

Conceptual history of “capitalism”

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This article presents the philosophical reconstruction of the concept of “capitalism”. The key thesis is that K. Marx was not the creator of the concept “capitalism”, he used the term “capitalist mode of production”. This text introduces the consistent philosophical reflection on the emergence and formation of the concept of “capitalism” from the very beginning of its first references in the political literature in Germany and France until the introduction of the concept into the academic discourse as a stable term. In contrast to an established perception that Sombart was the first popularizer of the concept and introduced it into the academic use, the article shows the significance of Shaeffle’s work as earlier and important contribution to the development of the concept “capitalism”. It was in Shaeffle’s works that the term “capitalism” received a neutral meaning through its convergences with the concept of “liberalism”, and lost its negative political connotations, which laid the foundation for its academic history. In this text, Sombart and Weber are represented not only as pioneers of the concept of “capitalism” in academic discourse, but also as scholars who, by connecting “capitalism” with the concept of “spirit”, made it possible for the former to be developed as ideology as a specific type of capitalist rationality. On the basis of the detailed philosophical reconstruction of the formation of the concept of “capitalism”, it has been shown how the dynamic, developing, unstable concept of “capitalism” transformed into the ideological term and then became the foundation for shaping rational/calculative New Time subject.

Keywords: philosophy of capitalism, capitalist rationality, liberalism, socialism, A. Shaeffle, K. Marx.

It is a commonplace statement in European humanities that «capitalism» as a stable concept was introduced into academic discourse and daily use not by Marx but thanks to the two-volume study “Modern Capitalism” written by W. Sombart in 1902, and M. Weber’s book “Protestant ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism” (1902–1905). Thus, the starting point of the research is the thesis that K. Marx never used the concept of “capitalism”: “Karl Marx did not use the noun “capitalism” more than in passing, but he wrote a lot about the “capitalist era” and the capitalist mode of production. His analysis, his critique, and his predictions have influenced the use of the concept ever since the 1870s” [1, p.9]. The history of the concept of “capitalism” as the subject of the research is connected with the necessity to reconstruct three main situations. Firstly, in the 1870–1880s of the 19th century, the concept “capitalism” emerged in the printed socialistic literature and was used as “kampfbe-griff” and antithesis to the concept “socialism”. The concept of capitalism came

into use as a political slogan, some kind of a pejorative word. Secondly, in 1870, A. Schaeffle in his study “Kapitalismus und Sozialismus” put forward the concept of “capitalism”, having completed the first shift away from the political and agitation air of the concept, and giving it a new life as a neutral concept. The thesis of Schaeffle was that liberal capitalism is the best form of socialism. Schaeffle transformed the antonym of the socialism into its synonym. Thirdly, since the concept of capitalism was introduced into the academic discourse in 1902, it had acquired a positive meaning and started being widely popularized thanks to the work by W. Sombart “Contemporary capitalism”.

The first main point of the research is the reconstruction of the practical conditions of politicization of the concept “capitalism”. The second main point is explanation of the need to introduce the term “capitalism” into the academic discourse as the concept that reflected real existing conditions of the society. The practical reconstruction of the emergence and the development of the concept of capitalism from a political slogan into an academic notion emerged from another central concept, the “spirit” of capitalism. The main hypothesis is that the concept of “spirit” added a positive meaning to the concept of capitalism and promoted its introduction in the academic context. In this regard, the purpose is to reconstruct and analyze the conditions of the emergence of the concept of “spirit” and its main characteristics, which encouraged the introduction of the concept of capitalism into the academic use. The method used in the research is called the history of concept (conceptual history) or Begriffsgeschichte. The term “history of concept” originated from Hegel, but as a philosophical method it was developed in the 1960s-1970s, and is credited to Reinhart Koselleck (a follower of H.-G. Gadamer). The specific feature of this method is to reject the history of ideas and the history of spirit and to study the concept in its particular cultural, political and historical context. The researcher who uses the methodology of the history of concept deals with the reconstruction of preconditions of popularization of the term, its being part of different cultural contexts, its introduction in the academic use and daily practices. Therefore, any concept is viewed as an event or a situation opening the space for the permanent modernity through reconstructing and actualizing cultural, political, historical and geographical preconditions of the concept(?) as part of the academic and daily linguistic contexts. It is important to note that the factual material for the research comprises unofficial and unexplored sources, such as philosophical and historical correspondence, periodicals, dictionaries, legislative acts, internal documents, correspondence, proposals of reforms, program documents of various official and secret societies etc — on the whole, all the sources that were left unnoticed by traditional humanities. The methodology of the conceptual history raised a question about the conventional concepts from a different angle. This methodology is closer to Political Theory and Philosophy than to History or Linguistics because the researcher constructs a philosophical perspective by studying the concept on the basis of a reconstruction of political and cultural practices in order to give a new meaning to the already established concepts.

