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Madalena dOliveira-Martins

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Abstract

Social theory is characterized by great creativity with regard to the formulation of categories and concepts that allow for the development of methodologies and social descriptions. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the past fifty years sociological reflexivity as a methodological element and research tool has become a fruitful and significant tool for social analysis. Sociological reflexivity plays a role in analysing the limits and conditions that shape and influence both sociologys object of study and the sociological researcher.The inward turn that sociology has made through sociological reflexivity leads us to new understandings of social action and opens up new avenues of study, as is apparent in the sociology of emotions developed by the American sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild. This article analyses the concepts of classical sociology that open up to sociological reflexivity and, consequently, the importance that this concept implies for the emergence of the sociology of emotions as a subfield of reflexive sociology.

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Sociological Reflexivity and the Sociology of Emotions

Madalena d'Oliveira-Martins

Institute for Culture and Society, University of Navarre, 31009, Navarre, Spain
*Corresponding Author: madalenaom@gmail.com

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Abstract Social theory is characterized by great creativity with regard to the formulation of categories and concepts that allow for the development of methodologies and social descriptions. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the past fifty years sociological reflexivity as a methodological element and research tool has become a fruitful and significant tool for social analysis. Sociological reflexivity plays a role in analysing the limits and conditions that shape and influence both sociology's object of study and the sociological researcher.The inward turn that sociology has made through sociological reflexivity leads us to new understandings of social action and opens up new avenues of study, as is apparent in the sociology of emotions developed by the American sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild. This article analyses the concepts of classical sociology that open up to sociological reflexivity and, consequently, the importance that this concept implies for the emergence of the sociology of emotions as a subfield of reflexive sociology.

Keywords Late Modernity, Social Reflexivity, Sociology of Emotions, Reflexive Sociology

1. Introduction

From its earliest formulations as a science, sociology has sought to clearly define its object of study. Once clearly defined, it becomes not only possible to foresee social events or at least anticipate the possible courses of social action and prepare for them, but also to choose a direction for social action. In fact, sociology needed to prove to the scientific community and to itself its predictive and explicative force to legitimize it as a science.

As Bauman [1] explains,

> [m]odern science positioned itself as the intelligence branch of modern practice, for which the extant reality (read: the as yet unpenetrated, opaque and obscure, and therefore uninterfered with and for the time being unmanageable segment of the action-setting) was the enemy. Throughout the past two centuries, sociology strove to be recognized as a science by joining in the performance of that role and demonstrating that it was capable of doing so.

In this scientific attempt to understand human social reality, social theory studies the validity of concepts that allow for a description of said reality; in this sense, we can say that from the beginning, sociology has been characterized by great creativity with regard to the formulation of methodologies and social descriptions. Therefore, it is not surprising that in recent decades sociological reflexivity as a methodological element and research tool has become a fruitful and significant tool for social analysis. This plays a determinant role when talking about limits and conditions that shape and influence both sociology's object of study and the researcher who carries out the study's tasks.

The inward turn that sociology has made through sociological reflexivity leads us to new understandings of social action and opens up new avenues of study, as the sociology of emotions developed by the American sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild shows. Indeed, the term 'sociological reflexivity' is at the heart of the issues herein discussed, first, as a methodological tool, and secondly, as the phenomenon that allows us to reach a better understanding of human social action in contemporary Western societies.

2. Developments in Classical Social Theory

Reflexivity which, as we shall see later, becomes a decisive element for social analysis in modernity is a phenomenon to which the first thinkers in classical social theory paid much attention. Studying topics such as sociological methodology, processes of socialization, the formation of identity in social agents, the relationship between the individual and society or between individual action and structure, among others, classical sociologists identify the prevalence of a reflexive element that is crucial for explaining social reality.

