

Two cultures and the real thing

The 80's developed the Sociology of the body and the Sociology of emotions. Both thematized "embodiment". That means that both kinds of research understand that traditional specialized social theories are not useful to understand body or emotion, as study objects. Never the less, any of the two approaches had been able to produce the theoretical turn needed to understand what "embodiment" really means to actual sociology frontiers.

My proposal is to consider a review of classic sociological intuitions about embodiment (revolutionary spirit into proletariat people, spirit of capitalism into bourgeoisie people, social conscientiousness into anomic modern people) in order to understand how to resume these abandoned theoretical research lines, taking in account the very new understanding of cerebral neurobiology of emotions and feelings, personal and social.

António Pedro Dores, CIES-ISCTE
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For social theory, mind and body are two concepts referring to the same object: the human being and one finds separate sociological approaches to mind and body. This is also the case with new specialized sociologies of the emotions and of bodies, even if their central concept is the same: embodiment. Why does it happen like that? Can we theoretically join what is in symbiosis in the real world?

Social lives through social levels and social dimensions

Sociological cultures and theories display new meanings for social uses supported by much older cognitive infra-structures, such as common languages and scientific languages used by scientific subjects, some of which are “natural” and others “social”. Western civilization has split apart spiritual institutions from political and state institutions – the secularization process. This means that people, both the mass and the elite, have learned to think of the material world and the spiritual world as two separate worlds. Snow’s (1956) famous “two cultures” remains to better understand how it is that people feel that a writer’s profile is not compatible in the same personality with the profile of a scientist. Why do we feel that an engineer should not be a poet, and vice-versa? Why do we continue believing in the innate or illuminating characteristics of each human personality, excluding other types of opposite characteristics, as a chosen and immutable divine or social trace, as if each professional family should, by nature, have its reserved field of specialized intervention,¹ instead of a multiple embodied package of dispositions for each person, to be chosen both by each one and by opportunities available within society? Isn’t this latter theory more modern?

Antonio Damásio (1999, 2003, 2004) shows us how one can better understand how the human brain works, if one accepts and develops the theoretical idea of the symbiosis of emotions and feelings, behaviour and action, both psychological and social. In order to do that, the author has understood that he has to overcome the “two cultures” thinking in the neurobiology field. Doing so, he became certain of the importance of his approach, because the outcome of his new understanding of neurobiological brain processes has been recognized as inspiring by his scientific peers and by a broader interested public worldwide. The author explicitly asks for new developments in the same direction by hard and soft multidisciplinary scientific approaches. This is the direction of the present work on social science theory.²

Essentially, Damásio conceives feelings as a body spending time reflecting about real time mind-body emotions. Emotions are very fast reactions to potential threats (or relaxation confidence about the lack of threats). Emotions are genetically programmed bodily states of action or incorporated by learning. They are potentials that actually manifest according to the environmental conditions and each person’s life experiences. Even if the human’s five senses have no time to be aware of these same threats (or if it is apparent that a threat situation is actually happening), our human body-mind is automatically able to respond to them before one can be reflexively aware of them.

¹ Bell (1976) mentions how the conciliation of modern artists with industrial aesthetics, has been a mainstream structural and cultural process during the XXth century.

² To read other comments on this, see Dores (2005a).

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How this works is based on a complex nervous virtual control panel, developed by each human being along his/her life, which is able, under certain circumstances, to mobilize the whole being by emotional actions and reactions all over the body, including some trained reflexivity capacities.³ Feelings are not as fast as emotions. They are more complex (re)actions to the state of the whole body (including emotions, other feelings and other “spiritual” phenomena) and to the total inside/outside situation. Feelings can free and reinforce emotionally induced behaviours or manage and control them, depending on the will and the ability of each one, and depending on previous training and education to evaluate the complete actual situation to decide just-in-time.

We experience different neurobiological reality levels (at a more profound and immediate emotional level and a more reflexive and time consuming feeling and more strategic and active decision making level) at the same time. These levels differentiate themselves from each other by different timings and different needs for perseverance.

Table 1. Differentiated social levels

	Less perseverance	More perseverance
Short timing	Innate emotional level	Feelings level
Long timing	Educated emotional level (incorporated results of socialization processes)	Strategic decision level

These social levels are different whenever reality dimensions make them different, such as family, professional or organizational dimensions. The latter dimension is known to be more reflexive and the first dimension to be more emotional. This is a consequence of the “two cultures” ideology. In the real world, as psychologists like to point out, family building is a tough reflexive task and to work for a corporation is a highly emotional adventure. Any of these dimensions includes a specific social configuration that links all social levels and all cooperating persons together in a certain specific, empirical, complex, way.

Each syncretic culture – produced by the dialectic relations between social dimensions, its members and intermediate social apparatus, through all levels of reality – has contrasted with other cultures through common sense images, through self images, through typical (un)disciplinary behaviour, through appearances, ideas and social status, and through political functionality. Cultures can express special emotions and feelings from and to human beings, through the special social configurations they are able to perform.

