

The Role and Significance of Sociological Theory Within Research Traditions in Relation to the Historical Context of the Postmodern Turn

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Abstract

The paper starts from the role and meaning of sociological theory in the context of research traditions. It begins with a discussion of the positioning of theory within qualitative research approaches in the time context of the late 1980s and early 1990s during the so-called of the "postmodern turn ". Given that the aim of the paper is to consider the genesis of research traditions in sociology with an emphasis on ethnographic research traditions, but it is difficult to start the discussion without grasping the essence of sociological theory. When talking about theory and ethnographic research, there are numerous forms of specific theories that ethnographers have, each of which is applicable to specific topics. The inappropriateness of the theory and the specific research topic results in a misunderstanding in relation to the main research questions. Within the work, the order of knowledge is also problematized, which is associated with ethnography on the one hand and postmodernism on the other, as well as a „reflexive" turn. The postmodern sensibility is especially visible within the reflective moment during the writing process. Postmodern ideas therefore first introduce a new level of criticality within ethnographic research and draw attention to certain topics, processes and phenomena that have not been sufficiently discussed within wider social reflection.

Keywords: research traditions, postmodernity, reflexivity, ethnography, theory

1. Introduction

The Role and Meaning of Sociological Theory - the Relationship Between Research Traditions and Sociological Theory

Always current discussions about the positioning of theory within the qualitative methodology of social sciences is related to discussions that are especially intriguing when it comes to ethnographic theory (Collins and Stockton, 2018). In this sense, the goal of the work itself is primarily reflected in the consideration of the genesis of

research traditions in sociology with an emphasis on ethnographic research traditions in relation to the historical context of the postmodern turn. The method of analysis and synthesis was used to study certain features, relations, and interrelationships within the studied context.

The word ethnography itself comes from the word *ethnos*, which represents a socio-cultural group, and the word *graphy*, which can describe the process of recording and recording reality, and at the same time implies the intention of openness. Thus, the etymology of the word refers both to the research process and to the product of the research in the form of an ethnographic report, usually a monograph (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001). Such doubts and ambiguities in the understanding of the term while simultaneously recording the experience of actors and asking questions within the cultural discourse result in the absence of connection between these qualitative methods with a research approach, which leads to questioning the position and role of theory within ethnographic research.

Understanding the historical genesis of research traditions in sociology, including the ethnographic research tradition, especially its incorporation within sociological methodological instrumentation, is difficult to begin without grasping the essence of sociological theory (Abrutyn, 2016; Calhoun et al., 2012; Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2021) "We could freely say that sociology is the science of progress", Afrić (1989, 8) believes, and continues that understanding the differences that appear between different sociological research traditions can be much easier if one points to its foundations, i.e. to the difference in the understanding of sociology as a science that is primarily reflected in different interpretations of social reality. This is where the way of understanding the subject of sociological study comes from. Given how they define their ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions differently, research traditions are classified into different worldviews, which are determined by their constituent paradigmatic theories. That is, research traditions are determined by theoretical compositions within which numerous normative, empirical, and axiological theories are elaborated (Afrić, 1989, 55-56). The structure of sociological theories arises as an answer to some fundamental questions. Regardless of the radically different answers to them, it is common to all sociological theoretical projects (Nisbet, 2007). What is common to all types of theories in sociology and to all sociological theories in general, and on which all sociologists agree, is the fact that theories are not things but processes (Wilson, 1983 as cited in Afrić 1989). Common to all sociological theories is the development in gradual processes of increasingly precise and detailed statements. "The fact is that sociologists who see the progress of sociological theory in its ever-increasing generalization on the one hand, while on the other hand they insist on more and more accurate and detailed predictions, i.e., those who see progress in the theory's ever-increasing approach to reality, do not see its progress in its practical effects" (Afrić, 1989, 106).