However, the path to identify this reflexive element was deeply conditioned by the first steps taken by sociology. One of the main concerns that the first sociologists had was, indeed, to develop a strong methodology in order to establish the bases for the development of the sociological project. And, with this concern in mind, they began to apply methods inspired by those used by the natural sciences targeting objectivity, rigor, rational explanation and prediction. Additionally, they establish the starting point for sociological research on structures, since they are long-term

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social configurations that preserve a certain amount of objectivity. According to these sociologists, human phenomena have an objective reality and sociology has the important responsibility of studying them. As Émile Durkheim [2] postulated in his preface to the second edition of The Rules of Sociological Method,

> [t]his science, indeed, could be brought into existence only with the realization that social phenomena, although immaterial, are nevertheless real things, the proper objects of scientific study. To be convinced that their investigation was legitimate, it was necessary to assume that they had a definite permanent existence, that they do not depend on individual caprice, and that they give rise to uniform and orderly relations. Thus the history of sociology is but a long endeavor to give this principle precision, to deepen it, and to develop all the consequences it implies.

This position favored the attribution of a primary role to structure, leaving the individual in the background; the social was considered, therefore, independent of subjectivity.

Now, although the problems of methodology and objectivity in the social sciences are still present in the development of social theory, an important change took place when the starting point from which sociological research should be undertaken began to be considered. Max Weber and Georg Simmel, the two great thinkers of the mainstream of German sociology, are the protagonists of this turn towards subjectivity that, for them, is a better starting point for approaching social phenomena. Both heirs of the Kantian philosophical tradition, they were interested in the many dimensions of human social action striving to provide a study of the social world that is as complete as possible and were committed to placing the individual at the center of sociological research, breaking with the tradition that privileges social relations and structures.

This turn required new methodological approaches that, while retaining the rigor and objectivity that they so valued, allowed a better understanding of social reality. For this purpose, Weber developed a theory of highly conceptual rigor and formulated one of his great contributions to sociological methodology[1]: the comprehensive method (*Verstehen*). This method, which represented a considerable methodological advance, focuses on the rational construction of human social action. For this, the viewer has to interpret the action in order to be able to identify the elements that compose it. Thus, he formulates a set of hypotheses that connect the possible reasons that lead an individual to perform a certain action with the objective reality of said action. In conceptualizing this action he thus makes sense of it identifying what causes and motivates it, its result and the effects it produces. Social action is guided by the meaning that subjects direct towards others so that, according to Weber [3], the task of sociology is always "the interpretation of action in terms of its subjective meaning." However, to achieve objective sociological knowledge it was essential to complete this comprehensive approach with causal explanation and to show the action. Thus, Weber integrates rational analysis into more subjective and irrational dimensions of human action; after constructing the *ideal-type,* the sociologist analyses the rational elements of action in order to then integrate irrational elements and, thus, proposes an explanation. In fact, the construction of *ideal-types* is a tool that serves well to strengthen the objective and empirical character of sociology. With it, Weber analyzed, for example, the connections between Protestant asceticism and capitalist rationality in a way that permitted him to test their potential causality. In this sense, we can say that the work of the sociologist from Erfurt "established the conditions of possibility for a scientific understanding of the cultural processes characteristic of our age, including the most significant of those processes modern capitalism and its iron-cage-like consequences for our social existence as well as our reflexive scientific analyses situated within those processes." [4]

Although Weber's work was very well received by later sociologists perhaps due to its conceptual rigor and insightful analysis into the process of rationalization in the Western world, it was ignored while he was living and only after his death mainly in North America, through Talcott Parsons did it come to exert great influence. Instead, Weber's contemporary Georg Simmel had a more immediate and pervasive influence in the development of American sociology. Despite his remarkable discursive difference from Weber, or perhaps precisely because of it, Simmel's writings easy to read essays focused more on a micro-scale analysis were widely influential among the first American sociologists and, more specifically, among the founders of the Chicago School. They were most struck by the way in which Simmel analyzes action and interaction, through the *forms* and *types* of interaction a legacy inherited from Kantian philosophy. The subjective dimension of the individual that Simmel assumed gives way, once again, to a major role for social analysis. Society, for him, is the result of interactions (*sociations*) between conscious individuals.

