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Beyond "Doom and Gloom" and "Saving the World": On the Relevance of Sociology in Civic Education

Abstract

In this article some tenets of classical and contemporary sociology are examined with reference to social problems that are also topical in civic education. The social problems are: social inequality, inter-communal conflicts, and democratic participation. A major obstacle in adopting sociological interpretations of the social problems to contemporary civic education lies in sociological reservations toward liberal democracy as a remedy to the social problems. More properly, some utopian (from radical to conservative) ramifications of the sociological analysis cannot actually be adopted in civic education. As a consequence, sociology is often distanced toward normative order and dominant forms of social power and practice of the actually existing societies, including liberal democracies. Thus, one can argue that sociology educates "young skeptics", rather than "young citizens" as postulated in some national curricula of civic education. Still, sociology may serve in civic education as an abundant source of knowledge for unraveling prejudices and false forms of democracy in the contemporary society, and also for questioning some national solutions to pressing social problems. Also, as long as civic education has a tendency to idealize the actually existing forms of (liberal) democracy and thus avoiding major criticism of the social order, teaching sociology in secondary education in concurrence with CE would be necessary for the sake of establishing a comprehensive education on the contemporary society and citizenship.

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2. Contemporary sociological answers to the social problems
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Key words

Sociology, civic education, classical sociologists, contemporary sociology, young citizens, young skeptics

'Viewed from within the legal system, the validity of norms remains unquestioned, but viewed from "society" (by, say, the sociologist), norms are seen as social facts and thus open to discussion' (Luhmann, 2008: 18)

'/W/hat has come to be understood as "democracy" is really just another form of Patriarchy which not only excludes most women from enjoying their most basic human right to equality, but actually oppresses the majority of people.' (Facio, 2009: 2)

Introduction

'Why are my students always depressed when they leave my sociology class?' is the subtitle of Brett Johnson's illuminating article entitled 'Overcoming "doom and gloom"', consecrated to class-room teaching of social problems. He argues that "sociology courses often increase knowledge of social issues, while they have no effect on, or decrease, students' levels of perceived civic efficacy" (Johnson, 2005: 47).

The difficulty with contemporary sociology may be owed to the underdevelopment of its capability of turning analytical models into predictable and broadly useful recipes for social action, on the one hand.

Yet, many sociologists want to preserve the cognitive integrity of their discipline by keeping up distance toward the social world, primarily its dominant norms and values. "Norms are social facts... open to discussion" says Niklas Luhmann in the above citation. In fact, a core of contemporary sociology both begins and ends its expertise with skepticism.

The underdevelopment of the applicative knowledge in the part of sociology that has the ambition of putting its knowledge into practice of social engineering is stressed by James Coleman in his seminal book on social theory (Coleman, 1990). The book, in its own right, represents a major effort of bridging the gap between theory and practice in sociology, yet with prerequisites of the rational choice theory which provides rather a reductionist account of social phenomena, which is akin to neoclassical economics.

Other and basically holistic sociological approaches are less geared up for finding proper solutions to social problems within a set of means disposable in current institutional policies, and are accordingly less appropriate for being adopted in civic education (CE). According to Scott McNall, the reason why sociology is less useful in understanding contemporary social issues and problems is that it is, esp. in teaching, too much oriented toward its classics who, as he puts it ironically, might have "saved the world in their own time", but not in this, our time. Hence, "our grand theories choke us and our students" (McNall, 2008: 152). Again, one must bear in mind that this is a partisan, not unison, stance in sociology. As such, it is basically inherent to Robert Merton's tradition in sociology, mostly cultivated in the United States, a sociology that pleads for the relevance of a local ("middle-range") rather than world-wide perspective on society.

On the other hand, CE is, to paraphrase McNall's remark, oriented to "this world"-society and is prone, more than sociology, to accept its current shape, and democracy in the First World within, nearly as the ultimate one. According to a widely shared definition, "civic education, whenever and however undertaken, prepares people of a country, especially the young, to carry out their roles as citizens. Civic education is, therefore, political education or...the cultivation of the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation" (Crittenden, 2007: 1). Unlike sociological criticism, thus, CE encourages the acceptance of the existing institutional order. For example as the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung highlights, in liberal democracies CE is an educational stronghold against illiberal education: „Civic education was indispensable in building a liberal democracy in the Federal Republic after 1945 and in reunited Germany after 1989... Addressing the destruction of the Weimar Republic by the combined efforts of extremists from the Right and Left as well as analysing the crimes of national socialism and the experience of communist dictatorship in the GDR will always remain core elements in civic education and its efforts to promote liberal democracy." (www.kas.de/.../42.5/). Very often, thus, liberalism is equated with democracy and criticism against liberalism, especially if it is inspired by ideologies opposing liberalism, such as Marxism or anarchism, used to be seen as antidemocratic.

