Theory

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Editors' Introduction

What are the contemporary tasks of sociological theory? Despite the significantly different perspectives represented by the papers in this issue of *Theory*, it is a question that each of the papers engages with in its own way. The papers demonstrate that the renewal of sociological theory takes place through reflections on the history and forms of sociological theory. Yet, they equally show how sociological theory evolves and enters

into new constellations through dialogue and confrontations with social and cultural developments. These dialogues are not limited to those between theorists and theoretical perspectives; dialogue can ensue from encounters with existing and emerging social problems and social practices, as well as pursued with other disciplines and intellectual traditions. Indeed, the first paper in this issue presents a case for the theoretical and practical importance of a 'dialogical turn'. It will be of interest also for its discussion of issues relating to the European funding of research in the social sciences. The second paper explores the significance of Johann Arnason's Macro-Phenomenology and underlines the potential of Arnason's conception of the phenemenological notion of 'world'. A couple of papers in the Autumn-Winter 2010 issue of *Theory* commented on Arnason's importance to recent developments in sociological theory in Australia. The third paper in this issue asks troubling questions about the social ontology of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It highlights the discontinuity between the political order and this social ontology. Many of the considerations that are addressed in these papers were familiar to Theodor Adorno and the last paper explicates an important facet of Adorno's unique vision of sociology and his conception of sociology's relationship to interdisciplinarity.

As you would be aware, the International Sociological Association World Congress will take place in July 2014. The RC 16 Presidents will provide the full details of the Sociological Theory Research Committee conference schedule and information about events that are planned for the ISA World Congress in the next issue of Theory, which will appear in Spring 2014.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Theory*.

Craig Browne & Paul Jones

Sociological Dialogic Turn: Regaining the Social Sciences' Legitimacy in Europe

The Social Sciences are under threat. European citizens are sceptical about their ability to respond to burning issues, like the effects of the financial recession on people's everyday lives. As social scientists, if we really want our work to be socially relevant, it is more urgent than ever that we contribute to tackling these problems. However, we also need to know how to distinguish theoretically well-grounded Social Sciences from those that are not. We are interested here in the role that sociological theory can play in the debates about the Social Sciences' legitimacy and their capacity to provide answers to relevant social problems. We argue that the dialogic turn in contemporary sociological theory is actually providing a strong, rigorous response to these questions. By dialogic turn we understand, on the one hand, how sociological theory is analysing the increasing dialogic and communicative dynamics in our societies, and on the other hand, how it is increasingly doing

these analyses in dialogue with civil society (Puigvert, 2012).

Over the last ten years – and particularly since the beginning of the economic crisis – the social utility of the research in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) has increasingly been questioned within the Framework Program of Research of the European Commission (EC). There was an extensive debate, for instance over whether SSH should be preserved as an independent research program within Horizon 2020 or whether it should become a transversal dimension of other programs. The EC had decided not to fund SSH separately – meaning that SSH research would disappear – but the scientific community got quickly organized and, with the support of the European Parliament, this was changed. With this arrangement, the SSH are secured for the next 7 years in the European Framework Program, which is the largest RTD program in SSH worldwide. However, Social Sciences here are in "tenure track" and need to reorient their work in order to demonstrate the social benefit of public investment in them.

Some may consider that this questioning comes from neoliberal politicians and EU bureaucrats, but this is not quite the reality. In fact, European citizens, that is, women, youth, immigrants or Roma organizations, and so on, are the ones who consider SSH scholars are like bureaucrats, in their ivory towers, with no relation to society. Social scientists must be accountable, not only to the institution that provides funding, but especially to their very society. Our scientific responsibility is to address relevant social problems and, more specifically, to those who suffer the most, such as people who have lost their jobs, the victims of gender violence, children who are failing in schools, and other groups at risk of social exclusion. These people need us to do research that can have an impact in their lives.

Researchers have not been able to do what the European Commission is asking them to do: "to develop a better relationship between scientists and European citizens (...) the work programme will encourage activities to promote greater public engagement and dialogue in order to involve citizens and civil society organisations in research and science policy" (European Commission, 2012, p. 12).

Along the same lines as other social theorists who are engaging this debate – for instance, Burawoy (2005) among many others – we argue that the dialogic turn contributes to improving the theoretical rigor of sociological theory. We will illustrate this argument through the INCLUD-ED project; the only study in SSH selected by the European Commission among the Ten Success Stories of the European Framework Program of Research. More recently, the main researchers involved in this project have been awarded the coordination of a new FP7 study (IMPACT-EV) aimed at designing a permanent system of selection, monitoring, evaluation and

comparison of European SSH research, with the ultimate goal of evaluating its social, scientific and political impact.