Two American sociologists influenced by Simmel Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead, have contributed decisively to the understanding of the importance of reflexivity in the constitution of both individual and social identity. Cooley, through what is identified as the mental viewpoint, deploys a theory that on the one hand, sets personal introspection as a method of approach to social reality and, on the other hand, considers the individual and society as two different scopes of the same reality. For him, human nature is essentially social; i.e., it is "a relatively simple and general condition of the social mind." [5] The imagination that reflects the ideas that others have about the self is produced in the mind. And, in this sense, Cooley defines a self who needs to move outside of itself and back into itself in order to develop and be recognized; that is, the processes of socialization and individualization, even if they happen in a psychic dimension, involve constant interaction with others and include a firmly reflexive element. In addition, the reflexive process in which the individual is reflected in others, in large institutions, or even in itself, supposes a communicative dimension that allows different types of interaction physical, symbolic, linguistic, etc.

While Cooley understood that all social phenomena is

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included in the psychic mechanism of the human mind, i.e., social relations exist in the mind, G. H. Mead put these relations in the world of objective experience, adopting a stance that emphasizes the role of human behavior. Mead proposes a line of research that deals with external, observable aspects of action and, at the same time and essentially, of internal and individual aspects. In this line, he distinguished between two dimensions of the self one individual and one social: the "I" and the "me"; "the 'I' is the response of the organism to the attitudes of others; the 'me' is the organized set of attitudes of others which one assumes. The others' attitudes constitute the organized 'me', and then one reacts toward that as an 'I'." [6] The social dimension of self the "me" is essentially reflexive; this is constructed from negotiating the attitudes of others according to which the "self" becomes an object to himself. And this, in turn, is organized reflexively through the relationship between the "I" and the "me". This reflexive process culminates with the formation of the "generalized other" that allows for the full formation of the "self" and that falls within the scope of the community. In this sense, the "self" is, substantially, a social composition.[2]

This approach to social reality, developed by Mead, exerted great influence on Erving Goffman, in his essentially microsociological theory centered on social interaction. Goffman went a step further in analyzing interaction and was interested in the ways in which individuals manipulate and define situations when interacting; this is how dramaturgical analysis arises as a branch of symbolic interaction. The American sociologist puts human behavior in a theatrical scenario and thus highlights the different levels in which the subject has to situate himself. Always aware of the context, individuals manipulate various tools in order to appear to others in the way that best suits them and in accordance with what they identify as the general expectations. The individual, in Goffman's theory, has an active role both in the formation of identity and in the social interactions in which he participates; at the core of these processes we find the individual's reflexive ability.

Even though in classical sociological theory reflexivity has always been considered an important element, in modernity it has generated even more attention; on the one hand, reflexivity becomes a fruitful methodological tool for social analysis (although there are those who criticize its use as a methodological tool[3]) and, on the other hand, the most notable social changes of modernity require certain revisions at the center of which we find reflexivity. That which in the pre-modern era was assumed or didn't imply great difficulty for individuals as in the case of identity in modernity becomes a phenomenon that requires study and, in addition, the individual, with his reflexive capacity, seems to bear the responsibility of sorting the problem out.[4] In this sense we can distinguish between methodological reflexivity and substantive reflexivity.