The notion, the concept, the term “capitalism” has been one of the most rated and frequently used terms both in various political, philosophical, sociological, and other humanitarily focused discourses, and also in daily life over the last 100 years of European and world history. The term’s seeming “obviousness” is actually not so obvious. First of all, any word that is broadly used circulates in various texts and might involuntarily acquire various semantic meanings that sometimes differ considerably. Moreover, this is because in our case there is a sufficient volume of theoretical and conceptual “prejudices”

related to this term, which makes it hard to adequately reproduce the “original meaning” and its “idealectic” (author’s) options that had formed the “semantic kernel”. The term, being actively used in the contemporary ideological debates, was immediately employed as a political (and, respectively, a politological) marker that drew the line between the allies and the opponents. At the same time, the “concept” itself remained outside special interest, attention and historical reconstruction.

Among such most frequently found «prejudices» is the conviction that in the works of Marxism-Leninism classics (by Marx, Engels, and Lenin, in the latest version of the Soviet ideological doctrine) the operational contours of this concept were defined both conceptually and discursively. These authors (first of all, Karl Marx) allegedly possessed exhaustive and scholarly correct definition of the term, thus defining the register of reality covered by it with a set of its characteristics, and also introducing the term into academic use.

In fact, it is not true. Relying on the method of conceptual history (Begriffsgeschichte) and not being content with the ordinary, though approved scholarly doxa, it is necessary to recognize the following. Marx (as well as Engels) did not use the concept capitalism either in his works or, the more so, in his philosophical and theoretical reflections. The classic used the concept capitalism only twice in the work “Capital” incidentally, among many other words that are rather vaguely defined, both in a theoretical and conceptual sense. The word “capitalism” didn’t receive any further significant development and did not get fixed as a significant conceptual point of the doctrine with sociological typology, inside which the “capitalist” formation occupies a penultimate role in the series of other historical formations. As a matter of fact, Marx never used the concept “capitalism” preferring to use other phrases, in particular, a “capitalist way of production”, which, with some reservations, can be called synonymous. In their classic work “The German Ideology” (1845/46) Marx and Engels used the concepts “world market” and “world history”, which are surprisingly close to the concept “capitalism”. In this regard, it is possible to claim that a certain autonomous semantic space had already been outlined even before it received an unambiguous definitional marking. At the same time, it should be taken into consideration that the expression “capitalist production” had already been used in 1815 in by Soden [2, p.443], the follower of Adam Smith’s theory, who drew on the contemporary ideas about capital at the time, and, when using this phrase, he implied the sort of production that gives surplus, stock, accumulation. It means it mostly refers to the type of production by which the capital is used, rather than to the way it is created. Only in the second half of the 19th century in Russian social democratic journalism a more unambiguous definition of a “capitalist way of production” appeared in the texts of the socialistically focused thinkers, where it was unconditionally equated with the concept “capitalism”.

The origins of this “prejudice” are obvious: if Marx performs the role of the main ideologist and theorist, then, undoubtedly, he is the one to outline the framework of fundamental terms by means of which the system gets fixed. It goes without saying that “capitalism” enjoyed popularity with theorists and practitioners of social transformations not due to the classic’s works or speeches.

No less frequent “prejudice” is attributing to the term (or just to the word) capitalism ancient stories and prevalence over a long period of time. Thereby, we see, in fact, legitimation of the category, or, using R. Bart’s words (“Mythology”), how History transforms into Nature, thus, giving the term (which is inseparable from its conceptual component)

its “natural” character. It is also not true. The term “capitalism” became widespread in Germany thanks to the French literature on the economic reforms of the revolutionary time. It first appeared in Richard’s dictionary in 1842 [3, p. 205]. However, there it was used as a simple and, in many respects, a formal (or just commonplace) word form, and was not given any strict definition. Later, the concept could be encountered in Louis Blanc’s work in 1850: “Capitalism is capital appropriation by ones at the exception of others” [4, p. 443]. In Great Britain this concept was recorded no later than in 1854. Moreover, it got its way in a work of fiction, the novel “The Newcomes” by W. Thackeray, which is not deprived, however, of political and ideological “flavor”. In Germany it appeared only in 1869 thanks to Rodbertus’s works [5]. Apparently, one of the prerequisites for the emergence of the concept “capitalism” was the fact that in revolutionary time there was an urgent need for an antonym for the concept “socialism”. Marking the other pole of the binary opposition was purely a logical formal requirement. At the same time, the word “capitalism” was loaded with emotionally negative meanings, and often used in the texts and speeches of socialists, conservatives and liberals as a rhetorical figure. It gives grounds to claim that the concept “capitalism” was used and publicly promoted in the political discourse inseparable from a contemporary “political struggle” (for rights or reorganization of the world).