The “two cultures” notion refers to the common use of polarization as a process of understanding, reducing the real complexity to some more cognitively manageable simple images. A culture turns a wired entity between two poles, and each human being is invited to join one pole better than another: religious people against materialist people, literary people against scientific people, rich people against poor people and so on. This analytical reduction is also a depth and wide emotional differentiation process through social dimensions. Namely, it refers to the different relationship of cultural producers with scarce resources to develop their own works. It also refers to the way that specialized socialization within school, professional, family and political environments can produce social feelings of repugnance or distinction in the presence of certain kinds of socially projected activity, regarding the referential social dimension. It

³ Wacquant (2004) describe the way fighting sportsmen through training develop new embodied emotions.

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concerns horizontal inequalities (at emotional, feelings and decision making levels) between differentially educated people and enjoins us to reconcile them, as Damásio has shown it would be scientifically productive to do so.

The sociological question is: is sociology prepared to join Damásio's scientific path in the 21st century? The author of this paper would like to contribute towards an affirmative answer. Anyhow, the real answer to the question depends not only on society, but also on sociologists. That is why this paper proposes to present an innovative sociological theoretical approach which it calls state-of-spirit.⁴

Modern social states-of-spirit: time, brains and social life

Bottom-up very fast emotions can break the quietness of regular and normal feeding of the individual mental neurobiological control panel, disturbing the well being of a person. That is why each person has to learn how to deal with his/her own emotions, eventually trying to transform their social output, namely when it is shameful or socially inconvenient in any way. Feelings are the way the nervous system and each person can react, top-down, to emotions - be it by denying them, by developing them or by changing them. Feelings are most of the time organized by strategic long term decisions about social alliances, priority social goals, self image, etc.

Using these neurobiological interactive individual mechanisms, top-down "social emotions" can help to express or to repress personal emotions, feelings and decisions. That is the way people can be educated and trained. Each mechanism contributes, in some way, to closing each one of the social levels and social dimensions over itself,⁵ using different time-space scales, while it stays linked and dependent on other mechanisms through individually active people, who have to play different social parts. Tuning refers to Damásio's nervous control panel assemblage work, as the regent of an orchestra trying to organize the sound which is outputted by feeling the good feelings of sound. According to Durkheim's theory of the division of labour, an organic solidarity like this does liberate modern people (and society), leaving them to concentrate on freedom and individual/communitarian will.⁶ That means that in modern times the needs of reflexivity procedures grow in the daily existence of people, who have to feel how to behave in each different and new social situation.

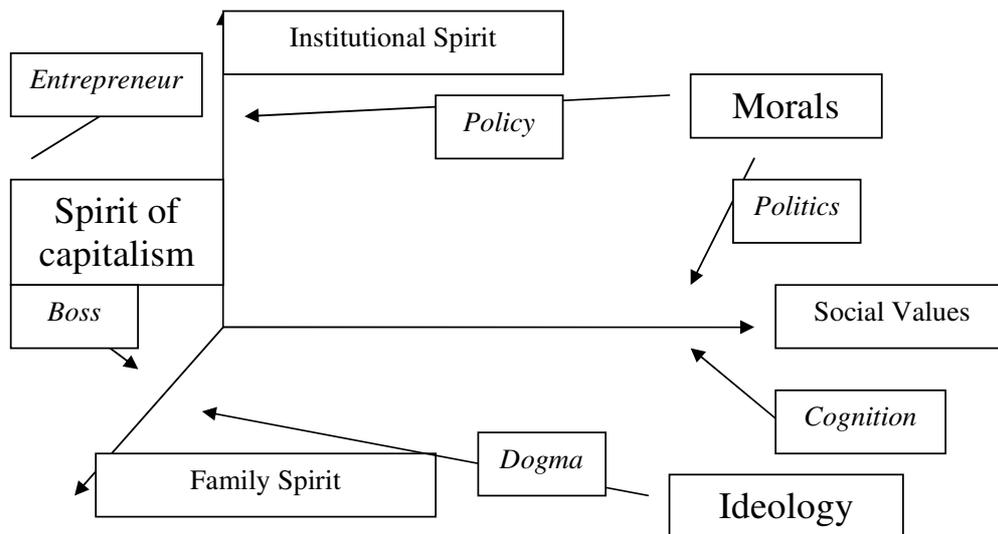
Fig -1. – Modern Differentiation: social state-of-spirit produced by modernity⁷

⁴ Embodiment is the tuning work of body, mind and social and natural environments, through socialization including training, education and the building of personality, throughout a lifetime and not just during the first years of life. State-of-spirit is the product of successfully achieved embodiment. It is a body-mind configuration stable enough to be parameterized by social scientists.

⁵ One refers to the emotional level, the feelings level and the higher social emotional level.

⁶ Modern societies spend a lot of resources on health care to liberate people from the natural cycle of life, reasoning that if one is ill s/he cannot concentrate his/her will on labour cooperation. This constitutes a major difference between Eastern and Western civilization in this matter and can be measured by social dumping practices in the markets.

⁷ In the bibliography one can find a few of the main texts formulating the author's theory of state-of-spirit.