Yet, from another viewpoint, for example that of Karl Polanyi (Polanyi, 1957), a political economist who is also taken as the one of the pioneers of historical sociology (cf. Skocpol, 1984), the occurrence of totalitarian regimes, such as Fascism and Bolshevism, is interpreted as a societal reaction to deep economic crises caused merely by the expansion of the free market economy, as the latter dismantled social bonds of economic reciprocation and redistribution which are fundamental structures of society.

In this paper, some tenets of major schools in sociology will be examined, which are concerned with social problems topical in the contemporary CE. The social problems are: social inequality, inter-communal conflicts, and democratic participation (for a list of key topics in CE see: Commission of the European Communities, 2006; Katunarić, 2009). Beforehand, certain reservations of sociological classics toward liberal democracy will be discussed. The reservations may reveal some grounds of the sociological "apathy" and the sociological "salvationism", respectively. In the conclusion, the sociological skepticism as well as utopianism is interpreted as intrinsic to the autonomous academic discourse on society, and, at the same time, inappropriate to CE as long as the latter is apologetic rather than critical toward the actually existing politics and policies of democracy.

Classical sociology's reservations toward liberal democracy

In Europe, two main social science paradigms constituted in the 19th century, i.e. positivism and Marxism, were mainly opposed to the ideas and practices of liberal democracy, i.e. the political and economic system based on individualism, which limits the power of the state over the individuals, yet primarily economic entrepreneurs. The positivist and the Marxist stance against liberal democracy were accompanied by similar approaches of other classical authors. For instance, Tocqueville assessed the preservation of social inequality in post-revolutionary France as well as the middle class egalitarianism in America as basically anti-democratic. Next is Weber's argument that democracy is impertinent to a bunch of institutional sectors. It is similar to Simmel's doubt that democracy can entail the precious balance between competition and cooperation in the modern society. An exception among the European classics in this respect, and among positivists in particular, is Spencer. Yet, his liberalism is more utopian than realistic, for he claims for disarmament, which is in contrast to the fact that the most advanced liberal states had (and still have) the strongest armed forces.[1]

Comte's conservative utopianism. Comte was preoccupied with the idea of establishing a world order whose organizational backbone would resemble the Roman Catholic Church (cf. Turner, 1990). In contrast, when considering the case of France, Comte claims that decentralization is a genuine system of the political governance, whereas centralization applies only to the spiritual power (Comte, /1851-1854/ 1875-1877). In any case, he does not see democracy as a major force in constituting national or world society. For him, democracy seems to be a permanent source of societal instability and disruption, which opens the door to revolution. Comte basically aimed to synthesize liberalism and conservatism by combining the idea of progress with the idea of order. However, he opted for elitism rather than democracy, and for sociologically informed technocracy rather than broad civic participation in decision-making. Basically, Comte shares fears of post-revolutionary upper class in France against the so called "dangerous classes", i.e. the lower classes whose members increasingly protested against the existing political and economic regime of the time (cf. Moscovici, 1985).

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1 The next presentation of sociological classics is selective both as regards to the authors and as regards to the topic(s). Still, the selection of the authors approximates some standard line-ups of the classics, as for example the one presented in the seminal work of Raymond Aron (Aron, 1998). On the other hand, the thematic focus of the paper, i.e. views of different sociologists concerning possibilities of liberal democracy for to provide cures for the major social problems, has determined the briefness of the next paragraphs.