Thus, it is fair to say that during the first half of the century of its very short history “capitalism” bore no relation either to political-economic researches or to theoretical postulates of sociological kind, let alone to cultural and historical typology, but only to the practically focused phraseological set used in confrontational circumstances of the current day. At the same time, it should be noted that up to the beginning of the 20th century even the word “capitalism” had been used rather seldomly, whereas the concept “liberalism” — quite often, mostly in order to describe unregulated economy. Ludwig von Mises wrote in “Liberalism” (1927): “A society in which liberal principles are put into effect is usually called a capitalist society, and the condition of that society, capitalism” [6, p. 10]. However, in the 20th century the concept “capitalism” and “socialism/communism” already appeared as an indivisible binary system, where one pole implied and defined the other and could not exist without its opponent in principle.

The main point of this article can be expressed as the dilemma of the “political” history of the concept of “capitalism” and its introduction into the academic discourse or “academic” conceptual history. As a result, “capitalism” became associated with a rather vague historical period with unidentified time frame, which entailed difficulty with understanding what capitalism really meant. When the German economist Richard Passow [7] surveyed the literature in 1918, he observed, allegedly, 111 slightly different meanings of “capitalism”, interpreting this broad spectrum of definitions as an indication that the concept was vague. Indeed, there were differences in definition. While Marx stressed the surplus value of contractual labor, relentless capital accumulation, and the dynamic class antagonism between workers and the bourgeoisie as major criteria of «capitalism», Max Weber together with Werner Sombart emphasized the “rational” organization of business and work in the enterprise (separate from household and politics) as major features of modern capitalism. Joseph A. Schumpeter defined capitalism as “that form of private property economy in which innovations are carried out by means of borrowed money, which in general <... > implies credit creation” [8]. There were many other points of view and nuances. However, if one looks closely at these definitions, one will see that they were not that far apart from one another. At least, structurally, they had much in common:

usually, authors used the concept to refer to the basic perceptions of their time deemed modern, new and different from more traditional socioeconomic relations, which had been less conducive to growth and fast change, and which had been based on non-market principles, that is, on feudal, corporate, or household principles. The concept “capitalism” was used to contrast the existing system with the idea of the beginning of socialism. That is to say, “capitalism” was a concept of difference. It gained its vigour from contrasting the present with the past and the imagined future. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the concept was not only used as a political catchword or as a key concept of social criticism, but also as an analytical concept within socialist and radical parlance, as well as in the texts of authors who were anything but anticapitalist intellectuals or activists.

The main question in the analysis of conceptual history of capitalism is how significant the concept of the “spirit” of capitalism is. This specific “spirit” of capitalism played an important role in the development of the concept of “capitalism”. As Hilger noted, the concept of the “spirit” of capitalism introduced the subjective element into the problems/issues of capitalism. This question resulted in studying the carriers of capitalism, such as colonists, sectarians, Jews, etc. It provoked philosophers to think about heterogeneity of the form of capitalism. Also, the concept of the “spirit” of capitalism represented the rational style of life, rationalization of daily life and human’s discipline. The idea of capitalistic rationality originated from this problem. According to Hilger, it became a commonplace in the philosophical studies that rationality is manifested in capitalism as opposed to other types of economic rationality. As a result, the capitalist rationality became the yardstick for all types of rationality.

Now we will discuss A. Shaeffle’s, W. Sombart’s and M. Weber’s concepts in more detail. In their works the semantic and operational horizons of the term “capitalism” were defined. Also, we will try to reconstruct the whole set of conditions and preconditions, options and vectors of the possible use, in the context of which the “terminological entity” might be articulated and put into practice. The polysemy, and, therefore, potential reducing of various social and discursive practices to this term, the practices that sometimes significantly differ from one another and even directly contradict one another, enables to claim the following. Both in its initial interpretation (i.e. at the moment and under the circumstances of its first use), and in its subsequent use, the term “capitalism” is “empty” and “exclusively discursive”. In other words, “capitalism” does not suggest any strict “phenomenological fixation” or correlation with the facts of reality. It “works” as a discursive operator. Therefore, its rapid distribution in various text practices, and also free migration of its semantic fields to other fields became possible. In this regard, it functions, and does so successfully, along with such “empty concepts” of the last two and a half centuries like “person”, “progress”, “class fight”, “economy” and so forth. The “theoretical formations” of this sort, exempted from the need to be connected to a certain fact or “legislation” (or a group of facts and procedures), easily allow, using simple rhetorical introduction of the figure “eventually”, to carry out semantic and semiotic substitutions and changes. In fact, “capitalism functions” as a “mythological structure”. Therefore, the primary topos of circulation (emotionally and ideologically dealing with situations of sharp social confrontation) predetermined the options for theoretical and conceptual interpretations of the term. To a certain extent, it also reflected the main evolutionary vectors of European mentality with the entire set of exclusive categories and experiences of reality.

