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Social Bonding in Times of Protests: some sociological - epistemological notes.

Vinculación social en época de protestas: algunos apuntes sociológicos — epistemológicos

Ruben Aroca Jácome

PhD, Profesor – Investigador, Carrera de Sociología, Facultad de Jurisprudencia Universidad de Guayaquil, ruben.arocaj@ug.edu.ec https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6179-085X

ABSTRACT

The origin of questions and answers about social initiation do not always come from the same source: that is, social science. The purposes of this reflection consist in the selection of initial questions for social thought and the possible forms of their answers. An examination of four epistemological currents of sociology is carried out in the perspective of determining: object, scope of research, method and type of resulting data. It is proposed as a problem the need to determine the attitude to be assumed in front of the existence of being. If theory assumes the answer to this problem, it implies the systematization of knowledge about existence and admits the possibility of considering it as a system or, at least, in a systematic way. We consider, on the contrary, that not the entire framework of the subject's existence is limited to society, that the existential place is broad and resists positive theorization in general. a) For certain dimensions of the real, we formulate the option of dispensing with the systemic as an ontological condition. However, for others, we choose to sustain it. b) When in societal phenomena, one event has the same probability of appearing as another, the result is disorganization.

RESUMEN

El origen de las preguntas y las respuestas sobre el inicio social, no siempre provienen de la misma fuente: es decir, la ciencia social. Los propósitos de esta reflexión consisten en la selección de preguntas iniciales para el pensamiento social y las formas posibles de sus respuestas. Se realiza un examen de cuatro corrientes epistemológicas de la sociología en la perspectiva de determinar: objeto, alcance de la investigación, método y tipo de datos resultantes. Se propone como problema la necesidad de determinar la actitud a asumir frente a la existencia del ser. Si la teoría asume la respuesta por dicho problema, ello implica la sistematización del conocimiento sobre la existencia y admitir la posibilidad de considerarla como un sistema o, al menos, de modo sistemático. Consideramos, por el contrario, que no todo el marco de la existencia del sujeto se limita a la sociedad, que el lugar existencial es amplio y se resiste a la teorización positiva en general. a) Para ciertas dimensiones de lo real, formulamos la opción de prescindir de lo sistémico como condición ontológica. No obstante, para otras, escogemos sostenerla. b) Cuando en fenómenos de sociedad, un evento tiene la misma probabilidad de aparecer que otro, la resultante es la desorganización.

Keywords / Palabras clave

social initiation, epistemology, sociology

inicio social, epistemología, sociología

Introduction

It can be argued that both sociology and the Social and Cultural Sciences, in general, emerge from a "second wave" of scientific thought at the beginning of the 19th century, however, trying to be fair, we should not fail to highlight the vastness of approaches and treatments of problems that we could consider as "strictly social", from Plato and Aristotle to Montesquieu. The importance of this momentum, as an initial stage, we maintain, lies in at least two factors: The formulation of specific epistemological solutions for the Social Sciences and a process of theoretical-methodological systematization that took conceptual achievements from other sciences (specifically, from nomothetic sciences), adapting them, transforming them and, to a certain extent, turning them into key axes of analysis.

An intensive process of delimitation of objects of study that, evidently, was finding, little by little, precise questions that implied a framing and constant search for reflections in a sense. Efforts such as the starting questions formulated by Simmel (how is society possible?), faced a multi-generational enterprise whose modern and contemporary approaches could no longer, therefore, take different paths. (Marina & Mosquera, 2020)

It is necessary to recognize that the starting questions have been constructed, at times, as references to problems formulated by philosophy (Fuenzalida et al., 2020). For example, Parsons' approaches sought to orient his theoretical development to the resolution of the "problem of order formulated by Hobbes", a question that inevitably led him to the individual-society relationship. A similar reflection can be made in relation to Marx's attempted response (the subject as Homo Faber), whose direct reference was Feuerbach's philosophical anthropology.

The concept Verstehen evolved from a philosophical notion to a technical term when Weber included it among the fundamental elements of sociological methodology, while referring its definition both to the work of Jaspers (General Psychopathology) and to that of Rickert (Limits of the conceptual formation of the natural sciences).

(Viniegra Velázquez, 2016) Thus, the origin of the questions and, at least partially, of the answers, do not always come from the same source: that is, science. However, we are left with no doubt that, as a result of the above, the beginning of the social as scientific thought involves answering several questions that revolve around the same purpose, which, however, does not imply that we will always respond from the same place.