The origin of the axis represents the faster reality levels. The outside pointed to by the arrows represent lower frequencies, more strategic phenomena - for instance, each one of us spends a lot of time in life developing a professional profile: first at home, after that at school, finally in the work place. Each strategic step towards our goal has its own social timing, depending on family, professional and market rhythms. That is why one considers, for the purposes of social analysis, institutions at an intermediate level, between social emotions and feelings (at the origins of the axis) and social strategic will (at the arrows). That is why one conceives institutions, at the same time, as open to innovation - even bottom-up innovation from social movements in democratic societies, for instance - and as vehicle of top-down power enforcement. Institutions are sites for political bargains and social tuning about relevant social issues spread throughout society.

Institutions, through bureaucracy, help to crystallize habitual, legitimated, cultural, educated social and organizational practices. They become systems for social and emotional stabilization, producing social feelings of safety. They prevail to reflexivity or will in the public and social spheres, unless a sufficient quantity of social reflexivity and will are invested in reforming the whole package of quotidian and institutionalized practices.

Personal, institutional and strategic levels of decision-making refer to different timings, even if for practical and historical purposes it is an empirical problem to decide what from each level is the more influential and relevant.⁸ In the real world, societal dimensions, social levels, singular people, societies and humanity all work together, even if in a specific way, and change in a somewhat autonomous way.

Modernization of society refers to human densification processes around towns and the subsequent development of new institutionalized social levels: the market level, the national state level, the international level and the global level. Modernization redefines

⁸ The deterministic approaches overestimate the power of institutional decisions, as if quotidian lives have no way of escaping the leader's theoretical declarations. Socio-cultural analyses which do not consider decision-making processes fail to consider their historical importance.

social inequality, social values and social practical and empirical dimensions. To chart all these variables has been a geographical and sociological task. To display the changing effects of adopting modern values as personal, institutional and civilization wills too, is a historical and sociological task. To evaluate the opportunity and the possibility of accelerating, moderating or turning back the processes of modernization is a political and sociological task. To show the social anatomy, to reflect and feel social will and to tune all information into a whole is once again one of the tasks of sociology. As I will argue later, in the process of carrying sociology after the Second World War, the “spiritual” parts of the original sociological program had been forgotten. In order to stress physical-positive cartography, mainstream sociological theory left to one side “violence”,⁹ “spirit”, Freudian or Foucaultian studies of embodied or institutionalised abnormalities, for instance. These are legitimate marginal sociological subjects of study but they are not permanent social features to be included in any complete social study. As if they were not always present as main questions when studying social structures and social reforms. These absences can be joined with the difficulty of conceiving explainable links between micro social (monographies) and macro social levels (historical events).

We learn to think of social change effects induced by modern values as either anatomies of social bodies or as cyclical, logical and coherent culture dynamics; as death bodies or living souls. Not as clusters of states-of-spirit. Not as complex syncretic clusters historically and socially embodied. Memories, habits, social networks, institutions, neurobiological mechanisms, and so on have their social potential due to social history and actual social embodiment processes. These processes are produced at an individual level on a daily basis, as a quotidian need, under social supervision. Coercion in Durkheim’s language.

We learn to give prevalence to mechanical feeding of the modern growing social body as if it exists as a macro organism body, and the suffering of cultural anomies that should be treated in order to avoid stopping the (mainly economic) growing/modernization process. That is why it is not easy to conceive of the hypothesis that at any moment, any social *habitus* can be shifted into another reproductive way of living, as happens when a revolution takes place, or when a dramatic change overcomes a locked social situation. This would be to anticipate a kind of social transmutation that one can never really observe in the natural sciences, even we know evolutionary sequences as its practical results.

Nevertheless, whenever a new social situation arises, even it does not show any kind of radical turn, it is not uncommon for societies, institutions and individuals to find themselves with new strengths, competences, energies (or weakness, inaptitude and sickness) they would not have anticipated. Crystallized social states-of-spirit need strong maintenance systems (quotidian comfort, institutional frames, legitimate leadership) because they are extremely sensitive. Changes can occur without warning, all of them looking forward for more balanced tunings between physical and spiritual social constraints, given different (antagonistic or allied) moral directions, most of the time presented, in modern times and for practical purposes, as dualistic political and social mechanical choices. This explains the popularity of polarization knowledge in modern times. As modernity is changing and challenging, polarization helps social entities to stabilize around one pole and, so, economize wild reflexive efforts without boundaries. This can explain the modern need to develop social science knowledge, and literature: they enable modern societies to explore non-polar reflexivity without risking

⁹ Cf. Giddens (1985) refers to the lack of a structural social dimension for violence within sociological theory and practice. The same problem is mentioned by Bauman (1989) and Joas (2005).

anomic consequences due to the leisure like status of this kind of exercise. It can explain, as well, the reductionist scientific trend in social theory, in order to become more “practical” and valued. That is why some sociologists choose to work on social cohesion and others on social reform, as if their choices were ideologically incompatible.

One of the more evident consequences of this state of affairs in social theory is shown by the concept of time. It is a neutralised positive feature, as a measurement reference for social historical interdisciplinary work, instead of a problematic and changing conceptual and practical rhythmic apparatus to gather people around or against (in or out) institutions and social movements. Time systems help and enforce social tunings and social differentiation at the different social levels.¹⁰ Time affects all of the rhythm of society. It accelerates life itself. Other social systems such as law systems or information systems, for instance, do the same with their own social instrumental apparatus and fields of influence. They make justice and knowledge happen as socially available products, instead of wisdom as a singular phenomenon and how justice and knowledge used to be in the pre-modern era. That is why even people who do not use judicial services or media services cannot avoid being affected by the social tuning rhythms imposed by them.

