



Kuhn, Michael, (2016) How the Social Sciences Think about the World's Social – Outline of a Critique, Stuttgart ibidem

Overview

Motivated by the question, how come that 200 years of social science thinking, especially critical social science thinking, has not made the world any better, this book outlines a theory about the social sciences. It argues in 5 chapters that the social sciences are a particular form of thinking, which not only emerges together with the emergence of the nation state social, but are a form of thinking which thinks about the social through views the nation state as its social constructs have on the social, a way of thinking, which reflects on the social through a system of categories, which cognitively reproduce the practical concerns the nation state made social has as the particular scientific knowledge the nation state made social has about itself.

In chapter A the book shows along examples of contemporary, leading social science theories, how social sciences construct their thought not only by confining thought to individual national socials, ever presupposing the nationally confined social as allowing to understand social phenomena, but by theorizing through the views of nation state constructs, which, once they theorize beyond the national social biotopes, unfold social science thinking inevitably towards genuinely imperial thinking about the world's social, arguing about which nationally constructed knowledge rules thinking. It then argues that the opposition against such imperial thinking does neither critique the particular way of a nation state biased way of theorizing, nor the leading social science theories, but opposes a *monopole* on theorizing in the imperial world on this nationally biased way of theorizing with alternative nationally biased thought, consequently presenting this opposition as a battle among nationally constructed scientific entities such as the Southern versus “Western” theories, a battle about which theories are global meta-theories and rule theorizing, thus, an alternative way of imperial thinking. By doing this, it is – as the book argues - this opposition of since then spatially coined theories, that is the opposition against “Western” theories, which finally universalizes social science thinking as the world’s way of thinking about the world’s social and thereby also finally

universalizes a way of thinking that – ever critically - admonishes the world's nation states to pursue *the* social sciences ideal, the ideal of a nation state with its final mission to aim at serving the world's mankind. It further on argues, that it is this opposition which is not only imitating the very way of thinking through nation state views on the social, but which advocates explicitly nationally biased thinking, in this book coined as “patriotic thinking”, a more recent type of social science thinking that argues against the remaining elements of objectivity in the concept of relative objective knowledge, opposes this as “universal” knowledge and advocates to replace the plurality of relative knowledge by a social science world consisting of the many “provincial” knowledges. To create a world of social sciences, consisting of the many patriotic theories, this chapter then discusses recent social science debates, which critique and omit the scientific essentials of social science, thus falling back towards all sorts of mysticisms, the social sciences had once overcome in their demarcation from religious thinking, paving the ways for a renaissance of religious thinking as the latest updated variation of social science thinking. Thus, the chapter concludes, the debate about globalizing social sciences is a typical social science endeavor ennobling the political mission making science a national resource for a global knowledge market and the battle about which knowledge rules thinking as a mission towards such noble ideas as “cosmopolitanism”.

Chapter B discusses in the first part the disciplinary architecture of social science thinking and in the second the essential categories founding how the disciplines construct their particular disciplinary view on the social.

In the first part the book outlines that it is already the architecture of social thought constructed as a multiplicity of disciplinary thinking, which by no means mirrors the different aspects of humans nature, but only the division of the very nation state made human, the citizen, into its multiple existence, as if this citizen would really consist of separated individual, political and economic life projects; a nation state made human divided into an politically made free and equal human, a freedom to pursue his life aims as equal citizens, an equality created by the politically executed abstraction from the economic means these humans own to pursue their life aims. This nation state made citizen divided into a free and equal individual, a political and an economic creature and the separated concerns the multiple existence this nation state made creature has about the social, constitutes the division of social thought into disciplinary thinking, a multiplicity of separated perspectives through which they interpret the social.