Materials and Methods

Part of the purpose of this reflection consists in the selection of initial questions for social thought, on the one hand, and the possible forms of their answers, on the other. We want to argue at the outset that, just as the origins of the key questions may come from non-scientific areas (such as metaphysics), the answers may also suffer from such symptoms. As working fields or problem areas, we have identified the following:

- Epistemologies of social production;
- The form of data and the forms of epistemologies;
- Epistemologies and the times.

Results

The first problem to formulate is the common idea that society is composed of individuals. When sociology tried to define its object of study, in its early days, it formulated this problem and tried to distance itself from the idea of society made up of men (Macassi, 2016)

The idea of a society not made up of human beings has always caused strong resistance, regardless of the era in which it was put forward. We would like to argue that the preconceptions that impede a necessary understanding of this principle constitute an epistemological obstacle Moreira, (2002) insofar as, if human beings are considered as part of Society, social differentiation is, in reality, the differentiation of human beings.

In other words, people would be divided, objectively, into ethnicities, classes, nations, etc., seriously contradicting the principles of humanism in general (Prieto Parra, 2018, p. 45)

Within this framework, we understand that the pretension of systematicity or holism of the theory is not attractive either. In other words, and without pretending to take the question for granted, we propose as a problem the need to determine the attitude, in terms of knowledge, to be assumed in the face of the existence of being. If the theory assumes the answer to this problem, this implies the systematization of knowledge about existence (object) and, in this sense, admitting the possibility of considering it as a system or, at least, in a systematic way.

We consider, therefore, that not the entire framework of the subject's existence is limited to society, that the existential place is broad and resists positive theorization in general. Therefore, we start by founding a place in which the answers to this dimension cannot be offered from social theory and we accept, instead, the possibility of philosophical knowledge.

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For certain dimensions of the real, we formulate the option of dispensing with the systemic as an ontological condition. However, for others, we choose to sustain it. From his reflections on social organization, Keck & Saldívar, (2016) categorically affirmed that systems exist. He clarified that this was not the commonplace of confusion between propositions and their own objects, but rather that the concept system means, therefore, something that really is a system, and that consequently assumes the responsibility of verifying its propositions with reality.

From this point, we argue that the starting point for thinking society is its ontological validation: society exists and exists as a system. We choose for this case (arbitrarily?), social theory considering that it can, given the condition of the object, give an adequate account of the description of the social system and its level of complexity, and we will try to justify our choice. We could, for this purpose, go back to Simmel's old question.

The delimitation of the object appeared to be necessary, and for this it would be necessary to distinguish the social from that which could cease to be considered as such. Thus, recognizing the social implied acting in accordance with an imperative whose essential character was always of a moral nature. If I do not submit to the conventions of the world, if in dressing I do not take into account the customs in force in my country and in my class, the laughter I provoke, the distance in which I am kept, produce, although in a more attenuated form, the same effects as a punishment in the strict sense of the word.

However, the external character of society in relation to the individual did not omit the necessity to separate the ontological sense in which the physical world has an existence independent of the cognizing subject and can causally influence his behavior, from the coercive properties of social organization (kamlot, 2017). This leads, according to Giddens, to the determination of the normative character of the social world as an essential difference from the world of nature.

In Parsons, the notion of "value" represents a significant role in his "frame of reference of action" because it links introjected values and, by way of normative role expectations, at the level of the social system. Thus, the concept "value" would be related to the Durkheimian idea of moral imperative, and the value frame of reference assumes a condition external to the individual (Luna Morales et al., 2013)

Social initiation, a basic understanding for bonding, would be marked in the relationship between the individual and certain units of social systems (O'Shea-Cuevas et al., 2015). The first of these is the social act, performed by an actor and oriented towards one or more actors, as objects. The second is the status-role, as an organized subsystem of acts. The third is the actor himself, as a social unit; the organized system of all his statuses and roles, as a social object and as the author of a system of role activities. The result of these delimitations consists in admitting as social only a certain state of affairs whose production is absolutely social.

In this sense, it is considered, inversely to what is argued by (Jaramillo) 2021that not all social factum is determined by society, which implies the negation of the category of totality. We assume here the criterion held that things are related to each other in a thousand ways, but there is no relation that encloses them all, there is no being that contains all the others.

