. The humanities are the sciences which overall objective is studying of the person against a society and working out own, specific methodology, - distinct from methodology of natural sciences. Particularly it is expressed in following characteristics: 1) the humanities adhere own, humanitarian, methodology of construction of knowledge of a society, - "without imitating" natural sciences and without being guided by their methodology; 2) in social interaction of individuals the emphasis is placed on studying of their personal, especial, individual characteristics, - even to the detriment of the analysis of the interaction; 3) the basic object of research in the humanities is the text, and the primary goal - interpretation of this text for the purpose of achievement of its full understanding; 4) the humanities are dialogic: they are interested in individuals who say something, and those individuals that enter dialogue with each other speaking something to each other on purpose to understand the sense of the said; in this aspect the humanities are in a greater degree communicative, than social sciences.

The problem of "social facts" always was in the centre of attention in social theory and social ontology (M.Gilbert, J.Searle, F.Guala, etc.). For instance, according to Searle, "definition

of 'social fact' refers to any fact involving collective intentionally". However, we would like to suppose another interpretation of 'social fact' which is connected with contraposition of "social facts" to "humanitarian facts". We give here the following definitions: (1) social facts are our knowledge on social process and interactions which is registered and interpreted with scientific methods and scientific methodology; (2) humanitarian facts are our knowledge on an individual, his thoughts, wishes and actions which is registered and interpreted with scientific methods and scientific methodology.

Look the simplest instance: *suicide* is social fact or humanitarian fact? Before E. Durkheim answer was only one: *suicide* was humanitarian fact, so long as it was provoked with exclusively individual psychological qualities of a person who committed the act of suicide. But E. Durkheim brilliantly showed in his work "On Suicide" (1897): *suicide* must be interpreted not only in "individual psychological" aspect (i.e. humanitarian fact), but also as stable repeating social phenomenon (social institution), i.e. social fact.

In our opinion, CMW-revolution really took place in the second half of XIX and in the beginning of XX centuries. CMW should be decoded as "Comte - Marx - Weber". Firstly, August Comte formulated a positivist paradigm; this paradigm became a basis for development of all social sciences in XIX-XX and beginning of XXI centuries. But, for instance, humanitarian sciences (cultural science, philology, literary criticism) have rejected this paradigm, and this became a ground for birth of humanitarian knowledge. Secondly, *as a result of this revolution, social knowledge has separated from humanitarian knowledge*. At the beginning Neo-Kantianism gave a powerful impulse for this process, and Max Weber finally completed it. And, at last, thirdly, social and humanitarian sciences utterly and finally have got ideological measurement; ideology intersperses in them as integral part, and finally this fact was proved by Karl Marx.

"Ideological booking" is deriving from state or lobbying some other political forces requirement to social sciences and social scientists to construct and approve some ideology which justify the actions of state (or some other political forces), - in spite of principles of scientific ethics and disinterestedness. But science always is opposite to ideology! "Scientific ideology" is impossible; this concept is oxymoron, meaningless combination of words. Social scientists must reject some "ideological booking" and can firmly oppose the ideological pressure with help of (1) "cognitive resistance" and (2) "scientific compulsion". "Cognitive resistance" is specific type of counteraction to something or somebody based on using of advantage in knowledge, intellect, and rationality. "Scientific compulsion" is very highest type of "cognitive resistance" when social scientists, using their advantage in knowledge, intellect, and scientific rationality, not only resist to external political and ideological pressure, but also, consolidating themselves as specific social group, force ruling subject to take decisions, advantageous both for social sciences and sciences as whole.

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theory is opposed to northern social theory in sociology and other social sciences (e.g. in social and political philosophy). This opposition was researched, for instance, R.Connel. Another geopolitical context can be considered through the problems of social ontology. For instance, we have introduced the notion of “ontological fact” which embraces geopolitical contexts. Ontological fact is empirical knowledge about processes and interactions occurring in society, which is epistemologically, ideologically and geopolitically selected, filtered and interpreted by a particular ontological program (or by a particular social ontologist) which serves as an “empirical base” of evidence for any social ontological concept.

