THE PROCESS AND STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

The scientific article is dedicated to a current methodological issue—the scientific process and architectonics in political and social research. In political and social studies, architectonics and the scientific process are essentially the manifestation of researchers' maximum activity in accumulating and studying knowledge in the field of the humanities. Substantively, the scientific process and structure (architectonics) of research constitute a scientific-methodological paradigm of politics and society. The research process in scientific studies, by its nature and content, should be as refined and developed as possible in accordance with a predetermined architectonic framework. For the research process and its corresponding architectonics to proceed correctly, it must align with one of the main attributes of political and social research—structural components and key characteristics.During the research process, the author must clearly define the subject and object of the scientific inquiry and specify the main paradigm of the phenomenon under study. This will enable the researcher to determine the foundation and model of the research and also to formulate the scientific hypothesis. In the course of the research, the collection, processing, analysis, and interpretation of empirical data also play a significant role. In the concluding part of the research, it is mandatory to present the results, recommendations, and the consistency and validation of the conclusions with the previously established scientific hypothesis.

Key words: Politics, Society, Research Process, Research Architectonics, Paradigm, Interpretation

პოლიტიკისა და სოციუმის სამეცნიერო კვლევის პროცესი და არქიტექტონიკა პოლიტიკურ და სოციალურ კვლევებში

ნატო გურგენიძე
ფუტანის უნივერსიტეტის
საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობებისა და
საზოგადოებრივ საქმეთა სკოლის დოქტორანტი

ანოტაცია

სამეცნიერო სტატია ეძღვნება აქტუალურ მეთოდოლოგიურ პრობლემას - სამეცნიერო პროცესი და არქიტექტონიკა პოლიტიკურ და სოციალურ კვლევებში. პოლიტიკურ და სოციალურ კვლევებში არქიტექტონიკა და სამეცნიერო პროცესი სხვა არაფერია, თუ არა მეცნიერთა მაქსიმალური აქტივობის გამოვლინება ჰუმანიტარულ მეცნიერებათა დარგში ცოდნის დაგროვებასა და შესწავლაში. შინაარსობრივად კვლევის მეცნიერული პროცესი და სტრუქტურა (არქიტექტონიკა) არის პოლიტიკისა და სოციუმის სამეცნიერო - მეთოდოლოგიური პარადიგმა. სამეცნიერო კვლევებში პროცესი თავისი ბუნებით და შინაარსით მაქსიმალურად უნდა იყოს დახვეწილი და დამუშავებული წინასწარ განსაზღვრული არქიტექტონიკის შესაბამისად. იმისათვის, რომ კვლევის პროცესი და მისი შესაბამისი არქიტექტონიკა სწორი მიმართულებით წარიმართოს, ის უნდა შეესაბამებოდეს პოლიტიკური და სოციალური კვლევის ერთ-ერთ მთავარ ატრიბუტს - სტრუქტურულ კომპონენტებსა და ძირითად მახასიათებლებს.კვლევის პროცესში ავტორმა აუცილებლად უნდა განსაზღვროს სამეცნიერო კვლევის საგანი და ობიექტი, დააკონკრეტოს შესწავლილი ფენომენის ძირითადი პარადიგმა. ეს საშუალებას მისცემს მკვლევარს განსაზღვროს კვლევის საფუძველი, მოდელი, ასევე ჩამოაყალიბოს კვლევის სამეცნიერო ჰიპოთეზა. კვლევის პროცესში ასევე მნიშვნელოვან როლს ასრულებს ემპირიული მასალის შეგროვება, დამუშავება, ანალიზი და ინტერპრეტაცია. კვლევის დასკვნით ნაწილში სავალდებულო რეჟიმში უნდა იყოს წარმოდგენილი - შედეგები, რეკომენდაციები, ასევე დასკვნის შესაბამისობა და დადასტურება ადრე ჩამოყალიბებულ სამეცნიერო ჰიპოთეზასთან.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: პოლიტიკა, სოციუმი, კვლევის პროცესი, კვლევის არქიტექტონიკა, პარადიგმა, ინტერპრეტაცია