Thus, it is necessary to argue that society does not operate as a giant objective structure that no one has ever seen, nor are they properly objects that are located in a specific place. Rather, society consists of a set of relational and communication processes that subjects can distinguish, but these distinctions are real and produce real effects. From a certain perspective, if we think of processes determined by their specific type of operations we can arrive at the idea that society is composed of social systems (such as the system of science) that link proper operations with proper operations. (Arnold & Osorio, 1998). Thus, it is possible to argue that linkage is a process of mediation between individuals and systems.

The form of data and the forms of epistemology.

The second problem to be formulated consists in the relationship between the form assumed by the data according to their epistemic foundation. We would like to argue at the outset that, at least as far as sociology is concerned, they come from elaborations that take as their starting point the work of Durkheim, Marx, Weber or Simmel, and Luhman, or that promote relations between one or the other.

As argued above, the object of sociology in Durkheim is configured as an external condition or nature of social facts that act coercively, and in a moral sense, on individuals. On the other hand, this mode of approach makes it possible to treat social phenomena as data and to consider it as the starting point of research.

In Marx, the Hegelian idea of production, in its broadened meaning, and the notion of homo faber of Feuerbach's philosophical anthropology (Acosta, 2014) tend to configure the object "relations of production" that makes possible the development of research on the historical relations of subjectivity and objectivity of social existence.

In Weber, social reality is cultural and the individual event is contained in the classical notion of action, which makes a certain behavior correspond to a "sense" that cannot be subjected to observation and initiates in the individual, where it becomes necessary to determine those aspects of particular phenomena related to ideas of cultural value.

For Simmel only the reciprocal interactions between individuals can be called society, resulting in the logical distinction between individual and social phenomena, a distinction which, to be useful for sociology, should strip the facts of their particular content and rather situate their "social forms" (e.g., the distinction between hunger and the social rules of eating) as the object. Generally speaking, what is central here would consist in the study of pure forms of socialization.

Thus, we observe that the Durkheimian matrix lines emphasize society as a condition external to the individual and in a process of observation devoid of individual realities; the Marxist matrix lines suppose a historicity of the social conditioned by the relations of (social) production, which is what would constitute the essence of the social; and the Weberian-Simmelian lines situate the beginning of the social in the individual subject and in his interactions with other individuals, so that society is the aggregation of interactions.

In the case of the Arnold & Osorio, (1998) approach, it could be considered that the society system has capacities to establish relationships with itself and to differentiate the relationships with its environment.

In addition, it would include that the social system perceives itself as a self-organized set of validated (observable) functions of multiple types, to which processes of different character and level are articulated. Thirdly, it would indicate that these functions would be determined by the needs of the system itself (internal needs) and by exchanges with the environments.

On the other hand, Luhman's systems theory does not boast of reflecting the social in its complete reality, nor does it claim to exhaust

all the possibilities of knowledge of such reality, nor does it even claim to be the only true one. It only declares that it can treat the totality of the social with the same set of concepts and, with this, it also implies self-reference because the theory would not be universal if it could not also account for itself as a social phenomenon (Luhmann, 1987: 163-165). Finally, it is necessary to point out:

Any systemic-theoretical analysis has to be the difference between system and environment.

Systems are oriented towards their environment and could not survive without it.

To differentiate themselves from their environment, they use boundaries that do not break their interdependence.

In the field of social systems both system and environment are always involved, for the simple fact that without psychic systems consciousness there is hardly any communication.

What sociology would do, and does, has its supports in these great matrices. This does not imply that they appear in a "pure" state and produce specific theory for each epistemological line; what we observe are theoretical developments that appear to be produced by the interweaving of referents. For example, starting from Marx's concept of "class", Dahrendorf incorporated Weber's conception of "types of domination"; he was thus able to understand formal organizations as composed of groups whose interests are determined by the structure of domination itself, generating in turn the concepts of "latent interests" and "manifest interests".

Something similar can be argued in relation to Parsons' use of Durkheim's notion of "anomie" in the framework of the development of the theory of "social action" of Weberian origin.

It is necessary to point out at least one aspect of the problem of data: without a setting, without a background and without indications of their origin, it is impossible to know their statistical validity. On the other hand, in literature or in narrative, the focus of attention is almost always on the individuals and not on the analysis, the arguments and the measurements: that is, it is almost always concrete and rarely abstract. Such an approach is necessary to correct the inordinate abstraction and keep statistics within the human perspective.