3. Methodological Reflexivity

Sociological reflexivity since the late 20th century has become a privileged methodological tool because, within sociology, to study and to understand the mechanisms used to approach a particular object of study, so as to achieve the maximum possible scientific objectivity is considered of paramount importance. By questioning their own presuppositions, science becomes an object for itself and assumes a position that seeks to clarify internal methodological processes so that its implementation can be more effective. In the case of the social sciences, Pierre Bourdieu [7] represents the position in favor of sociological reflexivity. For him, "sociologists have to convert reflexivity into a disposition constitutive of their scientific *habitus*, a *reflexivity reflex*, capable of acting not *ex post*, on the *opus operatum*, but *a priori*, on the *modus operandi*." Reflexivity is considered, therefore, an essential element of scientific practice. Through it, sociology turns back on itself to, in turn, become transparent; the presuppositions and procedures of sociology are questioned and then demonstrated. This process is not employed in order to achieve absolute objectivity or knowledge, or even in search of a kind of narcissistic self-analysis, but instead to control and strengthen the science itself. This process makes it possible to escape subjectivism and relativism and allows sociology to warn about and to question the conditions of the object of study and the researchers themselves. Indeed, sociological methodology focused on reflexivity makes explicit all the conditions that might affect the research results and makes its own limits visible.

From this point of view, sociological reflexivity provides a qualitative improvement over and above traditional methods; as Laura Bovone [8] explains,

> if sociological interpretation is an interpretation of second level related, precisely, to the interpretation of common sense, sociological reflexivity reasoning about the meaning of sociological interpretation can be considered as belonging to a further hermeneutical level: the third.

Moreover, this methodological advance that means "the sociological reflexivity" is a response to the needs of a particular age: that of modernity.

4. Substantive Reflexivity

In the last fifty years there have been many different changes in social life that involve a significant reflexive element. In modern societies, as heirs of the changes wrought by the industrialization process, many elements have converged that make for their own, new field. To begin with, globalization and the development of communication technologies appear as two factors of change that decisively affect the modes of social and individual organization, and in this sense significantly break from traditional models. This rupture is seen, essentially, within the notions of time and space[5]; as Giddens [9] explains, "one of the distinctive features of modernity, in fact, is an increasing interconnection between the two 'extremes' of extensionality and intentionality: globalizing influences on the one hand and personal dispositions on the other." Moreover, modern societies have a cosmopolitan character

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that tends toward overcoming cultural barriers. And finally, they perpetuate an almost blind trust in modern reason that, according to Giddens, helps to accentuate and to justify reflexivity's potential though its exercise may generate the opposite of that which is intended; i.e., uncertainty.[6] Thus the changes that come with modernity affect both institutions and the lives of individuals, establishing a set of social forces that feed on each other.

In this scenario of rupture with traditional models, social practices are consistently and continuously discussed and, to accommodate this process, individuals turn to the reflexive dimension. Subjects have to continuously negotiate through structural networks within their reach their position in the social sphere. This, in turn, forces them to reconsider their position in the personal sphere too, and this movement takes place through the exercise of reflexivity. Modernity's most common social context favors the development of a world of excessive reflexivity. Concrete evidence of this is seen through spread of specialists, self-help books, the triumph of psychological therapies, coaching, etc.

5. The Sociology of Emotions

In this environment, individuals and institutions become objects to themselves; they are at once the experts and the examined. Now, although an understanding of social reality and of the position that individuals assume in it always requires the study of the emotional dimension even if it is peripheral, in modernity, with the preeminence of reflexivity, studying the sociology of emotions becomes essential. To the extent that individuals and societies move towards implementing their reflexive potential, the need for a sociological study of emotion becomes apparent because it is at the core of human behavior and social relationships.

Given this, a look into the emotional dimension represents a more complete study of social reality, especially in contemporary societies. Precisely by incorporating emotion into social analysis is the sociology of emotions intends, on the one hand, to more fully understand social phenomena and to identify new phenomena and, on the other hand, to offer new perspectives that elucidate the nature of emotions and that are not purely biological, social, or psychological. The study of emotions, in turn and in so far as it is in direct correlation with the social dimension of individuals, reflects the characteristic reflexive processes of human social phenomena and, therefore, becomes a privileged subfield of sociology that aims at the study of social reality. Therefore, the emotional dimension is crucial in the process of individual and social construction and, to the extent that this process is essentially a relational one, emotion and reflexivity represent two dimensions of social reality that cannot be well understood if separated. In late modern Western societies the relationship between emotional factors and the reflexive dimensions constitutive of this era is clear.

