

## SOCIOLOGY OF WISDOM: THE PRESENT AND PERSPECTIVES

## Abstract

The article presents a new concept of sociology and social knowledge, according to which *the calling and truth of social knowledge are to become and improve as a thought that understands and interprets the truth of human interaction and interimpaction*. Therefore, social science and, in particular, sociology is rethought and improved as a “*sociology of wisdom*”.

*Keywords:* wisdom, truth, social knowledge, sociology, interaction.

## Introduction

Not only in the philosophical concepts of ancestors but already in contemporary philosophy as well as in sociology and, in general, in studies of spiritual-social nature, one can notice an increase in interest in *wisdom* in regard to the goal of knowledge acquisition and personal development, which, in turn, gives rise to many discussions concerning the definition of “*wisdom*”.

The concept of wisdom has become an integral component of the intellectual culture of mankind through the use of the term philosophy (love of philosophy) in Plato’s dialogues. In the first philosophy of Aristotle (2004) (better known as *Metaphysics*), for the concept of wisdom and philosophy, many positive characteristics are used, such as “knowledge of the truth” (II, 1-993-b20), “investigating beings as such” (VI, 2-1026-a31), “the most worthy knowledge” (XII, 10-1075-b21). The highest wisdom in Christian theology is called “Holy Wisdom”, “Divine Wisdom”, and “Wisdom of God”.

In medieval times, wisdom was considered a divine attribute, inaccessible to human understanding. During the Renaissance and Enlightenment, wisdom returned to the realm of human achievement in the work of R. Descartes, I. Kant

and others. A new stage in the study of the phenomenon of wisdom begins with the development of implicit and explicit psychological theories. Paul Baltes and his colleagues at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000) presented wisdom as expert knowledge of fundamental life practices. Robert Sternberg from Yale University’s most recent definition of wisdom stems from his “balance theory of wisdom”. According to this theory, people are wise to the extent that they use their intelligence to seek a common good (Sternberg, 1990). In most modern philosophical encyclopedias and dictionaries concept of wisdom is either absent or occupies a disproportionately modest place.

In terms of researching the foundations of sciences and scientific knowledge, the main thread is contained in the relations of the concepts truth, highest truth and wisdom. Scientific truth concerns the outcome of the process of scientific inquiry and therefore bears the tint of finality, of something already established and to be assimilated by the scientific community. In contrast, wisdom is the embodiment of intellectual cognitive abilities. If we accept a certain classification of scientific problems according to the degree of their fundamentality, then it seems quite ade-

quate to interpret wisdom as a cognitive gift for solving the most general, most fundamental problems of science, thus, as a source, or cognitive “mechanism” of acquiring the most fundamental, in this sense “highest” scientific truths.

According to modern theories of scientific knowledge, the foundation of a scientific theory is presented by the system of its axioms. In the field of natural sciences, the system of axioms reflects the most fundamental and, at the same time, the most elementary properties of natural objects and phenomena. Such a form of constructing the entire structure of mathematical sciences as well as natural sciences seems to be a sufficient basis for moving up and revealing their true calling in our world.

Scientists who manage to reveal the essence and vocation of natural phenomena and the existing laws of the natural world win the laurels and unprecedented fame and are named by grateful humanity as great geniuses of science. Francis Bacon substantiated with amazing accuracy the incomparable role of great scientific and technical ideas in an era when discoveries and inventions took only the first timid steps: “For to the authors of inventions they awarded divine honours, while to those who did good service in the state (such as founders of cities and empires, legislators, saviours of their country from long endured evils, quellers of tyrannies, and the like) they decreed no higher honours than heroic. And certainly, if a man rightly compares the two, he will find that this judgment of antiquity was just. For the benefits of discoveries may extend to the whole race of man, civil benefits only to particular places; the latter last not beyond a few ages, the former through all time. Moreover, the reformation of a state in civil matters is seldom brought in without violence and confusion; but discoveries carry blessings with them, and confer benefits without causing harm or sorrow to any” (Bacon, 1620/2018).

Grateful humanity with an open mind pays tribute to the memory of the geniuses of science and of outstanding inventors. Their glory is well

deserved and eternal. But did the eminent scientists understand the full depth of their discoveries? Being representatives of their era, even the most prominent scientists in the essence of the phenomena they discovered comprehend only things that were available to the worldview of their era.

