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Positioning Post-Soviet Sociology in Global Sociology: Between the Global South and the Global North

Kseniia Cherniak* and Artem Lytovchenko

Abstract

Sociology in today's world often seeks to internationalise research and globalise problem solving. However, so-called 'global sociology' is quite some way from being actually global, as it only involves specific regions and communities in the discussion. The voice of other regions, as a rule, is not heard in the established system of connections and positions, and the regions themselves act as passive objects of (re)positioning, which is determined by the needs of specific research carried out by the nominally 'global' community of sociologists. The goal of the current study is to position one of the excluded communities – post-Soviet sociology – in global sociology using the North-South analytical framework that is frequently applied in discussions of global academic inequalities. The findings suggest that post-Soviet sociology is positioned closer to the Global South, although significant country-based differences are observed. Post-Soviet sociology is functionally fragmented and disconnected, and this is facilitated by its orientation towards the 'northern' standards of knowledge production, which are professed even to the detriment of originality and independence.

Keywords: Global South, Global North, post-Soviet sociology, global sociology, academic inequalities.

Introduction

In the modern globalising world sociological research has increasingly focused on the regional and even global levels of analysis. Following this tendency, more researchers write about a so-called 'global sociology' (e.g. Costa, 2014; Munck, 2016) – an 'organisation of professional communities that promotes open, equal and fruitful cooperation between sociologists from different continents, countries and cultures, and enhances our discipline's position between other social sciences and in extra-academic environment' (Sorokin, 2015, p. 2).

Despite such a positioning, global sociology still does not include the sociologies of world regions equally, favouring certain communities, their features and positions, and marginalising or even excluding others. Therefore, problems investigated by global sociology cannot be resolved on the global level and the whole idea of a global sociology becomes questionable (Shah, 2020).

One such excluded region is the post-Soviet region¹ and its sociology. In the current work the term 'post-Soviet' is used to define the territorial borders of the region under investigation and to emphasise its common features, namely, belonging to the former USSR and the development of sociology under similar conditions until the dissolution of the Union.

Sociology in this region, which has been of high interest to researchers during the Soviet era (Greenfeld, 1988), becomes secondary through the wave of transformations after the dissolution of the Union and now mainly remains subordinate and overlooked in research on academia, science and knowledge production. While its place is not even discussed in foreign research, rare local sociologists also point to the marginal position of sociology produced in post-Soviet countries (Gapova, 2009; Gurevich, 2012; Titarenko & Zdravomyslova, 2017). However, to be able to equally

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1 Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

cooperate and promote its own approaches on the global level, it is crucial for such excluded scientific communities first to realise their own position among others, as is now realised by scientists from countries that were formerly under colonial rule (Collyer, 2018).

Therefore, the main goal of this study is to position post-Soviet sociology within global sociology. To achieve the objective, the research uses the North-South (divide) analytical framework as a theoretical and methodological background. This approach is widely used for the analysis of sociology and sociology communities on the global level and provides a variety of concepts and instruments for the analysis of academia (Connell, 2014; Keim, 2008). Moreover, it stresses the existence of the inequalities between scientific and sociology communities worldwide, supporting concerns regarding the existence of a *truly global* sociology (Alatas & Sinha, 2017; Collyer, 2018). At the same time, even this framework overlooks certain regions and their science, including post-Soviet sociology.

Research that uses the North-South framework in studies of academic inequalities usually predefines the positions of the regions in focus based on the geopolitical division of North and South and rather uses various methods to support the legitimacy of the predefined position than to test or define it. Based on the methods and tools used in such research, we constructed a comprehensive set of instruments (model) (Cherniak, 2021) that allows us to (re-)position the regional sociology in the framework of the North-South divide. Therefore, one of the sub-aims of the study is to test the resulting model empirically.

Another sub-aim of the study is to examine whether the sociology of the countries under investigation (still) constitutes a regional community of sociology researchers, meaning an organised interconnected community of researchers within a single discipline.

The article is structured as follows. First, the theoretical background and research questions of the study are discussed. Then the research design, including the data and methods are described. Afterwards, the research findings are presented, followed by a discussion. The last part, conclusion, gives the final summary of the findings, reflects on the limitations of the study and poses issues for further investigation.

Theoretical background

The background of this research consists of the North-South (divide) analytical framework in relation to academic inequalities, on the one hand, and existing research and information on the current situation in post-Soviet sociology, on the other.

Sociology from the Global South and the Global North: Presenting the model

The concept of the North-South divide (or the Global North and the Global South) appeared around the 1980s in geopolitics and international relations and is primarily used to reveal unequal positions between two world regions (Dirlik, 2007; Mignolo, 2011). In particular, it divides countries into two groups based on the set of dichotomous characteristics – wealthy and poor, developed and developing, mainstream and marginal, and so on, where the Global North relates to the former and the Global South to the latter (Odeh, 2010). A similar logic applies when the framework is used to analyse academia and, in particular, sociology and communities of sociologists (e.g. Alatas 2003; Keim 2008; Collyer 2018).

