

## The Process of the subject constitution in J. Habermas and J. Piaget: an interdisciplinary perspective

O processo de constituição do sujeito em J. Habermas e J. Piaget: uma perspectiva interdisciplinar

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### Abstract

Habermas (1983) establishes a homology between the theory of cognitive and psychic development of the human being, by J. Piaget, and the development of society. According to Habermas, the process of decentralization of the self, present in Piaget's theory of evolutionary stages, would have an equivalent in the civilizing process, that is: sensitivity and rationality present a growing process, expanding its area of action to increasingly comprehensive social forms.: the family, the tribe, the city, the nation. Finally, it would reach a universal form. In this aspect, Habermas' thinking is currently and heuristically relevant in the reading of contemporary society, while other authors of classical sociological theory have evident limitations.

**Keywords:** Constitution of the subject; Psychogenesis; Sociogenesis; Global society; World citizenship.

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### Resumo

Habermas (1983) estabelece uma homologia entre a teoria do desenvolvimento cognitivo e psíquico do ser humano, de J. Piaget, e o desenvolvimento da sociedade. Segundo Habermas, o processo de descentralização do eu, presente na teoria dos estágios evolutivos de Piaget, teriam um equivalente no processo civilizatório, isto é: a sensibilidade e racionalidade apresentam um processo crescente, ampliando sua área de ação para formas sociais cada vez mais abrangentes: a família, a tribo, a cidade, a nação. Assim, finalmente, atingiria uma forma universal. Nesse aspecto, o pensamento de Habermas resulta atual e heurísticamente relevante na leitura da sociedade contemporânea enquanto que outros autores da teoria sociológica clássica apresentam limitações evidentes.

**Palavras-chave:** Constituição do sujeito; Psicogênese; Sociogênese; Sociedade global; Cidadania mundial.

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## 1. Introduction

The writing of this text had a singular genesis that led me to consider some contemporary authors who, apparently, do not have an explicit connection with J. Piaget and J. Habermas. Among the new authors revisited, I want to highlight Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2006), Norbert Elias (1995), Pierre Bourdieu (1998) and Jacques Delors (2003). It has also been an enriching process with respect to the knowledge of Jürgen Habermas himself (1983) because, at the beginning, his book for the reconstruction of historical materialism was the main reference that supported my reflection. However, reviewing his original work "Theory of Communicative Action" and, later, his text "Knowledge and Interest", expanded my understanding of the author, the recognition of his relevance and actuality<sup>1</sup>.

This article is divided into five moments or sub-themes that, in my view, help to make a fruitful and happy reading.

1. The new paradigm of Boaventura de S. Santos and the importance of rethinking the world.
2. Invitation to reflect on contemporary society.
3. The subject constitution process in J. Habermas and J. Piaget.

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<sup>1</sup> The author of this article is unaware of the reformulation of the theoretical proposal that J. HABERMAS published in 1999 with the title: "Truth and Justification" De Oliverira (2012).

4. The subject constitution process in modern and contemporary authors.
5. Some paradoxes in the process of constitution of the subject in today's Society

The final considerations include an appreciation of the heuristic value of Habermas' work in the reading of contemporary society, the enumeration of some theoretical perspectives excluded in this text, a very brief epistemological reflection based on the idea of the Polish physicist Jacob Bronowski, and, finally, a proposal of expansion of the new paradigm presented by Boaventura de Sousa Santos. The latter may seem too audacious for some readers, but I trust in the ability that we all must participate creatively in the construction of a more comprehensive and, however, always unfinished discourse.

### **1.1 The new paradigm of boaventura de Sousa Santos and the importance of rethinking the world**

“Rethinking the world is changing the world<sup>2</sup>” was the phrase that a student of the Social Sciences course at the State University of Ceará (UECE) wrote on the whiteboard in the second academic period of 2002. He taught the discipline Sociology of Latin America. In the study of the process of formation of Latin American Nations, we took as a basic reference the books of two renowned authors: Carlos Fuentes and Eduardo Galeano. Respectively the works: *The buried mirror* and *The Open veins of Latin America*.

