

Approaches and Differences on the Ratio Between History and Sociology

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Abstract: *Today's society constantly raises issues related to our lives, both in personal and social plans. Handling and resolving these issues often require not only scientific knowledge but skills and attitudes to engage in discussions related to Historical events and especially to make critical judgments in dealing with sociological issues. Determining the difference between History and Sociology helps people understand the impact of socio-economic activities and people in the community where we live, highlights developments in relations between local, national and global level; highlights the ability of citizens to influence the life of community and beyond; examines breadth and depth of sustainable development issues and promotes respect for people and other cultures in the environment where we live.*

Keywords: *History, Sociology, method, development, society, culture.*

1. Introduction

Determining the ratio between two scientific disciplines, the relationship between History and Sociology in our case, is the moment of setting their own course, which is the most important aspect. Contrary to strict methodological naturalism in the field of Sociology, History consents that some of the characteristic methods of physics can not be applied in social sciences due to deep differences between Sociology and physics. "*Rules of physics or "rules of nature"*", - states Karl Popper in his book "The Poverty of Historicism", - *are valid at any time; the physical world is governed from an evenly and unchangeable system in space and time*". (Popper 1969)

Sociological rules or social life rules change in different places and eras. Even if History admits that there are many typical social conditions, whose regular occurrence can be seen, it denies regularities of social life to have irregular and unchangeable character of the physical world. They depend upon History and change in culture, and particular historical event; meaning that can not be spoken on e.g. economy rules without a settling of early industrial period and so on. There will always be mentioned the historical period in which rules of the time have been dominant.

Also, it should be underlined that History claims how historical relativity of social rules makes physical methods sociologically inapplicable. Typical historical arguments on which this viewpoint is supported have to do with generalization, experimentation, social phenomena complexity, difficulties of precise forecasting and understanding methodological essentialism.

Defining the relationship between History and Sociology is as important and difficult and such difficulty is seen in these moments:

First, in the ontological and epistemological according of a high degree in these sciences, which makes it difficult to distinguish and differentiate because the objects of History and Sociology studies are: society, social phenomena and their rules. Given the fact of society unity and its aspects, of the overall connectivity and mutual description of social interaction phenomena and rules, it becomes clear that the only relative order can be divided roughly in content and ways of study for various social sciences. It is mostly applied to History and Sociology because both are general social sciences.

Second, existing differentiated concepts that are related with different theoretical and methodological orientations, of different definitions of material and study methods within Sociology and History. Regarding Sociology, such difficulties, concepts and different orientations are known and almost proverbial.

Historians often declare that "behind such wrong theories, usually in the hidden agenda there is an apologetic aim and the assertion for the non changeability of sociological rules can easily be abused for such purposes. It is known the fundamental difference in theoretical and methodological aspects among *contemporary sociologies*, whose lone theoretical basis is social transformations and rules of such transform as one of the main objectives and *sociologies of functionalist orientation, behaviorism* etc., orientated firstly by study structure, functional relationships, conditions for a

harmonious relation to existing elements and incorporation of conformity in given conditions, is known as social determinism of these different orientations.

It is known the difference between theoretical extreme tendencies and orientations, even hyper theoretical, as Rite Mills calls them and *empiricist* trends and orientations, measurements and quantifications that are made in *quantofren*, as Sorokin stated. It is finally known today's Sociology's ambiguity, partially caused by its under development, especially by the under development of particular sociologies and the fact that it from one side pretends to be the most generalist social science, in studying qualities and general links to social phenomena, the general structure of society and its most general rules and on the other side basically studying tiny social phenomena, like micro social ratios. Given that, based on what said above, Sociology is hard to define as all of them who tried achieved only in showing what lacked in the others definition.

Such difficulties occur also in the subject of History, branched into sub-branches, periods, areas of life and social phenomena. When dealing with History, we will borrow the thought of Fernand Braudel, viewing his History and Sociology aspect, based on his writing for *Sociology* published by Gurvitch. *"There is no History, a historian's profession, but do exist historians professions, a complex that can be joined in curiosity, viewpoint and new opportunities. Probably sociologists ... will understand me better if I say that contests and contestations regarding studies of the past are as much as studies of the presents ..."* (Gurvitch 1996)

Obviously, there are difficulties and weak links in determining the ratio of History and Sociology, where we would mention the professional narrowness and partiality. An illustration of this claim and as a starting point for a more complete and adequate ratio of these two sciences, we will take a look at definitions of generalization, experimentation, innovation, complexity, inaccuracy of forecast, arguments objectivity and evaluation.

Many historians believe there is a deeper reason why physic scientific methods can not be applied in social sciences. They argue that Sociology, like the other "biological" sciences, meaning sciences that deal with live objects, should not act in a nucleus approach but in a different way called "holistic". Sociology's objects, social groups, should not be seen mere piles of people. Thus, the social group is a simpler and generalized member, also more than the just general sum of its members, more than just sum of personal relations that exist at given time among each member of the group.