INCLUD-ED researchers have generated a dialogic way of doing sociological theory that contributes to overcoming the SSH crisis and to regaining societal legitimacy. By drawing on such contributions as Habermas' (1984) insights on "comprehension in social sciences" or E. O. Wright's (2010) analyses of "real utopias", this study uses the Communicative Methodology (Gomez, Flecha and Puigvert, 2011), which puts the *expert system* in dialogue with the *researched subjects*. The Communicative Methodology not only researches "on" the subjects but also engages them throughout the whole project. Because of this dialogic orientation, INCLUD-ED researchers have not only identified mistakes in theories but have also developed new theories that move beyond the existing ones. The result has been the generation of the new the knowledge that is necessary for the sociological comprehension – in the Weberian sense– of social inequalities and how to reduce them.

One of the meanings of the dialogic turn, as Habermas (1984) suggests, is replacing power claims with validity claims in researchers' work, and more particularly, in the relations that are established between researchers and citizens. The Communicative Methodology puts in dialogue the knowledge of the scientific community with the typifications from the common sense of subjects, through the power of arguments and not the power position in the social structure. The words of a university professor are not at a higher level than those of a non-academic Roma mother, as what matters are the arguments provided. In relation to the INCLUD-ED project, there have been intense dialogues between relevant scholars in social theory and very diverse grassroots citizens. At the Conference we organized on "Women and Social Transformation" in 2001, renowned feminist scholars engaged in dialogue with the "Other Women", that is non-academic women, (Beck-Gernsheim, Butler & Puigvert, 2003). Through egalitarian dialogue, Butler exchanged her theories with disenfranchised Roma women, and later on reoriented her theory by including these women's contributions. Butler, in a personal communication with CREA[1] acknowledged the impact of the dialogic turn on her scholarship. She wrote, "It was a beautiful and a moving experience that will change me and my work... You have returned me to my most basic sense of why is feminism urgent, moving and creative".

The dialogic turn enables researchers to easily identify mistakes in Social Theories and much faster than before. One example is found in Habermas' incorrect understanding of Searle's Speech Acts theory. In *The Theory of*

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[1] CREA is the Centre of Research in Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities of the University of Barcelona.

Communicative Action, Habermas includes both intention and consensus in his understanding of Austin and Searle's illocutionary acts, but which are not their accounts. In a seminar organized by CREA, Searle argued that if Habermas had read his writings correctly, he would not have made such elementary mistake in relation to his theory of language or that of his mentor John Austin (Searle & Soler, 2004). In addition, the dialogic turn in social theory allows us to further develop theories, overcoming what Beck has termed the "zombie categories" (Beck & Willms, 2004). Let me exemplify this also through the example of speech acts' theory. In the following invitation, *"Shall we finish our work at the Cafe?"* Now, if we analyse only the utterance (verbal communication) we may not understand the consequence of that speech act, or what Habermas was worried about, that is, whether there are power or validity claims involved. In dialogue with young men and women we discuss how, beyond words, accounting for gestures, looks, and tones, as well as the power interactions within the social structure (i.e. hierarchical relationship such as boss and employee), different interpretations may arise regarding whether the speaker is covertly or openly pursuing a date or not. It becomes clear that by only analysing verbal language, it is impossible to fully capture the complexity of human communication in many different situations. The concept of speech acts is, thus, a zombie category that we have replaced with the concept of communicative acts (Soler & Flecha, 2010).

Dialogue is increasingly dominating more dimensions of social reality. The Spanish Revolution, the global movement that began on the 15th of May 2011 in Barcelona and Madrid, is a clear example of it. Sitting in the squares, thousands of people debated new proposals to improve education, health, or housing, through a dialogic form of democracy (Sordé & Santos, 2011). This dialogic turn is also observed in more specialized domains, such as the scientific community, for instance through the Public Knowledge Project or PLoS (Public Library of Science), an innovative publishing system where a discovery found today can be peer reviewed and published in less than two weeks. The movement to democratize expert knowledge is growing up, and it is all the time becoming more common that everyone should be able to freely access the latest scientific findings on medicine or physics, but also on sociological theory. In short, part of the task of sociological theory should be listening to the arguments made by those who are questioning the Social Sciences and being able to respond to them. The dialogic turn is the best way to face the threat that is being posed and to the Social Sciences regaining legitimacy, as well as the best way of improving the theoretical rigor of the very social theory.