This logic consists the basis of the theoretical-analytical model of the characteristics and relations of sociology from the Global South and the Global North that we developed specifically to position excluded sociologies between global regions. Below we will briefly discuss its main components (for the process of developing the model, see Cherniak (2021)). We should emphasise that the model only reflects the information captured in the literature and previous studies, and therefore represents both real and perceived characteristics and mainstream opinions in regard to the

regions and not the factual state of research work in those regions. Moreover, the model is used as an ideal type, and we do not claim that countries predefined as the North or the South actually and always hold those characteristics.

The model consists of four categories in accordance with the main topics considered in research into academia that uses the North-South analytical framework. Each category is divided into dichotomies that represent certain characteristics and relations (for the model itself, see Table 1 in the Appendix):

1. *Historical development* contains discussions about the place of origin and development of classical sociological theory and the independent academic community that is thought to be the Global North. The Global South is, in comparison, seen as receiving social theory through colonialism and capitalism, while its sociology and local research community remain dependent and subordinate (Alatas & Sinha, 2017; Keim, 2008; Oommen, 1991).
2. *Research orientation* describes the intellectual division of research between theoretical and empirical, fundamental and practical, among others. Here Northern sociology is believed to produce theories and concepts that make it possible to create independent empirical knowledge of universal and comparative character; research investigation is oriented towards various societies rather than the researchers' 'own' country. In opposition, Southern sociology is considered to produce only locally-oriented practical and empirical research (Alatas, 2003; Baber, 2003; Connell, 2007).
3. *Position on the global scale* relates to the visibility and recognition of sociology and the sociology community internationally, meaning its position in the international community of sociologists, the volume of research production and its perceived quality. The North takes a dominant position in the mainstream academia as a high-quality knowledge producer, defining the research agenda and 'global' standards of quality, while the South remains marginal and invisible, striving to catch up with the Northern research agenda and rules of knowledge production (Alatas, 2003; Collyer, 2018; Connell, 2014; Keim, 2011).
4. *North-South research cooperation* consists of two distinct sets of dichotomies – related to cooperation during the research project and to the flow of knowledge. The first is similar to the research orientation, but in regard to a specific research project (Connell, 2007; Keim, 2014; Rosseel et al., 2009), where the North engages in the theory development, analysis and explanation and defines core points, while the South is used as a source of data and barely participates in the other stages. The second set states the unidirectional flow of theoretical and methodological innovations only from the North to the South, the rejection of alternative knowledge by the North and prioritisation of Northern knowledge in the South (Alatas & Sinha, 2017; Keim, 2011; Oommen, 1991).

In order to have a complete picture of all possible positions it should be noted that, based on the literature, we also extracted the developing *resistant sociology* from the South that concentrates on the promotion of knowledge heterogeneity, development of indigenous theory and establishment of equal South-South cooperation (Alatas & Sinha, 2017; Connell, 2014; Keim, 2011; Oommen, 1991). It is important to keep in mind that nowadays Southern sociology can appear both in so-called subordinate and resistant forms, as might post-Soviet sociology.

Development and current state of post-Soviet sociology

In the post-Soviet space, sociology came from Western Europe at the end of the 19th century (Kondratyuk, 2012; Poghosyan, 2015; Titarenko & Zdravomyslova, 2017). For a long time, sociology in the region developed under a Marxist-Leninist framework and mainly investigated issues related to labour, within-Union migration, work, family, youth etc., with some researchers engaged in theoretical work and the critical analysis of Western thought (meaning Western European and North American) (Isaiev, 2018; Kononov, 2020; Poghosyan, 2015; Spataru, 2017; Stepanenko, 2018; Vaicekauskaitė, 2013).

Analysis of the literature on the state and development of sociology showed that after the dissolution of the USSR, sociology in post-Soviet states has been developing at a different pace. Consequently, to better understand the current state of post-Soviet sociology, we divided countries into two groups based on the development of sociological research and its embeddedness in the education and research systems.

Institutionalised sociology group (Armenia, Belarus, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Russian Federation, Ukraine) contains countries where sociology has developed a network of research and educational institutions that conduct academic research, while profit-seeking and non-profit agencies take over private and practically relevant research. In all of those countries, national sociological associations and Institutes of Sociology of the National Academy of Science exist; their social research institutions are spread all over the country, and sociology is considered a comprehensive academic discipline. These countries are also characterised by a more or less developed international research network and active engagement in international projects such as HORIZON 2020 and Eurobarometer (Danilov, 2014; Poghosyan, 2015; Shaukenova et al., 2014; Stepanenko, 2018; Tabuns, 2002; Titma, 2002; Vaitiekaitė, 2013).

Countries with *partly institutionalised sociology* (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) also have a network of sociological institutions; however, it is not well-developed, and a portion of the academic research is conducted by agencies external to academia that are also engaged in marketing and public opinion research. Education in sociology is provided by chairs of sociology in departments of philosophy or economics, while the research work is mainly done in the capitals and is highly dependent on foreign funding. Sociologists in the mentioned countries strive to build a stable local and regional research network, but results only remain to be seen (Isaiev, 2018; Bahtii, 2017; Ketsbaia & Kutubidze, 2018; Samiiev, 2016; Spataru, 2017; Suleymanov, 2010).

Unfortunately, we could not find any information about the development of sociology and sociological research in Turkmenistan; therefore, we excluded the country from the current analysis.

Noticeably, observations and reflections on the state of national sociology barely touch upon international cooperation and global positioning of the discipline and scientific community, and therefore still leave the question on their place in global sociology open (Gurevich, 2012; Klietkova et al., 2017; Sokolov, 2009).