Mouzelis explains the emergence of the "disease" of sociological theory about the understanding of theory as a "final product" and tries to establish "why things went wrong". This approach is in some respects like the generation of theory within grounded theory. One of the fundamental problems pointed out is contained in the excessive rejection of Parsons and the tradition of structural functionalism in its original or derivative forms, which leads sociological theory to a dead end (Čaldarović, 2000,11).

Excessive reactions to Parsons resulted in different variants of interpretive sociologies, as well as a fondness for the micro, which is only one side of the micro-macro dichotomy. According to Čaldarović Mouzelis takes on the difficult task of trying to find a "therapy" for a sick sociological theory (Čaldarović, 2000, 13).

One of the possible therapies is found within the attempt to connect the institutional and figurational structure (macro level), according to Mouzelis' conception, Parsons, and Marxist sociology "in one". This combination, which is otherwise unimaginable, is based, according to Čaldarović, on a very reductionist presentation of Marx's sociology on the one hand, and on the other hand on a slightly more innovative presentation and refinement of Parsons' AGIL scheme. Mouzelis begins with the classic distinction between two types of theory: theory as a set of interconnected independent statements that try to say something new that we do not yet know about the social world and whose claims can be confirmed or refuted by empirical research, and theory as a set of tools that only facilitate or prepare the ground for building a substantive theory. In non-Marxist sociology, the second type of theory is denoted by different names such as conceptual framework, paradigm, meta-theory, or heuristic tool. Preference is given to Generalities II. and Generalities III. coined by Althusser when distinguishing theory as a tool/means (Gen. II.), from theory as a provisional finished product (Gen. III.). All existing theories contain both types of theoretical claims (Mouzelis, 2000). The distinction between the two types of theories is considered essential, and neglecting it leads to misunderstanding among social scientists (Čaldarović, 2000, 19-21).

The real problem does not consist in the denial of sociological theory as a subdiscipline specialized in the construction of conceptual tools (Generalities II.), but it is necessary to ensure that the offered conceptual tools become more useful, and that the type of connections between theory and empirical research (between Gen. II. and Gen. III.) established by Parsons and his followers be strengthened and improved. Sociological theory, as an activity with a logic different from that of philosophy or other related disciplines, can help sociologists clear and prepare the ground for empirical research. Therefore, the main task of sociological theory is not exclusively to provide fully developed, conceptual creations, such as Parsons or Giddens, but also to provide provisional, flexible, open, transitional frameworks useful for empirical, comparative research of special sociological problems. The emphasis is on the elaboration of a smaller number of interrelated concepts that, instead of offering a

general overview, are useful when reducing "distorted communication" and asking interesting empirical questions for specific problem areas. Given that sociology has a multiparadigmatic character, the main task of sociological theory is to maintain and increase pluralism and try to transform the "separation" of disciplines into "open" differentiation (Mouzelis, 2000, 223-225).

2. The position of theory in qualitative and quantitative research: peculiarities of ethnographic theory

Within the tradition of qualitative research, one encounters an approach in which empirical and theoretical research are interwoven. Theoretical ideas may appear as a phase during or even at the end of fieldwork, rather than at the very beginning, which is not the rule. According to Bryman, one of the most cited approaches concerning theory and research is analytical induction (Znaniecki, 1934), and another concerning the relationship between theory and data in qualitative research is based on grounded theory (Glasser and Strauss, 1967). The shift has been made to the extent that the theory is allowed to appear among the data in a peculiar way, and in this way, it does not lose contact with empirics and manages to cope better with the complexity of social reality (as cited in Bryman, 1996).

Quantitative research seeks to define a theory based on the internal connection of variables. They are reciprocally connected through hypotheses or research questions. The position of theory in qualitative research is more problematic because there is no standardized terminology or rules here. The terminology (theory, sample) used by the researcher obviously varies with the type of qualitative research design (Creswell, 1994; Cardano, 2020; Copley, 2021).

What Hammersley means by theory are assumptions about the necessity of connections within categories of phenomena. One form of theory developed through ethnographic work is labeling theory. Some theoretical developments that can be recognized in the methodological writing of ethnographers are the following (Hammersley, 1998): claims that ethnographic work produces theoretical insights whose validity and value can be assessed by the reader; the idea that theories are universal propositions that can be produced from the study of a particular case.