	Durkheimnian matrix	Marxist matrix	Weberian matrix	Luhmanian Matrix
Object	Society as an externality	Production relationships	Meaningful behavior that produces individual and social action.	System and environment
Scope of the investigation	Social phenomena abstracted from the conscious subjects that represent them.	Historical interconnectio ns of subjectivity and objectivity	Meaning of the social action that a subject or subjects link to their actions.	System Composition Composition of the environment
Method	Moving away from pre-notions Observation of previously defined groups of phenomena Considering social facts in isolation from their individual manifestations	Representation of the concrete By means of subtle abstractions to reach simpler determinations Construction of the totality with multiple determinations and relationships.	Interpretation of evidence of sense-making, rational or endopathic understanding Type construction Specific or typical causal interpretation	Complexity of the environment greater than the system System complexity is a simplification The system consists of communications
Types of data	Social facts grouped into explanatory models (e.g.: types of suicide).	Social events grouped according to their status in social production	Social interactions grouped into types of social actions.	Observation of social communicatio ns

In the previous sections we have attempted to outline some answers (very limited and hurried, by the way) to extremely complex problems, in the perspective of constructing a theoretical framework from which to start what could be called "linkage with society". We have tried to leave the final sections to formulate the problem of the present, without excluding the need to understand these processes within or in relation to their corresponding social systems. For the purposes of this paper, we shall attempt a specific delimitation for these actions, which we understand to be situated at the meeting points between individuals and social systems.

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Every bonding process starts from an object-problem that requires specialized mediation. This requires both the inclusion of continuity-stability and risk-crisis perspectives. On the other hand, in a way, in a scheme similar to that of, as well as other dimensions of the social, we maintain that the central task of the processes of linkage consists in finding and articulating connections between social systems, the subject and the historical processes that put them in communication. This presupposes, however, a reflection on this object-problem.

Parsons' resolution of the problem of order takes into account the existence of tensions and conflicts in social life that derive from three possible sets of circumstances, each of which is centered, in a sense, on the notion of:

- a) Absence of mandatory value criteria in some sphere of social life;
- b) Lack of articulation between needs dispositions and a given value orientation pattern;
- c) Elements or conditions of the action, as perceived by the plaintiff, are erroneously specified.

The Parsonian approach to the problem of order presupposes a permanent tension in the individual-society relationship, so that actions would be oriented towards the construction of a possible and socially admissible order. This approach can be complemented with Habermas' notion of consensus. On the other hand, such a state can be achieved in language, whose telos is understanding. Agreement between people can be reached through argumentation, but there is no true agreement if one imposes itself on another. If what is pursued is success, then strategic action is derived therefrom.

In other words, whether it is a matter of misalignments in value imperatives (anomie), consensus building or strategic action, these dimensions would constitute the reality of the field of professional actions which, in turn, implies a process of mediation between the subject and an object-problem of the social, and would integrate a specific way of approaching tensions, needs or conflicts at that level.

Hardt and Negri, with reference to the dawn of modernity, observed that Hobbes' work defines two of the dimensions to be assumed as projects of society: In contrast to the above, and probably because of the very condition of development of social science, from Nietzsche onwards philosophy devoted its efforts especially to the critique of the epoch and the condition of anguish of the individual, leaving the project of society as a task to be assumed by sociology, economics and political science. For philosophy, apparently, it was more important to understand the foundations and essences of modernity, as well as to ring the bell of the advent of the new epoch, than to produce a framework from which the social sciences could direct their work.

Thus, the vacuum created gave room for evaluations based on the reification of trade relations, which Beck called the metaphysics of the world market. (1998). As Luhman argues, the vacuum produced by the expiration of the old legitimizing narratives has not been adequately replaced to this day. (1996).

Globalization is a network of states where sovereignty is both questioned and affirmed. Questioned, because no state action can claim to be determined in an absolute manner, not even in the case of the most powerful states. Affirmed, because without state permissiveness, globalization is not viable.

In this sense, it is possible to sustain two trends:

- The trend towards a global political order constituted by a networked power whose nodes are nation-states, supranational institutions, capitalist corporations and other powers.
- A form of order exercised through new mechanisms of constant control and conflict.

One of the ideas that enters into crisis at the confluence of the factors noted above refers to the concept of "space": that is, the territorial conception of society. This leads to the need to think of certain processes in a kind of continuum or flow, where the power of control and protest circulate, as well as their narratives, in the manner of communications. It is not that this is intended to produce points (events, facts, phenomena) without space; what is proposed is that this criterion is not applicable to society.

