

ABSTRACTS

Sociologias, Porto Alegre, ano 5, nº 9, jan/jun 2003, p. 378-383

1. Sociological theory and the new research challenges

Elida Liedke Rubini

The paper presents a set of six articles on sociological theory, published on the ninth issue of Revista Sociologias of the Graduate Program in Sociology of Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul. It emphasizes the challenges sociological theory oriented towards democracy has to face in a context of globalization.

Key words: globalization, sociological theory, democracy.

2. Beyond “Institutional Monocropping”: Institutions, capabilities, and deliberative development

Peter Evans

Modern economic theory has moved beyond “capital fundamentalism.” In the words of Hoff and Stiglitz, (2001, p. 389) “*development is no longer seen primarily as a process of capital accumulation but rather as a process of organizational change.*” This realization has made possible an “institutional turn” in development theory that emphasizes the role of ideas and institutions as determinants of the possibilities for capital accumulation rather than the reverse. Both the “new growth theory” and Douglass North’s “new institutionalism” are examples of the institutional turn. Unfortunately, the “institutional turn” has been used in a perverse way by global policy-makers. The globally dominant view is that because institutions are so important, therefore an institutional blueprint based idealized versions of Anglo-American institutions must be uniformly imposed on the countries of the global South in order for them to develop.

Not surprisingly, this view has failed in practice. Alternative perspectives proposed by Rodrik and Sen argue that development is unlikely to succeed unless institutional change is grounded in local decision-making. That is the view that is explored in this paper. The State of Kerala in India and the city of Porto Alegre in Brazil are used as concrete cases.

Key words: economic growth theory, development, institutions, democracy, globalization, capabilities, Kerala, Porto Alegre.

3. Reflection over a methodological strategy for examining

social protests

Adrián Scribano

How is it possible to identify, understand and explain the meaning of collective actions? That might be one of today's most challenging and controversial questions for Social Theory in general as well as for the Methodology of Social Sciences in particular.

From a theoretical outlook, there are several available courses to interpret collective actions and many of them imply the choice of a specific methodological strategy. Therefore, in an attempt to build a research design for the empirical analysis of social protests, some of the basic difficulties facing production of knowledge in social sciences become evident. One of the facets of such challenge is the need to have a critical articulation between theoretical, epistemological and methodological assumptions.

This work is aimed at presenting and discussing one of the strategies used to investigate the so-called "Road Blocks" in Argentina as a particular form of social protest, by making their premises explicit.

In order to reach the aforementioned aim, the following argumentative course has been selected: a) to summarize the basic epistemological assumptions of the approach adopted; b) to synopsise the set of theoretical tools built; c) to describe data collection techniques; and d) to reflect over difficulties found and the potentialities detected.

Key words: protests, epistemological premises, relationality, visibility, identity.

4. Autopoiesis, the unity of a difference: Luhmann and Maturana

Darío Rodríguez M. and Javier Torres Nafarrate

The article presents a synopsis of the fruitful relationship between Niklas Luhmann and Humberto Maturana. The Luhmannian theory is a conceptual structure whose dimensions include the understanding of the social as a whole. Notwithstanding the passing of the author in 1998, his posthumous writings are still being published and the influence of his thinking is gradually extended to several domains within social sciences. A core part of that complex thinking was developed with the benefit of concepts that Luhmann adapted from Humberto Maturana's biology. This study explains the workings of such tie and its reach for understanding modern globalized society.

Key words: autopoiesis, emergence, operational closure, communication, structural coupling, self-reference.

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5. Giddens: from social ontology to the political program - no return

Renato P. Saul

This text examines the relationship between Anthony Giddens' social theory and the Third Way program, a moment when the author became a British New Labour intellectual. The aim is to show that, in building such program, the main elements for the critique of "orthodox democratic politics" are founded on that social theory. The globalization process is seen by the author as a new model of social integration, whose bonds go well beyond traditional borders of communities and nations, carrying a new sense of social and political organization that challenges current generations to rethink the very roots of democratic experience. That is the meaning of the Third Way program as well as that of Giddens' social theory. In a more general dimension, it should be noted that both the theory and its political program are outlined within the trend that seems to dominate the current scene, that is to say, the perception of a new sociological environment in which market induction is dominant as an ethical-political center from which an encompassing redefinition of social, political and economic relations is processed both locally and globally.

