

SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE IN STATE-SOCIALISM

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Abstract

An important indicator of modernization is to what extent the social subsystem of science is autonomous. The role played by experts in the preparation of decision-making was assumed that the *semi-peripheric situation*, the state-socialist *political* and *economical systems* and the relevant patterns for modernization *had an impact on scientific cognition* and its utilization in experts, systems, too.

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1. When starting the investigation of the role played by experts in the preparation of decision-making it was assumed that the *semi-peripheric situation*, the state-socialist *political* and *economical system* and the relevant patterns for modernization *had an impact on scientific cognition* and its utilization in experts, systems, too. An important indicator of modernization is to what extent the social subsystem of science is autonomous.

The case studies justify that this *autonomy* is rather *limited* politically, at least, in the experts, activities. The *degree of the utilization* and application of social science knowledge can be regarded as another *indicator of modernization*. Empirical research has proved that the utilization of expertise is rather low. (It must be mentioned that the authors of special literature in Western Europe and the USA as well qualify the knowledge of social science researchers and experts as 'underutilized' but in the absence of comparative analyses, they cannot say what the difference between the utilization of the 'western' expertise and that of the eastern one is. They assume we are in worse position.)

2. Our other hypothesis was that the *socio-political environment* influenced highly the *cognitive content* of knowledge produced by scientific cognition. In expertises, studies the *opportunistic character of cognition* can be traced what follows from the too conformal adjustment to the customer. However, it should be added that an expert may expect the acceptance of

his proposal only if the needs and standpoints of the employer are taken into account. It has also been proved that the experts *autonomy depends* on the *nature* and *type* of the *task*. If he is expected to give information or frame about a conception, his autonomy is greater than when he himself is interested in changing the functioning of the organization.

3. A third hypothesis of ours propounds that *scientific cognition* and the concomitant special organization of professional work have a great *impact* on the *structures of cognition*, the content of knowledge as well as the standpoints of experts. But this hypothesis has not been tested because of the shortage of time and money as well as due to the operational difficulties following from the complexity of the task. This is why our investigation is about the utilization of expertise and not the problems of application of social sciences. During our work we made a clear distinction between the notions and functions of sciences, expertise and knowledge-expertise, so our analysis was limited to expertise and experts. Thus the expertise attached to the preparation of state measures, which had mobilized the methods and knowledge stock of sociology, economics and politology as disciplines, was studied primarily. But during our investigation it turned out that experts' work could hardly be bound to a distinct discipline. Generally, it requires complex and interdisciplinary knowledge, political routine and other social know-how. An expert's knowledge is cognitive only partially, assuming an empiric knowledge of 'the rule of the thumb' not inconsiderably. The success of the proposal depends mainly on the possession of this type of 'manipulative knowledge' and its applicability.

4. Due to our assumption it could be identified to what degree of technical complexity expertise is mostly wanted. It has been proved that in some cases an expert provides *analytical knowledge* to the customer. He describes and explains the relevant social processes, institutions and the resources belonging to them.

The *ends and means rationalization* is a typical experts' activity. Almost all case studies of ours add something to this form of utilization. We have found an example for the *function of systems building*, e.g. in the case of the housing policy. This function, however, can be performed only by multidisciplinary experts, team, indeed.

In relation to *needs* we have revealed that the specialized agencies of state administration (and the social and political ones as well) are very interested in the experts, activities and they take mostly the initiative. It is they who *formulate their demands* on the type of expertise. At the same time, the content and function of cooperation can be formed and modified by an expert's own role conception. But this usually leads to a *conflict* between the customer and the expert. There are examples for each

supposed function: the demand on a socio-technological function is the most frequent but there is a need for the participation in a social program embracing a certain demand, too. The function for the *legitimation of decisions* has also been traced several times.

The relation to the *cognitive variables of science* could not be justified convincingly. For the time disposable, we cannot make any difference between the professional development of a scientific discipline and the quality of the expert's work since instead of advanced theories politics and decision-makers in general need information and solution patterns which can be implemented rather easily and this can be provided by the less advanced scientific branches, too. It is the conceptional and theoretical contribution that is the least wanted one by a practitioner.

In relation to the *span of time* the tendency that expert's assistance to short-term tasks seems to be strong. An example for the preparation of a long-range decision-making has not been found. As regards *institutional variables* we have not found an essential correlation since customers usually want individual expertise. The function of expertise provided by some institutions, e.g. by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, is primarily to legitimize certain decisions owing to its high prestige.

