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Old and New Challenges for the Autonomy of Social Sciences

Abstract: The comparison of the picture of social sciences at the beginning of the 20th century and their state at the start of the 21st. leads to the discovery of unexpected changes, contradictions and paradoxes typical of post-modernism.

A question is addressed: do all these changes, which bring about the discussion of the post-modern era, cover also sciences, and social sciences in particular. Paradoxically, the post-modern era of informationalism and a society of knowledge is not conducive to the autonomy of science and consequently disturbs the frail and delicate autonomy of social sciences.

The post-modern phenomenon of departing from the modernist division of sciences and scientific disciplines manifests itself in theoretically and methodologically dubious cultural, social, political, and other studies. One can look at that phenomenon as a reaction to excessive fragmentation and autonomization in social sciences and an attempt of integrating reconstruction aiming also at eliminating the autonomy of theory in relation to practice.

Keywords: autonomy of science, social sciences, society of knowledge

Introduction: Problems of Science in Post-modernity

The doubtfulness of the methodological status of social sciences, including sociology, was a regular subject of discussions of the 20th century. They were opened by the debate—characterized by polarization of positions—on the possibilities of scientification of the study of cultural phenomena and conducted under the overwhelming influence of neo-Kantian epistemology, often referred to as *Methodenstreit*. It seems interesting to compare the picture of social sciences at the beginning of the 20th century and their state at the start of the 21st. This comparison, even quite superficial, leads to the discovery of unexpected changes, contradictions and paradoxes typical of post-modernism, easily noticed in changes of the scientific culture. The fundamental change consists in the fact that if a hundred years ago social sciences and sociology in particular, were gaining recognition in view of the epistemology and philosophy of science, the beginning of the 21st century—described as post- metaphysical—the object of attention and controversy is sociology of knowledge and sociology of science, questioning existing epistemological views. The change consists in a fundamental dissimilarity of positions occupied by social sciences, including sociology, that resulted from their shift into the center of interest and related—if one may say so—intellectual

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sociologization due to the outstanding significance of social factors in interpretation of investigated phenomena. The second statement refers to the paradox of science's changing position in society and its de-scientization, also due to social sciences of science that carry the idea of cognitive relativism. Therefore, there is a completely new context in which an older problem of autonomy of social sciences may appear; the context in which—according to many—the problem of autonomy loses its immediate interest. The older, or previous, challenges for social sciences centered on striving for recognition of their autonomy as a special, scientific way of cognition in the overall resources of human knowledge. Therefore, social sciences shared that challenge with all other sciences of the time, particularly those that provided the model of scientism, i.e., natural sciences that confronted the traditional worldviews. The second challenge, related after all to the first one, concerned the role of a scholar and its autonomy in relation to other social roles; the autonomy shaped gradually in a historical process (Znaniecki 1986). Finally, the third challenge consisted in defining the autonomy of social sciences in relation to natural sciences, i.e., in recognition of—as a Polish sociologist Stanisław Ossowski put it—peculiarity of social sciences demonstrated in different ways (Ossowski 1983).

Before we start to reflect upon these issues in a more systematic way in a new, post-modern context, the paradox of growing doubtfulness of science in the contemporary society of knowledge needs to be proven. In a characteristic way Manuel Castells travesties the statement of Descartes: "I think, therefore I produce" (Castells 2000, vol. I: 21) and develops a broad analysis of creating, processing and conveying information as a source of productivity and power owing to new technologies and social organization. However, none of the old problems of science's autonomy disappeared during the age of transformation, also called post-Cartesian in the light of sociology of science demystifying the cognizing, solipsist Ego.

It would obviously be illusive to accept the turn of the century itself as a sign of some new opening in history, including history of science. The term "turn" itself expresses a rather unsophisticated and popular conception of social time, of historical processes always full of trauma and conflicts that in a collective consciousness seem to accumulate in the representation of some "end" of time. There is much evidence that the intellectual trend developing under the banner of post-modernism that gained momentum in the 1980s may as well be interpreted as a rationalized form of some kind of millenarism, without excluding a certain cultural technique by which I mean reaching for existing cultural models of the "end of history," or eschatology, to act for stipulated change. Immanuel Wallerstein's *The End of the World as We Know It: Social Science for the Twenty-First Century* (Wallerstein 1999) could serve here as an example.