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In everyday life, people acquire "knowledge" through various means and directions. Science is one of the ways to acquire knowledge. This type of knowledge is based on reasoning and experience. The acquisition of knowledge is directly linked to individuals' activities; this type of activity is carried out by researchers. Therefore, the research process is a general system of activities and represents the paradigm of scientific research.The foundation of modern political science and sociology is knowledge. It is obtained through a methodology characteristic of the scientific process and differs radically from the information derived from myths, intuition, beliefs, or opinions and data provided by authority figures. Scientific knowledge has a range of characteristics, among which the most important is empirical verifica-

tion, which involves validating the validity (or reliability) of arguments through objective observation. In the research process, a scientist of politics and society observes, collects data, sources, and existing specialized and specific literature on phenomena such as elements of social policy, events, processes, and facts like elections, referendums, political protests, military aggression, annexation, the use of soft or hard power, and others. The researcher must describe, analyze, and explain the nature and essence of their observations as accurately as possible. These are significant and determining factors. Thus, we can conclude that the research process and its architectonics represent a complex and multifaceted paradigm.The research process consists of seven main parts, which are organically interconnected and integrated with each other:

- Identifying the problem of the phenomenon under study;
- Formulating, developing, and analyzing a testable hypothesis;
- Applying the appropriate research design;
- Scientifically measuring the phenomenon under study;
- Collecting and analyzing data;
- Studying existing sources, literature, and information;
- Generalization and interpretation.

The main characteristic of the research process is its cyclical nature. It typically begins with the identification of a problem and concludes with an attempt to generalize empirical data. The generalization that completes one cycle leads to the next cycle. This cyclical process continues uninterrupted, reflecting scientific progress.[1] Thus, the research process is characterized by a corresponding logical chain and a cyclical mechanism.

An important and defining aspect of the research process is the following effective feature: this mechanism typically allows for the successful identification and correction of potential errors from previous studies. Through empirical research and based on scientific hypotheses, researchers aim to verify existing generalizations and results. If the generalizations are rejected, then the formulation and scientific verification of a new hypothesis becomes necessary. Based on new generalizations and interpretations, the research operations must be reassessed, which helps to uncover errors in the operations of previously conducted research. Ultimately, these procedures facilitate the improvement of research outcomes. The correction phase—the process—can be conducted at an accelerated or slowed pace, potentially requiring more time. This process is also characterized by a moderate pace, during which both negative and positive aspects become apparent. Thus, the research process has its specific essence, nature, regularities, characteristic features, and logic. This existing structure must be understood and considered by the scientist in the course of scientific activity.

The research process is also characterized by several key stages that are essential for all research activities of a scientific-practical nature, regardless of the geographical location of the research (where geographically the research is conducted), the scope and quantity of objects under study (whether in large or small organizations), or the practical or functional purpose of the research (for socio-economic or political objectives). These stages essentially reflect the steps necessary for conducting research and obtaining results—from selecting the research subject (topic) to writing the research report (dissertation, thesis, or presentation). A comprehensive research process should include the following elements:

- Selection of the research topic;
- Literature search;
- Preliminary description and characterization of the research issue;
- Review of the literature;
- Definition of the research topic;
- Development of the plan and formulation of directions;
- Data collection;
- Data processing, analysis, and interpretation;
- Evaluation of the results;
- Formulation of general conclusions;

This is a methodological model of the research process, in which each stage logically follows from the previous one. However, it should be noted that the research process does not always and cannot always proceed according to the presented scheme, as it may be necessary to make adjustments at a certain stage for specific reasons. In order for the process to be as effective as possible and to avoid frequent corrections, it is necessary and beneficial to conduct so-called preliminary research, which should be carried out before the full project is executed and the research process is carefully prepared.[2]

It is advisable for a researcher to start the research process as early as possible. Upon initiation, the researcher should determine what empirical data will be needed for the research, the quantity of the required data, assess whether the collected data might be characterized by one-sided tendencies, and if such tendencies are negative, how they can be neutralized, and so on. At the same time, the researcher must assess how difficult it will be to collect the appropriate information needed to answer the research question. At the beginning of the research process, the researcher should also establish whether the phenomenon has been previously studied,

1 Nachmias, D., & Nachmias, C. (1987). Research methods in the social sciences. New York: St. Martin's PresiT, 1376.

2 Bagaturia, G., Bagaturia, O., Doghonadze, Sh., & Iashvili, G. (2019) Fundamentals of research methods in the process of public administration, Publishing House "Technical University." Tbilisi

and if so, how the issues of validity and reliability were addressed (whether the level of validity was measured).

Thus, from the very start of the research process, the researcher should ask questions like 'how much,' 'when,' 'why,' and 'where.' Through various sources (internet materials, the press, specialized relevant literature, ongoing archives), the researcher should seek out the results of prior studies, claims, and arguments that they disagree with or find inaccurate, biased, and unreliable. All of this should be carried out through the verification of the existing scientific hypothesis; the purpose of the process is to verify the empirical data of a particular author, and as a result, either confirm or refute the validity of the phenomenon under study. It would be effective and impressive if, during the research process, the researcher finds several studies whose results conflict with one another. In such cases, the researcher should identify the nature and cause of the conflict and establish their own position, approach, or viewpoint.