Regarding the ratio between Sociology and History, Ogburn and Nimkopf write: *"History, another general science, distinct from Sociology because it deals with description of unique events as e.g. the War in Okinawa, unique movements, as was England's Industrial Revolution. Sociology does not deal with unique events (unrepeated -J.S.), distinct names like Eisenhower and Churchill that are not seen often in Sociology books. Furthermore, only a limited number deals with description. The object of Sociology deals more with research of phenomena and explanation (explicom) rather than description. "Why" is very often in Sociology"*(Ogburn and Nimkopf 1968).

For the historicist, Sociology is a theoretical history. Its scientific predictions should be based on rules and since they are historical predictions, change projections, they must be based in historical rules. According to Carl Popper *"In the same time the historicist, maintains that the method of generalization is inapplicable to social sciences and that we must not think that uniformity of social life are unchangeable in space and time, since usually deal with a certain historical cultural period"* (Popper 1969).

Thus, we believe that social rules must have a structure somewhat different from usual generalization based on uniformity. Real social rules must be "generally" valid. But this does not mean that they apply to all human history, where it covers all of its periods rather than some of them. We also think that there can not be social uniformity that remains in power beyond particular periods. The only valid universal rules of society should be "rules that bind successive periods. They should be rules of historical development that determine the transition from one period unto the other. Here's what historicist mean when they say that the only real rules of sociology are historical rules" (Popper 1969).

Without needing profound analysis in details of such claim, we can not leave aside these three moments: *firstly*, the mentioned authors determine History as a science studying unique and unrepeatable social phenomena, a wide spread definition found in all authors of unique movements as in England's Industrialization. Sociology for this issue of study that is being revitalized and conditionally approached, as later, can be acceptable. *Secondly*, History is attributed mainly the description of phenomena while Sociology the search for cause and explanation. Said as such there is no clear answer to the factual state and degree of History's development a century before. *Thirdly*, strangely authors reserve the question "Why?" to Sociology, as such question can be both for them and other sciences, which is the question that scientific research starts.

Professor F.A. von Hayek, in his study "Scientism and social study" (published at *Economica N.S.*), after determining History and Sociology as general sciences, continues by claiming that *"There still exists great difference among History and Sociology ... the object of general History are phenomena and unrepeatable social processes, in the*

historical specificity and conditionality" (Goritcha 1965) He illustrates this through the example of slave life in feudal period, which is an historical issue, whilst *"Sociology deals with the question of what feudalism is, its social structure, requirements that caused and held it, despite of the existing historical forms of manifestation in feudal societies as in German feudalism, Byzantine or Islamic"*

"History studies French or October Revolution etc., as unique social phenomena fully determined in space and time". Also according to the author, *"Sociology deals in issues like; what is revolution, its characteristics, essential rules that are present in all social revolutions, despite its historical form of manifestation" "Research in Sociology is guided by general sense that is typical and stable..."* (Goritcha 1965)

Such two sciences are reciprocally completed. Sociology can not be understood without History because it gives food for "the necessary real case to the Sociology's generalization" (Hayek 1981). But neither History can do without Sociology because it *"can determine, describe and classify known phenomena, the essence of social phenomena and their rules, whose discovery and general sense are given by Sociology"* Goritcha states that *"Sociology stands toward general History, in the same position as to other social sciences. It gives to all particular social sciences (understandably to History), the starting point of general theoretical and methodological principles"* (Hayek 1981).

As seen from cited article, Hayek clearly distinct from the material or object of studies of History and Sociology. The objects of History are unique social phenomena of Sociology. Object of History are unique and concrete social phenomena determined in space and time. Object of Sociology is generality, relatively the constant and the typical. History studies this or that form of feudalism or revolution, while Sociology studies feudalism and revolution as such. In the examples taken we don't see clearly or even fairly treatment. For some issues that are reserved to Sociology, even to what is the structure of federalism and what are the requirements that brought and kept it, and what are causes and rules of revolution, at least in those forms of feudalism and revolution that History studied in tis framework.

Even more abstract and schematic seems the setting of link and mutual satisfaction between Sociology and History: History gives Sociology the material for theoretical generalization, which lay partially in the differentiation of the above question to their subject, while Sociology is supplied with knowledge on the core rules and phenomena studied. Faith, specifically, is the task of social sciences aiming at disclosing societies rules of evolution in order to foretell its future (as presented above - J.S.) may be described as History's central doctrine. Implausible seems the claim that *"Sociology discovers and defines the essence and rules of phenomena because, as said, History denies this and does not distinguish among essences and varying degrees of rule"* (Hayek 1981). Finally, it seems important the statement that *"Sociology donates to other sciences (as to History), the starting point of general theoretical and methodological principles"* (Collins 1981)

Charles Cooley, in his work mentions two main distinctions between Sociology and History, and another differentiation conditionally stated. Main differences according to him remain in these two elements: *first element*, "History's method is mainly individual and chronological, while Sociology's is typically generalist", *second element*, "Abstraction degree in Sociology is higher than in History" (Cooley, 1969).