Arlie Russell Hochschild (1940 -) was one of the first thinkers that saw the inclusion of the emotional dimension in sociological studies as essential.[7]She developed a theory that contributed to the birth of the sociology of emotions to which she gave name for the first time in 1975. While other classical sociologists were devoted to studying emotions, none of them have formulated a theory that focused on the emotional dimension of social phenomena.[8] For Hochschild, emotions are a decisive factor for action and for cognition; they also contribute to the recognition of actors in specific contexts. Emotions contain a relational character and they reveal the subject's position in the world and, at the same time, the context in which he is located.[9] In this line, Hochschild made her way into a field already opened by symbolic interactionism in the works of Cooley and Mead[10] and focused on emotions where the individual 1) constantly interacts with others, 2) is active and conscious when established in the social (and emotional) universe, and 3) displays, through emotion, a reflexive process. In addition, for Hochschild in reference to Weber's study of social action emotions are full of meanings that build a bridge between the individual and the social context.

To the extent that emotions make connections of meaning between the individual and the social context, they become, in turn, intrinsically dependent on the social context of every sentient individual. Though, it is important to note that at all times, and despite the obvious influence of social phenomena, the individual takes an active role. Hochschild [10] explains:

> Feelings, as I suggest, are not stored "inside" us, and they are not independent of acts of management. Both the act of "getting in touch with" feeling and the act of "trying" to feel may become part of the process that makes the thing we get in touch with, or the things we manage, into a feeling or emotion. In managing feeling we contribute to the creation of it.

On this point, Hochschild [11] follows Goffman insofar as she incorporates the individual's perspective as someone who is control of his emotions, but differs from Goffman in so far as Hochschild's theory adds to this awareness of feeling, the will to feel a given emotion. In addition, the subject not only manages his emotions through changes in expression, but also tries to deal with his feelings through a profound change in which he incorporates the nature of the feeling into his action (for example, if a person feels discouraged, she can use the tools and techniques at her disposal to turn the feeling of discouragement in one of encouragement). The first way of handling emotions Hochschild deems as*surface acting*,the latter as *deep acting*.[11]

In any case and as already hinted at, feelings acquire their meaning only insofar as they are played out in a context of which the subject is also aware.[12] Indeed, feelings and social context are dimensions of social reality that are interdependent. Therefore, and according to Hochschild [12], the way we deal, understand and manage emotions depends on the existing relations with social factors:

> [a]cts of emotion management are not simply private acts; they are used in exchanges under the guidance of feeling rules. Feeling rules are standards used in emotional conversation to determine what is rightly owed and owing in the currency of feeling. Through them, we tell what is

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"due" in each relation, each role.

The normative dimension of social reality not only influences behavior and thought but, through *feeling rules*, is also involved in emotions. Hochschild identifies three types of rules that, in approaching different normative dimensions, allow her to highlight distinct levels of analysis. First, there are normative rules, where the actor capable of feeling, and conscious of that capacity, wonders about the adequacy or inadequacy of his feelings. Secondly, there are rules that are syntactic in nature, in which the relationship between the actor's feeling and the reception of that feeling is evident [codes]. And finally, cultural rules highlight the connection between feeling and its target. These rules, by evoking a space where sentiments are expressed and recognized, give way to many different perspectives on a single reality. Also, the influence of social factors that underpin these rules is decisive in the feeling and in the formation process that precedes it. In this sense, a double influence comes through to the extent to which feeling rules adapt to the events of daily life and to the extent that daily life continues to influence the configuration of the same rules.