None of these arguments are entirely exclusive. But in any case, ethnographers should be sensitive to the indicated problems. According to Fetterman (1998; Fetterman, 2019), no research can be realized without a common, implicit theory or model, whether it is an explicitly anthropological theory or an explicit personal model. A theoretical approach helps to define and "come to grips" with research problems. The problem is most often approached with a certain theory or depending on a set of theories about how the work is progressing. The "trick" is therefore to choose the most appropriate level of theory for a given task. The ethnographer recognizes the importance of epistemological foundations for model selection. Thus, according to Fetterman, the typical model of ethnographic research is based on a

phenomenologically oriented paradigm that best captures multicultural perspectives, that is, the multiplicity of existing realities. Fetterman here simply says theories or models, which is in line with the opinion that there is no clear distinction between the terms model and theory, because both indicate some simplifications of reality, necessary in terms of reaching generalizations (Jary and Jary, 1999, 420).

In this context, it is necessary to point out the complex relationship between the theory and the model. If we start from the statement according to which "theories are statements that go beyond facts, and although they most often refer to systems of concepts and their interrelationships, they can also refer to just one concept, because the concept goes beyond a multitude of facts that make up the non-conceptual from the term "understanding" (Afrić, 1989, 102), contrary to this, the model is a representation of something else, which is designed for special reasons. This representation depends and takes many forms, depending on its purpose. All models have one common feature, regardless of their purpose, and that is: placement of elements in a system designed according to the model. It is possible for every relevant element to be located; in which case the model represents an absolute replica. The steps involved in building a theoretical model are as follows: the variables that should be used to characterize and understand the process must be specified; the forms of relations (relations) that connect these variables must be specified; ignorance and the need for simplification lead to the fact that all relations other than the identity of the subject are subject to error and therefore, with the aim of effective statistical judgment, these errors (wrong terms) must be specified; the parameters of the model must be estimated and the scope of identification established and verified. If it is inappropriate, the model must be reformulated and finally, the model must be updated and used, which speaks of its strength, durability, and reliability (Bullock et al., 1999, 536-537).

Models differ in relation to the degree of approximate reality. Its functions also vary, and it can be equally heuristic as well as explanatory. This includes proposals for new research hypotheses suggesting comparisons between unknown phenomena and those better known or better explained; these simplifications of a complex reality due to analytical requirements tend to obtain a general concept or tend to the most important places of fundamental explanations of the causal mechanism; the comparison between the "ideal" model and the real world is intended to increase awareness of real processes. In any case, it is concluded that there is no clear difference between the terms model and theory (Jary and Jary, 1999, 420).

According to Creswell, theory can be presented as a visual model. It is especially useful to translate the variables into visual images. Thus, Blalock (1969) translates verbal theories into causal models in a way that enables readers to easily visualize the connections between independent, mediating, and dependent variables (Creswell, 1994).

The ethnographic method and ethnography have their beginnings in anthropology and ethnology. The foundations of ethnography in anthropological research of diverse cultures are highlighted in the works of Malinowski and Margaret Mead. Anthropological concepts, methods, and techniques of data collection in the ethnographic field itself create the so-called the process of producing ethnography (Fetterman, 1998). However, although it is not possible to deny the anthropological and ethnological foundations and ideas of ethnography on the research of diverse cultures, ethnographic research was shaped by the principle of openness which manifests itself towards the researched social groups, cultures, and societies, and thus also towards other social sciences. The development of ethnography thus takes place in a certain parallel way through historical stages and within anthropology, ethnology, but also sociology. The goal of this paper is the articulation of ethnography within the sociological discipline and the application of sociological theories in this approach.