The concept of “capitalism” in the theory by A. Schaeffle

Schaeffle saw himself as part of the German historical school formed in the 1840s by Wilhelm Roscher. Schaeffle perceived economic value as largely subjective, and prices — as formed through the interaction between supply and demand. He favoured various forms of state intervention to ameliorate the detrimental social effects of competitive market capitalism. Schaeffle admitted that with an unrestrained freedom of capitalistic gain, a lot of exploitation did actually take place. Like many other members of the German historical school, Schaeffle claimed that a reformed capitalism with greater social welfare was possible. In 1870, he gave a series of lectures criticizing the prevailing approaches to socialism and communism. Several publications on socialism followed, including “Kapitalismus und Sozialismus” (1870), “The Quintessence of Socialism and The Impossibility of Social Democracy”. We are interested in his arguments on capitalism represented in the treatise “Kapitalismus und Sozialismus”, and it is important to note that Schaeffle’s work was translated into Russian in 1872 and sparked a controversy in the political sphere of the Russian Populists and Liberals [9].

The need to elaborate on the concept of capitalism was triggered by Schaeffle’s disagreement with the contemporary notions of socialism. He aimed to develop an alternative theory of socialism opposed to the agitation and radical socialism. In a nutshell, the new mode of socialism is a state-steered liberal capitalism. Let us try to reconstruct Schaeffle’s thesis on capitalism. According to Schaeffle, the socialists’ insistence on the necessity to socialize the means of production is wrong. He claims that the collective possession of capital goods and preservation of the individual property is the way for individualizing property. Therein, Schaeffle marks the necessity to build a new socialism where the foundation of free association with property or the concentration of capital property in the hands of the state would become possible. Schaeffle states that this mode of organizing property can lead the society to communism. Schaeffle also asserts that competition entails the improvement of the quality of production that brings about an increase in the profit of the enterprise and workers’ wages. According to Schaeffle, the high level of wages contributes to the transformation of productive forces of the society into the system of social production.

Schaeffle defines capitalism as the fusion of millions of various individual labour and property contributions into a common national and international organism of production steered by the hegemony of “enterprising”, capitalists competing for higher revenues [10, p. 140–150]. As we can see, this definition of capitalism captures Schaeffle’s organicist approach, which implies that the development of capitalism is the natural process of the transformation of the society rooted in the natural human need to communicate. According to Schaeffle, in the contemporary national economy capitalism shapes the general process of production and the characteristics of vast economic communication where every actor contributes the production of his labour and capital to the general pool of production. In this regard, profit, rent and revenue on capital can be defined as the capitalist’s reward for the managerial activity and the usage of the property under conditions of commercial risk. In Schaeffle’s view, only aggregate capital (as opposed to multiple, competing individual capitals) can lead to the absorption of individual property. As Schaeffle claims, the organization of common capital economic system will help peasants and lower middle class to take the side of collectivism. According to Schaeffle’s definition of capitalism,

the economic hegemony of capitalism is absolutely free exchange, free from the individual point of view. It means that every free worker obtains the products of his/her labour for the wages pursuant to a labour contract, into which he/she enters freely. As Schaeffle notes, from the legal point of view, each individual is an absolutely free economic actor. Since the development of capitalism, personal freedom and the freedom of exchange have become inseparable. To continue this thought, Schaeffle states that the capitalist epoch is the liberal epoch. Thus, anti-capitalism, as Schaeffle thought, is an attack against personal freedom of man.