Therefore, different geopolitical vectors and trends saturate with all massive of social sciences. Social scientists should not accept geopolitical challenges passively but they react actively on them. Above-mentioned “cognitive resistance” is such basic principle for this reaction. The world of social sciences is similar to the world of peoples and reflects similar geopolitical problems which are in global movement among nations. For instance, there is a problem of “ideological booking” for social scientists.

Southern social theory is opposed to Northern social theory in sociology and other social sciences (e.g. in social and political philosophy). This opposition was researched, for instance, R.Connel. However, we suppose, under improved conceptual analysis such opposition can be transferred to other directions: social ontology and social epistemology. For instance, Russian theoretical and ontological tradition in sociology also can be described with a language of “southern social theory”: it is opposed to contemporary northern social theory, taking all useful things from the last.

Here we formulate “KHM-Program” (KHM - Kant-Hegel-Marx) in southern social ontology and social theory which is based on “improved” categorial reformatting of modern socio-ontological knowledge, referring to the tradition of Kant, Hegel and Marx. We believe that all modern ontological and theoretical programs (J.Searle, T.Lawson, M.Archer, B.Epstein, etc.) only ostensibly appeal to “empirical facts”, while in fact they are based on “ontological facts”. Ontological fact is empirical knowledge about processes and interactions occurring in society, which is epistemologically, ideologically and geopolitically selected, filtered and interpreted by a particular ontological program (or by a particular social ontologist) which serves as an “empirical base” of evidence for any social ontological concept. “KHM-program” also presents its own development vector of the “improved categorial analysis”, i.e. correction, clarification and improvement of basic ontological categories, which allows us to deepen our understanding of the nature of social reality. This program uses “nomadic concepts” (C.Green), “thick and thin concepts” (G.Abend, etc.), “reflexive equilibrium in conceptual analysis” (G.Brun) - these ideas can also be applied in the “improved categorial analysis” as the development vector of the “KHM-program” and they, in future, are able to strengthen its position in opposition to “northern social ontology”.

It is necessary also to elaborate not only “southern social theory” and “southern social theory” but “southern social epistemology”: for instance, we can point out at the very perspective

vector – investigation of – investigation of echo chambers and epistemic bubbles (Nguyen C.T. Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles // Episteme. 2020. Vol.17. No.2. P.141-161). An epistemic bubble is a social epistemic structure in which other relevant voices have been left out, perhaps accidentally. An echo chamber is a social epistemic structure from which other relevant voices have been actively excluded and discredited. Echo chambers can explain the post-truth phenomena. Mere exposure to evidence can shatter an epistemic bubble, but may actually reinforce an echo chamber. Finally, echo chambers are much harder to escape.

There is also a sociological and political aspect of any geopolitical pressure. This is pressure on social science through different *scientific philanthropy foundations*. Take, for instance, as a case the situation with Central Asian social sciences.

Sociology of social sciences is a new and fast developing direction in contemporary sociology of science and technology. This direction aims at the study of social sciences as a specific social institution deriving from basic foundations of society. These foundations put deep influence upon the structure and the system of social sciences in all aspects - political, economic, cultural, etc. At the same time in this case we have “reverse connection”: social sciences themselves influence on social institutions, changing them in some direction. Just this interconnection always is in the centre of research attention of “sociology of social sciences”. Also it should be pointed out at close coordination between “sociology of social sciences” and “philosophy of social sciences”: these disciplines solve partly parallel tasks, but on different levels.

Central Asian countries (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) can be considered as a very interesting “training ground” for sociology of social sciences and, studying of the world of Asian social sciences, this sociology is able to get a lot of original returns.