Žažar (2016), citing several authors, points out that the diversity of sociological thought is visible through its multi-pragmatic nature and calls sociology a fragmented science that suffers from important levels of incoherence. The constant process of fragmentation at theoretical levels has turned sociology into a science focused on researching intricate details. Žažar sees interdisciplinarity as a solution to the process of dismantling sociological theories. Rogers (as cited in Žažar, 2016) defines interdisciplinarity as understanding a problem through the integration or execution of different concepts, methods, and epistemologies from different disciplines in a new way. Interdisciplinary research is not a substitute for research within one scientific discipline, but it gives specific research topics an additional dimension. It is possible to connect methodological and theoretical levels between sciences in this way in research but connecting the epistemology of each discipline would paradoxically lead to the disappearance of the foundations of that science (Žažar, 2016).

Returning to the discussion of theory and ethnographic research, we find countless forms of specific theories that are before ethnographers, each of which is applicable only for certain topics. At the same time, they can mislead or result in misunderstanding if they are applied to inappropriate problems. Theories then explain little. Out of the considerable number of theories offered, most researchers explicitly or implicitly opt for one or two theories: idealistic or materialistic. Idealist theories suggest that fundamental changes are the result of mental activities, thoughts, and ideas. Materialists, on the other hand, believe that these are material conditions: ecological resources, money, production models - in the sense of the first movers. However, no single approach can satisfy all requirements. Ethnographers therefore choose one of two approaches to tailor their efforts, specific needs, or questions of interest. Thus, one of the most represented idealistic theories in anthropology is precisely the cognitive theory, which implies the possibility of describing what people think. Using linguistic (ethnosemantic) techniques, it is possible to create taxonomies of the way individuals perceive the world. For example,

idealist theory explores the worldview from the perspective of mental origins, beginnings, cognitive maps, beliefs, and knowledge (Fetterman, 1998, 6).

Classical theory of idealism in anthropology includes culture and personality theory, sociolinguistics, symbolic interactionism, and ethnomethodology. On the contrary, ethnographers who support the materialist theory view the world as one that coincides with observed forms of behaviour. A limited but classic political-economic materialist theory is historical materialism or neo-Marxism. According to Marxist theory, all changes result from changes in forms or production, control over forms of economic power, class consciousness and class conflicts. Other materialist approaches in anthropology include techno environmentalism and cultural ecology. Theories should not be elaborated by adding constructions, assumptions, propositions, and generalizations; they can be medium-scale theories or personal theories about how the whole world works or just a small part of it. Ethnographers do not explicitly use grand theories because they do not automatically agree with them. Grand theory can be instructive, but many ethnographers point out that it is too broad and inappropriate for everyday research. Ethnographers typically use theoretical models indirectly related to grand theories to guide their work. Grand theories, models, and personal theories, all together fall into the idealist or materialist set-fundamental dichotomy useful when analysing other research projects. Approaches overlap in the field, but many researchers begin selecting theories or models (which are primarily idealistic or materialistic) before they even begin to conceptualize the problem. Furthermore, the choice of theories may also depend on simple reason, suitability, and ease of use. Ideological theoretical foundations are more often built, before conducting research, paving the way through the labyrinth of data. When theory ceases to be a guide, it is no longer useful, and when data ceases to feed the theory, it is time to perceive a new theory (Fetterman, 1998).

In general, regardless of the above, there is little discussion about the nature of theory within ethnographic work. There is agreement on the leading role of theory in historical explanations of the testing process, reformulations and retests that are also recorded in the ethnographic tradition in changing forms, such as grounded theory and analytic induction. The logic of progress in history and ethnography involves development from descriptive and explanatory accounts, through theories of development and testing, and back again towards better descriptions and explanations (Hammersley, 1998).

According to Hammersley, the concept of theoretical description is problematic, and it can be interpreted in several ways. The author also questions the possibility of ethnographic research when developing theoretical understanding. For him, the ethnographic adoption and acceptance of the goal of theoretical description leads to a fundamental misconception about the nature of description and the explanations it produces. Ethnography inevitably places great emphasis on description and offers a distinctive type of description: theoretical description. But the nature of these

distinctions is not truly clear. In short, according to this author, a description cannot be a theory, but all descriptions are theoretical in the sense of their relationship to concepts and theories. Ethnography, finally, according to this author, can hardly serve when developing theory (Hammersley, 1998).