Key words: social ontology, sociological theory, globalization, detraditionalization, third way.

6. Towards a sociology of experience: a contemporary reading of François Dubet

Anne Marie Wautier

The aim of this article is to convey a type of sociological thinking still not much spread in the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul: sociology of experience, theorized by French sociologist François Dubet. The effort is aimed at deepening the understanding of the concepts developed by that author, not only from the theoretical point of view, but also regarding their possibilities for application to the empirical field. That is why an analysis of two of his works will be carried out: *Sociologie de l'Expérience* (Sociology of Experience) e *Dans quelle société vivons-nous?* (Which society do we live in?), in an attempt to understand society's contemporary expressions, in its apparent crisis of values, ambiguities and

incoherencies. The reflection will lead to a set of questions that remain open, among which, how does Sociology of Experience concern Brazilian society?

Key words: social experience, action logics, social actor, subjectivity.

7. Sociology in Brazil: contemporary institutional, epistemological and theoretical tendencies

Enno Dagoberto Liedke Filho

The paper examines, in the first place, themes of Sociology of Knowledge and of Sociology of Science, regarded as relevant for the study of Sociology of Sociology. In the second place, it analyzes seven themes related to the development of contemporary sociology in Brazil.

Key words: sociology in Brazil, sociology of development, sociology of knowledge, history of sociology.

8. Views on changing labor

Miriam De Toni

In this article, the changes that have marked our societies after the crisis and restructuring of capitalism since the last decades of the 20th century are seen as having had great impact over labor relations, disarraying the relations that have shaped the Welfare State and reordering them under market regulation. Considering the central role assigned to work in our societies, it becomes relevant to discuss different interpretations of emergent phenomena in the world of labor - from approaches that point to "the end of work" to those that argue its sustained centrality - reflecting over their social implications. It is underlined that the speedy process of current technological diffusion has been making labor relations precarious, broadening insecurities and vulnerabilities, and becoming a crucial source of social inequality. The article is closed with reflections over the development of the world of labor, postulating a critical view regarding extreme positions about the subject and underlining the unfavorable repercussions entailed by the changes under way, in order to advert to undesired social outcomes.

Key words: "precarization" of labor, labor relations, centrality of labor, world of labor.

9. Computer-assisted qualitative analysis

César A. Cisneros Puebla

The aims of this article are: on the one hand, to present an approximation to the Hispano-American experience on Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS), grouping as a systematization exercise the works carried out by several colleagues from related disciplines. Although attempting to be exhaustive and thorough - as in any attempt at systematizing experiences - this exercise presents clear lacks and omissions. On the other hand, to introduce some theoretical reflections about the role played by CAQDAS in the development of qualitative investigation after that systematization, with a specific focus on data generation.

Key words: Hispano-American trends, CAQDAS, generation of qualitative data, Atlas.ti, Nudist.

10. The city in the flow of time: invention of past and heritage

Irllys Alencar F. Barreira

The article, based on a research carried out in the Brazilian city of Fortaleza, is aimed at reflecting over the distinct connections established between the city and its past. The discourses about the *urbe* are circumstanced to different contexts and speakers. Therefore, it focuses on the city as thought of by novelists, historians, politicians and urban planning professionals. The recent changes that the city has undergone entail discourses towards communication between past and present, presenting both complaints about disfiguration of urban space and the search for recomposing the city's "history", though a policy of preserving what is considered as heritage. Nowadays, the increasing encouragement to tourism in Fortaleza has been creating a new discourse on exporting images to be spread and absorbed for consumption. The renovation of the city center, of old buildings and leisure areas responds to such flow of transformation and preservation that characterizes not only Fortaleza, but also expressing a movement that takes place in other Brazilian cities.

Key words: city, time and space, discourse, patrimony, symbolic dispute.

11. The society of the living

Héctor Ricardo Leis

The question: which is the meaning of the experience of death in contemporary society?

The hypothesis: there is a somber and degrading facet in human condition, associated to institutional privatization, or “pacification” of death we see in our times.

Several contemporary social theoreticians rely on strategies such as reflexivity in order to reconstruct human fragmentation. However, such reconstruction can hardly take place without seeking support in key aspects of the human condition. This work attempts to point at some of the deficits of contemporary social theory and underscore some of the ways to overcome contemporary society’s dilemmas.

Key words: social theory, modernity, death.