Research questions

Based on a review of the current state of post-Soviet sociology and an analysis of the relations between sociology from the Global North and the Global South, we pose the following research questions:

1. Is post-Soviet sociology a part of the sociology of the Global South or the sociology of the Global North?
2. How does the degree of institutionalisation of sociology affect the placement of sociology on the North-South scale?

Finding answers to both questions requires formulating separate instrumental questions for each category of the model:

- What is the positioning of post-Soviet sociology in terms of historical development?
- What is the research orientation of post-Soviet sociology?
- What is the visibility of post-Soviet sociology on a global scale?
- Is post-Soviet sociology recognised on the global scale?

- With whom do post-Soviet sociologists establish research cooperation?
- How intensively do post-Soviet sociologists cooperate with foreign researchers?

By the category 'historical development', post-Soviet sociology was possible to position based on the literature, as several sources emphasise that sociology came to the region from Europe at the end of the 19th century (Isaiev, 2018; Kondratyuk, 2012; Titarenko & Zdravomyslova, 2017). Therefore, it can be directly concluded that *from the perspective of the historical development post-Soviet sociology is positioned in the South*.

In the current study we do not include the analysis of the flow of knowledge and the quality of cooperation between post-Soviet and other sociologists (North-South cooperation category), as this would require the deep qualitative analysis of the internal documents of research projects (that are not always available) as well as interviewing the researchers involved about their perspective on the quality of research cooperation. Such an empirical analysis requires a whole other study and is a matter of consideration for further research. Nevertheless, the questions we posed allow us to define the scale of international cooperation involving post-Soviet sociologists and the actors in that cooperation, and therefore still position post-Soviet sociology between the North and the South, following the literature on research cooperation in post-Soviet countries and under the North-South framework (Hunter & Leahey, 2008; Lovakov & Yudkevich, 2021; Rosseel et al., 2009).

Research design

Categories of the analytical model demand different approaches to their analysis; therefore, we collected and analysed various types of data.

The main units of analysis are post-Soviet countries (14). The scientific work of countries is usually concentrated in research institutions and conducted by individual scholars and evaluated based on their performance. Therefore, to be able to access enough data and ensure we can cover all variables we are interested in, we sampled 3 main research institutions in each country (42 in total, for the full list see Table 2 in the Appendix) and then formed a sample of researchers affiliated with those institutions, 211 in total. The sample includes heads of research units and researchers who hold the title 'professor'. For Russia only heads of research units and one professor were chosen, and then randomly every second person was sampled, as the number of Russian scholars was too big in comparison to the rest of the sample.

Table 1 summarises the main characteristics of the data. Each type of data is used for the analysis in one or more categories of the model of the characteristics and relations of sociology from the Global North and the Global South. Variables have been defined through the process of the operationalisation of dichotomies in every category and serve to define the position of post-Soviet sociology on the basis of each of them.

Table 1. Post-Soviet sociology in literature and research – characteristics of the data

Type of data	Data sources	Period	Variables
Profiles of sampled sociologists	Google Scholar, SCOPUS, Web of Science, Semantic Scholar, Research Gate	Data collected between 14.12.2020 and 20.01.2021	Existence of a profile (dummy); h-index; overall number of citations; RG score (for Research Gate)
Articles written by sampled sociologists	Profiles of scholars at research units' websites, Google Scholar, Web of Science, Semantic Scholar, Research Gate, SCOPUS, elibrary, ORCID, websites of journals where the article is published	Published in 2017-2019; citations collected in the period between 14.12.2020 and 20.01.2021	Language (native, English, another); year of publication; journal of publication; journal's affiliation (national, another post-Soviet country, Global South, Global North, undecided); journal indexed in SCOPUS or/and Web of Science; appearance in chosen databases (dummy); number of citations; article written in co-authorship (dummy)
Abstracts of articles			Research type (theoretical, empirical, mixed); unit of analysis (own country, another country, both); number of cases; research aim (general or local orientation)
Co-authors of articles			Name; affiliation (institution and country); affiliation in relation to the author (same institution, same country, another post-Soviet country, Global South, Global North, undecided)
University rankings	Times Higher Education University Ranking, QS World University Ranking, Academic Ranking of World Universities (all for the subject 'sociology')	Rankings for 2020	At least one university of a post-Soviet country is included in the ranking (dummy); number of included universities per country; place; citation ratio
Journal rankings	SCOPUS (category 'sociology and political science')	2019	At least one journal of a post-Soviet country is included in the ranking (dummy); number of items included; place; quartile; CiteScore; SJR indicator; h-index
Output of sociological publications	SCImago Journal & Country Rank (category 'sociology and political science')	1996–2019, 2017–2019	Total number of documents per country; total number of citations (without self-citations); average number of citations per document; place by each variable
International collaboration	SCImago Journal & Country Rank (category 'social sciences')	2017–2019	Percentage of papers published in collaboration with foreign scholars

Source: compiled by the authors.

Research orientation analysis was carried out based on the abstracts of the works written by the sampled researchers (following Baber (2003)) to provide information on the type, aim and data units of the research. Not all articles had abstracts and not all abstracts were possible to find, so from 960 coded articles only 860 abstracts were collected. The data were coded using the software MAXQDA and analysed using quantitative content analysis.