3. Postmodern outlines of sociological theory as a basis for ethnographic research

The extent of knowledge-based discussion related to postmodernism on the one hand and ethnography on the other is quite a challenging task. Within the 1980s, postmodernism becomes its own negation. But regardless of what postmodernism means over time, it is certain that it signifies the spread of conflicting definitions that refuse any moulding. Here one encounters a legacy related to the problematization of the notions of representation and legitimacy of knowledge, and the concept of aporia is introduced as a fertile area for developing practices. Lather is not interested in the "new" ethnography but is looking for the shaping of ethnographic practice which abandons the indicated type of scientific followed by other disciplinary methodologies (Lather, 2001).

The postmodern approach within qualitative research unites several different topics, but three are the most obvious. The first concerns all existing knowledge and the leveling of hierarchy and differences in all its forms. Doubt becomes the primary guiding perspective. The postmodern context of doubt "concerns" all methods equally, and none of them remains immune, nor does it have a privileged status. This radical relativism, with its decentralizing impulse, dissolves the remains of empirical and methodological compulsions, "encloses" all voices and representations as equally valid. Second, postmodern sensibility illuminates the relationship between "self" and "self and others". Ethnography engages in the marginalization of the researcher's separation identities as "scientists" or "objective observers" from those within the study. The third element is the narrative turn, which manifests itself as a critique of traditional ethnography, treating the world as a text to be read and privileging subjective discourses (Snow and Morrill, 1995).

Katunarić points to the easy rejection of old theories by postmodernist interpretations of society. They, again, express something that prompts the need for a new theory. The indicated interpretive attempts introduce new expressions or at least added terms into classical and modern contents. The overall impression is confusing, since the new theory should revise the entire legacy of sociological thought about society, because society is built on foundations that were not observed until then or move in directions that "old" theories did not foresee. The postmodern statement hardly reaches the theoretical level, its own identity, the necessary generality, or establishes it in a reductionist way, which until a certain moment was considered to belong to the pre-modern phase of social science and sociology itself, and as far as sociological theory is concerned, it introduces two problematic tendencies. One is the refutation of generalizing judgments about society, including

teleological judgments about social changes, and the second tendency is the opposite, generalizing and teleologizing in a special sense, which finds the basis for a comprehensive theory of society outside of sociology, in economic models of human activity. The multiplication of theoretical viewpoints did not increase the debatability, polemic or dialogue between different authors. On the contrary, such communication is significantly decreasing (Katunarić, 1995, 35-37).

The task of theory is to raise interesting questions and sensitize empirical research, and it is precisely with the results of empirical research that we return to general theory. The interdisciplinary field of ethnography is potentially "rich" in this sense, and therefore, despite different conceptions and approaches, ethnography can significantly contribute to theoretical grounding.

Mouzelis gives a useful instruction to the postmodernist orientation of the time, which, according to him, should "stop submitting to the tyranny of intellectual conveniences", "ignoring the old and automatically choosing the new, regardless of its true value". Mouzelis further states that its more "modernist" wing should discard its, according to him, "fundamentalist baggage and redirect its attention from universalist schemes and philosophical foundations "based on flexible, temporary conceptualizations that are suitable for the problems and dilemmas of empirical research" (Mouzelis, 2000:225).

Since the mid-80s of the 20th century, when postmodern challenges enter the scene, qualitative researchers undergoing "postmodern divides" demand the abandonment of all established and exclusionary values, perspectives, theories, and prejudices as the basis of ethnographic research. Qualitative researchers are now occupied with something "bigger" than mere recording and observation. The focus is on the researcher who plays an active role in the story. New pages are printed that reflect the researcher's direct and personal engagement within a certain historical period (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Delamont and Atkinson, 2011, Cooper and White, 2012).