To draw the conclusion, one can say that Schaeffle proposed the theory of state liberal capitalism as the best form of socialism. Thus organized, it is sufficient to sustain the capital exchange and financial activities of state and corporations. In such case, coercion of capitalists will be restrained by the state, and the stability of the society will be preserved through the increase in the efficiency of the enterprise and wages. It leads to the transformation of the functions of property because it will not be formed at the expense of the proletarians' wages. As an organicist, Schaeffle expressed the idea that the natural base of capitalist development embodied the relations of human freedom regulated by the state. We can make the conclusion that Schaeffle took the first step to cleanse the concept of capitalism from its political, polemical, pejorative meaning. Schaeffle actively popularized the natural, true character of capitalist development connected with the industrial progress. Schaeffle noted that the labour of each person is a contribution to the money-box of collective capital. It seems to me that Schaeffle stated that the liberal capitalism is the best form of socialism. It means that he did not think that capitalism is only a stage in the development of the society, and after its accomplishing, the society will be rebuilt, according to the socialist principles. He noted that liberal capitalism is the same thing as socialism, which is not polemical and radical. Therefore, we can note that Schaeffle transformed the meaning of the term "capitalism" from negative to neutral. Furthermore, he made the concept of capitalism a synonym of socialism by substantiating the theory of collective capital.

Having reconstructed the historical and theoretical context of Schaeffle's theory, we will try to carefully consider the conceptual and semantic presets. Eventually, they define the limits, or "theoretical a priori", within which the author's thought develops. It allows to realize "conditions for opportunity" fully. As it has been already mentioned above, Schaeffle "cleaned" capitalism from political and ideological "nervousness", having given it the status of "sociological category". However, the status of the categorial nominations of this sort plunges them into a series of ideological transformations within which they can function only as a "theoretical formalization". Let's outline the most vital points in the author's reasonings: economic theory, means of production, socialism, free association, property, proletarians, the nature of capitalism, social nature of human economy, salary, competition of entrepreneurs, optimization and improvement of production quality, collectivism, social division of labour, state regulation, exchange process, *personal liberty and freedom of exchange*. At the same time, regardless of axiological interpretations of the whole unit, its articulation in terminological allotments, having an unambiguous connotation (such as the natural origin of capitalism, its relation to progress, work, collectivity, and, in particular, to exchange and agreement) imbues the concept with universal character and brings it to the level of the Law or Natural Unalterability. In fact, it is about admissibility of total substitution within which any human activity can be converted ("finally") to an economic activity, work, or a precondition-condition of an exchange or a contract.

The concept of “capitalism” and its “Spirit” in Sombart’s and Weber’s theory

Sombart was interested in capitalism neither to discover its origins, nor to write its history. His aim was to determine and to reveal its essence as a specific economic system, a “historical individual”, a “cultural whole”, which objectified the “Geist” of its age as a unique organization and spirit. Sombart does not believe that capitalism is a historical category which emerged very early, when a man first began to use goods in a private way to satisfy his needs and desires. Sombart claims that the economic system of capitalism evolved much later and had been preceded by the feudal (manorial) and the handicraft systems. Each of these economic epochs (the empirical equivalents of the economic system) had its early beginning, its peak, and decline. While admitting that certain elements of capitalist “spirit” can be seen in earlier systems, Sombart says that its real evolution occurred in what he calls the age of high capitalism.

We aim to reconstruct Sombart’s thesis on capitalism and capitalist “spirit” explained in his treatise “Modern Capitalism” (1902). It is very interesting that the first edition of this book (1902) was translated only into Russian (in 1903-1905), whereas the second edition of 1916 was translated into many languages. It is known that the first variant of the treatise was written under the influence of Marxist thought, unlike the second one.

The main Sombart’s idea lies in the statement that the productive forces and their power underlie the differentiation of the stages of economic development. According to Sombart, the whole epoch arranges the productive forces for its economic aims. Sombart notes that the increase of the productive forces leads to the increase of specialization that promotes the economic differentiation and results in socialization of economic life. Thus, Sombart proposes three stages of economics: individual, transitional and collective ones. Therefore, Sombart makes a distinction between economy and production. In Sombart’s view, economy is an activity related to getting common value, and production is common labour, organization aimed at prolonged fulfillment of some work. Sombart defines handicraft and handicraft mode of production as the pre-capitalist economy. Handicraft was spread in the Early Middle Ages, and the handicraft mode of production survived well into the middle of the 20th century. As Sombart states, the handicraft is the organization of labor aimed at subsistence and independence. In such sense, Sombart writes about free craftsmen of the Middle Ages that were organized into corporations, guilds and alliances consolidated by the unity of profession. From Sombart’s point of view, the handicraft production is bound to specified trade in which a producer himself sells his/her production to a buyer. Money does not acquire the characteristics of capital in such type of trade because its use does not entail an increase in the production of labour. Thus, as Sombart remarks, all economic life before the capitalist “spirit” finally came, beginning from the Early Middle Ages to the second half of the 19th century, can be defined as handicraft production [11, p. 319–334].