Durkheim's utopian corporatism. Durkheim's idea of organic solidarity for the advanced industrial society is similar to Comte's idea of social order insofar as Durkheim's corporatism – i.e. the consensual tripartite governance of industrial workers, government and private employers – was also inspired by the Catholic social doctrine (Hawkins, 2002; Greve, 1998), although the latter propounds corporatism primarily in favor of the poorest. On the other hand, Durkheim's idea is also close to secular socialism (Durkheim, 1928). His oddness with liberalism is most clearly expressed in his theory of the *social division of labor*, where he reiterates his criticism of Spencer's liberalism and praise of competitive economy as congruent to anomic forces in society. Mostly, he rejects Spencer's assumption that society is based on contractual ties of cooperation between individuals. Likewise, Durkheim rejects liberal assumption of the existence of an innate human nature, whether egoistic or altruistic (e.g. by Adam Smith). Instead, he maintains that individuals and their orientations toward others, including the modern quest for happiness, are by no means "natural", but are products of social arrangements. (Durkheim, /1893/ 1947).

Marx' democracy-from-below utopianism. Marx would say that the latter, i.e. the quest for happiness, is most certainly the psychological construction of the late capitalism, i.e. consumerism, for happiness is increasingly conditioned by the power of individual to purchase the produced goods... Certainly, Marx is the most ardent critic of liberalism among the classics. His disdain of liberal democracy and its "parliamentary chatterbox" is notorious, as is his reason for such position: so long as the parliament confirms the class exploitation, it cannot be taken as democratic. Thus, the parliament basically misrepresents the people's mind (Marx, 1871). Hence liberal democracy being the scenery for an essentially undemocratic regime. A true democracy, according to Marx, will follow the removal of the capitalistic exploitation and the establishment of a federation of communes and industrial companies (cf. Held, 2006). More radically than Durkheim, thus, Marx contended that the market rules, and the economic laws derived from them via the classical economics, are ideological constructions rather than scientific or universal truths. Consequently, he expected that democracy-from-below should replace the representative democracy of bourgeoisie, as much as the redistributive economy should replace the free market economy. In turn, basic democracy and redistributive economy would eliminate major social inequalities and conflicts between nations.

Tocqueville's utopianism of petite owners. Often portrayed as an "aristocratic liberal" (Kahan, 1992), Tocqueville was genuinely worried about the destiny of freedom in a post-revolutionary regime and was consequently susceptible to new forms of despotism, i.e. a "tyranny of the majority", under disguise of democracy (Tocqueville, /1835/ 1990: 254-270). His vision of the future, yet viable, democracy consists of "an innumerable multitude of men...who... possess sufficient property to desire the maintenance of order, yet not enough to excite envy" (Tocqueville /1840/ 1990: 252). Accordingly, poverty and wealth should be reduced as unacceptable polarities. In a way, this vision anticipates the idea of the "people's capitalism" of Margaret Thatcher, unlike Social Democracy whose middle class is basically property-less and thus, according to Tocqueville, may easily succumb to (statist) despotism. Such a way, by rejecting the real existing liberal society, i.e. America and post-revolutionary France of his time, which consists of both propertied and dispossessed classes, Tocqueville shares the predilections of the classical sociology for the vision of a society which transcends the society of their own times.

Weber's polyarchic society. Weber's view of the democracy that cohabitates with undemocratic forms of rule can be comprehended on the basis of his three ideal types of authority, i.e. charismatic, traditional, and rational (Weber, /1914/ 2005). It is not that only rational authority, and bureaucracy as its central mechanism, have survived the modernity. All three types have actually survived modernity and are incorporated into its tissue in different portions. To be sure, all types may equally be destructive or constructive. For example, charismatic power is not only a synonym for despotic whims, but also creativity of some extraordinary individuals. Similarly, traditional authority, such as monarchy or patrimonial rule, is pertinent to churches, for instance, but not to parliaments. Eventually, rational or legal authority may be beneficial in many areas of society, unless it renders the rule of "specialists without spirit" (*Fachmensch ohne Geist*) (Weber /1920/ 1986). It seems that Weber, similarly to Simmel (see below), envisages a modern society in which democracy and liberalism, as much as the rule of law, do not constitute the entire social universe, but only a part of it. This part should accordingly be combined or balanced with other parts of the society and their procedures of rule, respectively. For example, science, economy, arts and medicine are sectors mainly ruled by meritocracies, i.e. a mixture of charismatic, traditional and rational authority. Furthermore, democratic politics cannot work without bureaucracy which, but, as Weber's student Robert Michels contended, leads ultimately to the rule of oligarchies (Michels, /1916 2001).