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Ramon Flecha and Emilia Aiello

On the Significance of Johann Arnason's Macro-Phenomenology for Cultural Sociology

Phenomenology has been marginal to the articulation of the strong program of cultural sociology. This is at least partly due to the perception that phenomenology (as with symbolic interactionism) finds it difficult to resolve the 'individualist dilemma'. This means that, while phenomenology is seen to be able to enrich understandings of the formation of collective order, its contribution to cultural sociology will remain limited because it is 'in more general theoretical terms, incapable of supplying the presuppositions of theoretical analysis itself' (Alexander 1985: 28). In the same vein, there is a view that phenomenology does not have the internal resources to move beyond the limitations of a 'philosophy of consciousness', which is seen to underpin it, in order to develop a 'post-phenomenological' approach in line with 'post-Marxism' or 'post-structuralism' (Habermas 1992). The present essay contends that Johann P. Arnason's macro-phenomenology overcomes the above mentioned shortcomings of phenomenology,

and makes a distinctive contribution to cultural sociology.

Although marginal to the development of cultural sociology, phenomenology is not altogether absent from it. In an essay from 1985, for example, Jeffrey C. Alexander discusses phenomenology and symbolic interactionism from the perspective of what he calls the 'individualist dilemma' (Alexander 1985). For present purposes, three things are important to note. First, the essay was written as a contribution to contemporary perspectives on 'micro' and 'macro' sociological theory, not cultural sociology, *per se*. Second, Alexander makes a distinction between *individualist* and *subjective* approaches, and argues for the relevance of subjective approaches to collective order. Some strands of phenomenology, and, especially, ethnomethodology, open onto collectivist perspectives that would be amenable to this. Third, while Alexander focuses on the 'individualist dilemma' of phenomenology, he introduces an interesting distinction between 'strict' and 'traditional' currents of phenomenology (1985: 29). 'Strict' versions are those that employ a 'strictly philosophical' usage and are applicable to 'any theory that accepts the independent structuring power of consciousness while denying the dualism Kant posited between phenomenal and noumenal' (1985: 28). Hegel is of especial interest as the 'prototype of a collectivist phenomenology', along with his conception of Objective Spirit as culture and institution. Alexander sketches a

current of thought from Hegel to Dilthey, from Weber to Parsons, to Geertz and Bellah, which he characterizes both as a broad *phenomenological hermeneutics* and *collective phenomenology* (1985: 28-29). However, he does not pursue the possibilities of this intellectual current further in that essay. 'Traditional' versions of phenomenology are those associated with Husserl and his followers. They elaborate an individualist phenomenology, although Alexander does note that some (such as Merleau-Ponty and Schütz) tried to reconcile 'traditional' forms of phenomenology to collectivist understandings of phenomenological hermeneutics.

Within the same period of his thought, Alexander devotes a lecture to (Husserlian) phenomenology in his *Twenty Lectures,* but subordinates it to ethnomethodology as an overarching frame of discussion (Alexander 1987). Of two lectures devoted to cultural sociology, one specifically focuses on hermeneutics. Here Alexander again highlights the importance of Mind (Spirit) in relation to Dilthey, but does not mention its antecedents in Hegel. In the same lecture, he discusses the importance of Ricoeur for cultural sociology, but neglects the phenomenological basis of his hermeneutical thought. In a slightly later essay, and this time within the context of cultural sociology/studies, Alexander continues to note the importance of Spirit, and the Hegelian links to Dilthey, but had started to more fully collapse the phenomenological element into the hermeneutical (Alexander

1990). Thus instead of referring to *hermeneutical phenomenology*, as he did in the 1985 essay, Alexander focuses on *hermeneutics* alone, which results in the occlusion of phenomenological problematics of relevance to cultural sociology. Indeed, with the exception of fleeting reference to Husserlian 'bracketing' and its application for cultural sociology, discussion of phenomenology in the context of debates on culture is absent altogether in that essay and other programmatic essays (eg Alexander 1990, Alexander and Smith 2003).