The *position of post-Soviet sociology on the global scale* was analysed on three levels grouped by the data. The dichotomy about the establishment of the research agenda was not analysed, as this would require a whole other study about the process of the establishment of the agenda in science and power dynamics that was not feasible to do in the setting of our research. The data collected for other dichotomies still gave enough information to answer the research question.

- Country-level. On this level we analysed general conformity with Northern standards of excellence in knowledge production and the global knowledge output, using the data from university and journal rankings and about the output of sociological publications. It should be noted that we primarily planned to use the data from the Social Science Citation Index, but it contains only 200 journals in the category 'sociology' and only two are from the post-Soviet region.
- Researcher-level and publication-level. On these levels how mainstream the produced knowledge was, the evaluation of the research quality and the place in the international sociological community, in other words, the visibility and recognition of post-Soviet sociologists and their works were analysed. For the researcher-level, the data on the sampled researchers' profiles were used, and for the publication-level, the data on their published articles (960 in total).

To be able to understand whether the values of the chosen variables for the researchers' profiles reflect the position 'closer to the North' or 'closer to the South', the profiles of three recognised sociologists were taken as reference points: Sari Hanafi, Michele Lamont and Ruud Koopmans. The values of their profiles are taken as a reference for what is considered a 'top' (Northern) position. To diminish the 'influential researcher' effect, each time from the three values the middle one was taken.

North-South research cooperation is analysed from the perspective of two questions: What is the share of international cooperation in the publications of sociologists from post-Soviet countries? With whom do those sociologists mainly cooperate? To answer these questions the data on international collaboration and co-authors for the sampled articles were used. In total, 456 articles from the sample and 942 co-authors were analysed.

All types of data from the second and third category were analysed in Excel using *descriptive statistical analysis*. As in most cases the variables did not have normal or skewed distributions, the main statistics used were frequency distribution, median, mode and minimum/maximum. Mean is used only in specific cases and to calculate the value for post-Soviet sociology in general. Based on the distribution of researchers and publications, weights are also applied to ensure the equal representation of all countries.

The final results are presented in the form of a scale with the Global South (-1) and the Global North (+1) situated at different ends following the dichotomous characteristics. To position post-Soviet countries and sociology on this scale, each variable was recoded to fit the distribution, and then the average, general and per country, was calculated.

Findings and discussion

In the following we will present and discuss the results of the analysis, firstly, for each category separately and then summarising the result to define the position of post-Soviet sociology between the North and the South. To prevent an averaging bias, the results are also considered at the national level.

Research orientation of post-Soviet sociology

According to the analysis of abstracts and the main indicators, post-Soviet sociology is oriented towards local empirical studies, which coincides with the description of sociology in the South (Keim, 2008, 2014). On this scale, post-Soviet countries are rather positioned in the Global South (Figure 1), and only Armenia, Belarus and Estonia are slightly closer to the North; however, no national sociology reaches the mid-point on the scale (the highest, Estonia, has the value -0.43).

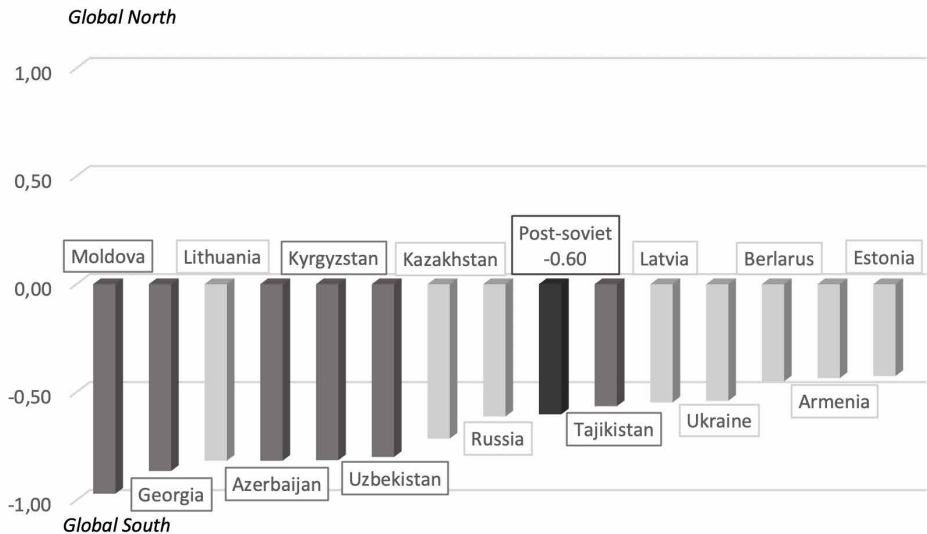


Figure 1.² Research orientation of post-Soviet sociology between the Global North and the Global South

Source: authors' research

Most sociological articles in the post-Soviet region are oriented towards empirical research (65.81%), with Latvia publishing only empirical articles. Theoretical articles, published by the majority of scholars from Ukraine and Tajikistan, do not concentrate on the development of theories, but on the consideration, comparison and adjustment of existing theories, in alignment with the local scholars' reflections (Suleymanov, 2010; Tabuns, 2002). Only 4.07% of all papers combine theoretical and empirical contributions.