The authors of this article focus just on the important circumstance of truth in terms of the correspondence of the idea of objective existence to its true calling, or in other words, the wisdom of truth (Kocharyan, 2006).

The rapid decline of morals and culture in the developed countries of West Europe warns that only by solving the problem of material production and distribution of income it is impossible to achieve social order and a hostel worthy of a reasonable person (Wolfe, 1991). It is an inner property of the existence and function of social science to be a twofold unity of the theoretical and practical. Social science studies and reveals possibilities of improving human life and realizes them aimed at achieving good orderness (Kocharyan, & Jijyan, 2020; Jijyan, Kocharyan, & Kocharyan, 2021)

### Social Knowledge and Truth

Really, social knowledge and science *uncover the truth of human identity and life, of culture and of its influence and vital activity that is realized by studies evolving in it or/and by it* (Jijyan & Kocharyan, 2017). Of course, the tasks realized by social science are more extended than that of pure theory, and there are also practical components, and its whole and unified theoretical-practical realization is the revelation and fulfilment of possibilities of human identity and life, culture and of its spiritual influence and of vital activity and improvement. Thus, social science, by its subject and theoretical-practical realization, may be defined and characterized as the following:

*Social science investigates and reveals the truth and possibilities of improvement of human*

*identity and life, culture and of its spiritual-vital activity - aimed at the fulfilment of good order.*

Or in a somewhat shorter formulation:

*Social science investigates and reveals the truth and possibilities of improvement of human identity and life, culture and of its spiritual-social activity - aimed at the fulfilment of good order.*

The intelligent human soul possesses two mental powers - theoretical and practical. A human being exists in this world by these two theoretic-practical inner powers of his nature as an understanding and acting creature. Thus, human identity and existence as such, by the specificity of its nature, brings to existence and realizes the endeavour and striving for understanding and interpretation that have the calling and principle intention to reveal the *truth*.

Social science and, in particular, sociology studies, apart from all the existing things, including culture, creations of human soul and work, the spiritually-civilizational, in which also culturally and concretely socially, *significant and just the influencing truth* of the existence of all kind of events and actions as such that is *necessary and preferable* by this same significance compared to existing reality and by virtue of this – *the opportunities of establishing good order*.

The principle calling and truth of science, namely, the existence of science in accordance to his calling and therefore containing its truth in itself and not alienated from one's own truth, the true existence of science is to uncover the truth of the entirety of existing things as such (Kocharyan, 2018). It could also be said this way. The calling of science as such is to uncover the intention, forming and fulfilment of all the existence as such.

There is a social component also in the all-embracing problematic of science, namely,

- of the existence of the nature or of the identity of the human person as such,
- of its freely chosen personified lifestyle and general life order in this world,
- of the common way of life or coexistence with nature and other humans,

- of the truth of the existence of life culture and, in general, of spiritually-socially influential culture, involving not in some way possible and voluntarily established *a sort of order-ness*, but just of the *properly good ordered or of the revealing good orderness* in its multi-layer, inner differentiated and still unifying structure.

The universal formula of thought is the statement that in all sciences, *scientific knowledge is the truth uncovering thought*. Really, a thought that clearly describes as the result of research by the external study of the “problem substance” the circumstances of a certain particular or general being and/or internally and in-depth understands and interprets its “truth” is called *knowledge* or *scientific knowledge*. The said applies identically also to the social science and to the contained in it scientific knowledge that studies the nature and functioning of the “social”.

A) *Social knowledge is the internally improving thought that investigates, understands and interprets the specific nature and function of the “social” (social life) aimed at its good ordering.*

B) *Social knowledge is the investigating-understanding and interpreting thought aimed at the possibility of improving the quality of human life and its good ordering.*

Already by preliminary formulation, scientific knowledge and the “study subject” of social science are becoming “*the knowledge of truth*”. Thus also by preliminary formulation, all the sciences and the social science become “*the science of truth*”. Wherein “the truth” could be understood and interpreted in various ways. As the truth of “objects”, “works”, or just of “social science”, could be preliminary understood even the *mere description* of their real and particular existences by which they appear in this life. And in this case, as knowledge is presented, that revealing truth thought which deals only with the visible and perceived by senses and just by this way (by sensual image) and this far (in sense dimension) described qualities. Of course, as the truth

of “objects”, “works”, or just of “social science”, could be understood the causal and cause discoveries of the quality of their real and concrete being.