Hochschild, in her sociology of emotions,begins with the evidence that individuals feel and handle emotions constantly in everyday life. She develops her theory from the key idea that these emotions are oriented to action and to knowledge, providing an excellent vehicle to show the actor's position in the world. In turn, the subject has an essentially active role and displays a reflexive process that determines the nature of his emotions. This reflexive process is conditioned by the social context in which the subject is located, and permeates his emotional life. It's unquestionable that the "turn to reflexivity" that occurs with the advance of modernity requires further investigation. However, Hochschild's work offers some perspectives that allow a close examinationof those feelings that guide these processes of reflexivity. Emotions are not only crucial to decision making, but also to the definition and redefinition of selves in a social context. In this global, changeable and complex world, trying to understand and interpret one's emotions and those of others is increasingly importantboth in intimate and social lives. And it is in interactions with others that we feel and understand feelings, as well as the meanings attached to them. Hochschild's work, through concepts such as emotion work, deep acting, and feeling rules, help us better understand the reflexive processes involved in the formation of the self and sociality. She provides a rich alternative to sociological knowledge about the common social phenomena of late modern societies.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. SeeL. McFalls, A. Simard, B. Thériault. Introduction: Towards a Comparative Reception-History of Max Weber's Oeuvre. In: L. McFalls (ed), Max Weber's 'Objectivity' Reconsidered, The University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2007, 4: "Even before explicitly stating as much in the 'Objectivity' essay, Weber never saw method or even theory as an end in itself, but only as tools for his *Wirklichkeitswissenschaft*, his empirical science of historical and social reality (as opposed to the logico-deductive 'dogmatic' sciences such as jurisprudence, esthetics, or marginal utility theory)."
2. See G. H. Mead. Mind, Self and Society, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1963, 140.
3. This is the particular case of Michael Lynch. Cfr. M. Lynch. Against Reflexivity as an Academic Virtue and Source of Privileged Knowledge, Theory of Culture and Society, Vol. 17, No.26, 26-54, 2000.
4. See D. Chafee. Reflexive Identities. In: A. Elliot (ed), Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies, Routledge, New York, 100-111, 2011.
5. Z. Bauman, 2001, 37: "Space, to put it in a nutshell, mattered. But now means it matters less; Paul Virilio, announcing 'the end of geography', has suggested that it does not matter at all: its past significance as an obstacle or even the limit to communication has now been cancelled."
6. See A. Giddens. Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age, Stanford University Press, California, 1991.
7. A. R. Hochschild, The Managed Heart. Commercialization of Human Feeling, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2003, 230: "It is not simply that the malleable aspect of emotion is "social" (the focus of the interactional theorist) and that the unmalleable aspect of emotion is its biological link to action (the focus of the organismic theorists). Rather, the unmalleable aspect of emotion (which is what we try to manage) is also social."
8. In addition, A. R. Hochschild, Thomas J. Scheff, Randall Collins, Theodore D. Kemper and David R. Heise have significantly contributed to the establishment of the sociology of the emotions as a theoretical subfield within sociology. See T. D. Kemper (ed), Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions, State University of New York Press, New York, 1990.
9. A. R. Hochschild, The Managed Heart. Commercialization of Human Feeling, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2003, x: "[…] emotions functions as a messenger from the self, an agent that gives us an instant report on the connection between what we are seeing and what we had expected to see, and tell us what we feel ready to do about it."
10. She is critical however, of Mead's definition of "I" and "me" when excluding the importance of interaction within the "I". See Hochschild (2003, 222).
11. A. R. Hochschild, The Managed Heart. Commercialization of Human Feeling, University of

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California Press, Berkeley, 2003, 38: "There are two ways of doing deep acting. One is by directly exhorting feeling, the other by making indirect use of a trained imagination."

12. A. R. Hochschild, The Commercialization of Intimate Life. Notes from Home and Work, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2003, 77: "[…] he need a third imagethat of the sentient self, a self that is capable of feelings and aware of being so. More than a bloodless calculator or blind expresser of uncontrolled emotions, the sentient self is aware of feeling as well as of the many cultural guideposts that shape it."

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[11] A. R. Hochschild. The Commercialization of Intimate Life. Notes from Home and Work, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2003.

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