Firstly, specific cultural tradition plays a significant role in the development of Asian social sciences. Speaking otherwise, Central Asian social sciences are more determinated in sociocultural aspect than, for instance, European social sciences. Goals and ethical norms of Central Asian scholars are tied more to religion and mores: these norms in least degree are yielded to change and the influence of modernity and post-modernity. The process of research itself in the sphere of social sciences often is considered as carrying of moral obligations and debt (for instance, the “debt” of junior scholars with respect to senior scholars, or, the “debt” of the scholars with respect to their national state). Therefore, the first goal of Central Asian sociology of social sciences is investigation of this influence.

In these countries Soros Foundation, Aga-Han Foundation, Eurasia Foundation and other funds promoted a lot of programs of development in social sciences with an aim of the introduction of western standards into national science and education. However, in reality such actions very often lead to the collision of western and eastern values: non-critically learning the achievements of western social knowledge, a Central Asian scholar sometimes has lost his own “common sense” in social knowledge and his specific sociocultural norms of connection and research.

Besides “force pressure”, we have here also the influence of “scientific vogue”: “weak” Central Asian social science sometimes simply follows blindly “strong social sciences” of western countries. But at the same time such blind following scientific vogue strongly injures a true scientist. Sometimes “fashion problems” in science after some time show its “surfacing”, “skin-deeping”. If a Central Asian scholar continuously looks for such problems, his research level can gradually decrease and the given scientist can fall into the state where his scientific individuality has weakened. This scholar loses his “research identity” and ceases to have authority in his scientific surroundings. Concerning him one could assert that the “orientation towards truth” is changed for “orientation towards popularity”, and such a state of matter also harms his scientific reputation.

But, there is another side of medal in “external influence”. In several cases Central Asian states, learning the standards of western thinking, produced something like “mythologization” in national social science, - in first place, in national history and cultural sciences. Here we have a paradox: non-critical and irrational adoption of advanced western social knowledge leads towards to creation “national mythos”, which are grounded on advanced western social knowledge itself! As a result, Central Asian social sciences stop to carry out their critical and rational function and become an appendage of national ideology.

Probably, Asian social sciences in most cases have enough polarized scientific stratification and more strongly expressed “Matthew effect”, - in comparison, for example, with European and North-American countries.

What is “Matthew effect”, if we cast a glance from the side of intellectual property of a scholar?

The intellectual property of a scholar is property of a scholar on all knowledge and information that he can possess, dispose and use. These are all ideas, being in social field around him and available for him as resource, including ideas, worked out by him personally as the subject of scientific creative activity. There are two main types of that property: general intellectual property and specific intellectual property. “Matthew effect” may be defined as “accruing of large increments of peer recognition to scientists of a great reputе for particular contribution in contrast to the minimizing of such recognition for scholars who have not yet made their recognition”¹. In fact, here we have only one of the wide-spread forms of the disbalance between informal status and formal status of a scholar: the first appears on the base of accumulation of intellectual property of a researcher (mainly, his specific innovative property), but the second - on base of accumulation of his rewards. When between the accumulation of intellectual property and the accumulation of rewards there is a discrepancy, then and that condition of disproportion between the contribution to science and rewards, depicted by R. Merton, appears: one scholar get more rewards, than his intellectual property is worthy, another scholar, on the contrary, less. Any disproportion between formal and informal statuses of a scholar in scientific community, between accumulated by him specific innovative intellectual property and rewards, got by him in social science produces the phenomenon, as “the Matthew effect”.

As a result, the differentiation among Central Asian scholars is stronger, and more famous scholars get more scientific goods than they must have. This leads to stagnation in Central Asian scientific society, the decrease of mobility, although, perhaps, it more corresponds to Central Asian scientific ethics and tradition.

Problem of power and stratification in Central Asian social sciences.

Power in science is not oxymoron at all, that power also real and tangible as any other power in other sphere of activity. All structure of science is throughout hierarchic, however, in contrast to other spheres of human activity, a such hierarchy is based on not only formal, but also formal principles, the last can be recognized as being even more significance than the first principles. Also it could be remarked contemporary science studies aim at formalization and calculation of every informal thing in science in order to calculate a “weight” of every scientist both owing to his formal status and informal services (for instance, through citation index, etc.).