Hardt and Negri called the networked protest "multitude", understanding that it develops not in the terrain of national space, but in that of biopolitics and producing, in turn, new subjectivities and forms of life.

- The aesthetics, as well as its digital translation, reduces or produces an "adequate" simplification of the protest, at least in two dimensions:
- Narrative, where all the plots are related in the same story, regardless of the origin of the story;
- Moral, as a form of treatment and resolution of the singularities of meaning.

The role of digital media in both processes is significant. In the first place, the narrative produced gives rise to a kind of semantization of the protest of the multitude, where the local sense tends to be transformed into a network narrative. On the other hand, since Hume argued about the effects of distance or proximity on morality: digital media act on perception producing symbolic proximity that also implies moral proximity. According to the above, protest flows, their narrative, become both a principle of meaning and intelligibility.

Conclusions

In the preceding paragraphs we have tried to sketch out some very hurried answers to extremely complex problems, but we have tried to leave a final space to formulate the problem of the place of bonding, while still understanding these actions as being understood within corresponding social systems.

For the purposes of this paper, we will seek a specific delimitation for these actions, which we understand to be located at the meeting points between individuals and social systems.

Parsons' resolution of the problem of order takes into account the existence of tensions and conflicts in social life that derive from three possible sets of circumstances, each of which is centered, in a sense, on the notion of Anomie.

- a) absence of binding value criteria in some sphere of social life;
- b) lack of articulation between needs dispositions and a given value orientation pattern;
- c) Elements or conditions of the action, as perceived by the plaintiff, are erroneously specified.

The Parsonian approach to the problem of order presupposes a permanent tension in the individual-society relationship, so that actions would be oriented towards the construction of a possible and socially admissible order. This approach can be complemented with Habermas' notion of . On the other hand, such a state can be achieved in language, whose telos is understanding. Agreement between people can be reached through argumentation, but there is no true agreement if one imposes itself on another. If what is pursued is success, then strategic action follows.

In other words, whether it is a matter of misalignments in value imperatives (anomie), consensus building or strategic action, these dimensions would constitute the reality of the field of professional actions which, in turn, implies a process of mediation between the subject and an object-problem of the social, and would integrate a specific way of approaching tensions, needs or conflicts at that level.

We argue that, unlike in other epochs, for contemporary philosophy it was apparently more important to understand the foundations and essences of modernity, as well as to ring the bell of the advent of the new epoch, rather than to produce a framework from which the social sciences could direct their work. Thus, the vacuum created gave room for evaluations based on the reification of commercial relations, which has been termed the metaphysics of the world market.

Social science, in particular sociology, consists of observations: they are systems observing within the social system. Observational possibilities are of three kinds:

- Environment
- Self-observation
- Other systems

Observation is, in this sense, of second order: observation of observation. This observation is a scheme of distinction, where the first distinction is the blind spot from which the observation is made. In terms of theoretical reflection, one of the notions that becomes insufficient for the understanding of contemporary protest refers to the concept of "space" which implies, in turn, the territorial conception of society. The critique of this conception leads to the need to think of certain processes in a kind of continuum or flow, where the power of control and protest, as well as their narratives, circulate in their sphere.

When we speak of "protest" we speak of society and the unresolved or unaddressed complexities of social systems. Protest" is such because its functionality is uncertain. Protest is a societal phenomenon: it is not of an individual character and, like the treatment of systems towards their environment (object), it simplifies the operations of the particular by bringing them all to the plane of unaddressed aspects of complexity. From the point of view strictly of the production of society, observation and protest are phenomena of society itself that belong to different spheres. From the theoretical point of view, observation and protest are "events" into which science must enter its differentiations, which give rise to research topics.

When, in societal phenomena, one event has the same probability of appearing as another, the resultant is disorganization. If protest has the same probability as consensus, then any kind of order is more improbable. Protest is entropy. The role of digital media, in both processes, is significant. In the first place, the narrative produced gives rise to a kind of semantization of crowd protest, where local meaning tends to link to a networked narrative. On the other hand, since the philosophy of the seventeenth century, it was argued about the effects that distance or proximity produced on morality (Hume)Digital media act on perception by producing symbolic proximity, which also implies moral proximity. In this way, protest flows, their narrative, become both a principle of meaning and of intelligibility, of community.

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