A clear majority of the researchers (82.01% and 83.87% respectively) choose their own country as the subject of their analysis and conduct single-case studies, while scholars from Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Uzbekistan only produce single-case local research. Only the Baltic states have a relatively high proportion of comparative studies of their own and other countries, mostly other countries in the Baltic region.

Consequently, it can be said that a clear majority of post-Soviet papers contribute to local

² In this and the following figures the data are presented on the scale, ranging from -1 (Global South) to +1 (Global North). Countries are coloured by the group: countries with institutionalised sociology (light grey), countries with partly institutionalised sociology (dark grey), average for post-Soviet sociology (black).

knowledge (74.88%), with Uzbekistan and Moldova conducting only locally oriented research. In contrast, around one-third of all articles produced by scholars from Ukraine, Belarus and Estonia contribute to universal knowledge.

The result aligns with the literature on the state of post-Soviet sociology that mentions the dominance of local-oriented research topics (Danilov, 2014; Poghosyan, 2015) with rare regional comparisons (Vaicekaускаite, 2013), and theoretical studies of existing theory and methodology (Stepanenko, 2018; Tabuns, 2002). Russian sociologists even state that although Russia often participates in comparative surveys, local researchers rarely conceptualise collected data and address it to global audiences (Titarenko & Zdravomyslova, 2017, p. 149).

Position of post-Soviet sociology on the global scale

In terms of position on the global scale, post-Soviet sociology takes a rather moderate position with a tendency towards the South, while the distribution of post-Soviet countries on the scale differs between the three levels of analysis.

On the *country-level*, post-Soviet sociology is of moderate visibility but not recognised on the global scale. Post-Soviet countries comprise only around 5% of all countries in university rankings (Estonia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia), while a fraction of universities barely reach 2%, which mostly appear closer to the end of the list. A similar situation is observed in the SCOPUS ranking: post-Soviet countries comprise 8.77% of all countries (Estonia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine) and 2.74% of all journals and have a rather low impact (similar to those from the South (Lee & Simon, 2018)). In terms of the number of sociology publications in the SCImago database, post-Soviet countries are distributed around the middle of the ranking, while in terms of citation figures, countries are mostly situated close to the end of the ranking (except for Estonia and Georgia that rank closer to the top).

On the *researcher-level*, post-Soviet countries are visible but rather not recognised. 82.46% of the sampled sociologists have a profile in at least one of the studied databases, while Tajik scholars have no profiles at all. The highest proportion of profiles were found in Semantic Scholar (73.93%), where they are generated automatically, while Google Scholar and Research Gate, where a scholar has to create a profile themselves, get the lowest scores (45.97% and 38.86%). Each platform demonstrates low interest in and recognition of post-Soviet scholars, whose citation values and h-indexes are at least two times lower than the middle value among the selected Northern scholars. Only Russia and the Baltic states show some competitiveness in this regard, being the most represented among all countries, and with Belarus take leading positions in the number of citations and h-index value.

On the *publication-level*, post-Soviet countries are moderately visible and rather not recognised. Representation of articles in databases is moderately good, with 85.83% appearing in at least one database. Articles are mainly published in local journals (75.88%) in the local language (48.92%). Only Georgian, Latvian and Estonian scholars as a clear majority publish in English (around 90%) and frequently appear in North-affiliated journals (indexed in SCOPUS and Web of Science). Most articles are cited up to 2 times. Only Latvia and Estonia show a significant difference (reaching 0.7 out of 1.0 on the scale), clearly tending to the North, while their papers managed to reach a reference number of citations.

Therefore, on the global scale, post-Soviet countries are divided in three groups: those positioned consistently closer to the South (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan), positioned consistently closer to the North (Baltic states, Russia) and countries that change their position. Such results on average moderate the position of post-Soviet sociology, while the countries themselves are widely distributed on the scale (Figure 2). Taking into account the results on all three levels, post-Soviet sociology is defined as being rather visible but under-recognised on the global scale, with rare exceptions.

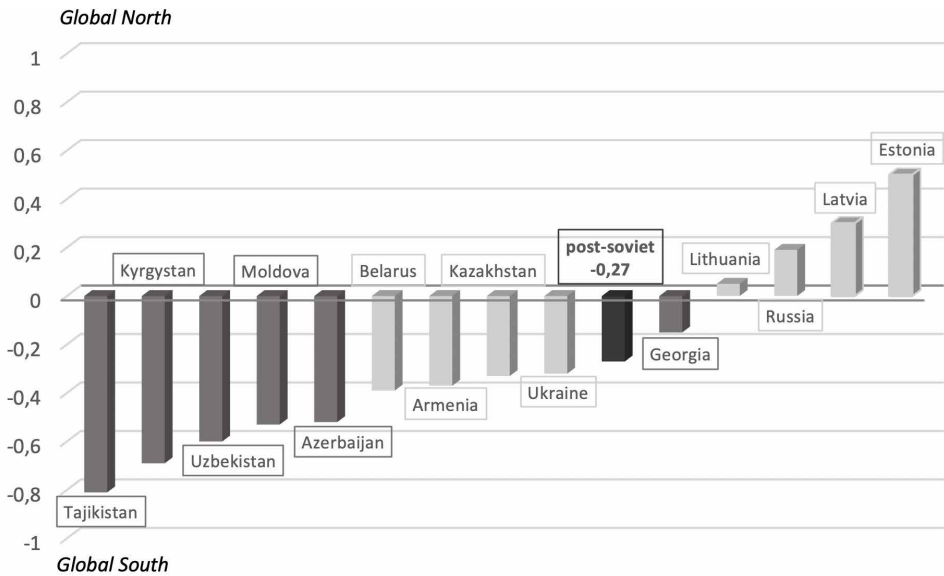


Figure 2. Position of post-Soviet sociology on the global scale between the Global North and the Global South
Source: authors' research.