The second part tracing the categorical essentials of the disciplines founding their particular view on the social shows along Anthropology/Cultural theories, Economics, Sociology, Political Theory and Psychology that all disciplines basically share the same metaphysical image of humans, the threat of an anarchic, non-domesticated, ungovernable human, a threat disciplinary thinking finds in the human nature to found their particular disciplinary view on the social as getting control over this human nature, a nature that is too obviously the nature of the, thus, naturalized citizen. The discussion of the categorical essentials shows that what disciplinary thinking finds in the human is only the nature of nation state creatures, to detect the nation state as a response to this made human nature. They impose this metaphysical image of humans into the humans nature by imagining the citizens, the very creatures of nation state societies only this society system creates, the competing privates as a threat if not controlled by the "ordering mechanisms" of anthropology, disciplined in their “boundlessness” by respecting “scarcity” in economic thinking, “structured” by the "society" in sociological thinking, “domesticated” by the political power in policy science and self-controlled via the domestication of their internal moral battles in psychological thinking. It is

these minor differences of how to domesticate the many threats of a free will which found the particular way of theorizing of the individual disciplines about the social. In social sciences theorizing thinking is still standing upside down. Unlike in the classical philosophies the real world is not the reification of an idea, in social sciences, thinking about the “real facts”, thinking is proving the truth of the ideals thinkers create about the world. Social sciences do not really think about the social world, but about if and how the world complies with the imagined missions social sciences impose into the social world as its objectives, missions constructed from their disciplinary images about humans; and, just like religious thinking does, social science thinking derives from its disciplinary images about the world their theoretical concerns, practicing theorizing about the world as thinking about the question if *the world is or is not how the world is supposed to be*. It is because of this idealism that disciplinary thinking consists of both critically affirmative and idealistically domesticating knowledge, questioning if the domestication means of the society system as helping humans to get on with their nature, critically observing if the means of the society provide this service to its citizens.

Chapter C discusses in part one the particular knowledge creation technics of social science cognition and in part two the advancements of teleological thinking.

Part one reflects on how social science cognitions that proceeds as measuring the world as deviating or coinciding from their ideals, practices a particular cognitive mode of creating social thought, a technic of cognition, in which the world configures as testifying the ideals via a reality, a reality into which social sciences ex ante insert their ideals, the “empirical reality”, a reality social sciences create for this cognitive operation, a made up reality in which they “find” their thought in the “real facts”. This part analyses along a few examples how social science thinking practices this circular way of teleological thinking in which thinking is not analyzing why things are as they are, but practices this pretentious comparison of the reality against their ideals, performed as thinking through the presuppositions of theories through which social science thinking approaches their objects of thinking. It is this way of teleological thinking through presupposing theories that results in relatively objective knowledge, relative to its presuppositions, a knowledge the epistemological social science departments consider as a natural must of thinking and which they enoble towards the nature of social thought. It then shows in the second part how the more recent social science epistemological debates about the natural sciences, aiming at disproving the objectivity of the natural science knowledge, paradoxically proved along their therefore mystified progress of knowledge from false to right knowledge towards a “paradigm shift”, how these social science debates about the alleged relative natural science knowledge pave the ways towards the dissolution of scientific social knowledge towards the paradox of subjective social science knowledge. It is this mystification of the progress of knowledge in the natural sciences from false to right knowledge, based on – falsely - identifying true knowledge with shared knowledge that proves for the social science epistemologies the also relative natural science knowledge and thereby provides the epistemological justification for globalized social sciences theories as a collection of the many nationally biased theories.

Chapter D discusses in part one the discursive creation of true relative objective knowledge and in part two how this knowledge progresses.

It argues that it is the struggle with the contradiction of relative objective knowledge that social sciences solve by transforming this contradiction into the contradiction of true knowledge as shared knowledge and discusses the paradoxes of how to create a shared knowledge among the many relative true knowledges. The chapter shows how social science

epistemologies transforms this paradox of acknowledged knowledge into the paradox of a hierarchy of knowledges, distinguishing between social science theories and meta-theories guiding the creation of theories – thus re-producing the paradox of acknowledged knowledge in the paradox nature of the discourses among acknowledged knowledges. In the second part this chapter discusses the two question raised by this paradox of acknowledged knowledge, which are: How to become acknowledged knowledge, a meta-theory, if it cannot be distinguished from other knowledge as right knowledge, and how acknowledged knowledge progresses, if it cannot progress from false to right knowledge? The answer is this: To become a meta-theory, a theory must re-interpret any substantial progress of *imperial* policy agendas as a critical opportunity to approach *the* ideals of the social sciences of a nation state serving its citizens, a legend only social sciences can unveil as the dreams the world is in truth pursuing. This answer on how social science knowledge progresses, last but not least, also answers the question, why critical social science thinking and a world of poverty and war coexist over a 200 years joint history.

Chapter E presents a few considerations about how to overcome and go beyond social science thinking.