Simmel's liberalism in balance with socialism. Although Simmel has been ironic toward egalitarian ideologies, saying that money, not democracy, is the leveller of the world (Simmel, /1903/ 1997), he has appreciated the idea of Socialism as a social order that may bring more happiness to people than liberalism which is an

individualistic idea and can as such hardly be satisfied (Simmel, 1900). On the other hand, he argues that the principle of individual competition, which is constitutive to liberalism, is indeed indispensable, for competition may improve the qualities of both products and people. In other words, competition and markets are instruments for moving guilds, trade-unions, states and other collectives to a higher level of both individual and social existence. Above all, liberalism, according to Simmel, takes the competitor as a partner rather than an enemy. However, he suspects that the nature of the modern economy, i.e. monetarism, where money virtually replaces all other values, may truly contribute to the individual growth and further civilization development. For him, money makes individuals frail and societies shapeless. Does it mean that a higher developed civilization should cancel money as a means of payment, what Marx did hope for as well, and would instead be ruled by an enlightened technocracy? These implications, which are pertinent to Simmel's thought, make it even more alien to the contemporary CE which takes monetary economy for granted, as a necessary condition for democracy to happen.

Spencer's reluctant liberalism. Although Spencer is the only one among the European classics who overtly advocates liberalism and competitive society, his liberal ideas are sometimes ambiguous. For example, he is bewildered by the non-ethical character of the liberal order and wonders why liberal nations are so militaristic and prone to colonialism, and why primitive peoples are still unmatched in the art of peace and social harmony (Spencer, 1851). Also, he was not always consistent in his writings as regards different aspects of liberal democracy. For example, commitment to the right of universal suffrage wanes in his later writings, especially when women's rights are concerned, because the latter elicit, allegedly, an "over-legislation" (Spencer, /1897/ 1978). In general, his liberalism is idealistic rather than apologetic. For instance, he propounds peace and disarmament despite that it is obvious that most developed liberal nations are at the same time the most armed nations. Likewise, Spencer is utilitarian and rather inconsequential when the diffusion of freedom is concerned, when it is needed to protect a large number of people, women in the first place, because such protections, e.g. quotas for new jobs or employment, contradict to the principle of free competition.[2]

Mead's liberalism as ideally balanced world society. The genuine adherent of the idea of liberal democracy, based on capitalism, among the classics is not a European, but an American, George Herbert Mead. He argues that the likeliness of Rousseau's "common will" strongly depends on the functional division of labor

by the means of market exchange (Mead, /1934/ 1962: 287). This conclusion is basically similar to Durkheim, although the latter would not subscribe to the market optimism. Mead points out, similarly to Durkheim, that all human needs as well as human happiness may come true only in a "universal society" (Mead, /1934/ 1962: 281 et passim.). Mead basically shares this position with religionists, for the belief in the existence in a universal society seems to be taken coterminous with its practical existence. Nevertheless, even Mead's enthusiasm for a worldwide liberal society is provisional, for market alone obviously does not work as a Great Balancer of human needs and gratifications. Perhaps, a Pareto optimum for the global economy and the establishment of a universal society are religious or utopian rather than capitalistic prospects.

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The above reminder of the notions of sociological classics on democracy shows that classics mainly were not consigned to ideas and practices of liberal democracy. Instead, they were prone either to propound a form of liberalism, which is far detached from the actually existing liberal democracy, or to disclose liberalism, like Marx, as a mask for undemocratic rule. On the other hand, classics have proposed other forms of rule, such as direct democracy, social corporatism or enlightened technocracy. Here, one can concur with Boudon when he argues that Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, and Tocqueville were strong supporters of the transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, i.e. that they were basically committed to the idea of progress, and even that they were 'liberals', deeply influenced by Kant (Boudon, 2004: 122). Nevertheless, their 'liberalism' seems to be reluctant, as much as it was that of Kant. For him, democracy based on peace requires a genuine cosmopolitan legal order, certainly not the one with the agenda endorsing the forcible "spread of democracy" and secret prisons (cf. Lucht, 2009). The classical sociologists actually reject the "perverted effects" (Boudon's phrase) of liberalism, such as anomie, vulgarity of taste or disdain toward art, all of them being caused by profit-seeking and power-seeking as the only valuable goals for individuals or society.