Icelandic sociologist, Johann Arnason (1940-) brings phenomenology and cultural hermeneutics together to elaborate a distinctive macro-phenomenology of the world in a way that overcomes the limitations of phenomenology associated with the philosophy of consciousness, and which can be situated as a variant of cultural sociology in the broad sense. Best known for his work in multiple modernities and civilizational analysis, and with a background in Frankfurt School critical theory, it might seem strange to argue for the centrality of phenomenology to Arnason's thought. Yet, like Marcuse, Arnason's critical theory emerged from phenomenological Marxism (Arnason 1971), and the phenomenological problematic of the *world horizon* is the most central theoretical question of his intellectual trajectory (Adams 2011).

The world horizon is a technical term central to phenomenology. It differs from everyday understandings of the world as 'the natural world' or as the 'totality of all existing entities'. The notion of horizon forms part of a cluster of interrelated concepts, such as *lifeworld* and *being-in-the-world* (eg Husserl 1970, Heidegger 2001). As in its everyday usage, the world horizon – where the sea meets the sky – delimits what can appear in human experience. It is the background against which all phenomena appear to humankind as meaningful. It is often articulated in existential or intersubjective terms (eg Heidegger 2001, Gadamer 2008, Schütz 1967), but this does not capture the impersonal and collective dimension of society itself (the *anonymous collective*, to use Castoriadis's term for it). This is the dimension of institution and society as an *instituting institution*. Arnason articulates the world horizon as a trans-subjective (and trans-objective), meta-social context of meaning that society encounters and institutes (puts into meaning). In line with Merleau-Ponty, he considers the world a 'trans-subjective frame of reference rather than a mere substratum of projections [of consciousness, SA]' (Arnason 1993:92). This approach highlights his focus on the macro-societal dimension of analysis, which he understands as the interplay of culture and institution on an inter-civilizational scale.

Arnason's elucidation of the world problematic took a cultural hermeneutical turn in the 1980s, and marked a concomitant shift

from Marx to Weber (eg Arnason 1988). But, unlike Schützian phenomenology, Arnason was more interested in Weber's early theory of culture as the 'relation between man and world' (Arnason 1993) than the subjectively intended meaning of social action. He connected Weber's theory of culture to Merleau-Ponty's notion of *mise en forme du monde*, which Arnason has generally rendered as cultural *articulations of the world* (Arnason 1993, 2003). This is a central aspect of what he calls 'post-transcendental phenomenology' as a critique of the philosophy of consciousness (1993, 2003). In turn, Arnason linked his notion of cultural articulations of the world to a reconstructed version of Castoriadis's *social imaginary significations* as *interpretative patterns of cultural meaning* (Arnason 1989).

For Arnason, cultural articulations of the world form the background meaning and central shaping force of a particular society or civilization. Yet for Arnason, culture is irreducible to society (to the social – or, more particularly, the societal -- realm). Arnason understands culture to have a twofold relation: to society, and to the world as an overarching context (1988). In going beyond socio-centric approaches to culture, he brings in the phenomenological question of the world, and argues for the importance of 'the whole problematic of culture as a way of relating to, opening up and making sense of the world' (2003: 114). The twofold relation of cultural meaning to society and world also highlights

Arnason's distinctive approach to the hermeneutical aspect: 'It is the opening to and articulation of the world that adds a hermeneutical dimension to the constellations of meaning' (1993: 92).

On Arnason's account, overarching cultural meanings (social imaginaries) are further concretely articulated and instituted across three social spheres: the economic, the (more narrowly) cultural, and the political (Arnason 2003). Arnason's elaboration of culture directly links to theories of power, although this aspect is less developed in his thought. For him, social imaginaries, such as the characteristically modern significations of *autonomy* or *rational mastery*, must be understood as cultural projects of power. For example, the cultural meaning of autonomy has been concretely articulated and instituted as projects of democracy. Leaning on Elias, Arnason understands cultural projects of power as *trans-subjective configurations* rather than as overarching structures in relation to actions (Arnason 2003).

Because the world is an under-determined horizon of meaning, a plurality of cultural interpretations is possible. This results in a conflict of interpretations where different and competing images of worldhood – such as those offered by the cultural currents of Enlightenment and Romanticism, for example – are available and amenable to different cultural projects of power (Arnason 1986).

Arnason is particularly interested in the *civilizational* dimension of the human condition in the world. He analyzes the cultural articulation of the world within comparative and historical civilizational constellations. He characterizes the field of civilizational analysis itself as a variant of the strong program, but argues also that it goes beyond it in incorporating an approach to weak programs, as well (Arnason 2006). Unlike Eisenstadt's better known version of civilizational analysis, Arnason's understanding of culture is not to be understood as a *program*, but as an *under-determined problematic*. Its horizons are open, not closed. In characterizing the world as a *shared* horizon, Arnason paves the way for an intercultural (and inter-civilizational) version of cultural sociology.