However, it reflects not only the intensification of social changes but also their cultural transformation in modern advanced societies. The post-modern discourse is accompanied by the globalization discourse. They both refer to far reaching changes typical of the modern form of capitalism in which cultural factors move to the foreground. Daniel Bell (1979) or Castells, among others, notice that movement and confirm the point of view of all those scholars who, like Max Weber, and other cultural

sociologists, preferred to introduce the perspective of the sociology of knowledge and investigation of meaning of mental dispositions in society. Weber spoke of a specific ethos of early capitalism. In its contemporary, consumerist form it is no longer the ethos of a puritan asceticism but a multitude of more or less integrated ethoses of prosperity and high quality of life, organized around hedonistic values. Science—analyzed in relation to what after social phenomenologists has come to be called *Lebenswelt*, and not reality of structures or institutions—has become only one of many suppliers of meaningful goals and means for those ethoses, probably not the most valid any more, and replacing religion. Society of an era described as post-modern, late modern, or—to show more distinctly its characteristic dissimilarity—new era of informationalism (Castells), as a risk society (Beck), a reflexive society (Giddens), is often called a society of knowledge (Drucker). No society has been deprived of knowledge. Therefore, the last of the above mentioned terms requires special consideration because it is not synonymous to a society of science.

There has been much thought given to the relation of post-modernity in its various aspects to the Enlightenment with its key idea of progress made possible with reason capable of scientific cognizance and based on critical, empirical verification or falsification of hypotheses, in contrast to doctrines and dogmas referring to the authority. Science was to expand human freedom both in relation to nature and all social elements. That last task was entrusted to social sciences and the greatest expectations were addressed to sociology.

Therefore, a justified question appears: Do all these changes, which bring about the talk of some post-modern era, cover also science and, what is the primary object of attention here, social sciences, including sociology. Paradoxically, the post-modern era of informationalism and a society of knowledge is not conducive to the autonomy of science and consequently disturbs the frail and delicate autonomy of social sciences. I prefer to speak of the problem of the autonomy of science because it is a wider problem than a purely epistemological problem of objectivity of cognition in social sciences that has been the subject of stormy controversies since the beginning of the 20th century when Max Weber questioned the value judgment based on heteronomic norms. The issue of autonomy being discussed here will concern only partially the normative heteronomy since it covers broader problems of functioning of scientific institutions and scholarly roles. Social sciences, aspiring to a full scientific character, searched for autonomy in relation to various disciplines of practice and orthodoxy, just as sciences in general did earlier. Coming across difficulties in the theoretical and methodological constitution of social sciences one would also look for their autonomy in relation to science in contemporary significance related to natural science and its successes. Max Weber, among others, symbolizes that search for autonomy within the field of rational investigative research, formulating—after Wilhelm Dilthey—a program of understanding sciences, and understanding sociology in particular. This internal autonomy within the limits of sciences was to follow from specific characteristics of social reality with the "humanistic coefficient" being studied (Znaniecki 1934), and therefore subjected to some earlier practical cognitive and valuation schematizations or typifications. Scientific constructs of such an understanding

science led from practice to theory and, strictly speaking, from practical cognizance to theoretical one. The purely epistemological problems of understanding science will not be discussed here. However, the distinction has to be made between a skepticism towards the scientific character of such understanding, theoretical cognition and complete turning away from theory towards practice, i.e., a turn within postulated earlier autonomy of understanding that can be observed in the so called post-modernist turn. The identity of social sciences as modern sciences disappears; one can see it in such terms as social studies or social research.

The reasons for such a change that can have far-reaching consequences for sciences, and in a broader sense for culture or civilization described as scientific-technological, should be searched for in a wider context of changes defining relations between science and other fields of activity and values in a socio-cultural context of post-modernity.

Three books by Norbert Elias (1987), Ulrich Beck (2000) and Immanuel Wallerstein (1999) present three different sociological views of these changes and simultaneously three different outlooks on social sciences and sociology. They were formulated in the second half of the 20th century so they allow to follow these changes briefly. The civilizing process perspective is common for them.

