

I will divide these five theorists into three groups:

The first group will be called: Structural Determinism. This theme indicates that the social structure is playing the dominant role in the construction and use of the knowledge, while leaving little or even no space for social agency to take effect. Within this group are Durkheim and Saussure. For Durkheim, the agent is the society itself which transcend the level of social actors; specifically in the religious sociology, those primitive people in the clans are practicing rituals and dominated by the totem sacredness without agency to reconstruct it. For Saussure, the deterministic role is played by the language, which is arbitrary over the object it is referring to and keeps unchanged over time.

The second group will be called: Structural Internalism. This theme indicates that although the social actors have the room to take actions under the structure, however, they are unconscious of the structure dominating over them since the structure is already internalized into their actions. So the agency will not substantially take effect. Within this group are Alexander and Bourdieu. For Alexander, he criticized Habermas of analyzing communication in a too rationalized way while ignoring the dark side – normative side of the communicative process. So in his narratives although the social actors communicate with and share the emotional identification with each other, the process of communication is playing the main role, rather than the social actors themselves. For Bourdieu, although “habitus” provides social actors the space to take action, however, the “field” leads them to act in a way that anticipates what is

required of them without conscious calculation, and thus leaves them only internalized, not constructive.

The third group will be called: Structure Productivism. This theme indicates the academic attempts to penetrate into the social behaviors. Within this group is Foucault, who put forward the resistance against the structural domination and in this way to produce the new structure with instability and contingency.

In Durkheim's eyes, culture was no more than social facts, which is the methodological foundation of his religious sociology – he held a totally objectivist perspective. Not using sociology of religion to refer to his research of the primitive clans is a conspicuous hint that he was not changing the methods, only the subject changed. In this division between the real world and the mystical/symbolic world, he was trying to reveal the beauty of religion through social relations while breaking away from the individual-level psychological analyses – everything is about the “social”. “The really religious beliefs are always common to a determined group, which makes profession of adhering to them and of practicing the rites connected with them. They are not merely received individually by all the members of this group; they are something belonging to the group, and they make its unity.” (Durkheim, 1965, p. 59) In Durkheim's works, the term “society” is used again and again; there was no agency for him since the agent is the society itself.

As a result, Durkheim explicitly linked himself to Rousseau in three ways: 1) social ontology: everything that makes social actors human to the society is their role as components of the relationship, and there is no “self” independent of social

context. 2) Society is a moral entity, not merely a sociological one with patterns, and society is bigger than the sum of its participants. In this entity, all of our ideas about right and wrong (morality) are generated by the society, while the society itself is reframed by the moral poles. 3) Freedom and liberation comes from the willing surrender to the social whole, and only those regulated are free in that as soon as you admitted you are powerless to something, you are having the ability to negotiate. In this way, actors are safer and freer if they are constrained to some body parameters.

So as we are getting to the elementary forms of the religious life, we can achieve the simplest society with its morality. In this primitive religious world, primitive clans operationalized beliefs and the ways of thinking through collective rites and rituals. They were totally dominated by the pre-existent beliefs and were submissively practicing in the given way to represent the moralities. Everything is mentally constructed, so are their minds; instead of from sensations, they were produced from the society in priori to their realization. When the whole group of people is situated in such dominant sacredness, people acting in ways of violating the rules and rituals will be intensely observed, while the remaining group will be held together more tightly and thus fortifies the cohesion and the dominant social structure further.

In Bourdieu's academic framework, social actors are not entirely dominated by the social structure like in Durkheim's world; they are given the space for behavior in the form of "habitus". Habitus is defined as "a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that

can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at an end or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 53) From the above definition, although Bourdieu tried to unmask systems of domination taken for granted through social practice, the social actors is just too structure-internalized to get full independency or strong agency. So, unlike Durkheim’s pure structural ontology, here comes a dichotomy between “objectivism” and “subjectivism”, in which the former referred to the “macro” durable structure, while the latter referred to the “micro” agency with social actions engaged in. This is a question about how the world is constructed. Different from Durkheim’s view that social integration is got through conflicts, in Bourdieu’s arguments, symbolic power and capital are dominating the symbolic practices.

There are three key terms in Bourdieu’s conceptual architecture: habitus, capital and field. Habitus, as seen in the above definition, its practical mastery comes from the internalized disposition. Specifically referring to distinction, it is not about the social actor’s thoughts, but about what he/she get used to do – this is a spontaneous knowing and response. From objectivism perspective, habitus is a reflective structure, which is constructed by people’s objective positions, rather than the interactive process; from subjectivism perspective, habitus provides the principle of action and a probabilistic, rather than deterministic relationship between habitus and structure. The latter perspective is offering some agency of behaviors, however, still constrained to a great extent by the structure. Capital, as defined as accumulation of resources of power, is mainly taking the form of symbolic capital in Bourdieu’s arguments, as

resources of legitimating. In the practice to accumulate the symbolic capital, there is no conscious calculation or individual utility maximizing, but only for the purpose of symbolizing and materializing the symbols to keep the class unity. Field, as defined as the configuration of objective relations between positions especially in terms of the accumulation of various types of capital, is posing structural constraints to the habitus and social agency.

Foucault showed us a post structuralism picture which effaced the “objectivist” thoroughly. He tried to distance sociology from science as far as possible and penetrate social behaviors to get power and domination in a different way from Durkheim or Bourdieu. To him, although power is still an inaccessible process, it is now related to detailed knowledge of population, instead of the mere structural constraints or objective positions. What determined the power now is the “discourse”: rules of allowing certain statement of the knowledge to be judged. In this way, struggle of competing discourses are the struggle of power, which is a kind of distortion of truth and at the same time constitutes truth. Rather than a repressive force to deny and to limit, in Foucault’s framework, power is productive and proliferating; rather than some agentless power, for Foucault, power is exactly coming from the behavior of resistance – by refusing the normalized discourse, by being wrong with something, one is to give up all the power to constitute the new power. Not like Durkheim’s agentless power, not like Bourdieu’s internalization of power, in Foucault’s way, people are productive of their own behavior needless to be subjective. Through this resistance, people got enlightenment and consciousness.

What's more interesting is that he attempted to discover the temporality, instability and contingency of this "post-modernism" world. For doing this, he used a historical method for analyses to provide history to the presence, specifically in this book, to the day to day discipline of the bodies – the normal and healthy body. "This book is intended as a correlative history of the modern soul and of a new power to judge; a genealogy of the present scientificolegal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justifications and rules, from which it extends its effects and by which it masks its exorbitant singularity." (Foucault, 1979, p. 23) By the genealogy, Foucault presents us how the presence is contingent and independent of direction to history and relating to the contents, how the disappearance and less cruel punishment contradictorily got intensified or even total domination.

In this interlacing of power and genealogy, people are provided with a spectrum of true and false which prevents people to be considered only either true or false – freedom is thus coming into consciousness. In this sense, being abnormal is to find a space to know the truth. Foucault's perspective of power is rather method driven, instead of problem driven in that, the power is inherited in the methodology how knowledge is constructed and confirmed – people are digging into the underlying facts in this way. Exactly since the methods possess the power, agent must be on the stage in this case, or who will get to occupy the knowledge?

One most fundamental focus lies naturally in Foucault's logic that on the surface, power should determine the truth, so we are able to interpret why the boundary between the state and society is such a permeable network of relationships.

References

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