This idea could be considered by skeptics as naive, but my contact with the thought of Edgar Morin, through reading the book: *Science with conscience*, carried out between 2007 and 2008, in the Complex Thought Research Group, coordinated by Professor Dr. Ailton Siqueira, from the Department of Social and Political Sciences at the State University of Rio Grande do Norte – UERN, allowed me to understand that “a new system of thought can significantly contribute to social change<sup>3</sup>”. Later, I taught the Monograph Seminar subject to students of the seventh period of the Social Sciences course at the same University and, in a text of my own, entitled *The Dimensions of Being and The Dimensions of Knowledge*, I had the audacity to say that the dimensions of being and the dimensions of knowledge were similar insofar as knowledge is constituted as being, that is, as part of being.

At the time, I had already achieved a better understanding of one of the seminal ideas of G. F. Hegel in the work *The Science of Logic*, in which he states that, if the determinations or qualities of being allow us to name them differently, it is in the relations between them that the being is constituted as such. I only had to add, assimilating in a particular way, the thought of E. MORIN and, to a certain extent, also of F. Capra, the fact that the discourse on reality also constitutes it.

Finally, thanks to meaningful conversations with my colleagues at DCSP, I had the privilege of reading Boaventura de Sousa Santos' text entitled: *A Discourse on Science*. In it, SANTOS (2006) mentions the four elements that constitute what he calls the “new paradigm of science”. These principles are well known in the academic world, but it is worth remembering them in order to go beyond them, without questioning the relevance and timeliness of the author's thinking. Let's see:

1. All knowledge is self-knowledge.
2. All-natural scientific knowledge is social history.
3. All scientific knowledge aims to become common sense.
4. All local knowledge can reach the level of being considered global.

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<sup>2</sup> At that time, I already knew the documentary by J. Arthur Baker “The power of a positive vision of the future” and the affirmation of one of the books of the Old Testament: “As a man thinks, so is his life.”

<sup>3</sup> “There will be no transformation without a reform of thought, that is, a revolution in the structures of thought itself. Thought must become complex” Morin (2005 p. 10).

## 2. Invitation to a Reflection on Contemporary Society

Herbert de Souza, “Betinho”, well-known Brazilian sociologist, expresses the challenge and opportunity of society contemporary in these words: “The result of the last hundred years of experience forces us to radically review everything: market, state, society, and their relationships. It forces us to question all theories, institutions, and strategies in the light of a simple, elementary, central, and decisive question: how to build a planetary, egalitarian, participatory and solidary society that can place the fulfillment of basic needs at the center of its dynamics. of every human being, regardless of gender, ethnicity, sex, or age? How to place human development at the center of all actions of all human beings and their institutions; how to generate the world culture of human development? (Souza, 1994 p. 45).

Betinho's statement invites us to reflect in a radical way, beyond any local, regional, or national specificity. It leads us to recognize the universality contained in each locality or nation, confronting us with the uni-duality of the local and the universal. The recognition of this reality, of this new social scenario, also leads us to think about a new historical subject. A subject who fully asserts himself in the exercise of world citizenship.

The most recent experiences of creating blocs of nations and the experience of the United Nations (UN) itself constitute part of a general trend that would lead to the constitution of a world state, parallel to the development of a civil society, also of a global nature<sup>4</sup>.

Some indications anticipate the path that humanity must follow in its inexhaustible process of development and renewal, in which national states are framed in a new context: regional blocks of nations in the medium term, and the world state, in the long term.

In a similar way as the national states, they developed in Renaissance Europe, constituting several projects of nations, such as England, France, Holland, Italy, and Germany. Humanity today perceives with some degree of difficulty the need for a community of autonomous nations, with a universal auxiliary language, a legislative and judicial system, as well as a global executive.

In this context, as already mentioned, the UN, despite its current limitations, represents, through its various bodies, an important process of development of political, cultural and solidarity institutions that anticipate, in an embryonic way, associations and forms of government. corresponding to a Civitas Universal<sup>5</sup>.

