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## The Changing Role of Social Philosophy & Methodology of Antireductionism

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*There are two problems: 1) it is necessary to get the social philosophical foundation of the structural evolution of the modern philosophy, and 2) it is required to explain why the social philosophy is becoming philosophical dominant at the end of the XX century. These problems are analyzed in this article.*

*Keywords: Social philosophy, curves in philosophy, everyday life, methodology of social sciences, reductionism & antireductionism.*

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### 1. “Curves” in philosophy of the XX century

The most radical curve in philosophy of the XX century was ontological one. As a result, the problems of consciousness, mentality, knowledge and science turned out to be the problems of being, its processness and its structureness. This curve – as it was found out in the last quarter of the XX century – was actually of the social philosophical nature, as it was very important to answer the questions, *who* reproduces and builds up the forms of being, *what interactions* of subjects they changed and constructed in. All the curves of philosophy of the XX century eventually are focused at the social-philosophical work. Philosophy as an activity of the modern society and a form of interconnection and organization of people turns out to be the social philosophy in its orientations, in its characteristics of being and its self-rationale.

It is the question of self-rationale of the philosophy at the end of the XX century that requires social-philosophical understanding of the changes in the relationships of philosophy and everyday life of people, demands to consider philosophy in the rank of other forms of scientific activities, primarily social-humanitarian disciplines, “submerged” in the connections of social being, which are dependent on the mentioned connections.

From epoch to epoch the philosophy was changing the dominant: naturphilosophy, ontology, gnoseology, antropology, etc. Why did it occur? It is a very serious problem. And it is the problem of the social philosophy; moreover the double socialphilosophical problem: 1) it is necessary to get the socialphilosophical foundation of the structural evolution of philosophy, and 2) it is required to explain why the social philosophy is becoming

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philosophical dominant at the end of the XX century.

There are philosophical constants: about the world, a man and the question about a man in the world. But never before the question about definite qualities of a man, who is being philosophized and is philosophizing himself was topical.

The sight on the world, the revealing of human problems, the treatment of whoness (or subjectness) of philosophy depends on such concretization (definite characteristics). In other words, when we are discussing whoness of philosophy, about its whatness and about the connections between them we had to displace accent on the understanding of whoness of philosophy and its social philosophical foundation.

Further, we are going to describe not a man, but people and dynamics of their interactions.

Dynamics of sociality is included into philosophy; in this sense the “sedentary” subject of philosophy is disappearing (Rosenau, 1992). The previous philosophy – in images of Aristotle and Nitzshe – described situation. But now it is necessary to mention the survival of philosophy and the formula of the survival secrets into the forms of social processes and demands of the social philosophical foundation.

In a few words, the dynamics of philosophy of the last century and a half can be considered as follows. Scientific social knowledge is becoming very important. Self-determination, interaction of economics, sociology, psychology and social antropology is becoming more important for the development of society than the classical methaphisycs and the philosophy of history, which, nevertheless, have the initial forms of social philosophy. The picture of a human being started to form from the fragments of socio-scientific knowledge which were (it should be noted here) naturalistic in many aspects, because they hadn't

(and couldn't have) social philosophical basis. On the contrary, the humanitarian approach, which also had no socio-philosophical foundation but was mainly based on an antinaturalistic approach, was arising.

As a result, there was rejection of the philosophical methodology, the crack of social and humanitarian knowledge, the dominance of sociality as superindividual, quasinatural form, hard division of disciplines on the basis of spontaneous division of labor and primitive complementary.

In the middle of the XX century this situation turned out to be hopeless. A number of attempts to give ground to separate social-humanitarian disciplines and all complex social knowledge, philosophy and culture were increasing.

Rethinking of the basis – practical and spiritual – of theoretical activity of people come not only and not so much from philosophy, but from zones where the necessity and possibility of definite contact between social-humanitarian disciplines and philosophical methodology was especially crucial.

It is worth to mention, that the remarkable role in this work has been played by not so-called “pure” philosophers, but the researchers who compelled to solve methodological questions on the basis of separate social and natural sciences. And here we can mention , realizing that the list is not complete, the following researches: G. Allport, L. Bertalanffy, F. Braudel, P. Burdieu, A. Giddens, A. Gouldner, T. Kuhn, J. Piage, I. Prigogin, I. Wallerstine, G. Homans; among our compatriots – P. Anokhin, V. Bakhtin, A. Gurevich, N. Conrad, A. N. Leontiev, J. Lotman, N. Moiseev, B. Porshnev, A. Ukhtomsky.

Social-philosophical substantiation of the methodological forms of separate (first of all – social-humanitarian) disciplines is supposed to consider them in the “flow” of human experience.

Social philosophy appears “inside” this space-time system.

