

Political Science in Russia: academicians and experts

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Summary

The paper accesses the comparison of role of some segments of academic and expert communities in the development of Political Science in Russia. Academic communities in Russia consists from two main part – scientists from the research institutes of Russian Academia of Science (formerly Academia of Science of USSR) and from university lecturers. Expert community in field of politics and policy was constructed from politicians of ‘romantic’ period of post-communist political life of Russia, who were academicians in natural sciences mostly, and from managers of electoral campaign of 90th. The experience and practices, which every of this groups invested in contemporary political science in Russia will be discussed in the paper.

Political Science in post-soviet Russia started “from the scratch” in the beginning of 90th, when specialty “Politology” was approved in Russian universities and in the lists of PhD dissertations. Before this time political science did not exist officially in our country – Soviet Union. Political science was the last ‘bourgeois pseudo-science’ in the line of genetic, cybernetic and political science. But in practical life some politology approaches was used by expert community affiliated at International Department of Communist Party Central Committee, or as the speechwriter’s pool of Communist Party Secretary-general. Georgiy Shahnazarov was one if the members of this community. Other roots of political science took place in Institute of the State and Law of Academy of Science of USSR, where in the end of 50th was established Soviet Association of Political (Gusudarstvennovedcheskih (State-researching)) Science, which was a

member of International Political Science Association¹. This association was under strong control of Communist party functionaries, of course, and their activity was non-public².

Participation in IPSA used by soviet leaders for influence on this international professional association. Giovanni Sartori talked during his lecture in the World Congress of IPSA in Santiago in 2009, that in 70th he received proposal from Soviet delegation in IPSA meeting to nominate him to position of IPSA president, as alternative to other person, who was known by his 'anti-USSR position'. 'If you agree, delegation from all countries from socialist campus will support you' – said leader of Soviet delegation.

During the end of Gorbachev's perestroika the first departments of so name scientific communism start to transform to the departments of political science, with the same staff and leaders. This origin of majority political science departments in many of Russian universities is so name birthmark of political science in Russian regions. Exception from this rule was a MGIMO (Moscow state institute of international relation) university, where from the Soviet time was a tradition of real political science courses for the future diplomats. Other exceptions were the new universities, established in the middle of 90th – State university 'Higher school of economic' in Moscow and non-government European University in St. Petersburg. Last university, especially, invited for position of professor of political science young Russians, who received PhD degree in one of prestige western universities.

Michael Sokolov in his researches of sociology community in St.Petersburg, proposed to divide all community into three main groups: West Side, East Side and Transitional part³. According this classification West Side consists of sociologists from the European University in St. Petersburg, East Side – from the Sociology Faculty of State Petersburg University, and Transitional part – from SPb branch of Higher School of Economics. West Side are oriented mainly to the Western standards of academic activity, has a good experience in fundraising activity and focused sooner to research than to education. East Side are oriented mainly to the traditions of soviet universities and focused sooner to education than to research. Centrum position is intermediate. We can propose, that this classification can be used for politology community. In regional approach, West Side community concentrated mostly in Moscow and St.Petersburg, and in a few other regions – Perm, Kazan, may be - Nizhniy Novgorod. In recent

¹Coakley J., Trent J. 2000. History of the International Political Science Association 1949-1999. IPSA.

²Dmitriy Vorob'ev. Politologiya v SSSR: formirovaniye I razvitiye nauchnogo soobshchestva. // Politicheskiye issledovaniya (Moscow), 2004, № 4.c. 169-178.

³Michael Sokolov. Izuchaem local'nye akademicheskie soobshchestva. // Sociologicheskiye issledovaniya, 2012, N6. S. 76-82.

years, starting from the third president term of Vladimir Putin, on this separation starts to influence the strengthening of state-oriented official ideology. “[Today] exists contradiction between Russian political reality and desire for to be in the world liberal trend. Therefore two poles exist: liberal paradigm and state-oriented (‘gosudarstvennicheskaya’) paradigm”⁴.