For all the importance of the observed quality of “things” and/or “works” of human life and/or because of the “power” and “order” of their being as such and their importance, nevertheless, the truth uncovering scientific knowledge is the thought that also embraces the *invisible and unperceivable by senses* and uncovers the *truth perceivable by mental power* only and even of a deeper layer – the council of wisdom. As an example and obvious demonstration of the above said, one can recall remarks by M. Veber and other prominent sociologists that sociology deals with *rational acts* and having the goal of uncovering motives of actions, in essence, investigates *the rationally conceivable truth* rather than that of sensually perceivable one.

Along with the considered not many cases of interpretation of the rich in its meaning concept “truth”, we should fix that revealing the quality of an entity or work is equivalent to uncovering meanings or senses. Every science and concretely sociological science by theoretical function fulfilling its task – the revelation of truth – has to deal, in essence, with three possible alternative interpretations of the concept sense. Really, in regard to the essence of each entity or phenomenon, the revealed sense could be of three possibilities – incomplete, false, and true, the latter revealing the very true sense – the subject matter of scientific research and science. In social science, the revelation of the essence of the components of the “body” of human spiritual-civilizational life – defined only by sensual data – is only the means and *preliminary work* in the happenings or beings of human life for the fulfilment of the main and principle intention of understanding and interpreting the *very meaning and wisdom*.

Because social science studying the existence and functioning as well as possibilities of the fulfilment of human spiritual-civilizational identity,

life and culture as such, taking into account also their causes, in essence, understands and interprets the truth revealing meaning and wisdom of the spiritual-bodily or sense-material twofold unity of all these.

Thus, the social studies aimed at searching, attribution and strict fixation of the purely material, bodily and factual, in essence, *are preparations* for understanding and interpreting of the *formed in the human life meaning* by which the human identity and life get the possibility for existence by being educated with wisdom and spiritual development and life endowing.

This type of studies cannot be self-aimed, containing the meaning and value of their existence only in themselves. So far, not being at all self-aimed and having their value just due to their actual existence, these studies are *preceding and preparatory procedures* for the understanding and interpretation of the meaning and wisdom formed in entire human life and in actuality *are produced and got their fulfilment for this preparatory work*.

Social studies having their *calling and truth and containing their truth in themselves, which means – by their true existence, can be present* only in the case when in choosing the “word” subordinate to their study and understanding accept as the *main and prospective task* and fulfil their self-understanding and intension towards the *twofold unity* of human life and culture – of the very intension of semantic-material (“spiritual-material” or “spiritual-bodily”) existence – *and accordingly the uncovering of the truth and council of the wisdom of the formation and fulfilment*.

In the case of this form of self-understanding, social studies have the possibility of appearing by their true existence and already not by untrue existence – only in the extent and degree in which they understand and define their problematic – subordinated to the principle query of “understanding the truth”, in other words, to the problem of “human spiritual-civilizational, in which also of social, and just of the truth reveal-

ing vital existence, and in that meaning – of the council of wisdom”.

Summarizing the above said, one can fix that these sciences and studies could exist adequately to their calling if they by accepting as the closest problem and task and by fulfilling the revealed truth of the most human spiritual-civilizational “body” of life would never encircle and restrict the truth of the social science – accessible to human cognitive capacity completeness and perfection – by this form and degree of explication.

In all sciences and concretely also in social sciences, it is required and principally necessary and preferably useful to ascend from the “true knowledge”, and hence from the “true science” to the “knowledge of wisdom” and just to the “science of wisdom”. Wherein, “the knowledge and science of truth” by this quality of its ascent is not deformed and does not cease to be “the knowledge and science of truth” but rather becomes more perfect and in accordance with human capacities becomes more penetrating and acquires deeper insight (or possesses deeper knowledge) concerning the fundamental and all-embracing “truth” revealing council of wisdom.