Research cooperation of post-Soviet sociologists

Analysis of the data on research cooperation also demonstrates that post-Soviet sociology tends towards the South, with Latvia and Estonia being situated in the middle between the two regions (Figure 3). Cooperation with Global North-defined countries³ is more intense than cooperation with other post-Soviet or Global South-defined countries.⁴

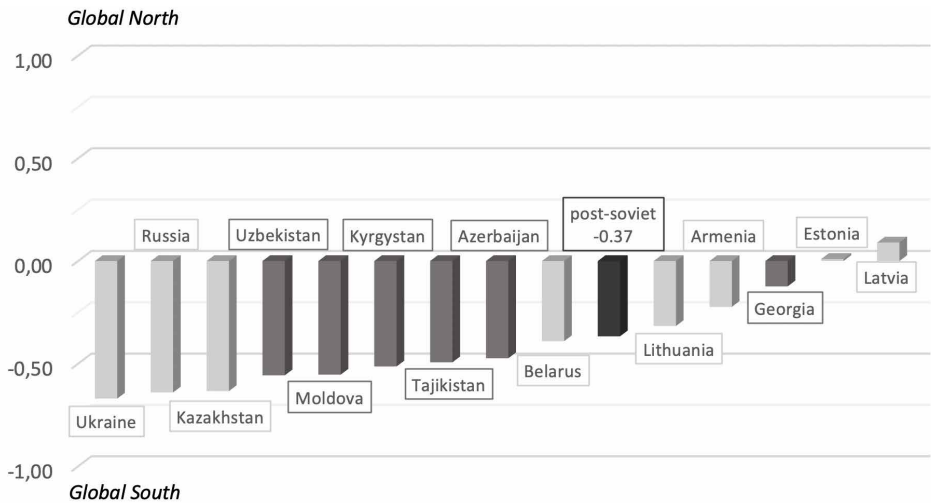


Figure 3. Research collaboration in post-Soviet sociology between the Global North and the Global South
Source: authors' research.

3 Appeared in the data: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, USA
4 Appeared in the data: Brazil, Costa-Rica, India, Pakistan

The SCImago data on the proportion of papers written as part of international collaboration in 2017–2019 shows that in this category post-Soviet countries switched their positions, with Russia having the least articles (13.43%) and Tajikistan, the most (67.78%), while on average more than 40% of articles are written with foreign co-authors.

Among the sampled articles, 51.15% are written in co-authorship, mostly by Estonian (95.65%) and Latvian (88.24%) researchers. The least cooperative appeared to be Ukrainian and Belarusian sociologists (less than 30% of articles written in co-authorship).

Around 75% of all co-authors come from the same institution or the same country as the researcher under study, and this aligns with the data on higher education research (Lovakov & Yudkevich, 2021). Among foreign scholars the highest proportion is taken by the Global North (11.25%); mainly Estonian and Latvian researchers contribute to this type of cooperation. Only 4.99% of papers are written with scholars from other post-Soviet countries.

Therefore, the international cooperation of post-Soviet sociologists in terms of publishing appears to be rather low, especially in comparison to rates of publishing with their compatriots. It is interesting to note that post-Soviet articles written in cooperation are more represented in Northern and Southern journals and in journals indexed in SCOPUS or the Web of Science.

Post-Soviet sociology – part of the South?

Bringing together the results for each country in all three categories, the majority are oriented towards the Southern end of the scale. Still, post-Soviet countries can be clustered into four groups based on the place their sociology takes in each category:

- Countries consistently positioned closer to the Global North include: Estonia, Latvia, Armenia. These countries have a higher proportion of comparative studies, increasing international cooperation, particularly, with Northern scholars, and greater recognition of research works. Latvia and Estonia are also the most recognised on the global scale.
- Countries with a moderate position include: Belarus, Lithuania, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan. The first two are positioned somewhat closer to the North – they are moderately visible and recognised on the global scale and are slowly increasing their international collaboration, while the other three stay closer to the South: Kazakh sociology is rather visible on the global scale, but regionally-oriented; Azerbaijanian and Tajik sociology is not visible or recognised, but strives for international collaboration and conducts theoretical and comparative studies. However, the results for all five countries do not reveal a strong tendency towards one end of the scale or the other.
- Countries consistently positioned closer to the Global South: Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Uzbekistan. In two out of the three categories these countries are the closest to the South: they are hardly visible or recognised on the global scale, their sociology is strongly oriented towards local issues, while only compatriots appear among their co-authors. The positions of Kyrgyz and Moldavian sociology are supported by reflections of local researchers who mention the need to increase international performance and collaboration (Spataru, 2017) and the lack of governmental and financial support for research development (Isaiev, 2018).
- Countries with highly varied performance include: Georgia, Russia, and Ukraine. These countries shift their positions from the South to the North depending on the category and even on separate indicators. The situation in Russia might be caused by the existence of a large, but rather closed sociology community (Titarenko & Zdravomyslova, 2017), in Georgia, by the Northern financial support of the research and weak academic community (Ketsbaia & Kutubidze, 2018), in Ukraine, by the fundamental research orientation and lack of funding.