In order for this part of the research process to be successfully implemented, it is advisable for the researcher to take another scientific step: to explain/define the phenomenon under study – to describe and characterize the research subject. Offering an explanation involves identifying the political and social phenomenon. This action will allow the researcher to perform a primary, subsequent, and prospective explanation, characterization, and systematic analysis of the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, the primary, subsequent, and prospective description and characterization of the research subject are of utmost importance in the research process. This stage is closely related to defining the research topic and the direction of future research since 'if you cannot describe what you are doing, then you do not know what you are doing.'

Thus, in the execution of a scientific paper, the research process must be as refined as possible, accompanied by proper structuring. The research process can be envisioned as a process with a general algorithm. Typically, it corresponds to the quantitative research method; however, in many cases, a qualitative method is used to clarify/define the nature and characteristics of the research process. It should be noted that an algorithm is a complex systematic description (explanation) of scientific actions, within which the phenomenon is studied in a sequential manner to achieve the set goals and fulfill the tasks.

One of the main attributes widely recognized as confirming the correct direction of the research process is the introduction of the paper. Thus, all types of scientific papers require a proper and refined introduction, which presents the relevant components of the research. The main function and purpose of the introduction of a scientific study are to provide a clear understanding to the reader and interested parties about the topic or problem (phenomenon). A proper, comprehensive introduction of a paper is distinguished by its complex and multifaceted structure.

Structural Components and Characteristics of the Introduction:

- A brief overview of the research project;
- Relevance of political and social phenomena;
- Formulation of the research problem;
- Research objectives and tasks;
- Subject and object of the paper;
- Formulation of the research hypothesis;
- Review of existing sources and literature (current state of research on the topic);
- Theoretical basis of the research (theoretical foundations of the study);
- Research methodology (use of specific methods in social and political sciences);
- Novelty of the scientific research (innovation);
- Theoretical-practical and utilitarian significance of the research;
- Discussion of the terms used in the paper;
- Volume and structure of the paper.

RESEARCH RELEVANCE

- Why is this issue (raised in the topic) important?
- For whom and for what is it important?
- Is the issue interdisciplinary? (If so, justify.)
- What scientific data is available on this specific issue?
- What remains unaddressed and needs clarification?
- How can your paper relate to the existing knowledge and scientific data?

FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The selection of the research problem depends on the researcher's range of interests, the dissertation topic, and the type of research.

RESEARCH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The research goal can be considered the general purpose of the dissertation topic. For example, the goal of the research may be to define, discover, or investigate something. A research paper may have one or multiple goals. Each goal should be broken down into objectives. Research objectives are the specific steps the researcher has taken or will take to achieve the research goal. The goals and objectives of the research must be clear, specific, and should clearly reflect the nature and essence of the phenomenon under study.

SUBJECT AND OBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher must be fully aware of what is being studied, how the object of the research is characterized, and within what scope and limits the subject of the research is conducted. This information should be present-

ed in the introduction as one of its key characteristics.

FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

One of the important parts of the research process is the correct formulation of the hypothesis. A hypothesis is a presumed answer to the research problem, but it is expressed clearly through a defined relationship between independent and dependent variables. A hypothesis is a tentative answer that can be either confirmed or refuted. It must be empirically tested. After formulation, it must be thoroughly verified. If the existing hypothesis is not confirmed and is refuted, the researcher should develop a new hypothesis, which, if accepted, will contribute to scientific knowledge. Adequate and convincing testing of the hypothesis is facilitated by its proper formulation. A correct hypothesis provides a solid foundation for the researcher in making further decisions during the research process, while an incorrectly formulated hypothesis leads to errors and results in negative or inaccurate outcomes.

SEARCHING FOR AND REVIEWING LITERATURE

Once the research topic is established, comprehensive information about the essence of the research subject must be gathered to exclude the existence of similar studies. Information can be sourced from scientific papers, various publications, print and electronic media, and archival materials. Additionally, it is not advisable to use Wikipedia as a resource in the paper. In the literature review, the following should be addressed:

- Review scientific sources related to the specific topic;
- Engage in dialogue/debate with other researchers;
- Develop the author's own position (viewpoint, approach).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This involves defining the theoretical basis upon which the paper is built.

RESEARCH METHOD

This section explains why the selected methods and techniques are appropriate for the research. It should also justify why the researcher chose these methods over others.