In this context, the concept of social philosophy as generalized image of society, man and history seems to be doubtful. Comparison of social philosophy, sociology and definite reflections of society is even more doubtful.

The social philosophy acquiring its methodological sense not only in comparison to sociology, but in all complex of social knowledge, that, actually, allows to show insufficiency of sociology as the characteristics of a society (community), its inclusiveness in the definite historical structure of social life. The problem of inclusiveness of the specialized knowledge in various systems of social interactions clears up the meaning of philosophy as an element of reproduction of human experience, it sets up the tasks of the philosophical work properly. The philosophy meets the necessity to combine methodological orientations of separate social-humanitarian disciplines with the everyday experience, in which the people are managing to sort out their problems. The specialized methodology is immersing in the context of daily experience, is verifying if forms are conformed with the dimensions of everyday being of social individuals. At the same time the another task is arising: to overcome limitations of separate systems of social interaction – both by means of their probable integration, and by means of expansion of their orientations within the dynamics of social life in time. In this aspect the methodological task of formation of an image of the social world as combinations of the interconnected orientations comes out.

The dynamics of our work is connected with going further linear schemes, which fix basic dependences of philosophy and social experience, philosophy and sciences, science and everyday experience. The transition from linear dependences to dependences of the

multidimensional logic of social reproduction is becoming more definite.

The above-mentioned dynamics has produced the shift of the basic research schemes of philosophy, changed their structure and character. During almost a century (from the middle XIX to the middle of XX) there was the tendency of object knowledge which combined the classic tradition and naturalistic approaches. Reductionistic methodology, which treated sociality as a reality, external to people was closely connected with this tendency.

In the middle of the XX century this paradigm started to concede to the schemes of direct human interactions, which were characterized as social or communicative action. Antinaturalistic character of the shift is obvious: sociality and knowledge have got individual human measurement; they have appeared “internal” interaction of people. However, due to the “turn” the indirect relationships, functioning of social things, which did not find place in the dimension of direct interaction of individuals, were disappearing from the characteristics of sociality. Sociality as a process in time and space couldn’t be expressed in the sphere of such contacts. The social philosophy has defined the importance of the “subject – subject” scheme and it was compelled to expand this representation, to open other horizons of human life.

## **2. Social Philosophy & everyday life**

In the last quarter of XX century everyday practice is focused on all the social-humanitarian disciplines. It dictates the subjects and methods, now not only to the humanitarian research but the social sciences as well (like sociology and economics), that not long ago adhere to classical objective opinions about social being.

People’s representations about the subject of their everyday life actually concerns more important things than the subjective-

methodological division of social sciences. People in their everyday life do not divide the problems of survival, identification and balanced development into philosophical, psychological, economical and sociological aspects. People need knowledge, including scientific knowledge about their everyday life, but this knowledge must be in the context of their experience and adapted in its forms. The knowledge is organized not according to the standards of division and interaction of social humanitarian disciplines, but under the pressure of problems, questions and projects which result from the practice of everyday life.

Submerging to philosophy and science in everyday life leads to their humanitarization, which means their approaching the individuals' composition of sociality. But this process has the dark side: "lowering" the positions of philosophy and science – in the sense of the loss of privileged position, in the sense of lowering their authority in the society and in the sense of lowering the methodological standards.

According to the view of another scientist (or scientist from the top of hierarchy) that has a rationale, like "people are not aware of what they are doing", turns out to be one of the version of everyday knowledge.

Immersing of social knowledge in everyday life evoked a lot of effects; it especially strengthened the positions of critics of scientific rationality, phenomenologists and psychologists who insist on immediate reflection of life "here and now". However, concretization of its views in the world of everyday life was more important for the scientific social knowledge.

Being "inside" this world scientific social knowledge that posses of different means of describing and explanation of social being by gradual immersing in the everyday life has reflected its diversity, non-homogeneousness, non-reductiveness to some abstract characteristics of everyday life. Everyday life 'in

general" – reminding, by the way, metaphysical representation of being or social reality in "general form" – seized to exist.

Submerging of social knowledge in the everyday life world not only abolished the privileges of knowledge but greatly influenced its methodology (Кемеров [Kemerov],2004).

Theoretical questions proper, the question about society, for example, started being treated more and more in the plane of practical interests. The questions, whether the system of society should be considered in the perspective of preserving of its structures or in the aspects of changing them, produce two different models: structural-functional and transformational, the model of conservation and the model of development.

### **3. Two models of society**

These models can be treated as the variations of the systematic representations of society. In both aspects, historical and typological, they are coordinated as classical and postclassical ones. In the practical aspect they can be treated as different models of using and developing human resources.