Figure 1’s social value, family spirit, institutional spirit factors represent modern social cohesion/transformation and historically differentiated and highly elaborated and persistent social emotional, feelings and decision making fields in the process of becoming different. Social fields are to some extent becoming empirically and theoretically different. Not necessarily more modern. Modernity refers to a by no means uncontroversial way of understanding the present social world and its social inhabitants. The three factors proposition of Figure 1 emphasise the autonomy of up and down processing in each differentiated field and the confrontation and cooperation between each other (as a tuned state-of-spirit configuration in process). The empirical state-of-spirit becomes a structural social dimension, such as markets, politics, sciences, arts, religions, demographics, ecological situations, security situations and so on.

One can suppose that people live without having the opportunity and/or ability to experiment with all kind of social feelings. Many social feelings only emerge on special social occasions and within social frames, such as the modern spirit or renaissance spirit or scientific spirit. Other kinds of spirit are known to be appropriate to the same kind of social conditions: children, older people, the demented, are less available for social participation and the incorporation of high social values in a self-controlled manner. They develop a specific state-of-spirit of their own. The more elaborate feelings are, the harder it is for these to be felt under a fixed form, even after specific training and/or with a strong will. They can be appreciated and diffused by all corners of society as values, as gadgets, but rarely really felt as one’s own feeling. Social symbols are needed to express to each human being the kind of experience one is supposed to live and share.¹¹ Social symbols help to build top-down social natures and social cohesion, as a desired and happy constraint to reflexive modern individuals, as shown by Durkheim. It is a strategic task for top institutional management to develop social power signs (and cultures).¹² The status of management and of institutions, as part of the dominant class, depends on the social return of their power displays in comforting subordinate people.

¹⁰ Regarding the sociogenesis of time and the concept of time, see Elias (1998).

¹¹ There is open ground for symbolic violence and symbolic manipulation.

¹² Casanova’s (2003) study shows that the reference to main modern values, such as equality and freedom, is more determinant in differentiating social orientation than common structural sociological variables.

A single institution can survive within a system of institutions, even its social functionality is not strong enough, depending on the complete social configuration and depending on dominant personalities, sympathies, or wills. It survives when it produces a strong enough social return, as a whole. It can also survive when people hope that it sooner or later can return valuable social values, in the future, which are better than otherwise. At any rate, there is always an "enjeux", there is always a moral and wilful struggle to support any institution and all institutions.¹³

Common sense can repeatedly be heard arguing that present society lacks social values, a family spirit or an institutional spirit. This means that people feel that social energy flow – to use alternative Chinese medicine notions – is not as fluid as they desire. The micro-macro, in-out, top-down social exchanges are unbalanced, not only because they are changing (they change all the time) but because they lack sense (modern - traditional, narcissistic – communitarian, rational – institutional, whatever) to the people who express themselves this way. In this kind of situation what is needed is that local institutional problems can be solved locally, instead of joining the chronic upper level social problems already existent. At the same time, the weakness of the whole system provides more opportunities for the development of local institutional problems as social problems. One can call this kind of configuration locked situations: society needs more social energies to overcome them than which can be mobilized at a quotidian level, as is the case of vicious circles. This is the principle of civic participation or, as Durkheim would say, positive problem solving.

At the exclusive society level,¹⁴ when a social non-solidarity turn of mood has overturned our lives, all over the world, and when the stability of Welfare State institutions are questioned from within their own tops, one can say there is a social value problem.¹⁵ Which means that people are not feeling well and not able to tune each other out strongly enough to make sense of the situation or to turn around the present balance within the social mood.¹⁶ Be that as it may, one should not forget what Young (1999) has called our attention to, that the building of the Welfare State was not consensual - on the contrary. The cycle of the inclusive society, from 1945 until the end of the sixties, was not idyllic, even for those easily touched by romantic feelings. One should remember the 1968 youth revolutions in many western countries and the social causes and the fighting mood that prevailed at the time.

Figure 1 represents the modern social differentiation produced by individuation, new family experiences and state and institutional (re)building and uses, including new social movement quests.

Each one of the axes separates separate differentiation paths that come together around specific social and historical empirical configurations. For instance, the growing frequency of the single household is morally negatively correlated with growing loneliness and depression diseases, economically, positively correlated with medical and drug markets and, ambiguously, socially correlated with work flexibility policies and professional specialization. The divorce phenomena, the demographic downturn, the hedonistic cultural change, the social recognition of gay and lesbian couples, the conservative push for defensive isolationistic values, the global market, its governance

¹³ Think about the actual resistance of Welfare State institutions and the faced with the neo-liberal revolution.

¹⁴ Cf. Young (1999).

¹⁵ Cf. Castel (1998).

¹⁶ The World Social Forum is a reference to people who feel that "another world is possible". It shows the importance of social tuning over and/or aside rational strategic social intervention.

and the way to produce new institutions without social war or, as North American voters argue, by exporting war. Capitalist interest, specialized education and privacy are new social rights in a split active-non active society of exclusion. They are all social empirical phenomena to be included in the same analytical and holistic sociological framework, in order to characterize the current social situation. One can easily identify links between personal isolation, fear and social war mood, and institutional stimuli to support or fight such feelings. For analytical purposes one should identify the way the different social dimensions close or open themselves to each other and stabilize, for a time, at an empirically recognisable social configuration.