Other place for academic activity in contemporary Russia – is research institutes of Russian Academy of Science. During first part of 90th some previously existed academic institutes in Moscow were transformed to the politology institutes. For example, Institute of international workers movement in 1991 was transformed to the Institute of problems of workers movement and comparative political science, and later, in 1996 – in Institute of comparative political science. In Institute for scientific information for social science (INION RAN) was created department of Political science and scientific journal “Political science” are published. Serious researches in field of political science took place in academic institute of International Economics and International Relations. But special political science institutes was exists in Moscow only, in St. Petersburg, for example, in Sociological Institute of RAN exists department of sociology of power and civil society. Only in a few other Russian regions in academic institutes exists some departments or sectors of political science –in Institute of Philosophy and Law in Ekaterinburg, in the branch of this institute in Perm, for example. We must add, that majority researches from academic institutes works as lecturers in universities also.

If we apply classification of Michael Sokolov to political scientists, working in academic institution mostly, we can attribute them to Centrum and partly to East Side. They have more time, that lecturers in universities to read contemporary literature in political science, in soviet time they had more moderate communist ideological pressure and censorship then lectures in universities⁵. Some of them had real experience of expert activity from Soviet time, because some experts of Communist Party Central Committee worked in academic institutes also.

Expert communities in field of political science in 90th consists of two main and strongly separated parts. The first of them was participants of democracy movement of perestroika time and/also (partly) politicians of the first romantic wave, elected in 1989-1990 to Soviet and Russian Congresses of Deputies, or to regional or city council of deputies (or their colleagues). The second consists from ‘new specialist’ in electoral management, who successfully organized some election campaigns and than called-for new campaigns in new regions and cities.

⁴Interview with A, professor of St. Petersburg State University, April 2015,

⁵Cherkasov P.P. IMEMO. Institut mirovoy ekonomiki I mezhdunarodnih otnosheniy. Portret na fone epohi. – M.: Ves’ Mir, 2005.

One of the best example of the first part is Center (than Foundation) INDEM (Information for Democracy). The roots of the INDEM center (INformation for DEMocracy) go back to the 1970s when the young mathematician Georgiy Satarov and the historian Sergey Stankevich met and started to study of the political forces status in the USA Congress together. They used mathematical and statistical methods and computer techniques for analyzing poll results.

The creative tandem of Georgiy Satarov and Sergey Stankevich, which existed for over 10 years, acquired new quality when Sergey Stankevich became People's deputy of the USSR in 1989. A year later he was appointed deputy chairman of the Mossovet. (Moscow City Council). It was at this time that a new subject of studies emerged – why people vote the way they vote. Furthermore, for the first time, there was demand for analysis and forecast of election results in different political factions. In that situation it became necessary to set up an independent research structure, a small institute which could study the new political reality for the purpose of promoting the new democratic institutions in Russia.

An important stage in the development of the INDEM Center was the invitation extended to its leader Georgiy Satarov to come to the Kremlin and work as an advisor to Boris Yeltsin, the President of the Russian Federation. The period of work in the state administration strengthened the position of the Center and earned state commissions. . It also provided Georgiy Satarov with the invaluable experience of real participation in the decision- making process at national level, an experience which cannot be obtained by reading books. At the same time, the existence of the Center as a strong basis gave Georgiy Satarov more independence in his work as an advisor to the President.

Other example of such tendency is Sergey Sulakshin - Doctor of physic-mathematic science, was in 1989-1992 deputy of Soviet Congress of Peoples Deputies and member of Supreme Council , then he was plenipotentiary of Russian President Boris Eltsin in Tomsk (1991-1993) and member of State Duma (1993-1999). He adds in 2000 to his doctoral dissertation in natural science dissertation in Political science and established in 2006 Center for problem analysis and governmental projects. In St.Petersburg author of this paper, doctor of biology science and head of committee for Science and Higher education of Leningrad/Petersburg City Council and his colleagues from political club 'Perestroyka' and from City Council (Lensovet) established SPb Center for humanities and political science STRATEGY. Later he received candidate and than doctor degree in political science.