Autonomy of Science and Its Antinomies

The modern society of industrial era privileged science and its autonomy. The preceding formulation was expressed in a language of which almost all categories, including "society," have been shaping since around the 17th century, simultaneously with modernity. Immanuel Wallerstein points to three differentiating areas of institutions: market, state and civil society, that were followed by the shaping of the most important social disciplines: economy, political science, and sociology (Wallerstein 2004: 157). This differentiation is not complete and one could point to the importance of emerging of a modern idea of culture which for some time functioned interchangeably with the concept of civilization—those notions gradually underwent differentiation and specialization—and consequently, cultural sciences. The relations between economy, politics, society and culture have created challenges still to be met by social sciences. Relatively, much attention has been given to find an answer to a question of how the formation of social sciences was possible. Attention was called to the separation of society from the state and politics and simultaneous emergence of questions related to phenomena and processes non-reducible to the issues of political system and wielding of power that were becoming sociological problems. Such autonomy of social phenomena and, consequently, social science was more of an intellectual reconstruction or a postulate than the actual state of affairs.

To be able to speak about the autonomy of social sciences the autonomy of science had to emerge. Ulrich Beck points to the importance of possible specialization consisting in drawing the lines between scientific cognition and political action owing to the separation of an institutional system of science and political system of a mod-

ern state respectively—to go a step further, also political parties and civil roles. It was a specialization and separation of theory and practice—cognizance that can be oriented towards the past and decision making that turns to the future.

In post-modern societies where the scientification of the Enlightenment took place and covered almost every aspect of human activity, one can observe the secondary blurring of border lines between science and non-science, including science and politics. According to Beck, who apparently refers to the work of Jürgen Habermas devoted to scientification of administrative and political decisions (Habermas 1983: 402), it led the existing system of science to lose its status of a distinguished cognitive monopolist (Beck 2002: 236–237). These are the grounds for talking about reflexive society where scientific knowledge penetrates all institutions. That term was popularized mostly by Beck and Anthony Giddens but one can also draw the same conclusion from earlier considerations of Habermas.

Beck suggests to distinguish two phases in the process of shaping relations between science and non-scientific acts in modernity: simple scientification and reflexive scientification, where the latter one consists in the transition to a situation in which the results of scientific study and its methods were widely accepted in practice of institutions other than scientific. However, one must notice that reflexivity has a double meaning here. It refers not only to the presence of science in everyday life, i.e., its transforming activity towards nature and society, but also to the reflexive reference of science to itself, exemplified in the development of various meta-sciences—sciences of science. Going back to the key problem of autonomy of science discussed here, it is increasingly problematic in its reflexive phase. The question concerns not only the demystification of the so called "pure" science due to the development of social sciences of science but the consequences of changes taking place in the area of the state, market and civil society penetrated by the media in the process of globalization. That context of complex changes, broadly analyzed, consisting mostly in strengthening globally the market sphere at the expense of the state and civil society raises questions concerning the possibilities, scope and nature of autonomy of scientific research. One can clearly see the processes of de-monopolization of cognition offered by science, the loss of privileges of scholars and scientific institutions to their influence and distinguished position in modernity. Beck stresses that paradoxical situation saying that it is the success of sciences that has led to their dethronement (Beck 2002: 248). He is one of those observers of the changes who do not hesitate to speak of the breakdown of both theoretical and social identity of science, i.e., shaking of the methodological basis and hitherto existing principles governing the relation of science to practice, in contrast to the early phase of simple scientification in which the critical scientific questioning was directed at the existing common knowledge. In the late modernity it leads to relativization of truths created in the field of science. Anti-dogmatism and criticism, often described as the organized skepticism, beside such characteristic values of science as universalism, disinterestedness and communitarism described by Robert K. Merton (1982: 579–589), together with the development of mass education and being conducive to the weakening of authorities finally turned against science. The methodical skepticism that is an essential attribute of cognitive approach in scientific

research, in the phase of reflective scientification turns against science. It is generated in various areas that are essentially non-scientific; areas of practice "scientificated" through its influence. To a certain degree the excessive development of science leads to autonomization of practice—of politics and economy—in a way that science is threatened by a kind of feudalization (Beck 2002: 256).