The three axes represent lasting differentiation processes that occur and are continuing to occur in modern civilization. One does not claim all meaningful social processes are represented here but one can propose a theoretical framework to characterize, in a scientific way, a state-of-spirit point of view.

Classical sociology: modern differentiation processes under analysis

As Weber remarks, to separate family relations from professional and economic relations and accounts is one of the characteristics of modernization processes. The modern family type, in the real world, is one of two kinds: the bourgeois nuclear family and the salaried nuclear family. In Figure 1, the bourgeois family concept depends more on the relationship between “institutional spirit” (socialist or capitalist, for instance) and “family spirit” (the kind of authority which is socially accepted between husband, wife, children and the rest of the family). The salaried family concept would be better analysed through the kind of relationships between “family spirit” and “social values” (commonly accepted and/or stimulated practices of free initiative and solidarity, for instance).

The analysis of different historical stages¹⁷ would reflect corporate changes introduced by stock markets, separating capitalist families from managers and entrepreneur families. The network capitalist organization,¹⁸ also has to have profound social consequences, namely separating affluent families from excluded families in an exclusive society.

This kind of analytical approach crosses the boundaries of Weber’s more acknowledge social dimensions (politics, status and market economy), but it is compatible with the “spirit of capitalism” underdeveloped approach of Weber. One can say Weber’s sociological inspiration has been mainly developed by mainstream social theory in a deductive and non-historical way. The *inductive phenomena*,¹⁹ described by the notion of spirit-of-capitalism, had passed mainly unnoticed.²⁰

Durkheimian analysis of modernity focuses on the *inductive holistic* integration process of each individual into a social labour division morally preconceived as more productive and freer than the old communitarian living together. To do so, the main reference was that of the modern collective consciousness becoming institutionalized as an “institutional spirit”, which had to be embodied top-down by individuals, the faster and deeper, the better. The social mission of sociology should be to show and to teach

¹⁷ See Boltansky and Chiapello (1999) for an analysis of the post-modern spirit of capitalism.

¹⁸ Cf. Reich (1991), Castels (2004).

¹⁹ Once the “state-of-spirit”, the spirit-of-capitalism, can be experienced out of its historical context, it can become socially evident. What is more, once it is experienced, it can be diffused and used by people, institutions, societies, communities, and so on. Sociology can discover and classify the known state-of-spirit and, in doing so, it can even try to understand the scope of the state-of-spirit available to human kind.

²⁰ See my comments on the concept of time and historical sociology.

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human kind the secrets of social morals, that is, the social type of modern solidarity: the complex laws of organic solidarity. Sociology can have a preventive effect on avoidable social anomie and, at the same time, promoting a higher probability for individual happiness and *tuning institutionalized social sub-systems*.²¹

Marx separates social and historical infrastructures, as an everyday struggle for resources and wealth, and ideological institutionalised superstructures, created by the bourgeoisie through the state building process to cover exploitation and social inequality, in contradiction to Republican and revolutionary promises which comes with a liberal understanding of modern Law. Figure 1 suggests that the individuation process has been possible because modern society has split the pre-modern social cooperative dimension. At the factory workplace, the new social relations are individual and socially reproduced at the family level, as *the* complex modern problem of social exploitation.²² Each individual can be socially supported by his/her citizen's rights, shared in society and common to everybody else,²³ even if, as Daniel Bureaux (1977) calls our attention to, very different social treatments and considerations refer to different kind of families, even when the bourgeois way of life was being lived by the working class in the central capitalist countries.

The spirit of capitalism, anomie and social morals, class consciousness as common sense and as revolutionary disposition, are all well known classic sociological subjects. Nevertheless, out of Hobsbawn's Revolution Era when they were born, they have been adopted better as innocuous sociological traditions, than concepts to become integrated within mainstream social theory. The normalization of the sociological approaches to these subjects, as scholarly matters for sociology students and as professional tools, in the second half of the 20th century, has been achieved.

In present times one can empirically and historically find somewhat of a revival of some 19th century quests.²⁴ The Cold War reinforcement of social theoretical polarization is over. For instance, sociological structural versus agency analysis split, sociological cohesion versus transformation analysis split, sociological institutional versus social movement analysis split, sociological behaviour or action versus mind or super mind analysis²⁵ split, all need new assessments, through taking the new social situations into account.

By the 1980's, two new sociological sub-disciplines had been born at the same time and discuss the same concept – embodiment – conceiving themselves apart from each other: the sociology of the body and the sociology of emotions. In this new polarization, however, both poles agree on dissolving the mind-body theoretical and analytical bias. In order to do justice to these double desiderata, one can expect both sub-disciplines to join efforts to achieve this. The proposal presented here, using a state-of-spirit approach, suggests a discussion on classic sociological inspirations,²⁶ taking into account the social configurations of the time they were written and a kind of revival of some structural social moral issues we live through nowadays. The theoretical support of the

²¹ Modern morals – or state-of-spirit – are described as operating mainly top-down. This means that for Durkheim, knowledge states-of-spirit should be embodied first and experienced afterwards, as in the case of the biblical tongues of fire which came down to the Apostles.