According to the first model society exists as a special form independent of human individuals' being. It is reasonable to think society as a space for people; people occupy its rooms, are separated by its walls, are connected by its stability; all these structures that separate and connect people can be represented and used so as if people don't affect their reproductions and changes. People for society structure servicing, its conservation and renovation are supposed to be used in this conception, of course. But individuals are represented in this conception not in their specific being, diversity, peculiarities, but as raw material and energy necessary for the society, overwhelming and acting behind them (Pratt, 1984).

Such understanding (and application) of society's model inevitably produces the methodology of reductionism. In practice it means that the structures and institutions of society absorb life and activity of people. In theory this methodology produces quasi-natural pictures and schemes of society where social forms are represented as natural environment of people's life and people themselves as natural force, adapted to this environment.

The second model represents society as the result of human individuals' interaction. Society doesn't exist separately from individuals, behind their backs and heads, it appears and is reproduced in their mutual and individual life, it is alive until people reproduce it by their interdependent being. People, of course, can be represented in the composition of supraindividual subjects, subsystems, subcultures, – the main thing is that society is represented as reproducible result of people's interaction (Sztompka, 1991).

#### **4. Reductionism and strict science**

In the process of becoming of scientific social knowledge, reductionism has played the main methodological role. But it was not the philosophical reductionism that was reducing the reality to philosophical abstractions, but the reductionism brought up by natural science and its standards of scientific, objective and commonly significant investigation. Separation itself of "scientific" from "non-scientific" in social sciences used to happen primarily under influence of the norms and standards of natural sciences, in particular – theoretic mechanics. The thesis about reducing human interconnections to "the logic of things" is accepted as the most significant methodological principle, and has been acting for almost a century.

Without any doubts, reductionism can be treated as a universal methodology of human activity, reducing complex to simple, hidden to

apparent, unmeasured to count. However, in the plan of becoming and developing scientific social knowledge, reductionism plays a special role. It should be pointed out that this special role changes quite fast, sometimes not apparently to the participants of this history themselves.

At first reductionism works as an instrument of reducing various to equal in human activity, individual to common in human interactions, and specific to general in defining social forms. So the representations about classes and groups of people, about the branches and spheres of their activity, about structures of social reproduction arouse. In this way the details, from which the picture of social life was composed, were formed; the model of society in which these "parts" exist in definite relation and subordination, was presented. The fact that this picture is violent and approximate is not important in the beginning. It is significant that the prospect of scientific investigation of society and scientifically provided effect on it has opened up.

Classics-founders of social science sacrificed certain qualities of being for creating social science itself, for the possibility to construct within it appropriate theories and to use them. In the prospect concretization of these theories and their approximation to realities of people's being were supposed. In fact, the state of things in social sciences occurred so that the schemes were founded on reductionism often played the roles of ready-made theories as instruments design and practical action.

The conception of society which exists over people and the methodology of reductionism turned out to be closely connected; society alienates from individuals (both in theoretic and practical sense) because its structures reduce deindividualized forces of people into its reproduction, leaving outside sociality their differences, features and self-actualisation. This

is how dual ontology of society is composed: 1) ontology of structures and 2) ontology of people, – hence, various dualisms: structural and agentic, objective and subjective, social and humanitarian.

### **5. Anti-reductionism as an anticlassical reaction**

The significant factor, that made the methodological role of reductionism doubtful, was the shift of the advanced domains of natural science to non-classical path. “Turnings around” of social science to classical natural sciences played a bad joke. While the social science tried to make the investigation of people similar to the investigations of things in classical mechanics, natural science started investigating non-classical object (waves, fields and particles) that are not things. The logic of things was losing its gnoseological and ontological basis; a thing stopped being axiom of investigation and interaction of things – its elementary cell or frame of reference. Reducing joint and individual life of people to logic of things lost its previous scientific attraction.

Somehow, the problem of alternative methodology arose in social sciences. At the beginning of XX century this tendency became bold as marginal movement of social knowledge: social sciences got shadow satellites; in each of them – sociology, psychology, history – there appeared features of work of shadow schools.

The crisis of structural sociality was expressed in a number of conceptions declaring the end of philosophy, science, culture, history, subject, man and sociality. Their destructive pathos, moreover, was a reaction to treating social structures as superindividual, quasinalatural, quasimechanical. Destruction of sociality in this context was represented primarily as decay or dismantling of big quasisubstantial structures, dividing and connecting individuals, absorbing their energy,

adopting (socializing) them to their functions. Dismantling of theories and methodologies that reach only reduction of individuals’ being to big structures, corresponded to the trends of social practice.

Thus, social theory and methodology guess the dynamics of structures of sociality, their individual measurement. Dynamics of social life and diversity of social change of the last two decade of XX century obviously exceeded theoretical methodologies of knowledge about sociality. It could reflect separate aspects of social historical dynamics but was not able to embrace the current process by connected theoretical models, to correlate global, local and individual dynamics of sociality.