In conclusion, Arnason's sociology can be understood as a variant of the strong program of cultural sociology; his civilizational focus enlarges the scope of cultural sociological analysis. Unlike Alexander, Arnason makes phenomenology central to his theorization of the autonomy of culture. Although he only occasionally draws on Hegelian terminology, his macro-sociology may be understood as a distinctive phenomenology of the Objective Spirit, reconfigured in trans-subjective and institutional terms, and his understanding of culture as an element of not only society but also the world opens onto the interplay of Objective and Absolute Spirit.

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<div align="right">*Suzi Adams*</div>

Theoretical Insight of the Bosnian Social Ontology

The social structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina is changing into something. It is nevertheless becoming more difficult to anticipate the direction of these transformations. Ever more clearly we can see that everyday life represents the flow of intentional acts with "the unintended consequences of actions" (Giddens, 2004,

342). Parsons speaks about the institutional patterns of social system. But at the same time Parsons emphasises that these paterns are not some rigid entities and that they certainly do not posses some mysterious 'substantial' nature (Parsons, 1958: 239). What kind of social ontology are we dealing with when we speak about the Bosnian society?

If we apply the Durkheimian concept of social facts to Bosnain experience then we see that the institutional dimension is produced by a political ontology that does not correspond with the social ontology. At least, in the sense that is possible to enable the institutional order to be historically and sociologically functional, efective and logical.

"This means that the political ontology of Bosnia and Herzegovina is formulated on tautologies and contradictions, on the opposition of 'absolutely true' (tautological, hyper-national) and 'absolutely untrue' (contradictory, anti-national) ideological concepts, rather than on *possible forms of existence* of a normal society compatible and convergent to the communities of nations united within the European frameworks of partnership and cooperation." (Ibrulj, 2008. In: *Pregled*, October 2008, 205).

In Bosnia and Herzegovina we are dealing with the problems of the social structure and the social actor; an actor, or an individual that this society's rules and functions do not configure as an autonomous individual. There

is a total absence of the citizen with the coexistence of political elites. It is a representation of the "paradigms of political pathology" (Fočo, 2005, 67). What this implies is that the transition - as a transformation of social structure - goes *beyond citizens* as a constitutive and immanent parts of the structure. More clearly, it means that individuals are unaware of changes, because these changes are the necessities and factual consequences of a political ontology that has no relations to inner social facts and social actions.

What is given as a goal of Durkheim's sociology, namely, the investigations of conditions for relations between individual personality and collective solidarity (Giddens, 1986) is a profound problem in the postcommunist period of former Yugoslavia. This is because there is no individuality, or individuality does not participate - in the form of a citizen - in the constitution of political, social, economical and cultural *togetherness*. That is, the individual is an atomical and introverted self, with no connections to those other individuals that do not belong to his or her national tribe-community. Daniele Conversi speaks about the regeneration of Medusa's heads starting from the 1990s, refering specially to the former Yugoslavia and the articulating of a negative patriotism as etatistic ideology. It is an ideological patriortism that leads to an elimination and deprivation of otherness, particulary ethnic otherness, and by the negation of the internal

pluralism that builds common culture and history in general (Conversi, 2007). In order to understand this phenomenon we need to understand the kind of nationalism that emerges in the Balkans. The idea of nation-building, through such techniques as communication, urbanisation, mass education and political participation as a conditions for nation-states, was bent and intentionally distorted in the process of "moving to East".

"Namely, although the idea of nation and nation-state as a civic state arrived in our region at the end of the 18th century...there were no conditions desired by that idea for its development and actualisation because there were no civic class, nor integral market nor any other capital conditions which was crucial for the constitution of that states in Europe...nation is here identified with religion...so the state emerged not as a tyrant toward feudalism structures, but toward the peoples who were other nations or religions." (Filipović, 2003, 185).