²² Educational and health systems – the biggest and most expensive social support institutions – interact intimately with family dynamics.

²³ Everybody else meaning: select people who are able to get their rights recognized.

²⁴ Young (1999), Castel (1998).

²⁵ Cf. the "larger mind" classic analysis by Charles H. Cooley.

²⁶ Cf. Dores (2003).

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sciences of living systems, such as neurobiology, is not original. But it can be effective.²⁷

For instance, how is it that sociology is not prepared to take as a prevalent object for its mainstream research the spirit of security that has been spread all over the world, in a new and deeper fashion, since September 11th 2001 ?²⁸ Be that as may, it is stated clearly that 20th century sociology did not try hard enough to develop an analysis of violence, war or very instable and fast social processes.

When the Cold War was over and old strategic polarized force equilibrium fell apart, socially strategic fixed references were not there anymore. Sociology does not have theoretical or methodological instruments to cope with the growing social relevance of complexity:²⁹ new mixes of western modernities and far east modernities, in the Pacific, have arisen; the challenge of integration in the European Community; the terrorist wars based on religious grounds which have emerged; the neo-liberal revolution and the new dualization of the national population through free global market politics and access to new information technologies is becoming evident; the renewal of metropolitan concentration, population movements, demographic phenomena and the Welfare State leaves sociology feeling vulnerable.

In all these cases, it is not possible to take as a fixed or irrelevant variable the mood of the peoples all over the world. Public opinion cannot be reduced to media manipulation or to any kind of superstructure: it really counts in many ways in the conforming of human societies. Peoples and structural actions need to find sense for their "structural reforms",³⁰ without which they cannot legitimate either their mood changes or their reformed behaviour. Sociology, not only Economics, can also help with this kind of reflexivity.

State-of-spirit concept

²⁷ Cf. Dores (2005b).

²⁸ Norbert Elias is one of the finest sociologists ever. He worked on his *Civilization Process* and he was not able to link it to the extremes of violence experienced in the XXth century, as he recognizes in his last work, *The Germans*. "...viewed from today, the 1990s look like a kind of holiday, a pause between two eras of anxiety and conflict. Just as Eric Hobsbawm defined the 19th century as stretching from 1789 to 1914, so we can take the same liberty: the 90s began with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 and ended with the fall of the twin towers in 2001.

In other words, that decade was the hiatus between the cold war and the clash of civilisations. Before the 90s, the world was caught in a stand-off between east and west that seemed destined to bring armageddon. After the 90s, the world has become locked in a new confrontation of east and west, with Islam replacing Communism as the great menace.

Never mind that both the old and new threats may be exaggerated, the danger felt and feels real. In the post-1945 era, we lived in fear of a third world war and a nuclear winter. In the post-9/11 era, we tremble at the prospect of suicide killers on a double-decker bus. Fear is the constant."

Freedland Jonathan, 2005. "Burned out long ago" in *The Guardian* August 31

On this topic, for a theoretical approach to the "Prohibitionist Spirit", see Dores (2005a).

²⁹ Post-modern sociological exercises are one of the consequences of the mismash between theoretical polarizations and practical and political problems at the present time. The theoretical freedom many sociologists feel they have to use to deal with the new social configurations may leave them outside the boundaries of sociology and science.

³⁰ By structural reforms is meant life habit changes. These changes can be induced (top-down) or deduced (bottom-up), integrated by current social configurations or provoke, to some extent, new arrangements in social configurations.

To study more complex societies and relationships between people, sociology needs to mobilize more complex theoretical and methodological approaches. Top-down, bottom-up and horizontal social process occurs not necessarily with different timings or at different times. That means that they should not be split as a matter of theoretical ideological discussion, as if they refer to different social worlds and problems. The other way round, different times and different timings empirically refer to the presence (or not) of singular kinds of top-down, bottom-up, horizontal social processes and their social meanings referring to social cohesion or anomic phenomena. More complex, as a consequence of “time” acceleration³¹ within present societies, is the reference of coexisting different timings at the same time, as the mixtures of waves Alvin Toffler has called our attention to or the mixtures of modern and traditional trends as Eisenstadt (2003) has shown us.³²

At the interactive level, for instance, at the same time as professional life can be successful, family life can be apart and institutional life as regular as always. This pattern can be classified: as a “workaholic state-of-spirit”, for instance. Other patterns of state-of-spirit can be discovered as a socially complex configuration used for actual embodiment processes within specific social strata and situations (observable tuned dimensions of life – personal and interactive, institutional and cultural, strategic and coercive – configured all together).

This complexity of multi-processing social practices are theoretically referred to by the names of flexibility, reflexivity, adaptability, emotional intelligence, identity, body building, networking and others.³³

This state-of-spirit is a sociological concept that refers to this social complexity, considering the need to analyse traditional sociological substantive and methodological dualizations together within a critical approach.

Fig. 2 – Neguentropic grade of social freedom by analytical axis

³¹ “Time” can also be suspended by unemployment, exclusion, reclusion or depression, for instance.

³² Both ideas are not original, since Durkheim and Marx have already referred to them. Working these ideas out is not very common in the mainstream Sociology.