The philosophical “subject–subject” scheme was supported by linguistic, psychological and phenomenological models of communications designed first of all for the description of direct human interactions. However, social problems of the end of the XX and the beginning of the XXI centuries are specifying the tasks – including the tasks of global character – to overcome the limits of this circle. The question about indirect human interactions, about social things and about proper methodology is becoming more and more important.

### **6. Anti-reductionism as a bid of post-classical synthesis**

In this part of the article we are going to study antireductionism, as not a nihilistic and antireductionist reaction to classical science, but as a methodological strategy that provides understanding the dynamics of society, its connection with self-being of the individuals and with understanding human differences as resources of qualitative renewing of social forms.

Thus, the methodology of post-classical antireductionism becomes the methodology

of social beings' dynamics. This dynamics concretizes in tasks conservation of social reproduction, design and constructing of being's connections, and development of social interactions. The latter is clearly associated with the questions of identifying the peculiarities, differences and individual structures of subjects creating the situation on interaction. Hence, the problem of becoming, conservation and changing of social form as a form of definite subjects' interaction arises. In this view, arises the perspective on considering subject and individual dimension of social projects, models and constructs that become forms of social interactions. In general, its methodological aspects are actually problematization, operationalization, instrumentalization of a system of coordinates that were offered by Einstein. In the social-ontological aspect it is problematization, dynamization, personalization of social forms, deducing them from the context of polysubjective sociality.

In the gnoseological aspect antireductionism is oriented on revealing the specific nature of objects and their special logic, and in this sense, their self-being. The unknown becomes well-known, not by reducing it to pre-formulated classifications and typisation, but via revealing the specific, inherent to it, mode of being. One of the key features of antireductionism is a set to form an object's conception in the process of interaction with it and in the process of knowing it. The conception of the object may be quite rational but it starts from the moment of defining the differences of the object from the others and expands as description of specific logic of its being. The idea of difference is forming as initial condition of interaction and knowledge, it works in the contact with the specific object, it determines the targets of knowledge and it has, no doubt, value significance (Kemerov [Kemerov], 2006).

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From the point of logic, reductionism remains the same procedure as it was 150 years ago, but from the point of view of practice and the tasks of new scientific investigations has remarkably changed. And what is more important, this role is predominantly determined in the context of antireductionist strategies.

### **7. Social philosophy & civilizational projects.**

During XX century the social knowledge was moving from a thesis "People are not aware of what they create" to thesis "People know what they do when creating their social world here and now". The point of view at social world as becoming plurality and changing diversity, i.e. the view originating from polyphonic dynamics of sociality, reveals the methodological unproductiveness of such a dilemma.

The point of view at people "from above and aside", i.e. the view of classical philosophers and scientists, turns out to be methodologically insufficient, as it doesn't detect how people design and construct their being and, therefore, doesn't describe people's interactions that provide reproductiveness and changes of society structures. The point of view limited by the situation "here and now" doesn't create the conditions for the right understanding of social reproduction; as people have to interact, taking into account diversity and dynamics of social world, they are obliged to correlate their "here and now's" with other "here's and now's", i.e. with other regions of sociality.

Work of social philosophy under these conditions is mainly determined by necessity to connect these different approaches, to convert them, to renew them at the expense of forms which treat social dynamics differently. Philosophy supported by its best traditions

and experience of work with cultural diversity demonstrates limitness of methodologies and relevant positions described and, at the same time, their interdependence as elements of social reproduction as means of conserving and design of the latter. Coming apart from these approaches philosophy clearly defines its own position, it doesn't fuse with everyday life and is no trivialized by it, but as well avoids methodological arrogance in relation to everyday life, thus proving its dignity and the right to special social and cultural functions.

It should be underlined that these methodological problems mean the trend of becoming the new forms of human community,

polysemantic and contradictory trends (for example, trend of globalization – Adams. & Reed, 2011). Anyway, perspective methodology of social knowledge will go on working not with separate types of social connections and their correlations but with diversity of social forms and their interaction. The problem of social design is becoming more significant element of reproduction of multidimensional social form. This problem people will have to solve permanently but without predetermined patterns [7]. In solution of this problem the methodological work of social philosophy has to be built according to the work of permanent change and transformation of human interactions.

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«Change almost always starts at the margins or the in-between spaces, not at the centre».  
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## **Меняющаяся роль социальной философии и методология антиредукционизма**

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*Есть две проблемы: 1) необходимо получить философское обоснование структурной эволюции современной философии и 2) требуется объяснить, почему социальная философия становится философской доминантой в конце XX в. Эти проблемы анализируются в данной статье.*

*Ключевые слова: социальная философия, повороты в философии, повседневность, методология общественности, редукционизм и антиредукционизм.*

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