Naturally, the social system is not a system of privation of religion or ethnicity, but what we need is a "common premise" that ties all differences within a framework suitable for the fulfilment of collective and individual goals and intentions. This is so because all personal and collective identities (and their significant elements such as religion, customs, believes, myths, etc.) as parts of a social system are in process of *inter-constitution* and *intra-constitution* and that *never-finished-process* is

based upon common social, cultural and historical background (that is, in common Bosnian history that is multilateral, multireligious and interwined with different personal and collective experiences that constitutes common "Bosnian spirit"). *Intra-constitution* enables religious self (in this sense this is a self that is constructed as the ethnic or national self by the political ontology of nationalists movements where Orthodox peoples became Serbs or Catholic peoples becames Croats) to intensify his or her connections to the community that he/she belongs, while the *inter-constitution* enables him/her to intensify the connections with another self or another community on the level of common social system. The inter-constitution and intra-constitution processes are different from those of *ethno-reductionism*. *Ethno-reductionism* is a type of essentialism and parochialism that tends to express all complexity and plurality of the multidimensionally structurated world only through the sense of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Taking this as a core for the constitution of every possible social phenomena, social processes and social relations. Ethno-reductionism is essentialism because it acts as some supra-generic universality from which every kind of identity can be derived, or revesely, can be reduced to. In a Durkheimian sense, to investigate this *social fact* is to investigate the ethnicity that configures every expression of individual consciousness by collective (namely religious/ethnic) consciousness, or in the

Weberian sense, to investigate *social action* is to investigate ethnicity as a dynamic force and vivid energy that - as essentialism - reveals its potentiality on all levels of the social world and thus affirms its permanent actuality and universal applicability. In the sense of mehanical solidarity, ethno-reductionism is a collective consciousness with intensive and and all-embracing religious, mythical and folklorical articulations. On the other side, there is organic solidarity without individuality. Instead, we are actually dealing with a "false-consciousness" that superficially represents an individuality with a strong conception of self-awareness and concsiousness. The result is obvious. We have neither a strong collective consciousness in the form of a state, nor have we the presence of autonomous individuality. Bosnia is not a case of mehanical solidarity because there is a clear absence of mutual and collective-national and civic representation in the state and at the same time there is a clear presence of collective-ethnical representation in a sense of mythical or ideological infinity. Bosnia is not a case of organic solidarity because there is no (or not enough) individualities capable of reflecting about ethnic or religious identity as a sequence of identity and as something that is not sufficient to fulfill all potentiality of a human being. This implies the necessity for the "comparative intentionality" (Ibrulj, 2008) instead of self-sufficient national or personal identity that has no intentions to Otherness.

Ethnic self (or ethnic/religious consciousness) as a part of ethno-reductionism is a self made out of special structure. Like all other selves that are self-sufficient and significant (destiny, or some supra-sensitive being, is what makes these selves so significant), ethnic self is also composed of something special, mysteriously unexplainable, and that defies rational explanation. This special material is invisible and unrepresentable but it represents and makes visible aspects of this self and his/her (in this particular case) ethnic community - altogether with their values, myths, symbols and all other characteristics that makes them so different from other identities and communities. Žižek in his further explications reveals this special structure that enables communists to live beyond everyday circle of common life fulfilled with ordinary human weakenesses and pasions.

"As they are on some way ʽa living dead mens', still alive, but already exculted from the ordinary circulation of natural forces—which means, like they are having beyond their commom physical body some another, sublime body." (Žižek, 2002, 199).

Community with its members based on ethno-reductionism (the ethno/religious "They-Self" in Heideggerian sense) is not by its implications capable of constituting civil society and the state of mutual acceptance and recognition of individual and collective distinctiveness. Instead of ego-centrism on personal level (or ethno-reductionism on

collective political levels) we need to accept the process of interpersonal community as a community with different (personal, ethnic and national) selves and Otherness in general. This is a crucial moment of the moving from monadical/ethnical egoism to connectionism between all members of society.

In Bosnia the process of inter-personal community is in most cases reduced to communication between the personalities of sameness. This means that the otherness is totally driven out and ignored - if we speaks of othernes in terms of persons that are not the members of my own religious, ethnic, political or ideological community. There is a perverted image of civil society, in which I and my identity is not oriented toward my neighbor (who is not a member of my religous and ethnic community) but is yet a member of the same land or society, or the state to which I also belong. Instead, I am orientated toward some identities who *are not here next to me*, who are not sharing my street, my building, my school activity, my company activity, and who is not the member of my society and the state at all. Paradoxically, the one who is next to me is in another state, community, history, culture, language, etc. (This is the case where a large part of the Bosnians don't communicate with one another, but instead with [ideologically, mentally, politically, psychologically] the persons who are the citizens of neighboring countries). If the primary goal of collective consciousness (Durkheim) is morality as solidarity then we

need to establish or to invoke the necessity of *trust* within the phenomenology of Bosnian intersubjectivity, to use Husserlian words. Can we establish trust among the peoples (and their collectivities) of Bosnia and Herzegovina and what are the conditions for this? How can we restore it and can it be restored? (Vlaisavljević, 2006, 234). The constitution of society with a political ontology that does not wish to correspond to the social ontology of that society is an impossible and nonfunctional project. The question remains does this political ontology-social ontology correspondence *wish to be achieved* or instead will we witnesses the disolution of this specific model and its "decomposition into nation-states" (Ibid., 262). That is, the final sociocide (Keith Doubt) of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an multilaterally distinctive entity within the history of European societies.