Poststructuralist and postmodern criticisms are preoccupied with questioning "ethnographic authority", emphasizing the discursive naiveté in ethnographic writing that is unaware of the way in which something is "written" and plays the role of creator of culture rather than its inventor and "reflector". It is recognized that ethnographic practice and writing must be aware of its own position and connection to the world. This awareness mirrors the symbolic and structural positioning of all human subjects, the entire human experience (Willis and Trondman, 2000; Grgurinović, 2012).

4. "The death of theory" in postmodernism

According to Daly (1997), postmodernism means the end of traditional forms of theory (Mutman, 2006), but this certainly does not mean the end of theorizing activities within ethnography. On the contrary, theory retains its position as a rearticulation of what theory is in the postmodern sense. As well as Katunarić (1995), who calls postmodern theories of society a "confusing interlocutor", Daly finds that ethnographic theory viewed through the prism of postmodernity behaves like a lost person. Social scientists, in fact, argue for her presence, but there is no indication of her physical presence.

Studying the position and role of theory within the long history of ethnographic research has never lost its interest. This did not happen even in the period of postmodernity, which within that context introduced a dose of critical awareness of what it means to do ethnography as a form of social science. The Chicago School of Sociology started from ethnographic accounts that resulted in substantive theories regarding, for example, the "treatment" of death, the consumption of marijuana, and all the way too much more formal theories of identity and interactions. With postmodern theories, new epistemologies, paradigms, and discourses have resulted in greater reflexivity and are related to the results of ethnographic endeavors. Special attention was directed towards the final ethnographic text because of the reflection of numerous interpretive levels and meanings, social and cultural determinations. The most important contribution is seen within the "call" against privileged claims about the representation of truth or the reality of experience. In doing so, historical experience is imposed as a decisive factor when understanding postmodern theoretical transformations (Daly, 1997).

Within postmodern forms of thought, ethnographic authority was shaken, which was manifested through a crisis of representation. There is scepticism towards the researcher's direct recording of "lived" experience. The postmodern world suggests the impossibility of further presenting the theory as an objective representation of the participants' real world. The theorist is not perceived exclusively as a thinker, a reflective and participating member of the presented social reality. Theory no longer has a privileged place within the representation of the actor's experiences and intentions. Rather, the theory is, by its very nature, given. As Denzin agrees (1978 according to Daly, 1997) theory has an indispensable place within science, and its absence leaves the research report at the level of descriptive empiricism.

It is interesting to point out Daly's personal experience in connection with the theory, which is usually placed somewhere inside "thick complicated books". After a long and arduous journey, interdisciplinarity seemed to him a good reason against the use of any theory. He was of this opinion until he encountered this topic himself in his doctoral work. Then, according to him, he realized the importance of theory when looking at the world in a separate way, which was very encouraging. But that happened only when he was able to conduct research and produce a theory in his own

characteristic way, and this is due to the moment that enabled him to see the theory as something personal and at the same time as an independent process. Theory is then directly involved in the selection of key elements, construction of concepts, relevance, values, and emphasis within the study. The traditional position of the theory is recognized when the status of science is raised according to the "privileged voice" carried by the elite, and its creators are also those who supervise a certain disciplinary field. Postmodernism called for the abandonment of such monolithically shaped truths and sought to understand the changes and complexity of social reality. This leads to the demystification of the radical tradition of objectivity in favor of awareness of value, meaning, interpretation, and finally, the question arises: what does it mean to have the role of a scientist who is interested in researching people? While theory on the one hand may have a privileged position in science, the increase in diversity across and within paradigms results in growing scepticism about its overall status. The pluralization of scientific values, procedures and requirements increases uncertainty regarding the meaning and value of theory. The number of terms used when it comes to theory (models, paradigms, backbones) is noticeable, and three distinct levels of generality are noticeable: origin and variety, their use and multiplicity. The meaning of the theory is even more indicative in the light of postmodern considerations. So where is theory in postmodern science? If we move away from theory as an axiomatic, predictive, and predictable thing, what do we leave behind? Looking at it from the perspective of postmodernity, the question arises, is theory different from opinion? That is, if we define opinion as "a view that we consider significant", then is the theory different in any way? Is it more legitimate than some other forms of commentary, such as religious, journalistic, and political ones? Should theories be privileged? What is the difference between a theoretical story and another? (Richardson, 1991 according to Daly, 1997).