Regarding the first distinction, the following examples and claims proceed that *"Rome's history is a successive series of real events, the historical picture of the year 1789 gives individual appearance of this revolution, even when the story makes the study of an individual designated phenomenon, History uses Sociology as a method (!). Rather than individualized real actions, Sociology examines the essential qualities such as that of a slave state or the bourgeoisie revolution. It should reveal common qualities of a certain type of social phenomena, the typological view of revolution state, class and other categories"* (Cooley, 1969).

Regarding the second distinction, Cooley states that *"Sociology operates with concept, while History operates primarily on mutual link of all social phenomena ... studies society in terms of interaction of different structural elements. History, on the contrary, deals with social movement primarily from political aspect, taking in consideration even other elements but only insofar as explaining scientifically certain historical phenomena"* (Cooley, 1969).

Despite the first impression, the analysis might show that this view is even more uncertain, inconsequent and unacceptable. Firstly, it reduces the difference between Sociology and History in methodological differences, in contrast to study methods, while the material might be the same: History is individual, concrete and chronological, while Sociology method is general and typological. Furthermore, it is said that in studying concrete phenomena, History uses Sociology as method but does not explain how is possible, when both are differentiated in methods. Examples given, contrary to the upper assertion, implicate the subject of their difference.

The second distinction, regarding different levels of abstraction, looks like it says something but unable to express it. The assertion that follows Sociology operates with concepts, while History by concrete images is totally unacceptable. Because, if anything at all is known with certainty in science is that there is no such thing as operating by image. Even the third distinction over Sociology as a science of link and interaction of all social phenomena and History as a primarily

political development science does not seem reasonable because neither Sociology has not achieved the determinial level and there is no reason to make comparison based on the lack of historical events.

Professor Anthony Giddens, in the textbook "The Constitution of Society", 1997 edition, acknowledges the necessity of historical orientation toward Sociology (Giddens 1997). This means much more than completing "historical context" within which events take place. Such information is necessary considering a small portion of knowledge people have, regardless of freshly historical events, are limited. It should be said that one of the most important elements in recent years for Sociology has been the resurgence of historical analysis. It should be understood only of a matter of sociological gaze on the past but also as an elementary contribution in understanding today's institutions.

A complete classification of general and specific details determines the essence of these events, their relationship with others, etc. But that's not enough because for a full recognition is necessary a thorough knowledge. This means that "generalization of some common characteristics of events will provide short and synthetic recognition and above all will reveal rules and balance of a variety of materials extracted from society and other cultures" (Abrams 1982).

In delivering particular historical explanations, History does not deliver complete interpretation and as such is not fully independent. It seems to rely on support of other particular social sciences to extract from them particular social phenomena on notions and rules. On the other hand, "must also rely on a more general social science that will also define its own notion of society as a whole of all social phenomena and different societies at different developmental stages" (Althusser 1969).

So, History is defined as the science that studies particular and real social phenomena, while Sociology as a science studies the relation among all social phenomena, eras and notions. This definition implies a difference in substance and in method but this is not fully explained. Rightly, History is defined as the not only the writing science but also explanatory of the particular and again rightly is added that such explanation of the particular is not enough, not only within the reach of History.

Examples taken to illustrate this relation and manner of expression do not look very random. "History will show how the event was held concerning the history of people. It will describe the behavior of relevant people will run to Sociology to determine the kind of social phenomena in which it takes part" (Arendt 1963). Borrowing general notions of war, revolution and uprising from Sociology, History will prove whether in the mentioned event there are all of the phenomena or just one of them." Naturally, these examples contain a part of the truth are illustrative for freshman students but ignore the fact that every science, including History, creates a self conceptual system of categories, even incomplete and are not remained on loan.

Mentioning some textbooks shortcomings in the ratio among History and Sociology does not naturally mean denying the fact that even the cited texts are not mentioned fundamental moments of such ratio but for a definition of it and related texts mentioned above we would consider:

First of all, determining the relationship between Sociology and History, these two sciences deal in abstraction, by dealing with it in many moments of their contemporary being, so History as General History and Sociology as a science of linkage and general social qualities, on the general structure in repeating and general rules of its development.

Analysis of their ratio will ascertain the close link but also difference among the two sciences.

The objective real linking and differentiating basis among Sociology and History comprises a unified objective, general dialectics and particularity of social reality. The general and particular categories will be taken as revitalised. The generalization, links and ratios, structures and general ruling of social phenomena in their real shape in connections and conditions are studied by History. But generalization and particular do not exist apart as every particular in a way or another, the objective reality comprises the basis of linkage among Sociology and History. On the basis of such unity and divergence derives link and difference in methodology among them.