According to Beck, another important source of the problem is the failure to shape a single, uniform theory of science. It should be remembered, however, that theory of science and scientific theory belong to two different orders and transferring failures of the former, i.e., meta-science, onto the perception of the latter is a phenomenon that belongs to the area of social psychology of science. What is threatened here are the sciences that are weak, frail and relatively not very well advanced theoretically, e.g., social sciences.

The development of both natural and social sciences has in modernity inevitably led to questioning of long-lived images of reality identified with reality itself. First, it led to the conviction that science competes for truth with religion. Nevertheless, such statements as the one formulated by Beck that science, in the process of advancement lost its truth (Beck 2002: 252) and instead of serving truth became an activity without truth, reflect misunderstandings concerning the nature of scientific research. These misunderstandings grow on the basis of psycho-social phenomena and are deeply rooted in those cultural expectations of unquestionable truth that were created in the modern epoch when science competed with religion. Here one can look for factors that weaken science in the post-modern phase since science can not meet the expectation for certainty. Its cognition is by nature hypothetical, based on so called "data," but that data is constructed. Should one speak of "inability" of science to provide truth, it favors the development of strong sciences, i.e., natural sciences, and threatens the frail social sciences. Instead of elaborating their methodologies to perfection, constructing data and hypotheses, and formulating new questions one is threatened by the acceptance of unchangeable "laws" and "truths" governing social life and provided by various more or less traditional and socially legitimate sources.

Autonomy in Science: the Problem of Disciplines and Specialities

The development of scientific cognition is reflected by the contemporary multitude and differentiation of sciences that simultaneously, beside the hypothetical aspect of cognition, contribute to its growing partiality, fragmentation, and incompleteness. On the other hand, the multi-faced cognition remains in a total opposition to a need, or a habit, for simplification, schematization that formed the basis of permanence of patterns of routine action in a traditional society.

Therefore, one can speak of—as Beck does—a particular "surplus" of science that defines its competencies as hypotheses, very often competitive, and offers relativistic pluralism of interpretations and explanations. It is worth stressing that the problem of science in post-modernity does not result from science itself as Beck seems to suggest. That problem has its structural, institutional context related to change in the

three above mentioned areas: state, market and civil society. Moreover, as mentioned above, it has a psycho-social and cultural context, i.e., it results from specific instances of discordance between old expectations and routines based on certainty and new pressures resulting from the new complexity of post-modern societies subject to globalization. Those new pressures are defined by the category of risk and if they were to be related also to science, than social sciences are especially subject to that risk. It is social sciences indeed that—borrowing Beck's expression—face the threat that just as before the modern epoch others will dictate what "should be the truth" (Beck 2002: 256). Those others could just be significantly different from old institutional authorities and could assume the form of a democratic authority—the majority's opinion. The old, initial and key problem of the autonomy of scientific study remains unsolved. In the area of social sciences in particular the division between the roles of "laymen" and "experts" becomes obliterated the more so because various non-scientific agendas and institutions produce knowledge for their own need, borrowing or imitating methods and techniques of research and names of scientific institutions.

In Beck's opinion, users of science free themselves from science more and more effectively with a help of science. These claims, however, require some correction. While socio-technique has been developing, the relationship of science with practice in the case of social reality has never consisted in a simple control of science over practice as was the case with natural sciences. Here as well the pluralistic offer of scientific knowledge, but—what's more important—with a questionable status of scientific character intensified with questioning the authority of science in general, favors not only the autonomization of practice but also its offensive in the area of scientific study. Social sciences become practical sciences in a new way. Beck speaks of socially recognized "cognition," of which science is but one of "co-producers." It should be stressed that it is not simply a case of cooperation but partly exploitation, partly cooperation, and party competition with the participation of media communicating various forms and shapes of knowledge.

A systematic practice of science required social legitimization of the roles of scholars, and in the modern era the national state came with the aid. Currently the financial base of autonomy guaranteed by the state, connected in modernity to the autonomy of a corporation of scholars—a specific sovereign republic of scholars—is shrinking. The proverbial "ivory tower" of academic scholars, or academic study, seems to be a less threatening side effect of modernist science than imminent loss of autonomy, feudalization of science, loosening and liberalization of principles of professional control in the area of science. It should be stressed again that frail social sciences are more susceptible to such manifestations of risk. As far as natural sciences are concerned, the specialization continues and related professionalization of a scientist's role curtailed by requirements of high competence, will continue. As far as social sciences, and more broadly the humanities, one can observe the leveling of existing disciplines of science—caused by various non-scientific factors—that results in subjecting them to various forms of practice, exemplified by diverse social or cultural studies. It poses a threat to the professionalization of the roles of scholars in social sciences. It may result in the mix-up and easy access of non-professionals.