This grouping to a large extent reflects the division between countries with institutionalised and partly institutionalised sociology that consistently presented itself throughout the analysis. Therefore, it reveals that the level of institutionalisation has an influence on the position of sociology in the world, thereby answering our second research question: The more sociology as a field of study and research is institutionalised in the country, the closer it will be positioned to the North. Although more research is needed to find out the explanatory mechanism, we can suppose that higher levels of institutionalisation allows the necessary structures for the further development of the research field and reflects more serious relations with the field from the academic community and the government. Moreover, under those conditions, sociologists may have better opportunities to concentrate purely on academic research, while in countries with lower levels of institutionalisation agencies that conduct social research are also involved in market research and externally initiated projects.

Relatively speaking, the described grouping is also reflected in the joint values that demonstrate the position of post-Soviet sociology and national sociologies between the Global North and the Global South (Figure 4), although all the countries except for Estonia and somewhat Latvia are situated closer to the South on the scale, as is post-Soviet sociology in general. The general distribution and the results for each category (including historical development) bring us to the conclusion that post-Soviet sociology is positioned closer to the South between the Global North and the Global South, and therefore is part of the Global South, following the analytical framework of the study.

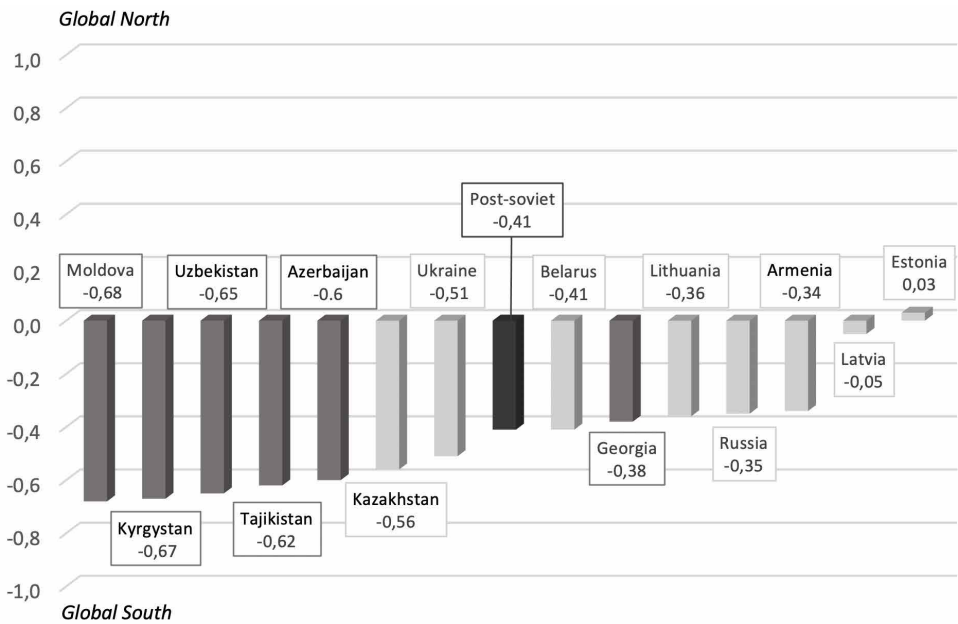


Figure 4: Position of post-Soviet sociology and countries between the Global North and the Global South
Source: authors' research.

Moreover, post-Soviet sociology resembles the South in its subordinate form: sociologists work in the framework of North-South cooperation and under Northern standards of knowledge production, striving for recognition in the Northern research community and have not so far been able to create their own indigenous theory and build a regional scientific community (or do not wish to do so?). Only Latvia and Estonia may be marked as being in-between and moving from the South to the North.

The findings also reveal that post-Soviet sociology does not exist as a regional scientific community and post-Soviet sociologists are mostly disconnected from each other. Therefore, the term 'post-Soviet sociology' proves to be an umbrella term for separate sociology communities existing on the territory of the former USSR.

Conclusions

Our research demonstrates that, despite predictable and explainable differences in the position of the sociology of certain post-Soviet countries, in general post-Soviet sociology (with Estonia and Latvia tending to become exceptions) combines a set of characteristics that are typical of the Global South in its subordinate form. Moreover, we also showed that sociology in the region is weakly connected and has a low level of internal cooperation revealing that national sociologies in post-Soviet countries, starting their development together, nowadays do not comprise a regional scientific community. The created model for the positioning of regional sociology between the Global North and the Global South served our goals well, and therefore has proved its efficiency.

It is important to note that the current analysis does not include all dichotomies of the model. Although the variety of dichotomies and characteristics still allowed us to study all four categories and provided valid results, further studies on research agenda and cooperation in the frames of international research projects would be a fruitful expansion of the presented findings.