This examples reflect situation of establishing independent research and policy oriented organizations, which can be named think tanks or public policy centers. In the 90th there were a lot of possibilities for financial support of such think tanks. It could be money from presidential

administration, as it was in case of INDEM foundation, or Ministry for Education and Science, but also from international foundations, as it was in case of SPb STRATEGY Center, or money from Russian Oligarch Vladimir Yakunin, as it was in case of Sergey Sulakshin Center. The objectives for expert organizations can be formulated in President Administration or in other power centers in federal or regional level, or can be formulate by think tanks itself, if they can to receive support for it's project from one of the international foundations. In the last situation they can to invite experts for its projects from universities and academic institutes, special in regional level.

In the end of 90th and beginning of 00th the salary, which such think tanks and some other NGOs can to propose for academician from universities and state research institute was more than their traditional salary. 'The flowering of analytical centers was in 90th. It was connected with the serious stream on foreign grant money, which created more competitive conditions for experts, then traditional structures as Academy of Science, universities and governmental agencies, especially'⁶.

Sometimes such think tanks in process of realization some projects aimed for public participation in policy process, stimulate creation of community of experts in some concrete field. The participation of SPb STRATEGY Center in creation of community of budget analytics in the process of realization of project of public participation in budgetary process was a good example of such cases⁷.

Situation with the will and readiness of officials to receive expert advice from university political scientists was correct described by university professor: 'Starting from the 90th it was a few waves and situation was different. In 90th I observed, that officials did not understand well, how much they can use their leverage, and it was a period, when experts, whom now 60, invited constantly for consultations (officials ask their advises and consultations). In 00th situation is changing, and in this time experts invited for evaluation of state projects more often, they are included into consultative councils, affiliated to governmental agencies'⁸.

More radically situation with relationship between invited academicians from universities and governmental official in contemporary Russia was described by other respondent, member of staff of regional assembly in one of Russian regions: 'Some university academicians are invited as experts. But it is doubtful that in for realization of analytic needs of official, because

⁶Interview with Michael Dmitriev, President of Center for strategic research, Moscow, 01.03.2013.

⁷Alexander Sungurov. Project «Social participation in the budgetary process» as an example of interaction between the expert community and civil advocacy groups in the post-Soviet Russia. Paper for International Conference on Public Policy, Grenoble, 26-28 June 2013, Panel 21-1 'Expertise and involvement'.

⁸Interview with A, professor of St. Petersburg State University, April 2015,

there are concrete order for scientists. Customer know, what result of expertise he want to receive, and he received it finally⁹. Other respondents, who himself now member of regional assembly, giving us example, when power did not like listen to recommendation of fire official before starting of fire, said: «Prevention of fire and firefighting are two different functions. In contemporary conservative mentality [of power] this prognostic function did not claimed»¹⁰.

Let's proceed to the second part of expert community – to the community of spin doctors. It was a very popular business in 90th, and many expert team, or think tanks, which were created with some mission to improve public policy, transformed to the spin doctor's team by influence of huge amount of cash, circulated in this field. Sometimes after victory of their candidates they continued collaboration with him as a team of political advisers, but the objective of such new business was reelection their patron only.

They did not use such notions as a public goods or other normative conceptions. When in process of analysis of results of electoral campaign in SPb Legislative assembly, 1995 in seminar of SPb STRATEGY Center, Vladimir Bol'shakov, leader of such effective team of spin doctor was asked about responsibility for the results of political activity their formerly candidate. Vladimir Bol'shakov answered: 'The only our responsibility – to use all allocated money honestly. We have no responsibility for the activity of our clients. When physics in USA worked in project with atomic bomb, they did not thought about results of bombing'¹¹. Later, in the middle of 00th, when 'sovereign democracy' in Russia spread, electoral business starts to be not so profitable, and many of spin doctor's team transformed to PR-agency or disappear.