³³ Personal, civic and professional careers use different social levels, according to their socially selected accessibility and according to each one’s innate and educated disposition as well as persistence. Each social quotidian organization has to conform, at the same time, to different social timings.

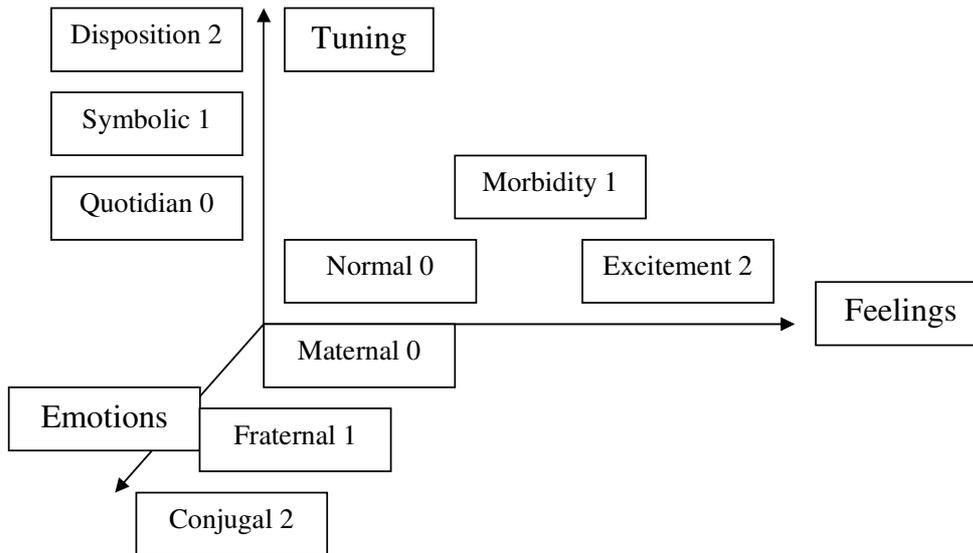
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During the different stages of human life, one can recognize different regular characteristic states-of-spirit. For instance, the different stages of the socialization of children, youngsters and elderly psychological studies identify recurrent states-of-spirit. As well as the people in the position of raising a child, a juvenile or an old person has a special and common kind of state-of-spirit: family needs, both material and spiritual ones, should take priority and the rest of social life hopefully benefits from this caring state-of-mind. Sometimes, however, parents or elderly keepers behave against human rights norms. Other examples of analytical applicability of this theoretical approach can be the contrast between night and day lives. Bohemian life experiences can be very influential throughout one's life. It can be a job opportunity for artists or an impediment for developing professional sports careers. It can be a way to live a radical individuation process or to compensate for and to take one's mind from social dependencies, for a while or for a long period. Night entertainments can be used to spend time, in a good mood or in a bad mood. It can also be used to join complicit social networks, criminal, political, business, academic ones, and so on.

The state-of-spirit concept refers directly and calls theoretical attention to the differences between different growing and reproductive life phases of each and every human being, through the "emotion" factor. That is why it refers to gender specificities without need for supplementary theoretical approaches. Through the "tuning" factor it refers to different national or regional characters through history.³⁴ At the civilizational level, one can distinguish western and oriental philosophies and cultures. Each one takes opposite directions when referring to facing-death utopias: Western Christians follow the Light in the symbolic sky- even as the highest wisdom, drawn by centrifugal movements in figures 1 and 2. Oriental Buddhist teachings mention reincarnation as paths to return to life for those who are not yet convinced of the uselessness of material lives. For this philosophy, the true wisdom is the knowledge of the virtue of cosmic meaninglessness – the nothing we share with all of Nature. It can be drawn by a centripetal movement in the Figures.

³⁴ Norbert Elias (1990) has carried out an interesting comparative exercise between the histories of France, England and Germany and their social and national characters.

The same concept is suitable for referring to the different practical approaches to life. Be living the quotidian routine intensely (at 0 levels in Figure 2) – for instance, sharing bar time with soccer friends that join together to watch weekend games together and discuss them all the rest of the week – or be it to look for higher understanding and/or intervention at higher social levels – as theoretical or literature levels, as institutionalised power levels, as social leadership levels (at levels 1 or 2; the first more bureaucratically oriented and the second more charismatically oriented, to take Weber’s types of power).

This formulation returns to classic and modern sociological concerns mentioned earlier in this paper. It continues Pierre Bourdieu’s intuition to look for evanescent immaterial social matters, such as “taste”, to develop sociological insight to new theoretical and methodological understanding of human social life.³⁵ It is, also, a critique (and intend to be a developmental proposition) for *habitus* theory.

Definition: states-of-spirit are abstract and alternative dispositional systems, both immanent and independent of people, temporarily adopted at the social level as a patterned way of existence, controlled by conscious and/or intentional cultural, institutional or personal activities. These dispositional human systems work together, in a somewhat tuned way, with developed social systems of reason, more or less codified and open to innovation.