Contemporary sociological answers to the social problems

The contemporary sociology did not take a much more favorable attitude toward liberal democracy than classical sociology. Thus far, sociology does not occupy a prominent place among disciplines eligible for being included into CE teaching. Still, sociology has produced an enormous knowledge, which may facilitate the understanding of the causes and consequences of different social problems. Certainly, one of the central competences of CE is cognitive as well, i.e. to enable students to recognize social prejudices and

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2 Hence, a new form of "democracy" may render a new form of Patriarchy, as Facio contends in the above citation.

stereotypes, and to debunk them by the means of empirical evidence (cf. DeCesare, 2005). In this respect, a great deal of sociological knowledge might be useful, for instance in reducing social distance toward people belonging to other cultures (cf. Jedlicka and Katunarić, 1985). Yet, different sociological interpretations of the causes and consequences of prejudices and stereotypes, and how to reduce or eliminate them, may not only expand, but also curb the possibilities for finding practical solutions to such problems. For example, some sociological explanations of social prejudices highlight group-maintaining function of prejudices, although the explanations do not advocate prejudices as such (cf. McLemore, 2004). Nevertheless, researchers may be skeptical, for instance, as regards the impacts of the educational efforts in divided societies as long as these are replete with tensions and conflicts, or where no interethnic civic associations exist (cf. Varsheney, 2002; Ajduković, Ćorkalo, 2008).

In general, one part of sociology builds knowledge (of society) for its own sake, and the other addresses social problems, but most effectively through empirical analysis (Goldthorpe, 2003), and only rarely by providing practical guidelines aimed at solving particular social problems, which would be, as a competence, applicable to CE (Mobley, 2007).

In the following, some basic tenets of the major contemporary sociological schools – i.e. functionalism, class analysis, social constructionism, and rational choice – will be exemplified in the way they address solutions to the social problems topical to CE as well, i.e. social inequality; inter-communal violence, and democratic participation. Here, some retention of the sociological reservations toward liberal democracy, as a remedy for the social problems, can repeatedly be recognized. For the sake of making the presentation of the topic in such a broad spectrum of sociology as clear and coherent as possible, tenets of one representative author of each school will be presented briefly like in the previous paragraphs on the sociological classics. The contemporary sociological authors are: Niklas Luhmann (representing functionalism/system analysis), Immanuel Wallerstein (representing class/world system analysis), Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (representing social constructionism), and James Coleman (representing rational choice).

Functionalism: democracy as a product of the functionally differentiated society?

Luhmann interprets social inequality as a remnant of traditional societies, in which division of labor overlapped with social ranking (Luhmann, 1997: 1055-1060). The inequalities can accordingly be reduced or even eliminated in the modern society where – similar to Durkheim's vision – different profession and occupations will be treated as equals, and thus lined up horizontally.

By the same token, horizontal or functional differentiation should eliminate ethnic and similar communal conflicts which also, like classes, originate in traditional segmental society (Luhmann, 1997, Ch.2). This conjecture is also similar to Durkheim, i.e. his evolutionary typology of society and his explanation of the sources of anomie or conflict in the older, i.e. segmental, society.

For Luhmann, furthermore, the political theory of (liberal) democracy must be transformed into sociological theory. This is because the evolution of the modern political system is concomitant with the evolution of law, and the purpose of the politics is to implement law. Yet, democratic political parties are immoral insofar as they defend their cause or their vote as the only "true", whereas others are rejected as "untrue". Thus, unlike impartiality of the universal law, politics is partisan and as such inappropriate for governing over a functionally differentiated society; otherwise, politics must structurally be "coupled" with the legal system (Luhmann, 2000: 390; cf. Thornhill, 2006). This deduction is akin both to Durkheim's corporatism and to Simmel's implications of an enlightened technocracy.

Class analysis or how to secure the transition from liberal to direct democracy

Wallerstein's world system analysis modifies Marx' class analysis for the sake of its application to the global society. In Wallerstein's interpretation, class inequalities are commensurable with inequalities between rich and poor countries, and the divisions between core, periphery and semi-periphery correspond to the divisions between upper, middle and lower classes on national levels (Wallerstein, 1974). Furthermore, the upper class in a country on the periphery, according to Wallersteins's model, must be taken as the member of the core capitalistic class.