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Vedad Muharemovic

Approaching Critical Theory, Adorno and Sociology: Autonomy and Interdisciplinarity

After returning from exile in the USA, the work of Theodor W. Adorno, although initially organized from a philosophical point of view, gravitated around sociological arguments. Adorno played an important role in assessing the possibilities and contributions that could be offered by sociological thinking. Nevertheless, the relevance of interdisciplinarity was always present in his thinking. It is a topic that allows one to observe certain fundamental traits of his critical theory. Given the limited space at my disposal, I shall focus especially on how Adorno's discussion of sociology, particularly in the lecture "Introduction to Sociology" held in the winter-semester 1967/1968, may contribute to narrowing down some of the specificities of the problem of limited autonomy from an epistemological point of

view and the way in which he understands the influence between different disciplines.

Adorno's specific outline of a critical theory of society has been presented in different texts and it is certainly one tributary – among others – of those views brought forward by Max Horkheimer in his now seminal essay "Traditional and Critical Theory", published in 1937. It is therefore necessary to briefly recall to what extent the dialogue between different scientific disciplines inside the so-called *humanities* (e. g.: history, philosophy, economics, law, sociology) is fundamental for their thoughts. At the same time, my analysis considers the importance of preserving certain theoretical or epistemological frontiers between these disciplines.

This is vital in so far as it puts the problem of autonomy and interdisciplinarity – even if not formulated with this emphasis – as a central point of the debate. After all, one has to consider the ways in which it is possible to rely on these distinctive methodological or theoretical viewpoints, while sustaining another standpoint. And among the central preoccupations here, as I understand it, one has to put the relation between theoretical formulations and empirical research. Although theoretical thoughts always constituted the centerpiece of the Frankfurt School, during the decades they undertook empirical research on different topics and mobilized these approaches to organize their research.

In the case of Adorno, in the lecture just referred to, he discusses the different conceptions of sociology inside this specialty. He tries to assess the way in which certain epistemological concepts of philosophical thinking should or should not be incorporated into this perspective(s). Discussing those different methodological views that frequently sustain this discipline he tells us:

"*I would say that the choice between those poles, that I indicated as a model for the aporetic character of multiple investigations, that what one has to do is to weigh those moments, in a way that the theoretical moments also enter the thought about the relation of individual and society; in which – if you accept it – in opposition to the sociological opinion or, rather, technique that predominates today, I think more sociologically radical, as I observe innumerable facts, that empirical sociology merely attributes to individuals and generalizes them in the sense of an attribution to a statistical universe, I see them beforehand as social, through which the apparently particular receives a much more general importance then is the case after a first, naive view*" (Adorno, 1993, p. 129).

Such a relation would allow for a first delineation of the problem of how to mediate between the particular and the general inside sociology. This is important since it addresses one of the main problems in the humanities and, taking into account the efforts by Émile

Durkheim to understand how social cohesion can be generated and reproduced, has this relationship of individual and social (or society) as a centerpiece of his positivist understanding. Adorno asked himself if a Durkheimian concept would not still be faced with the problem or limits of reification, since a Durkheimian would be able to consider this social existence, what he called a *sui generis* existence, as something independent from the individuals. And therefore not giving enough attention or relevance to the relationship or the mutual conditionality or intertwinement of individual and society, but separates both instances in a rather artificial/idealized manner - an alternative that would not be accepted inside critical theory because of it being deemed as overly simplifying the concrete foundation of society.

Adorno, for his part, outlines the basic question – in a very simplified manner, partly because of the context of a lecture – in the following manner: "*If you ask me what sociology should be, I would say that it must be insight* [Einsicht] *into society, into the essential of society* [...]" (Adorno, 1993, p. 31). This kind of *insight*, at least in Adorno's thought, shares a significant content with German philosophy, as far as it presents the importance of *interpreting* social reality, considering precisely those various intertwinements of general and particular.