Bourdieu’s *habitus* should be understood as the social and individual production of several sets of potential dispositions, and not just one set of specific dispositions for each person. Some of these sets are socially capable of being trained, developed and used; other are not. Anyhow, be it for personal, group, cultural or institutional will, or be it for social configurational changes, each active set of dispositions can change or be changed – when one changes job or family status, or when neighbourhood ambience or political power change, one can decide to cooperate or to oppose these social events. One needs to change with them, anyhow, even if not by predetermined ways.

Sleeping social dispositions can become active for a person or group or institution. And other active set of social disposition can fall asleep. For instance, when a professional sportsman or a sportswoman lives sport, s/he needs to find in him/her own professional sleep patterns and develop them. For instance, when the privatization trend of state industries became clear, management and workers state-of-spirit adapted and changed to bargain change for every party involved - institutions, leading persons and represented persons as well. For this to happen we can identify two types of causes: the quotidian ones (for instance, the strategic changes affecting management decisions affects all workers to some extent, namely the change of immediate and long term organizational and business goals) and other strategic ones (worker’s unions risk being excluded not only from the privatization process but from the future institutionalized social politics too. So they organise in a different kind of cooperative opposition to the state policies).

Timing factors

Tuning different timings by the clock is one of the favourite tasks of modern people. Before modernity, who needed this? The social groups, as they see themselves, had their own particular timings to distinguish themselves from one another. When all

³⁵ Cf. Bourdieu (1979).

joined together, occasionally, a lot of time was need just for tuning protocol purposes, just to get the mood to live the same festive and extraordinary timing for a while. The same happens in the political and diplomatic worlds, for instance, when people have length discussions concerning their own agendas to find a way to meet each other. And one cannot overlook the protocol liaison staff, who should be respected if one wants to deliver a message.

The state-of-spirit factors show how different timing results from and contributes to social differentiation processes. Tuning by the clock enables modern people to respond faster to whatever occurs. Individuation processes split apart families and institutions from each individual that – by chance – at the time, is part of them. That is the price and the merit of modern freedom, supported by a normative equality for all individuals: becoming an anthropological abstraction as conceived by rational choice theories, by neo-classic full elasticity economic models or by the new networked spirit-of-capitalism. As if pro-active and cooperating individuals are like *Phoenix*, born from ashes, and form excluded families and social equalitarian institutions.

In Figure 2, one can understand the “tuning” / “institutional spirit” factor as a use of a linear historical standardized timing pattern. Different from “emotional” / “family spirit” timing, stretched by human reproductive tasks of choosing family members to join, using sex for alliance and reproductive functionalities, raising children and youngsters, and framing elderly people – or rejecting them. Family work joining together quotidian tasks, conviviality and each lives’ actions. They prevent each individual from being with a live before and after active economic life. This is different from much faster “feelings” and uses of public “social values”: when people feel strong enough to compete, as a result of an adaptation process to tuning individuation choices through family, educational, communitarian, professional, pleasurable, cultural, economic and political challenges.

Closure

Embodiment means to cooperate through society to build a body (one’s own personal body or/and a social body) over a biological dynamic. The energy for embodiment can come from inside or from outside the person, from the top or from the bottom of society; it can connect only one or few social dimensions or it can produce a holistic effect. Embodiments can be classified and should be analysed.

Embodiments are often studied as body embodiments, as individuation social processes, rather than sharing and fixing social states-of-spirit intended to spread all over the world and studied as an external printing as a differentiation warranty and reinforcement, as if the social agent feels the need to stress the individuation process as radical personal choice, instead of (or rather than) social coercion. However, embodiment, even when the imprinting is ostensive, is social coercion too.

The embodiment can also be studied as interactive emotional changes between two or more people, because mental printing on the self can be carried out by internal neurophysiological processes. This kind of embodiment, the emotional embodiment, reflects itself in shaping certain aspects of body appearance and behaviour. It can be observed, registered and analysed, as well. For instance, one knows that continued stress has aging consequences in people suffering from this. Social measurements and medical measurements can come together, as often happens in Public Health studies.

Body and emotional embodiments are not theoretically different social and neurophysiological processes. Body and emotional embodiments occur not only on

special occasions or with special people. They both occur to common people in everyday life. And they occur at the same time, since body and emotions come together in each human being. The difference between an emotional embodiment and a body embodiment depends on the observer and his/her methodology of observation, not on the social process.

The sociology of the body and sociology of emotion should work together and choose classic sociological subjects and concepts, opening them up critically to new accelerated changing social realities. As with computers, human hardware does not move or mean much without its software. Body and emotions already work together under complex patterns. Sociology can be mobilized to typify them, just as the example of the periodic table of chemistry science typified all the ways subatomic elements can be thought to empirically come together to build consistent atomic level particles.

The Modern age has been treading its path through violence. Modernization is only possible where and when modernist differentiation breaks old fashion social solidarities, as Durkheim emphasized: first it is necessary to change social morals for it then to be possible to rebuild society on new ground. This sociological message should be taken seriously by sociologists and by societies too, especially during the present historical times. We must be better aware of human possibilities, for better and for worse. Since humankind is very sensitive to embodied states-of-spirit, to which Marx called our attention, when he referred to the historical relevance of revolutionary consciousness. Max Weber, as well, taking the same argumentative direction, called the attention of Marxists when he referred to the spiritual and philosophical socio-genesis of the spirit of capitalism as one of the main modernist breakthroughs.

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