He has predicted that capitalism should collapse around the middle of 21st century, but he could not anticipate as to whether capitalism will be replaced by a more adequate economic and social system (Wallerstein, 1996)

Wallerstein's interpretation of inter-communal conflicts, particularly nationalism, is subdued to class analysis. Simply, he argues that nationalism and racism are ideologies that defend capitalism in its downward cycles, and that the upper classes are those who benefit from the conflicts. Nevertheless, he forfeits that all successful revolutions from below had a national form and that the national would be a center-stage of the future political struggles for democracy (Wallerstein et al., 1990).

As far as democracy is concerned, Wallerstein shares the central Marxist assumption that genuine or basic democracy is possible only as a follow-up of the establishment of the socialistic economy.

Social constructionism without civic issues

In their seminal book *The Social Construction of Reality*, Berger and Luckmann did not mention democracy and human rights whatsoever. In the introductory part of the book, the authors argue that such topics, including the idea of freedom, are not properly sociological:

'*Is man free? What is responsibility? Where are the limits of responsibility? How can one know these things?....* /T/he sociologist is in no position to supply answers to these questions. What he can and must do, however, is to ask how it is that the notion of "freedom" has come to be taken for granted in one society and not in another, how its "reality" is maintained in the one society and how... this "reality" may once again be lost to an individual or to an entire collectivity.' (Berger and Luckmann, 1975, 14-15).

This way, social constructionism assumes that freedoms and rights can sociologically be considered only as facts that vary with different societies or cultures. Accordingly, there is no absolute or prior meaning of rights and freedoms and similar issues. Perhaps, this approach might fit chapters in CE which tackle multicultural democracy and citizenship, i.e. where liberal assumption of rights and freedoms meet with collectivistic assumptions of democracy (as elaborated, for example, by Kymlicka, 1995). However, there was no place for the word "culture" in Berger's and Luckmann's foundational work on social constructionism. Nevertheless, social constructionists of the subsequent generations have contributed much more to the knowledge of different cultures, including how cultures were used in generating ethnic or religious boundaries and also violent conflicts (cf. Joireman, 2003). Still, their contribution to the peace research and, generally, to the skills of conflict management is not exclusively sociological, as it cannot be understood nor performed without broad interdisciplinary collaboration, primarily with cultural anthropology (cf. Galtung, 2002).

How rational is choice in a suboptimal democracy?

'In an absolute democracy (where all rights are held collectively), the people may be as coercive and arbitrary as an individual despot' (Coleman, 1990: 337). This assertion represents Coleman's response to the so called *Sen' paradox*. The paradox says that liberalism cannot be acceptable or optimal for all members of a society. To be sure, Coleman is right when revoking the despotic nature of collectivism. Nevertheless, the vices of the latter do not automatically provide virtues for the former. Basically, Coleman underlines the profound difference between the two systems of allocation of resources, since the latter 'evaluates policies according to their consequences for each individual separately, whereas liberalism... judges policies according to the liberty they permit for each individual' (Coleman, 1990: 335).

Coleman argues that democracy is a majority rule principle and cannot be otherwise, because there would be no possible democratic choice anymore, including emigration of persons to societies where they can employ their abilities at the best, which is their inalienable property. '/I/f a subordinate class eliminates property rights following a revolution, they must also effectively eliminate emigration rights. This may, however, eliminate the incentive for individuals in the next generation to acquire the personal resources that make them productive, so such a system may be foredoomed to a lower level of productivity' (Coleman, 1990: 356). So far so good. But, how to qualify developed countries' restrictive policies of immigration aimed at protecting the resources of their own citizens against immigrant contenders?

Unfortunately, in place of considering the cases of serious inter-communal conflicts whether in the US or in the world at large under auspices of the rational choice model, Coleman illustrates his assumptions on a relatively trivial example, namely a conflict over the curriculum in Pasadena schools in the US. On its hand, this example might have been used to make comparison to some other (inter)communal conflicts. Yet, he does not do such an analysis, nor does his method of producing evidence deal with corresponding social-historical contexts. Instead, most of his examples are fictive and garnished with invented characters or persons, which reminds of experimental science designs rather than sociological analysis.