Sombart defines capitalism as an economic system in which the entrepreneur is in charge of management, owns the means of production and is confronted with unpropertied and dependent laborers. The direct objective of the capitalist enterprise is to make profits by utilizing market and profit opportunities. By a capitalist enterprise he means the form of economic activity whose purpose is to instantiate the material property to the benefit (Profit) of the proprietor. The property used in such way is called capital [11,

p. 320–327]. As opposed to handicraft, the purpose of a capitalist enterprise is not related to a living person, but to a material force. It means that the purpose is detached from a physical person, so the purpose of capitalist production becomes abstract and unlimited. According to Sombart, the abstract and unlimited aim of production is the main characteristic of capitalism. In other words, a capitalist enterprise is formed in order to get profit from an impersonal position. The first merit of capital is overcoming of particular purposes. Abstract and unlimited purposes are main, distinct features of capitalist enterprise which make a capitalist enterprise perfectly suitable for obtaining. As Sombart notes, an economic subject is the agent of material force in the capitalist enterprise. The aspiration for acquisition and pursuit of profit, as subjective characteristics, are objectified in capitalist production. The surplus of material profit is concentrated in the hands of the capitalist entrepreneur.

Sombart defines the capitalist “spirit” as a combination of the entrepreneurial and adventurous spirit with the “bourgeois” spirit, calculation and rationalism [11, p. 321–324]. It is possible to say that the Spirit is the dialectic category combining subjective psychic moments that become apparent in the process of objectivization. The objectivization of capitalist “spirit” occurs when the aims of production become impersonal, and the material force, not the one of a man, starts to produce the infinite aims that work, at the psychological level, as the aspiration for getting profit from the capital.

Sombart’s reconstruction of the concept “capitalism” made it possible to see the changes that the idea of “capitalism” underwent after it had entered the academic use. It is obvious that Sombart’s understanding of capitalism originates from Marx’s theory, and this relation can be seen from the fact that capitalism is defined by a particular way of production that is implemented in the enterprise where the use of workforce is a driving factor in the process of gaining capital. However, obviously, Sombart brings a subjective element to the understanding of capitalism by a certain glorification of the figure of an entrepreneur, without which the objectivization of the capitalist “spirit” would be impossible. The thing is that, from Sombart’s point of view, the capitalist organization in the form of enterprise was possible only because some economic agents, who were “obsessed” with capitalist spirit, were able to originally save metal money that was finally transformed into capital as part of capitalist organization of labour. It is the definition of the “spirit” that makes Sombart’s concept different from the theory of Marx as it adds some new terms to the idea of capitalism — “calculation” and “book-keeping” — that formed the basis of a new type of the economic rationality defined as capitalist rationality.

The procedure of introducing the category “capitalism” by Sombart into academic use, and also its legitimation within these limits is very telling. In fact, the discourse functions according to the rules and practices which are defined outside the discourse itself. It is a typical example when “a scholarly concept” is a priori set by some extra scholarly operations. All reflections are preceded by formulation of the question, and the question pre-determines the answer (which already contains it implicitly and is immanent to the primary question). In our case, it is creation of a certain theory of capitalism. First of all, it implies that “capitalism” has resources at the conceptual level and can be subjected to a research of this sort, in principle. After having formulated the question, we formulate the aim and the subject of the research: economic activity per se and one historical segment of this activity. Certainly, analyzing the aim of research (and, respectively, contemplating the subject and one of its segments in more depth) is not possible without defining, even superficially, the

whole structure in its functional aspect. Productive forces are the steps of development of economic life and the enumeration of the criteria responsible for assessing development at different levels. Then we see how this stage is bound to a certain cultural and historical reality that is divided into more or less autonomous periods closed in themselves. It is remarkable that “linear temporal” continuity is not used as a binding constant (formally registered continuity), but, again, as a speculatively discursive construction (a research vocabulary which is basically a meta-formation). After that, the teleologic imperative, the purpose and the ways of its realization are articulated. At the same time, the purpose takes us outside the reality; it is not immanent to the phenomenon anymore (corporal and individual characteristics of this or that person, or a group) and becomes transcendental, anonymous and abstract by nature. The most remarkable thing is that capitalism as a “system” (a scientific system!) is defined by the term “spirit”, well-known in the European thought and, in particular, in the German philosophy of the 19th century. And even the definition of the “spirit of capitalism” as a “specific and modern world view” changes nothing. In the same way, in Christian anthropological concept terminological replacement of spirit by mentality brought no change: we see an unscientific, though discursively correct, traditional for European experience, definition of transcendence (religious by its nature, based on Christian texts). Using the term “capitalism” as a basic definition of a phenomenon (a sociohistorical formation) and as a reference to the term predetermined by tradition (spirit) closes the semantic horizon. It is curious that “spirit” plastically coexists both with rationalism and positivity. And the operational horizon (i.e. circulation of the term in a discourse) is limited by such operations as calculation, narrative description associated with rationality, and typological procedures (a production method).