While the North-South framework primarily provides instruments to define regions only as North or South, our model shows that there is a place (on a scale) between these two options. Therefore, this classically dichotomous framework in fact includes the variety of positions and in the future may become a multiscale. This relates in particular to post-Soviet sociologies. Although using the existing instruments, we defined post-Soviet countries as part of the Global South, in a broader sense such a position is also described as 'non-North', 'close to the South', 'striving to the North', 'dependent on the North'. However, there is no tool to confirm the monolithic stature of the non-North that is frequently taken for granted and now being challenged by developing resistance in the South, offering that more than one science from the South can exist. The development of such an instrument and distinguishing sub- and transit-positions according to the North-South framework could be a possible development of the current study.

It is worth emphasising that the complete characterisation of the position of any 'regional sociology' in the structure or field of global sociology demands the inclusion of a separate discursive component in the analytical model. The reason for this is that the positioning of regional sociology is not reduced to formal parameters, even to such significant indicators as frequency of publications in indexed journals. The complete picture of the positioning will be formed only after the extraction of a habitualised perception of post-Soviet sociology by both representatives of the Global South, the Global North and post-Soviet sociologists embodied in specific discursive practices. Such self-reflections and comparisons with the international perception is significant not only for previously invisible and ignored regions, such as post-Soviet sociology, but also for countries pre-defined as the Global North and the Global South, and will help to improve the North-South analytical framework as well as help us grasp the actual state of regional sociologies and global sociology in general.

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Appendix

Table 1. The model of characteristics and relations of sociology from the Global North and the Global South

Global North	Global South
<i>Historical development</i>	
Place of origin of sociology	Sociology came from the North through colonialism and capitalism
Euro-American, Western academia	Post-colonial, non-Western academia
Classical sociological theory	Subordinate, dependent sociology
<i>Research orientation</i>	
Pure, theoretical and conceptual research	Applied, practical research
Produce both theoretical and empirical knowledge	Produce only empirical knowledge
Studies of own and other countries	Studies of own country
Comparative studies	Single-case studies
General studies	Area studies
Produce universal knowledge	Produce locally-relevant knowledge
<i>Position on the global scale</i>	
Dominate in international sociological community	Forced to internationalise
Establish research agenda and trends	Depend on the Northern research agenda
Establish standard of excellence for knowledge production	Try to catch up with Northern standards
Produce high-quality research	Produce poor-quality research
Central, mainstream knowledge	Marginal knowledge
Visibly large output of global social knowledge	Almost invisible contribution to global social knowledge
<i>North-South research cooperation</i>	
Theoretical and analytical work	Technical and field work
Process the data, produce theory and explanations	Supply data, apply knowledge from the North
Set research agenda and priorities	Conduct research irrelevant for local issues
Developed sociology, producing pathbreaking and viable knowledge	Backward sociology, has to catch up
Flow of knowledge outside	Flow of knowledge from outside
Rejection of alternative views, homogenisation	Rejection of local views and contexts

Source: Cherniak 2021

Table 2. List of sampled sociological research institutions per country

Country	Institution 1	Institution 2	Institution 3
<i>Institutionalised sociology group</i>			
Armenia	Yerevan State University – Faculty of Sociology	Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law of the National Academy of Science – Sociological Department	Armenian Research Centre in Humanities
Belarus	Belarus State University – Chair of sociology, Centre of sociological and political research	Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Science	Y. Kupala Grodno State University – Chair of sociology
Estonia	University of Tartu – Institute of Social Studies	Tallin University – Institute of International Social Studies	The Institute of Baltic Studies
Kazakhstan	Al-Farabi Kazakh National University – Chair of Sociological Science and Social Work	Gumilyov Eurasian National University – Faculty of Social Science, Department of Sociology	Information-Analytical Centre at the Ministry of Education
Latvia	University of Latvia – Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Faculty of Social science	Latvian Academy of Science – Division of Social Science and Humanities	Riga Stradins Univeristy – Department of Sociology and Psychology
Lithuania	Vilnius University – Institute of Sociology and Social Work	Vytautas Magnus University – Social Research Centre, Department of Sociology	Lithuanian Social Research Centre
Russia	Higher School of Economics – Department of sociology, Moscow	Saint-Petersburg State University – Department of Sociology	Moscow State Lomonosov University – Department of Sociology, Higher school of social sciences
Ukraine	V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University – School of Sociology, Centre of socio-humanitarian research	Kyiv National Shevchenko University – Department of Sociology	Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Science
<i>Partly institutionalised sociology group</i>			
Azerbaijan	Baku State University – Chair of sociology, Laboratory of social research	Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the National Academy of Science	Centre for Economic and Social Development
Georgia	Tbilisi State University – Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Department of Sociology and Social Work	Centre for Social Sciences	Institute of Social Studies and Analysis
Kyrgyzstan	Centre of sociological studies ЖАҢҮ	Kirgiz National University – Chair of sociology and social work	Bishkek State University – Chair of Sociology

Moldova	Centre of sociology and social psychology of the National Academy of Science	Institute of development and social initiatives 'Viitorul'	Moldova State University - Department of Sociology and Social Work
Tajikistan	Takij National University – Chair of Sociology	Centre of sociological studies 'Zerkalo'	Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Law of the National Academy of Science
Uzbekistan	National University of Uzbekistan – Chair of Sociology	Republic centre for public opinion studies "Ижтимоий Фикр"	Consulting agency NBT / Expert Fikri

Source: compiled by the authors.