Nevertheless, perhaps the production of empirical evidence is not important at all, because the assumptions cannot be conclusively tested as long as the social problems – such as inequality, participation and conflicts in the context of liberalism and democracy – are attempted to be explained, or even solved, on the level of methodological, or even political, nationalism. This means that rejecting the others under the pretext of their belonging to "another" world, and not "our" world, cannot sociologically be justified. The only adequate meaning of contemporary industrial society in sociology is global. It is a society in which all members are interdependent in their actions, and even their feelings and thoughts, and where there are no barriers for their interactions, unless created by artificial boundary-makers, whether empires, states or just by criminals.

Unlike Coleman and many other contemporary sociologists, classics – at least Comte, Marx, and Durkheim, and Simmel in some respect – have postulated methodological cosmopolitanism or the world society as a proper framework for solving social problems such as social inequalities, inter-communal conflicts, and democratic participation. Such way, the social problems traditionally seen as internal or external to

a society, and divided in such respect, now become internal or "our" common problems. Unfortunately, neither CE curricula nor textbooks in their present shape postulate the world integration of polities, economies and cultures as the ultimate solution for the fundamental social problems. They rather cherish methodological nationalism.[3]

Conclusions

Limited adequacy of sociological knowledge to CE is due to underdevelopment of the applicative dimension of sociological knowledge as far as the solutions of the pressing social problems are concerned. More properly, in its positivistic design sociology finds its application in empirical analysis rather than social action or interventionism. Yet, a more important reason for sociological inadequacy to contemporary CE might be epistemological. It is that a core of sociology, especially the classic one, is prone to a variety of utopianisms: conservative, communist, corporatist and liberal. In any case, sociologists rarely or never see actually existing liberal democracy, and capitalism alike, as a remedy for the social problems that it produces, i.e. social inequality and poverty, inter-communal conflicts, and limitations to democratic participation. Furthermore, a part of sociology, but again mostly the classic one, cherishes a holistic and cosmopolitan rather than particularistic and nationalistic notion of society, which surpasses the methodological scope on society, mostly limited to nation-state, in a typical CE curriculum.

Thus, the central problem in establishing a more encouraging relationship between sociology and CE is that reformist, let alone radical, ramifications of sociological analysis cannot actually be adopted in CE, for they can supposedly be labeled as "subversive" or "antidemocratic". On the other hand, CE is a primarily normative, and partly apologetic, form of education for liberal democracy. It is normative in the sense that it teaches students to behave differently than they used to. For example, how to adopt social skills in order to participate in a public dialogue (as declared in the national curriculum of CE in Finland, for example) or how to tolerate diversities (Netherlands), or how to collaborate with others (Norway) (see more details in: Katunarić, 2009). CE is also partly apologetic for it educates "young citizens" (as declared, for example, in the national curriculum in Scotland), rather than "young nonconformists", for instance, in the sense that

the former are expected both to respect and to accept actually existing institutional policies or practices in their countries, while the latter are not.

In the end, one may contend that sociology educates "young skeptics", similarly to "non-believers" when attitudes toward religion are concerned. Here, religion is substituted for the belief in democracy as a real possibility, paradoxically, in a society occupied with oligarchic patterns of social power and prestige virtually in all its spheres, from schools to companies and government. Perhaps, this is the main reason why the sociological enlightenment provides cognitive rather than moral incentives to the learning of/about democracy, and that sociology with its insistence on the basic distinction between values and facts, and between institutional norms and social practices, respectively, approaches to the normative dimension of civic education rather with vigilance.

Still, sociology may represent an abundant source of knowledge in CE, especially for unraveling the false forms of democracy in the contemporary society, and for deconstructing questionable national solutions to pressing social problems. Alternatively, as long as civic education has a tendency to idealize the actually existing forms of (liberal) democracy and thus avoiding major criticism of the social order, teaching sociology in secondary education (which has a rather long-lasting tradition – cf. DeCesare, 2005) may provide a complementary solution. In sum, sociology and civics should be concurrent rather than mutually exclusive subjects. Accordingly, CE may represent a sort of normatively oriented subject, while sociology may represent a critical and fact-oriented subject in contemporary education on society and citizenship.

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3 Virtually, in all curricula in the twelve countries under research – Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Ireland, Scotland, England, Austria, Germany, Slovenia, Hungary, and Croatia – it has been taken for granted that the social problems are basically solvable within actually existing nation-states (cf. Katunarić, 2009). Likewise, the curricula do not see problems emerging in the Third World countries as something that concerns the domestic agenda of the First World countries.

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