SCIENTIFIC NOVELTY AND THEORETICAL-PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PAPER

- What scientific novelty does the paper contain and highlight?
- What will the paper present that has not been revealed in previous research?
- It is important to emphasize who will find the research necessary, interesting, and who will use it.

DEFINING THE PHENOMENON OF THE RESEARCH

The process of defining the research phenomenon should be carried out by focusing on the research questions. For example, if a researcher is studying the social system of a country, they should first focus on social policy and its components, and then shift the focus to the specific elements of this phenomenon, for example:

- On social policy as a public theory and practice;
- On the subject, object, and subjects of social policy;
- On the social structure of society (stratification);
- On the nature of social transformation and contemporary trends;
- On social security and government policies aimed at ensuring it;
- On the labor market, unemployment, and employment policy;
- On issues related to labor remuneration regulation and their solutions;
- On the social insurance system and its reform issues;
- On indicators of social policy effectiveness related to the population's standard of living;
- On social partnership as a key direction for the implementation of social policy;
- On social policy in foreign countries;
- On the strategy and priorities of social policy in the state.

The focus should be similarly applied to other issues in political science. For example, the political system of a country should be scientifically studied as a whole, and then attention should shift to its components and structural elements, for example:

- Paradigms of the political system of society;
- Classification of political systems;
- The role of the state in the political system;
- Reform, modernization, adaptation, and transformation of the political system, including strategies, mechanisms, and resources for modernization;
- Legal paradigms of the political system of society;
- Improvement of the political system in the state and development of constitutionalism;
- Local governance and self-government within the political system;
- Political systems in foreign countries;
- The global political system.

Thus, a researcher should undertake research planning, which is a crucial part of the research process (developing the research plan and direction). The paradigm of the phenomenon to be studied must be defined, as it determines the nature of the research. A paradigm represents a set of theoretical and methodological guidelines that shape scientific investigation at a given time. The research paradigm addresses questions such as: What? Where? When? How? and Why? It defines the research subject, field, timing, and techniques—essen-

tially, where, when, and how the investigation should be conducted. Together, the answers to these questions form the methodology—the collection of methods used to conduct the specific research.

One indispensable component of the scientific research introduction is the innovation or novelty of the paper. In this section, the researcher should provide objective information on the level of study of the phenomenon under investigation. It should be clarified what type and volume of information characterized the research object before the author's study and what the researcher plans for its future examination. Analyzing the phenomenon requires a complex, systematic approach. When analyzing the novelty of the paper, the researcher should determine whether the dominant focus is on the innovation process or the innovation result. Which aspect is prioritized in the research? In our view, both components of novelty should be equally reflected in the introduction. Finally, the paper should also include a conclusion, a list of references, and appendices.

CONCLUSION

The research process is a structured approach to acquiring scientific knowledge, underpinned by empirical verification and a methodical framework. It is grounded in the activities of researchers who observe, collect data, and analyze phenomena across various fields such as political science and sociology. This process involves several interconnected stages that form a comprehensive system of scientific inquiry.

Initially, researchers identify the problem or phenomenon they wish to study. This involves understanding the scope and nature of the issue at hand. Next, they formulate hypotheses—testable statements or predictions based on existing knowledge and preliminary observations. This is followed by designing a research methodology, which outlines the procedures and techniques to be used in the investigation.

Measurement is a critical stage where researchers quantify the variables involved in the study. Accurate data collection and analysis follow, providing insights into the phenomena being investigated. Researchers then review existing literature to ensure their study addresses gaps and builds on prior knowledge. This stage involves synthesizing information from various sources to contextualize the research within the broader academic discourse.

Generalization and interpretation involve drawing conclusions from the collected data and determining their implications. This cyclical process, where each completed cycle leads to new questions and further investigation, reflects the dynamic nature of scientific inquiry. As new data and insights emerge, researchers refine their hypotheses and methodologies, continually improving the accuracy and relevance of their findings.

A crucial part of the research process is the introduction of the research paper or study. This section provides an overview of the research project, its relevance, objectives, and the research problem. It also includes the formulation of the hypothesis, a review of existing literature, and an explanation of the theoretical and practical significance of the research. The introduction sets the stage for the study by outlining its contribution to existing knowledge and its potential impact.

Effective research requires careful planning and preliminary investigations to identify potential biases and ensure a robust approach. The research paradigm—encompassing the theoretical and methodological guidelines—shapes the investigation and determines the scope, timing, and techniques employed.

In summary, the research process is a complex, cyclical endeavor that integrates various stages of scientific inquiry. It demands a thorough understanding of the research topic, a well-defined methodology, and a careful consideration of the theoretical and practical implications of the findings.

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