5. A *scientist* and an *expert* can be differentiated; not a specialty and its scientist but an expert and his expertise are relied upon. Thus the cooperation of 'science and policy' is only an *abstraction* and at this level nothing can be said. It is only an expertise having particular knowledge and capabilities that may have an empiric content. It is only the personified special knowledge that is relevant.

6. In the process of decision-making the *major agents*, i.e. politician, the civil servant, the scientist and the expert should be differentiated. In decision-making the politician relies on two types of expertise: on the expert's 'scientific knowledge' and the civil servant's 'official knowledge'. To some extent, the latter plays a more important role. Thus the 'office' is stronger in influencing the decisions than the scientific field supporting the scholar-expert.

7. We have framed the *concept of an expert*: he is the scientist/researcher who participates in the preparatory process of the political (socio-economic) decisions. This definition will make the concepts of the expert and expertise relative. In some respects other agents of the process are considered experts, too, and these positions may be exchanged as well.

8. It has been pointed out that the decision-making of political (party) institutions is determined by public offices with the *monopolies of 'official knowledge'*. Generally, in the relationship between the state apparatuses

and bodies the situation is the same. However, the defensive of offensive actions of the party guidance usually decreases the rationality of administration.

9. It seems to be justified that the processes of decision-making may be analysed by the concepts of 'formal' and 'material' rationalities introduced by Max Weber where experts think and act in the spirit of formal rationality and politicians in that of the material one. This dichotomy can be demonstrated especially in legal development. The precondition of the success of every reform is that the formal (scientific) rationality in the service of normativity should gain advantage over the political and ideological imperatives and maxims.

10. The *outcome* of the decision-making processes *depends* on the *power position* of the knowledge-carrier, the interests and power relations of the host institution.

11. We have succeeded in *differentiating between the form of expertise* where neither quality nor use-value has any importance and the one which must work well by all means in real processes. In the first case only the prestige of science is needed (see legitimation) and in the second one the actual participation in changing the systems is required.

12. The more an objective knowledge expected from the expert the stronger his autonomy is. But if he himself participates in implementation, his independence of the organization will be diminished drastically. However, the *opportunism* that must be undertaken by a 'manager expert' is a *precondition of the success*.

13. The *expert's responsibility* is related to the degree of autonomy. (Three types of autonomy are combined with four types of responsibility, i.e. general, professional, and ethical responsibilities and the one for the consumer.) The more independent the expert, the less his responsibility is, and vice versa.

14. Also, a *typology of the utilization* of expertise has been elaborated: the legitimation of intent, the quasi process management, the legitimation of decision, the legitimation of activities, the avoidance of responsibility and the actual process management with politicians.

15. It has been proved that experts are used to establish a *negative Pareto-optimum* when the alternative of the 'relative worst' is chosen by the decision-makers. (See the tax system.)

16. The cause of the *disfunctional work* of experts is that the basic problems are not clarified, the programs are not formulated and the basic

problems of value choice are neglected. Responsibility should be taken by politics for this.

17. In some field (e.g. industrial design) the *lack of experts*, the preponderance of quasi-experts and the underestimation of the real ones are typical. All these will contribute to lagging behind modernization.

18. The Habermas concept of a norm-controlled activity is apt for experts who are able to be identified with the standpoint of the organization to which they of the '*communicative expert*' emerge to abridge the differences of the various experts, conceptions.

19. In some fields (e.g. social policy) we have made an attempt to compare the *types of experts* to those existing internationally. It cannot be denied that the Hungarian stock of roles is incomplete and rather poor.

20. In addition, *general patterns* have hardly been identified. This seems to support our conclusion that the expert's work is of situative character and nature, virtually. They are as follows:

- in some places the scholar experts are ousted from the decision under preparation (e.g. at the framing the tax system) and are replaced by the administration's own internal experts);
- there may be decisions during which no experts are invited to (e.g. TEHO = tax for settlement development);
- despite the experts' opinions — owing to political and power considerations — wrong compromises are made (see the waste imports);
- political decisions are converted into local expertise (corporate social policy);
- political changes are favourably influenced by experts (the election system);
- the same comes to halt contrary to expertise (e.g. that of cultural centres).

21. Although every case offers different opportunities for the cooperation of expertise and power as a general trend, our hypothesis that scientific rationality influences decisions made *inadequately* seems to be justified. Moreover, it should be stated that the constraints of power and value are so strong in the decision-making processes that the opposite to scientific rationality being only type of expertise which is able to consider the standpoints of the socio-political rationality has a chance for utilization.