And the matter is not that Sombart in many respects, both textually and ideologically repeats Marx, “creatively” and “specifically” developing Marx’s “general thought” or “general attitude”. What matters here is that Marx’s revelations were already put into the strict frame of “conditions for opportunities”. The latter were proportional to Sombart’s epistemological position and, as a result, were funded by a speculative “code” and, certainly, a new European concept of reality. Therefore, Marx’s impulse, rather theoretically vague, was successfully linked to a certain scholarly and nomenclature terminological group.

It is important to consider Sombart’s thesis in relation to Weber’s position on capitalism and the “spirit” of capitalism. We reconstruct the thesis of Weber on the basis of his famous book “Protestant ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism” (1902–05). Let us start with Weber’s understanding of capitalism and capitalist spirit: “We provisionally use the expression spirit of (modern) capitalism to describe that attitude which seeks profit rationally and systematically in the manner which we have illustrated by the example of Benjamin Franklin. This, however, is justified by the historical fact that that attitude of mind has on the one hand found its most suitable expression in capitalistic enterprise, while on the other the enterprise has derived its most suitable motive force from the spirit of capitalism” [12, p. 27–28]. According to Weber, the aim of capitalist activity is the systematic usage of material resources or personal conditions to get profit so that the final calculated entrepreneurial profit exceeds the “capital”, that is, summary material resources consumed by the enterprise. The calculation and rational behavior are the foundation of the capitalist enterprise. Western capitalism of the modernity based on rational organization of free labour constitutes the main distinction from other types of capitalism, such as the adventurer capitalism, the irrational-speculative capitalism and

others, that happened everywhere and always in the East. According to Weber, the main point of his concept is that the rational organization of labour produced proletariat as a class, and it could only happen in the West. This is why he talks of Western capitalism. Weber's conception is about Western, bourgeois, industrial capitalism with the rational organization of free labour. The technical usage of scientific knowledge is the distinctive feature of Western contemporary capitalism. Weber notes that the development of technical science in the Western society was effectively stimulated in the West. The rational structure of law and government can be explained by the economic encouragement of this area. On the other hand, as Weber claims, the economic rationality depends on people's predilection to the practical-rational types of behavior. Weber marks that the "economic rationality" is defined by religious persuasion, specifically, the rational ethics of ascetic Protestantism. Weber asserts that Catholics and Protestants chose different spheres of activity, the former opting for traditional handicraft and humanistic occupations, the latter — for entrepreneurial, industrial occupations. The difference between their choices is caused by religious education. The significant statement of Weber is that religious indoctrination is a factor influencing professional choice. This is what Weber wrote about the capitalist "spirit": "It might thus seem that the development of the spirit of capitalism is best understood as part of the development of rationalism as a whole, and could be deduced from the fundamental position of rationalism on the basic problems of life" [12, p. 37]. Weber notes that the rational order of thinking gets its adequate form of realization in the capitalist enterprise, and the last one finds a spiritual, driving force in it. The "spirit", as Weber says, gets money. The capitalist relation to the labour means a vocation, when the work is an end in itself. The "spirit" of capitalism is an ethic norm regulating the way of life. According to Weber, the sense of the spirit of capitalism can be expressed in Franklin's slogan: "Time is money".

Thus, it becomes clear that capitalism is a sort of a religious doctrine. Or, to be more precise, it is the realization of a certain world outlook. It is remarkable that Christian (Protestant) ideology made it possible not only to offer one more modern version of the world order, but also to give it a universal character. If we try to articulate what Weber stated in other disciplinary and terminological markers, we will see approximately the following: the reality available to rational anonymous systematic comprehension becomes the totality within which there is some universal determinant (money) to which ("eventually") all variety of forms and facts of life are reduced. Even if this determinant cannot be considered to be ontological, it can be a discursively narrative basis for all speculations focused on evaluation of the current practices. Also, the determinant is inherently irrational, abstract, aimless, self-sufficient, closed in itself and groundless. Predetermining a framework of actions and, what is more important, options for interpretation of these actions, allows to carry out discursive investment procedures without qualitative (and quantitative) characteristics of primary substratum, i.e. the substratum it is trying to be implemented in. As a result, annexation of territories takes place. In religious terms, it is the conversion of the unfaithful. In secular terms, it is getting familiar with progress, rationality, production of material goods, welfare, democracy, and, finally, consumption. The religious sociological doctrine includes the anthropological project, within which the procedures of alienation from other kinds of reality with their subsequent seizure and transformation in the "image and likeness" are carried out. It would be courageous but not devoid of sense to claim that in this regard "capitalism" as a concept, including both