Generally, it is said that "History is an individual science, which studies phenomena in their specificity not only in time and space but also in their functional connection with other phenomena" It is also mentioned that "Sociology, on the contrary, is general, studies it and aims at establishing a categorical system that includes and explains the whole prosperous concreteness of social phenomena, ratios and ruling"

Such fundamental methodological difference between the two may be considered as true if considered absolute. Authoritative authors limit and make it relative the upper claim. Bottomore, in his textbook of Sociology writes: "In what ways differ History and Sociology? It's usual to say that History describes unique events, while the sociologist makes generalization. This is not true. The work of every serious historian is full of generalizations, while many sociologists were involved in description and analysis of unique events or their consequences. Probably is best to say that historians usually start a deep study of events and sociologists start in generalization, trying to prove by studying a number of similar parts of events. In short intent is marked" (Bottomore 1972) This is what Leon Kamin (1977) in his work "The Science and Politics of IQ" published in London in 1977. It is wrong to say that History studies unique aspects on of past

events because every historian in the theme framework it treats classifies the characteristic of events from accidental ones.

Received and relativized in such manner, the upper methodological change, which in essence seems right, allows to see hints of the historian is not and can not be the only chroniclers of the past events but researcher analyzing main structures and influence of main factor in the stream of events, which allows understanding historical tendencies to be "transcended the the amusing description towards an analytical and scientific development of past history" as Jensen put it.

The difference remained between Sociology and History is still the primary theoretical and methodological orientation of Sociology and it trends to create a categorical or ruling system of a general theory and methodology that can serve as a starting point and theoretical support for all social sciences and History. Engels emphasizes when writes "on the importance of discovering the principles of historical materialism from Marx on the science of History". But this distinction cannot be absolute and this was one of the main objections done to the analysis of the texts analyzed. All because of primary theoretical and methodological orientation which does not mean exclusive orientation and even and even less could mean that other sciences do not fall under their various degrees of generalizations, do not establish categorical and ruling systems nor theorise despite the fact that in History, most of the time there is lack of explicit theoretical and methodological presumptions in discussions.

A relative distinction of History as science will guide to the study of the past and Sociology's primary guidance from the present human society.

Among methodological differences between History and Sociology is a distinction that even Bottomore mentions but widely mentioned by Dowse and Hughes in their textbook of political sociology. They say that for History are important facts as such: percentage of member vote of a class that gave the vote to a party. For Sociology, on the contrary, this fact becomes valuable information only in relation to some theory e.g. on the Marxist theory on the class character of political parties (Dowse & Hughes 1972).

The emphasis on differentiation, but also the subject of close connection of Sociology and History, insistence on relativism of their methodological differences, which is ultimately dictated by the development of these two sciences, must lead to the idea of linking close between them, to the idea of Lucien Goldman on Historical Sociology and Sociological History.

In the later development of Sociology, especially after World War II until the 50s, was predominated in historicism, functional basis shape, various behaviourism influences but also in the form of Stalinist dogmatism Stalin. Perhaps here should be asked the reasons for the crisis of Sociology, which is spoken and are speaking so much. But if we are to think of Bottomore on the idea that "social development and radical transformations of recent decades are causing a twist in the orientation of Sociology and are causing a new orientation in History".

Neither History was not without downsides like it was reflected in the form of *atheorism* and *positivism*. We believe that weaknesses separating these sciences times ago have been temporary. *"Their eventual disputes have always been result of misinterpretations. Regarding their future ratio, these two sciences will determine this ration in their future development. For the better, less schematization from Sociologies viewpoint towards this ratio it is best expressed"* (Ross 1954)

Sociology's attitude toward such ratio is best expressed by the political science researcher Carl Deuche when writing that "History is required not as a servant of social sciences but a powerful friend and ally" (Millon-Delsol 2000)

2. Conclusions

Analysis of this study may indicate, views associated about the ratio between History and Sociology, which is clear and acceptable. This means reducing the difference between them regarding methodological differences, in contrast to methods of studying the subject. The accomplishment of goals, objectives and historical topics, requires extensive use of historical resources (evidences). Ability to discover, to examine, to inquire, to compare, to draw conclusions from the sources of historical evidence are formed in different ways: finding and examining of objects, buildings and other resources, their examination and use of evidence helps to develop analytical abilities of man, to observe to discover, to compare views, to draw conclusions about human actions and decisions.

However, we think that if the case may be the same, we can rightly say that History is individual, concrete and chronological and Sociology's method is general and typological. Moreover, one could say about the study of concrete phenomena, History uses methods of Sociology but does not explain how this is possible, when History and Sociology exactly differ in methods.

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