And such a problematisation should be oriented by the general trend he observed

among scientific thought: a rising necessity of *formalization* (cf. Adorno, 1993, especially p. 111). This is a way in which most of the importance of sticking to certain influences of a less-formalized mode of thought, as it has been historically presented inside general philosophy (that is, excluding logic and philosophy of science), should still permeate sociology. This evidently is not the same as refusing to recognize the contributions offered by the use of mathematics or statistics, but rather being able to discern those factors that have to be incorporated with restrictions or even refused.

Reflecting on the relationship of so called "sciences of the spirit" (*Geisteswissenschaften*), a definition similar to the *humanities* that predominated in Germany prior to further specialization into philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology and so on, and "formation", as the translation of the German concept of *Bildung*, Adorno (Adorno, 2003) does not simply oppose philosophy to the sciences in the sense they acquired during developments of the 20th century, but rather expresses his consideration about the ongoing and apparently unstoppable "*scientification*" that affects all disciplines equally. Once more it is vital to distinguish between this phenomenon and a general and naive condemnation of a kind of scientific thinking in general. What the author is concerned with is that such a process might be able to loosen the dialectic (and therefore: *critical*) vein historically underlying the project of a non-

positivist sociology and consequently approximate different kinds of thinking and *disfigure* their reach and incisiveness to *reflect* upon social transformation and reality.

A similar idea was presented by Ricardo Musse in his article on Adorno (Musse, 2009), but focused on the philosophical content, without establishing a link to his production in sociology. My effort here is to show that while formulating his critical theory, Adorno also establishes some orientation and/or suggestions about the intellectual praxis of sociology, attributing it some autonomy - that is, certain distance from philosophy because of the centrality of empirical research - while at the same time still grasping the relevance of interpretation (*Deutung*) to (critical) sociology. Musse also points to the relevance of *speculative thinking*, inherited from German idealism but reinterpreted in the critical thinking of Adorno to bestow a reflexive stance upon sociology.

Wolfgang Leo Maar (2002, pp. 95 f.) pointed out a similar emphasis on *conceptual* and *interpretive* dialectics. While his focus is more a longitudinal approach, trying to assess how this view is – again, under philosophical assumptions – present throughout the work of Adorno, and pulling towards the importance of the concept of *culture* inside his social theory, I refer to him here because the same distancing from (German) idealism is conveyed by his comment, thus showing that this represents a significant rupture. At the same time, Maar develops his argument, and in the final passage of his text states: "*To Adorno, the 'spirit' (Geist) links itself not to merely reproductive social work, but also to its creative form: 'intellectual' work (geistige Arbeit)*" (Maar, 2002, p. 104). Therefore, once again we are confronted with the suitability of maintaining the spirit (*Geist*) of that specific thought-concept as a keystone for either philosophy or sociology.

To restore the problem of autonomy, it should be sufficient to recall how the presupposition of *critical theory of society* is to act as a perspective for different disciplines and represent an effort to orient them *without detachment* or unawareness regarding certain methodological assumptions that constitute these different disciplines. Consequently, one should under no circumstance equate a prospective 'Adornian' social theory with the questioning of the necessity of these distinct and more or less established scientific disciplines, but rather understand the specific proposal as providing an orientation or qualification for intellectual work.

Directing myself to a few conclusive remarks, it seems important to hint at the concept that Alex Demirovic proposes to understand Adorno's work: *conceptual constellations*, elevating it to a centerpiece of this theory (DEMIROVIĆ, 2004). Although it would require a whole new presentation to discuss this in detail, it suffices to point out how such an idea is relevant to considering the

preeminence of *concepts* and how these should or could be appropriated by distinct disciplines, preserving their traits and accordingly not questioning the existence of these divisions while, nevertheless, assuring a platform for a dialogue that should improve critical interpretations.

In a nutshell, combining a certain level of resistance (*Widerstand*) to excessive and foremost irreflexive formalization of science with the cornerstone of insight (*Einsicht*), a theory – notably a social theory – that guides itself by the pertinence of a critical overview of society must be fostered that considers the antagonisms underlying present society, being This specific compromise something equally valid when Adorno wrote as well as nowadays. Hence, while certain and limited aspects of such a theorizing might need further problematisation after fifty years of sociological achievements, *mutatis mutandis* to the particular relationship of autonomy and interdisciplinarity displayed by Adorno's perspective, a broad concept of *constellations* should still be able to anchor sociology and might be seen as an important contribution to nurture contemporary sociology.

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