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Theories in the interpretive tradition are essentially "stories". Theoretical stories are interpretations and creations of meaning that enable the theoretician to make sense of the stories of the research participants (first-class stories) and the theoretician's own experience of living in and being a part of these stories. Thus, theory, like any other form of narrative, is a structure that shapes meanings and determines consequences. First-rate stories are locally narratively based. A secondary story is an

interpretive commentary on those living stories. The scientific story is embedded in the lived and observed experience and language of social science. Calling a theory, a story confirms that it is a type of story (Van Maanen, 1988) shaped by the skill of the author, literary conventions and means (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994).

Within the traditional canons of positivist science, theory is a direct reflection of experience. Postmodernism, on the other hand, focused on the demands of intellectual, objective representations and the formation of a text that unites all the voices mentioned. At the most fundamental level, continuous observations of the subjective meaning of certain actions now become imperative. Scientists, who increasingly distance themselves from their own participation, become both research subjects and narrators. Theoretical stories and the experience of stories are rooted in culture and based on cultural understanding, which implies the simultaneous subjectivity of both theorists/researchers and participants. Theory is therefore transformed from a single voice, a single echo, towards a multi-voiced conversation (Daly, 1997).

Objectivity also has a significant place in theoretical formulation. One way of achieving this appropriateness at the theoretical level is to involve participants in theory building processes. The logical consistency of the presentation is one of the most prominent features that separates the objects of scientific thought from the thought objects constructed by common-sense thinkers in everyday life. Theoretical accounts are therefore more understandable when they are written in a logically consistent manner. When it comes to postmodern theory in the interpretive tradition, it is ordered as both generated and generative. By entering "self" into a scientific text, we encounter what Geertz (1983) refers to as the blurring of genres - humanistic and scientific models, and when subjectivity becomes an equally important part of the text, the result is something between quasi-scientific and quasi-humanistic. Moreover, the theoretical form is based on a combination of systematic observation, personal experience, and a complex sense-making process. In postmodern science, theories should not possess privileges and inviolability. There is an opinion according to which this science is "subjective, idiosyncratic, ambivalent, conflictual, related to inner life and related to experience that cannot be measured, tested or fully shared" (Krieger, 1991, 2, according to Daly, 1997).

Thinking of theories as second-rate stories affirms the importance of theory in interpretive science and reshapes our thinking about theory by keeping the storyteller in it. According to Daly, keeping theorists "in the game" is the basis of producing science with integrity. How else can we expect to support the position that our methods imply the active involvement of persons, and theories do not? (Daly, 1997).

According to Stewart, researchers' "slide" towards an ontology in which the actor's perspective becomes "truthful", and ethnographic demands tend to understand these multiple truths. Through their writing, postmodernists demonstrate an approach to a

multiple representation of reality, which, however, did not answer how certain knowledge was acquired. The answer to this question leads to the method. It is the method that helps in getting to know the real world. Thus, the main contribution of postmodernism, specifically the contribution to the ethnographic method, is found in sensitizing readers to the existence of multiple perspectives, including ethnographic ones (Stewart, 1998).