There are real differences in the models of collaboration with academic political science community for the first and second parts of expert community. The first part – formerly democracy politicians or leader of think tanks – actively collaborate with academic community, mostly in framework of Russian Association of Political Science (RAPS), received degree in this field, and this two communities was as communicating vessels. We can mention special seminar devoted to public functions of political science in Russia, when discussed as experts activity of political scientists, as participation of them in civic education activities¹² or research project, devoted to analysis of expert activity of political science academicians¹³. Creation of web-site of

⁹Interview with B, member of staff of Regional Assembly and PhD in political science, April, 2014.

¹⁰Interview with C, member of Regional Assembly and PhD in sociology, March, 2013.

¹¹From personal diary of author.

¹²Obschrstvennyefunktcepoliticheskoyнауки v postsovetskoyRossii. Materialy nauchno-prakticheskogoseminara, 19 aprelya 2005 g., Moskva / pod red. O.Malinovoy. – Khabarovsk: IzdatyelstvoTikhookeanskogoUn-ta, 2005.

¹³O. Malinova. Problemy razvitiya politicheskoy nauki i 'tcentry publichnoy politiki' v Rossii. // Publichnaya politika-2005. Sbornik statey. – SPb: Norma, 2006. S. 91-94.

RAPS (www.rapn.ru) on the base of web-portal of St.Petersburg STRATEGY Center is other example of such collaboration.

The second part – community of spin doctors – have no collaboration with academic community of politologists practically. They created their own Association of political experts and consultants¹⁴, did not participate in RAPS conferences and seminars and it is a very little transfers between them.

Finally, let's return to academic community of Russian political scientists (together with first part of expert community) and try to analyze their participation in professional associations. We mentioned early RAPS as a part of International Association of Political Science. It is interesting, that not all prominent in academic community persons are the members of RAPS. Practically of all academician from the most 'West Side' part of Russian professional community – from the European University of St. Petersburg are not member of RAPS. Oneofthemsaidinthisinterview: 'All my colleagues graduate European University, therefore they all did not want to enter to RAPS, they have other sphere, other politology. We all are snobs a little, it seem to us, that we were so strongly beaten in European University, that now we are better, than other. And we all are including in some other place, but not in RAPS. All our professors did not member of RAPS'¹⁵.

But not all specialists in political science from other - East Side agree now to be members of RAPS, as a part of international community political scientists. Three years ago two deans of recently created faculties of politology – in Moscow (Andrey Shutov, Dr. of Science in History) and St. Petersburg (Stanislav Eremeev, Dr. of Science in Economic) universities initiated creation of new political science association – Russian Society of Politologist (RSP). They proposed to create some umbellate society, and to unite all other association, including RAPS. Non-officially it was idea to create more patriotic and not so westernized association, as RAPS. Now all association exists independently, but many regional specialists in political science are members of two this associations. In Moscow and St. Petersburg situation other – political scientists from Higher School of Economic, from MGIMO University and from academic institutes – are member of RAPS and not members of RSP, in Moscow and Petersburg universities – member of RSP mostly, or RSP and RAPS together, but some of them – members of RAPS only.

This situation reflects, we think, the attempts of power to made community of political scientists and affiliated with them experts in this field more controllable. From other side, it

¹⁴DmitriyVorob'ev. RazvitiopolitologicheskogosooobshestvavpostsovetskoyRossii. //Politicheskiiyeissledovaniya (Moscow), 2004, N 6, p. 151-161

¹⁵Interview with D, alumni of European University in SPb, April 2015.

reflects the deference between 'East side' and 'Centrum' communities of Russian specialists in political science.