A great number of works have been produced on the subject of human societies and problems of social sciences, especially sociology. A look at these problems is usually related to elaboration of the motives around established subjects. The central one is the problem of autonomy of cognition and the problem of risk—issues raised by Beck—and discussed earlier by Habermas and Norbert Elias. The views of Elias are worth considering because he discusses also the question of autonomy of the scholar's role. In the mid of the 20th century Elias started with a question of why social research is still less effective scientifically, both theoretically and practically, and always leads to frustration when one takes into account the ability to oppose threats and areas of risk created by people themselves. It is perfectly clear that among those the most serious ones are the permanent threats of some groups of people being destroyed by others. Contrary to Beck, Elias puts the risk related to the consequences of taking advantage of accomplishments of natural sciences within social processes—in conflicts resulting from the competition of individuals and groups struggling for status or power, and not in science, defending firmly its right to autonomy. He associated the problems of social sciences with inadequate autonomy of scholars themselves. There has been much attention given to the subject—object relation in the processes of cognition. Attention was brought to the specific character of cognition in social sciences that ultimately is a kind of self-cognition of social coexistence. Elias deepened that analysis introducing as antonyms the categories of involvement and detachment.

Searching for conditions of lack of involvement entirely separated from any interest, i.e., of separation from practice in scientific research, Elias suggests above all the adoption of a long perspective of time for the investigated phenomena. It is definitely a simplification, not only because natural sciences also study the short-term phenomena, but, first of all, because in research of social phenomena as historical phenomena it is not enough to adopt the perspective of a long duration, or a long lasting process of change, to guarantee disengaged, impartial, objective cognition. The historical perspective, contrary to what Elias claims, is not analogous to the perspective of cosmology. Discovering the developmental paths of social institutions and connections between social phenomena is always a reading of meaning of historical processes, opening the possibility of multiple interpretation. The adoption of a long-time perspective does not by itself guarantee impartiality and objectivity, although a short-time perspective could be less conducive to detachement from involvement in immediate interest, valuation and group sentiments hindering the cognitive autonomy of a researcher.

The problem becomes even more complicated if one accepts—as Elias and the majority of contemporary sociologists—the critique of the philosophical theory of cognition based on Descartes' cogito, i.e., a subject who is not involved; an idealized "I" without "we" and "you" (Elias 2003: 15). The perspective of sociology of knowledge shows the problem of entanglement of scientific cognition in existing resources of social knowledge and cognitive patterns. Consistent application of sociological perspective to the analysis of scientific cognition has to lead to the weakening of the statement that it is sociology and social sciences where involvement

prevails. It is not only that the emotive and involved ways of thinking about nature have not disappeared (Elias 2003: 93) and concern a man himself as a part of nature subject to research in the area of biomedical sciences. The sociological point of view has to lead also to questioning of the assumption that natural sciences have in their organization established professional patterns and institutional guarantees that protect them from pressures of heteronomic judgments (Elias 2003: 92). Once we reject the simplified assumption that the so called true science is free of values, as Elias does pointing to the central value of scientific ethos, i.e., impartiality of cognition, then the absence of relation between those autonomous values of science and heteronomous values originating from other areas of human activity has to appear questionable.

One could also pose a question of why the improvement of ways and instruments of cognition in social sciences should be so important. Going back to the initial problem of risk reduction, the ultimate goal is to increase the possibilities of effective control (Elias 2003: 99). The next question that comes to mind concerns the issue of who is to exercise that control and it is a question about decisions, i.e., a political one.

One should not, however, neglect the problem of fragmentation of social research (Elias 2003: 103) that results from autonomization of specializations and search for a scientific solution to current problems that still results from the beliefs of scientism. Due to fragmentation, a wide theoretical structure linking more particular problems seems to be distant or even unattainable (Elias 2003: 104). It may as well be undesirable, threatening autonomy of practice and freedom of human action. However, and it will be discussed further on, the proposals for the reconstruction of a comprehensive social science threaten also freedom of research.