the doctrine and practice, is one of modern options of the well-known form of cross-cultural and interethnic interaction — colonial expansion. And in this sense, capitalism does not differ, even being oppositional, from socialist (or communistic) doctrine: both are the modern versions of two Christian presets — Protestant and Orthodox. Active and intolerant “hostility” (or opposition) enables to claim their primary, ontological, and basic unity. Both act within the same “cultural code” and are operated by it. Respectively, the transition from one pole to the other with all the variety of real “revolutionary situations” does not involve any essential structural, semantic or discursive operational transformations. Also, it is true that the transfer of these principles to the territory that has a different world outlook or jurisdiction with a different cultural code, even taking into account any “winning streak” and “the world celebration” are nothing more than decorative and casual gestures of ornamental kind.

Coming back to “capitalism” and conceptual history of capitalism, it is necessary to say that M. Weber’s capitalist theory can be considered the very discursive base, if not for all, but for the majority of subsequent reasonings on capitalism as a sociological, social and philosophical category. The modality of these reasonings is not crucial: any negation or an abusive denial, as well as an axiological assessment, are no more than reproduction and repetition of the primary organising principles of this concrete discourse.

The reconstruction of the concept of “capitalism” and “spirit” in Weber’s work shows that the philosopher understands capitalism as a special type of production that materialized in the enterprise, where economic rationality is realized because of the need for getting profit and strengthening capital. In addition, the entrepreneur’s “spirit” as a special way of thinking is caused by a particular religious tradition (Protestantism) that determines the choice of the job which enables a person to get legal profit. In the works by Sombart and Weber capitalism finally loses its negative political connotations, but retains those additional ethical and psychological aspects that were inherited from liberal economists. The “academic” history of capitalism provided ethical and psychological ground for explanation why every person who wants to be identified as “homo economicus” or “homo rationalis” should participate in capitalist “business”. Hence, capitalism turns out to be the realization of a rational-aesthetic and cultural approach to life that identifies people as reasonable, that is to say included in the capitalist system, or unreasonable, in other words, excluded from it. It is obvious that the academic legitimation turns capitalism into an ideological term, which is used by people to see the world and, according to which, they define their own lives. Thus, the “academic” history of the concept of “capitalism” comes from the process of turning capitalism to ideology, which has the principle of rationality and calculation in its basis. Capitalism becomes a keynote, while “the capitalist rationality” becomes the leading anthropological feature of the New Time subject.

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Концептуальная история «капитализма»

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Статья представляет собой философскую реконструкцию становления понятия «капитализм». Ключевым тезисом оказывается то, что К. Маркс не являлся создателем понятия «капитализм», он использовал термин «капиталистический способ производства». В тексте поступательно воспроизведена философская рефлексия появления и становления понятия «капитализм», начиная с его первых упоминаний в политической литературе Германии и Франции и заканчивая вхождением понятия в научный дискурс в качестве устойчивого термина. В противовес устойчивому представлению о том, что Зомбарт был первым популяризатором понятия «капитализм», введя его в научный оборот, в статье исследуется значение трудов Шеффле как более ранних и значимых для становления данного понятия. Именно в работах Шеффле понятие «капитализм» обрело нейтральное значение через сближение с понятием «либерализм», утратив свои негативные политические коннотации, что заложило основы для начала отсчета его «научной» истории. Зомбарт и Вебер представлены в статье не просто как первооткрыватели понятия «капитализм» в рамках научного дискурса, а как ученые, заложившие основы развития капитализма как идеологии, связав его с понятием «дух» в качестве воплощения специфического типа капиталистической рациональности. Подробная философская реконструкция формирования понятия показана

ла, как из динамичного, развивающегося, не имеющего устойчивого значения термина капитализм становится сначала идеологическим понятием, а потом и основанием для формирования рационального/калькулятивного новоевропейского субъекта.

Ключевые слова: философия капитализма, капиталистическая рациональность, либерализм, социализм, А. Шеффле, К. Маркс.

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