The perception of the new situation generated in postmodernity is beyond the orthodoxy of historical materialism and structural functionalism in contemporary sociology. Only a new and inspiring vision makes it possible to understand the development of human society in a holistic way. This new vision understands the history of economic, political, and military processes, so characteristic at the time of the formation of nations, as an integral part of the evolution of the human spirit, in the general process of planetization<sup>6</sup> of social life. The consideration of such an important and complex subject in no way forgets the difficulties and obstacles in this long path of unification of humanity.

Racism, excessive nationalism, social injustice in international relationships and within each country, the lack of an auxiliary universal language, religious fanaticism and the cultural backwardness of millions of human beings who live in poverty, in addition to discrimination against gender, constitute the most evident difficulties. However, in addition to the

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<sup>4</sup> An excellent presentation of this theme can be found in the book by Brazilian sociologist Renato ORTIZ: “Globalization and Culture”. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1998. Other authors deal with the same subject - in a less systematic way - however relevant, among them: Ware (1982); King (1991); Bronowski (1992); Naisbitt (1994); Capra (1995); Hofman (2001); Friedman (2007); Santos (2013). An audacious and moving presentation on the subject can be found at <http://thrivemovement.com>

<sup>5</sup> Effendi (1973), citing Bahá u lláh, states: “...do not look at each other like strangers’ ones. You are the fruits of a tree and leaves of the same branch... The land is only a country and humanity, its citizens... Let no man boast of what he loves your homeland, rather boast that he loves his seeds”.

<sup>6</sup> Ortiz (1998) Seeks to establish the difference between the following concepts: Internationalization; globalization and *worldering*. According to Renato Ortiz, internationalization reveals a process of commercial expansion - typical of colonialism- Globalization is a new economic organization of the world based on corporations and, finally, *worldering* is understood as the cultural expression of a process that intends to become a standard world in terms of lifestyle. On the other hand, the concept of planetization is used by several authors in a more general sense, as a totalizing process that includes civil society and the state at a world level.

difficulties mentioned, at the beginning of the 21st century we can already see a new social order that will fully unfold in the future. We have the unique privilege of witnessing the beginning of a new spring in the history of human society. On this important subject, Vernaskiv, quoted by E. Morin at the beginning of chapter IV of his book *The Seven Knowledges Necessary for The Education of The Future*, says:

For the first time, man really understood that he is an inhabitant of the planet and, perhaps, he should think and act in a new aspect, not only as an individual, family or genus, state, or group of states, but also under the planetary aspect. 2001, p. 64).

### 3. The Process of Subject Constitution in J. Habermas and J. Piaget

The path taken by the development of sociological paradigms reflects the most recent societal and scientific advances. Jürgen Habermas, from the Frankfurt School, represents <sup>7</sup>the most systematic and rigorous effort to establish a solid base of what could be called interdisciplinary sociology. The critical theory of society in Habermas incorporates both the knowledge or diagnosis of contemporary society and its plan for therapeutic transformation, at cultural and systemic, structural and personality levels. Habermas incorporates in his speech elements of the classics of sociology Durkheim, Marx, Weber, and the psychology of J. Piaget.

In the work: *Towards the Reconstruction of Historical Materialism*, Habermas (1983) revisits the Marxist theory of modern society trying to transcend its limitations. According to him, Karl Marx puts aside the ethical or normativity problem considering that it – normativity – is a natural result of the material development of society. Let's see: If I insist on this theme, despite its still insufficient degree of explicitness, it is because I am convinced that normative structures do not simply follow the line of development of the production process, but on the contrary have an internal history.

According to the author, K. Marx enters the game of instrumental - systemic - rationality characteristic of modern science. The understanding of modern society represented by Marxism lacks, therefore, a development of the ethical question. According to Habermas, the lived world formed in inter-subjectivity, which he calls communicative rationality, has a certain autonomy and its own laws that allow it to act on the system and the world of work, represented by instrumental rationality.

Habermas (1983) relies on Jean Piaget to develop a theory of social evolution. It establishes a homology between the theory of the cognitive and psychic development of the human being – psychogenesis – by Jean Piaget<sup>8</sup> and the development of society.