When arises the question of the existence of the being as such, researchers study and disclose not the existence of beings in their various, quantitative and particular being – in their accidental, casual and non-essential variety of properties – but rather to study the general qualities that disclose their nature, compose, identify, establish, and principally differentiate from other entities and in this way explicate their essential, universal and specific- and general-properties.

Many theorists think that sociologists depend on customers who want to dominate and therefore manipulate society. Liberal sociology is forced to try to adequately understand the social problems being studied because, as N. Somin (2015) explains, “nobody needs obvious hack-work”. But on the other hand, the status of a “servant” forces sociologists to profess a special morality, figuring out not “how it should be” but “how beneficial” customers are. Thus, the task of

reforming and improving the modern world remains outside the field of interests of liberal sociology, which prefers to “largely engage in justifying the system that has developed on this sinful earth” (Somin, 2015).

In the light of the above discussions, let us turn to the problem of Christian sociology. By its calling Christian sociology, its essence could be expressed as follows: Christian sociology is a social science about the necessary and preferred form of good Christian ordering of society as a whole.

Here are two important points we have to take into account.

Firstly, for all Christian teachings, the central point and task is the aim of saving human souls.

Secondly, there are plenty of complex social problems in Christian countries. They make their solution an important part of the worldly existence of millions of Christians. This reality of our days makes it an important task to activate all resources to achieve the goals of social justice and equality.

Thus, we come to the following definition of Christian sociology: Christian sociology is a social science about the necessary and preferred form of good Christian ordering of society as a whole and of the way of life of individuals with the aim of saving human souls and activating all resources to achieve this goal (Jijyan, Kocharyan, & Qocharyan, 2021).

For true Christians, this kind of world order is utterly unjust and eventually requires considering the general idea of “economic justice” and “social welfare”. How can a worker think up and concentrate on self-improvement if he is jobless and his children are crying from hunger? The Human should not live by bread alone. But he must have bread. To save human souls, Christian sociology must call people to fight hunger, to fight poverty, to fight inequality.

After Christianity became the state religion, a wonderful formulation was suggested that the union of the Christian church and the state raised humanity to the highest stage of development.



“This union,” emphasizes Alfred Harnack, “for the first time recognized a person in a person and opened to historical development the goals to which it is now striving. True cosmopolitanism, the ideas of spiritual freedom, equality and fraternity for the first time gained strength on this basis, and the Christian idea of God was an inconspicuous but powerfully acting engine that determined the course of history and ensured for the human personality its spiritual dignity and, at the same time, responsibility” (Harnack von, 2001). In the fullness of the Christian life, Wisdom is acquired. Wisdom is needed in order to be safe from the influences of the world, from evil, and in order to choose the right path, to rejoice in the good and do good, to have a long peaceful life. Making his free decision, a person nevertheless listens to the promptings of God’s word. Even with free will, a person remains in touch with his creator: “When God touches man’s heart through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the man himself is not inactive while receiving that inspiration, since he could reject it; and yet, without God’s grace, he cannot by his own free will move toward justice in God’s sight”. These are words of truth and wisdom of social philosophy.

The greatest misfortune of modern societal life is its indifference to the needs and worries of other people. This total indifference to one’s neighbour demonstrates a complete absence of Christian brotherly love and care, a kind of life without God’s wisdom.

*When the existence of an entity as such is questioned, certainly, it is necessary to study and explicate the things that really exist but to be principally unmistaken and not consider as truth its mixture of truth and non-truth but embark on searching and finding the principally necessary and preferable modus that is adequate to its calling, i. e. to explicate the truth of the existence of that entity by itself which is identical to the discovery of the Modus Vivendi adequate to the truth of its nature.*

According to the general point of view of the

authors of this article, the methodological, conceptual principle of the study aimed at the fulfilment of the analysis of philosophy, social science and all of the sciences is the following statement: all the events and affairs that express or have a relation to the human existence in the world significant by their good meaning life endowment should be studied not only in their real existence but also from the viewpoint of the possibility of their necessary and just preferable existence.

One should study events of human life together with *real existence* and just by the critical-comparative way, also taking into account the *necessary and preferable* (of the present and future) aspects. The above said means that each good event of human life significant in its life-endowing power should be analyzed as twofold unified truth, i.e. from the viewpoint of an existential and intentional unified concept.

