Strong coupling and social realities: A moderate view in social ontology

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Abstract
Social ontology is a leading and increasingly developing field in the philosophy of social sciences. Here, the central problem is the social reality's mode of existence. There are two main views on the subject: Holism and Individualism. The Holists hold that the social realities could not be reduced to or supervened upon individuals and their relations. On the contrary and as expected, the individualists take the opposite position. In the Islamic intellectual tradition, the problem also has been debated, especially after Allamah Tabatabaei. Here, two sorts of arguments are advanced in defence of holism: Philosophical arguments and empirical ones. In this paper, employing the method of IBE (inference to the best explanation), first I have had a critical look at the holistic views within the Islamic intellectual tradition, and then a new moderate account is proposed. This view suggests that there is no irreducible whole over and above individuals. This said social realities maintain characteristics such as coercion, resistance and persistence. This new suggestion is indebted to the Muslim philosophy of language as presented in principles of jurisprudence, especially Mirza Naeini and Sadr's views. What is presented here as a theory of social ontology has implications of overriding importance for the methodology of social sciences and led to the development of a new method called deep analysis.

Keywords: Social Ontology, Holism, Individualism, Strong Association, Semantic ties, Psychological Ties, deep analysis

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