The postmodern epistemological challenge at that time, therefore, does not only concern the connection between the observer and the observed, but also the relationship between the ethnographer-author and the ethnographic text. Ethnographic orientation must include true description and a systematic methodology analogous to reflexive awareness. In the wake of these considerations, while respecting all the resulting variability of criteria, Richardson (2000) discusses the judgment of ethnography with the help of two criteria: scientific and artistic. Postmodern, as it has been pointed out, anew "awakens" the processes of collecting and reporting results and brings new challenges within the discipline as well as boundaries of ethical, aesthetic, theoretical and empirical foundations. As a result, many ethnographers no longer wish to be distant, neutral, distant, and related to this, to practice traditional ethnography. Richardson welcomes the blurring of genres, the complexity of writing, the blurred boundaries between "fact" and "fiction", "subjective", "objective truth" and "imagination". It unlocks the door and gives freedom to the personal search for different possibilities of manifestation, and at the same time warns of the need for greater self-awareness in relation to authorship, authority, truth, validity, and reliability. The new way of writing opens a discussion regarding the criteria for evaluating ethnographic work - new or traditional. Traditional ethnographers are concerned about how their work will be received and whether it will violate the norms of ethnographic writing. Ethnography, namely, is always created through research practices. Richardson points out the requirement for the continuous formation of new criteria, as well as new parameters for selecting the criteria themselves. She believes in "maintaining" the entire ethnography in accordance with high and demanding standards. In doing so, Richardson singles out five criteria that she herself uses when judging ethnographic articles or monographs: Substantive contributions - do the texts contribute to the understanding of social life? Does the author demonstrate the deeper foundations of the human world of understanding and perspective? How do these perspectives affect the construction of the text? 2) Aesthetic merit: are the parts aesthetic enough? Is the text artistically designed, satisfying, complex and boring? 3) Reflexivity: how was the information obtained? Ethical problems? How is the author's subjectivity both the producer and the product of the text? Is there appropriate self-awareness and does it open the reader up to decision-making? Do the authors consider themselves responsible according to the standards of knowledge and narrations of the participants? 4) Impact: Does it affect me? Emotionally? Intellectually? Does it produce new questions? Does it encourage writing? Does it encourage new research practices?

Does it encourage action? 5) Expression of reality: does the text embody the feeling of lived experience? Is it experienced as a true/credible representation of culture, society, individuals, or "reality"? Finally, creative art is one prism through which we see the world and analytical/scientific is another, and attention is drawn to the fact that we still see the world best through both lenses (Richardson, 2000).

5. Conclusion

The question of the position and role of theory within ethnographic research, that is, the positioning of theory within qualitative methodology, is the subject of many discussions.

Ethnographers usually have no dilemma when diverging and abandoning a particular theory. When the data no longer "feeds" the theory, and it no longer proves to be a useful guide within the research, it is simply abandoned. The concept of theoretical description is also problematized, which according to critics lacks an element of distinctiveness, especially when it comes to explicitness and coherence, so one of the solutions is found within the proposal of the so-called dense descriptions.

Discussion based on the order of knowledge in the context of postmodernity and ethnography in ethnography itself manifested itself within a reflexive turn. The problems of representation and legitimacy of knowledge are revisited. The guiding perspective now becomes doubt. Dominant values, perspectives, and prejudices are questioned as sources of ethnographic research. It is about the deprivileging of texts, critical scepticism and knowledge, and the establishment of re-questioning of the relationship between oneself and others. The researcher's identity as an objective observer is placed in the background, and a narrative turn occurs as a kind of criticism of traditional ethnography. Ethnography enriched with postmodern sensibility brings new insight into newly established social relations and structures. Postmodern also implies the abolition of traditional forms of theory, but this does not mean the end of theorizing activities in ethnography. Postmodern ideas bring a critical awareness of what it means to "do ethnography" as a form of social science.

Finally, one of the main contributions of postmodernism to contemporary ethnography, which can also be seen as one of the contributions of this paper, is to sensitize the reader to the existence of multiple perspectives, which implies the multiplicity of ethnographic perspectives through the transmission of diverse experiences. Basically, postmodernism has awakened the problem of data collection and reporting, brought challenges within the existing rules of the discipline and the boundaries of ethical, aesthetic, theoretical and empirical foundations. Some of the directions of future theoretical and methodological efforts can therefore be directed towards the analysis of the positioning of the theory in relation to the postmodern turn and within a wider disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary context.

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