Truly, cognizing and understanding certain event means being able to conceive the meaning that explicates its truth (defined as “knowledge of the truth”) and then being able to reach by critical reasoning the council of wisdom contained in the same meaning, thus perfecting “*knowledge of wisdom*”. Science is truly a science as much as it has principle intention and fulfilment to understand and disclose wisdom thus by self-understanding and self-perfection becoming a science of heavenly and human events and/or revealing the meaning of the truth of a particular field of all the existing entities and becoming the science of wisdom. The science that contains in itself its truth and strives for perfection is the science of wisdom. The above said is true also in regard to social science (Jijyan., 2014; England, 1986; Samson, 2015).

If a science, and in particular social science, is not striving for wisdom and just is not a science of wisdom, then it does not know anything and does not know the truth and all that it claims to know it knows wrongly. Righteously, *if science, and in particular, social science, does not know truth and wisdom, then it does not know anything, and that what it thinks it knows, it does not*

*know as it should have to know* (Kocharyan, 2016).

From “Knowledge of Authenticity”  
to “Knowledge of Wisdom”

Thus, summing up the above said in regard to social science, it is essential to question, understand and interpretively explicate the meaning that reveals the truth of the existence of social science as such that contains and preserves the council of wisdom. The social science questioning the truth of intention for good-ordering and improving human life and coexistence is becoming a science of the truth of disclosing the meaning of the coexistence of human individuals aimed at improving the good-ordering of the society.

And then adding the fulfilment of its ascending progress by analytical discourse reaches the target point hidden in the same meaning the *knowledge of the council of wisdom*. One could fix that *the knowledge of council of the truth of social science is such a knowledge that thinks up not only the visually attainable or sensual but also in principle invisible and just supersensible and available only to reason and/or thinkable council of wisdom*.

Social science becoming in itself and/or in the acquired by its knowledge as “the knowledge of wisdom” ascends to his fulfilment and perfection – *social science aimed at wisdom and possessing the council of wisdom*. Similarly, the social wisdom and science becoming in itself and/or in the acquired by itself knowledge “the knowledge of wisdom” ascend to the identical to its calling truth of existence - *aimed at wisdom and possessing the council of wisdom social science and ... just to wisdom*. And concretely, sociology becoming in itself and/or in the acquired by itself knowledge “the knowledge of wisdom” ascends to its fulfilment and just to perfection – “*sociology of wisdom*” (Kocharyan, 2016).

As it could be noted, the newly suggested definition of the fulfilment and perfection of “know-

ledge” in epistemology or theory of knowledge as “knowledge of wisdom” is presented, in general, as a new concept of social science – *aimed at wisdom social science* – and concretely a new concept of sociology – “*sociology of wisdom*”.

Defining the calling of the existence of sociology as such and, respectively, of its truth and its necessary and preferable presence and perspective existence by the concept “*sociology of wisdom*” do not we presume by that the completion and perfection of sociology? “The understanding of the calling of knowledge and/or science and by that - of the quality perfection – as of “knowledge of wisdom” and/or “science of wisdom” does not mean in any way that in this life the fulfilment of science reaching this degree of its completeness could have or imagine its finality since wisdom is principally infinite” (Kocharyan, & Jijyan, 2009; Kocharyan, & Jijyan, 2018; Kocharyan, & Jijyan, 2020; Jijyan, Kocharyan, & Qocharyan, 2021).

The above said is applicable also to social science and, in particular, to sociology. Really, if we re-interpret the completion of knowledge and science as “knowledge and science of wisdom”, then respectively, we should re-interpret the completion of social knowledge and science as “*knowledge and science of social wisdom*”. Thus, the calling and, respectively, the truth of sociology should be re-interpreted and re-comprehended “*sociology of wisdom*”. And the social science aimed at wisdom and, in particular, the sociology of wisdom should be defined, characterized and brought to perfection as *the knowledge of the council of wisdom that reveals the possibilities of improving the good-order of human spiritual-civilizational life and fulfils them*.

The ascend of social knowledge and science to wisdom and, consequently, to the completion of the fulfilment of social knowledge and science as of “knowledge and science of social wisdom” just identically express the infinity of the fulfilment of “wisdom” and, consequently, the limitless ascent of the knowledge of the wisdom of

human life.

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