In search of an adequate path leading to knowledge about social phenomena and social processes many scholars stressed the peculiar methodological autonomy of interpretive social sciences in relation to the principles of positivist methodology, demanding that scholars accept the perspective of involvement. The possibility of reconciling the demands related to impartiality of a scholar's role with requirements related to the necessity of understanding beliefs and practices of researched groups remains a problem (Elias 2003: 100–106).

Just as the short, or a long, time perspective of investigated phenomena, the macrosocial perspective is not a better path to lead social sciences to autonomy and cognitive objectiveness. Therefore, Elias is wrong when he claims that research of patterns of social phenomena on a level that is different and independent from individuals favors the autonomy of a researcher, and atomistic, or to put it differently and more precisely, nominalist conception of social sciences is not conducive to detachment. Elias still considered important the problem of increasing autonomy of researchers in relation to the investigated reality and adequacy in the analysis of social phenomena as well as of carrying into effect—by the scholars themselves—the disciplined detachment and impartiality. Elias pointed out accurately the conditions that limit that autonomy; first of all reciprocal threats created by groups to which scholars also belong. Affectivity of ideas of members of those groups and low level of ability to control threats creates a vicious circle that social sciences find hard to break (Elias 2003: 132).

New Reconstruction of Social Sciences and the End of Autonomy?

I have already signaled the post-modern phenomenon of departing from the modernist differentiation of sciences and scientific disciplines that manifests itself in theoretically and methodologically ambiguous cultural, social, political, and other studies. One can look at that phenomenon as a reaction to excessive fragmentation and autonomization in social sciences and an attempt of integrating reconstruction aiming also at eliminating the autonomy of theory in relation to practice. Numerous examples of questioning of the modernist concept of social science could be given. Edgar Morin for instance advocates a reform of sociological thinking, criticizing the excessive fragmentation into sub-disciplines and specializations, and the multiplication of detailed sociologies on one hand and excessive abstractness of general sociology on the other. He questions its autonomy in relation to everyday experience and life-world. In a way characteristic of post-modernism he questions objectivistic epistemology where there is no room for subjectivity of a researcher presented as a creator of texts—an author. Sociology as a humanistic discipline is to aim at a more precise connection to other human sciences and arts (Morin 1994).

The views on these matters of Immanuel Wallerstein, the former president of International Sociological Association, received a wide response and is very symptomatic. Wallerstein questions the validity of all the mentioned above ways of understanding autonomy of research. In his opinion, systemic changes on the global scale—de-Europeization of the world and consequently the end of Eurocentrism in science—are to lead to far-reaching changes in a way of understanding scientific research. Wallerstein presents a program for restructurization of social sciences (Wallerstein 2004: 223), and more precisely, a project of the unified social science. Formal rationality of science separated from politics and the autonomy of theoretical scientific reasoning is being criticized. He also questions the need of autonomy of specialized disciplines, and finally the autonomy of scholars who do not get involved in constructing a local and global social order. Wallerstein refers to the need of social legitimization of scientific research and to the interests of intellectuals, but not to arguments in the area of pure science. He proclaims the need for total transformation in order that the social roles of scholars retain their social relevance, and the scholars themselves are not pushed over to a narrow corner of some second-rate academy (Wallerstein 2004: 190).

One should distinguish diagnosing changes affecting science from designing changes, including changes in science. Wallerstein does not refer to a well-known adage from *Theses on Feuerbach*, by Karl Marx[1] but his point of view is similar. It is inscribed in the optics of tradition of political left, which—according to Castells—was characterized by an obsession with transformational political action as an ultimate

[1] Thesis XI: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."

goal of truly meaningful intellectual venture.[2] It is a tradition that excludes autonomy of science.