There are two types of power in science: formal and informal, and both types of power to some extent are grounded on science intellectual property (first of all, specific innovative intellectual property). The most “visible” type is formal power; here the position of every scientist in formal scientific hierarchy is designated more exactly. Under large administrative resource the volume of that power is very significant and accessibility of different goods and awards is great enough; however, this can influence to a small degree on the volume of informal power. Informal power is, in the first place, *authority* in some sphere of scientific knowledge: this authority embraces the possibility of active influence on the estimation of results, getting by other scientists, and, as a whole, on the distribution of roles and statuses in science. Sometimes informal power can be formalized; for instance, through the institution of recommendations, enlisting of the given scientist into experts, etc. But mostly informal power does not give material goods for this scientist; it only raises his inner self-appraisal. Also informal power can be compared with informal influence in science and analyzed through subsequent institutionalization (invisible colleges, virtual workshop, etc.).

In Central Asian social sciences we also observe a great disproportion between formal and formal power. Possessing of administrative resource allows for scholar-administrator to accumulate his formal power for the obtaining of his scientific rewards. Scholars with informal power in the form of “scientific influence” are not allowed to formal power, including high administrative positions. In some cases they not achieving ruling positions and they are obliged to go outside his country.

As long as external geopolitical pressure then it should be remarked Central Asian social science the very slowly moves towards “the open social science”. We define “open social science” in same sense approximately, as Karl Popper defines “the open society”: “open social science” is science, where are respected the rights and liberties of a scientist and the last can take the independent decisions; here is absent any economic and political pressure on a scientist and he acts, founding on the principles of critical rationalism and “scientific democracy”; a scientist is free

as an intellectual property-owner and can order it as it is comfortably for him. To counterbalance it, “closed social science” is something like “closed society”: a scientist cannot take independent decisions; there are different forms of the pressure (economic, political, administrative) on him, in science “scientific aristocracy” rules a ball and only a formal status of a scientist is of importance; the last cannot freely order his intellectual property and it can be withdrawn from him any time. From that point of view, science intellectual property is a keystone of “open science”, its basis and fundamental principle. Also we introduce inappropriate the contraposition to each other of “open science” and “proprietary science”: in fact, property is the basis of any freedom and the destruction of the institution of property in science will bring the destruction of freedom. The juridical and moral recognition of the intellectual property of a scientist will not able to eliminate free access to science information; on the contrary, it will enhance the responsibility for the use of another’s scientific results, cultivate the respect to another’s intellectual property and intellectual work. It could be noticed, that approach deepens the notion “intellectual freedom” and “political freedom” to the notions “economic freedom” and “freedom of property”, but simultaneously confirms the restrictions of this freedom in the name of the interests of other property-owners. In that case “open science” is science where the principles of the freedom of property are opened for critics and is constantly improved in order that may be else more and more “open”. In general, if the given “social system of science” in some way “preserves” legal and moral establishments concerning property (or it directly does not recognize that property), not trying constantly to improve them, there is a danger of changing towards the system of “closed science”. Therefore, I suppose, “proprietary” science is the best way to “open society”. It is necessary at the whole to re-interpret the notion “open”: it must be treated more deeply; it does not only mean “open access to intellectual property in science”, but also “open science” in the sense “the open society”. Probably, a first step should be considered as the gradual transition from moral recognition of science intellectual property to juridical recognition of it.

All above-said is very urgent for Central Asian social sciences. In my opinion, Central Asian scholars *owing to external geopolitical pressure* defend badly their intellectual property and grounding on this intellectual property their political and economic independency. Just recognizing themselves as independent property-owners (and feeling themselves in such role) they are able to show the movement of Central Asian social sciences in direction of “the *strong* open science”. If national governments can to protect the intellectual property of their scholars and recognize the last persons as property-owners and equal partners, then any enforcement in regard to them will be impossible.

(Footnotes)

¹ Matthew R. The Matthew Effect in Science, II: Cumulative Advantage and the Symbolism of Intellectual Property //ISIS, 1988, vol.79, P. 609.