Contrary to historical facts, i.e., duplicity of involvement of social sciences and sociology in the situation of crisis after the French Revolution, either liberal, or conservative (Habermas 1983: 342), an ideological claim appears that social science emerged as an intellectual complement of liberal ideology. Therefore, the required transformational reconstruction of social science is to be a way of saving it from annihilation together with the end which liberalism is approaching (Wallerstein 2004: 190). What is characteristic here is the mix-up of orders of analysis. Social and political conditions of expansive development of science, made possible thanks to the development of liberal democracy in the West that guarantee freedom of research, i.e., institutional development of science are one thing, and possible determinants of theoretical interests are quite another thing. It is probably easier—if one is to follow this logic of thinking—to prove social conditions of the sociological point of view searching for social determinants in the logical and substantial construction of science than it is to confirm the accuracy of the hypothesis of social determination of scientific cognition as such. Sociology of science, if instead of primitive materialistic determinism accepts sociological determinism that originates from the persistent mixing of the concept of science as a social organization of practicing scientific research and its institutions and science as products of this research—concepts, assertions and theoretical forms that put it in order—becomes a paradoxical venture, i.e., a science that in its development turns against science.

Social sciences, also in their institutional dimension, have met more difficulties in relations with both the institutions of the state, market and media as vehicles of knowledge and information, and civil society. Wallerstein sees the assumptions of autonomy of scientific cognition, including such principles as impartiality, empiricism, universality, simplicity and clarity, as the worldview, giving the term a critical undertone—in other way round than in the case of old-fashioned advocates of Marxist scientific worldview. It is a case of confusing the idea of scientific cognition with scientism as ideology. Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont describe that mistake accurately stressing that the justified opposition to scientism may lead to unjustified reaction against science (Sokal, Bricmont 2005: 184).

Wallerstein is looking for challenges towards modernist science in culture. Marxist point of view turned against autonomy of culture in relation to the so-called social being. Analogically, despite a verbal recognition of culture, Wallerstein's sociological determinism turns against the autonomy of science because of direct connection of science with other social institutions. Although Wallerstein seems to distance himself from solipsistic views of some post-modernists, in a post-modernist style he proclaims that rationality is a source of suffering, and postulates freedom from formal rationality. Just as Marx turned Hegel "upside down" Wallerstein turns around Weber's claim of the necessity for non-normative practice of social sciences. Considering various kinds of rationality Weber preserved the distinction between theory and politics in

[2] He speaks of tradition "obsessed by the inscription on Marx's tomb at Highgate" (Castells 2000, vol. III: 389).

both meanings of the latter, expressed in English as politics and policy. Wallerstein connects the two. In this project the autonomous rationality of science, especially social sciences that separated from politics, makes a turn, closing a cycle by science's return to politics, and theory's return to practice (Wallerstein 2003: 173 ff.; 190).

Wallerstein's project contains a post-modern variation of all-embracing knowledge, social science as a total science, "sociologizing" all other kinds of cognition (Wallerstein 2003: 192; 223; 229). Instead the division into two scientific cultures—culture of natural sciences and culture of the humanities—Wallerstein suggests a new single sociological culture (274). In anthropology the term "culture" functions in the plural form as "cultures" and a similarly differentiating term could be applied to sociology. To paraphrase Freud's expression that has been repeatedly paraphrased—also by Wallerstein—one can say that the problem being tackled by Wallerstein is actually a problem of "pluralism of science as a source of suffering."

In Wallerstein's reasoning ideological tendencies are clearly visible. They are typical of cultural radicalism of the 1960s about which Daniel Bell says that pretending to criticize the technocratic society it criticized reason, rejected science in search of a new culture originating from the experience of the community of human beings (Bell 1979: 144). In fact, Wallerstein still refers verbally to science but it is understood as a new, post-modern culture of cognition and activity in the world.

Among the earlier and new factors presented above, Wallerstein's is the project that consciously goes farthest of all in questioning autonomy of science, both as far as autonomy understood as the difference between theoretical and practical cognition, autonomy in mutual relations between fields of knowledge and disciplines including understanding social sciences and sociology, and autonomy of the scholar's role in relation to other social roles.

On the centenary of the American Sociological Association in Philadelphia in August 2005 the annual conference was held with the main title *Comparative Perspective, Competing Explanations. Accounting for the Rising and Declining Significance of Sociology*. When popularity is gained by the standpoint that the time has come for a new postdisciplinary knowledge, reflection on old and new challenges for the authonomy of social sciences and the place of sociology should engage not only specialists on the theory and methodology.

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