**Table 1 - Child's emotional and cognitive development process according to Jean Piaget**

AGE	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	11 and older
Emotional Development (Psychogenesis)	Symbiotic	Egocentric	Socio-Centric	Universalist
Cognitive Development Process	Sensorio-Motor	Pre-operational: Language Development	Concrete Operations	Universalist

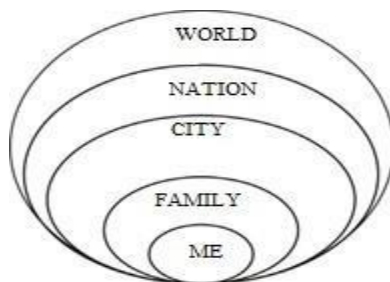
Source: Authors.

<sup>7</sup> The Frankfurt School was led by Theodor Adorno (1903-199) and Max Horkheimer (1983-1973) Authors of the work: “Dialectics of Enlightenment” (1947).

<sup>8</sup> According to Piaget, human psychogenesis follows a consecutive path through four stages of emotional development: symbiotic, egocentric, sociocentric and universalistic. A path that is accompanied by a parallel process of cognitive development: sensorimotor; pre-operational; concrete operations; abstract operations. Jean Piaget (1896-1980) was a biologist and dedicated his life to submitting the child's process of acquiring knowledge to rigorous scientific observation; From the study of children's conceptions of time, space, physical causality, movement and speed, Piaget created a field of investigation that he called genetic epistemology - that is, a theory of knowledge centered on the natural development of the child.

According to Habermas, the process of decentralization of the self<sup>9</sup>, present in Piaget's theory of evolutionary stages, would have an equivalent in the civilizing process, that is, sensitivity and rationality present a growing process, expanding its area of action to increasingly comprehensive social forms: the family, the tribe, the city, the nation, and eventually attain a universal form. A new state, perhaps, of a multinational character, and finally worldwide, would be established because of this process.

**Figure 1** – Decentralization process of the Self according to J. Piaget.



Source: Authors.

In the theory of communicative action, considered his greatest contribution to sociological theory from the analysis of language, Habermas develops the concept of communicative rationality as a fundamental aspect in the process of constitution of the subject. Communicative rationality is built from the inter-subjectivity of subjects, a result of “lived experiences. The lived experiences presuppose the construction of a language that allows establishing rules for reading speech and discourse with which consensus can be reached<sup>10</sup>.

This rationality is opposed to instrumental rationality, which represents the interests of the economy and the political or state system (De Oliveira, 2001). According to Habermas, in primitive society the lived world predominated over the system and economic and political problems were organized and guided by the normative rationality of myths and beliefs, by the values that emerged in the world of interaction.

**Figure 2** – System predominance over the lived world according to J. Habermas.



Source: Authors.

<sup>9</sup> “These quick observations are only meant to suggest the heuristic fecundity of the assumption that there are analogies between the structures of the Ego and those of world images: in both dimensions, development evidently leads to a progressive decentralization of the system of interpretation and a delimitation increasingly univocal of the subjectivity of inner nature in face of the objectivity of external nature, as well as the delimitation of the normativity of social reality and the intersubjectivity of linguistic reality”. Habermas (1983).

<sup>10</sup> The theory of communicative action advances towards an ideal dialogue in which the different discourses could express themselves transparently in the search for consensus that would find a new epistemology of normativity. The normative world would result from communicative action through consensus once interference in intersubjective communication is eliminated. Contrary to rational action in relation to ends, communicative action orients, among other things, towards the respect of intersubjectively valid norms. De Oliveira (2001).

In modern society, on the contrary, the system prevails over the normative world or human interaction. As a result, the human being is alienated and impoverished by instrumental rationality. It is therefore a question of re-establishing the balance between the system and the lived world. For Habermas, the current social crisis results from an excessive presence of instrumental rationality in individual and collective life. It is up to sociology to make the diagnosis of modern society by identifying the pathologies or structural and personality crises of contemporary capitalism. It is necessary to develop a social therapy and a strategic plan for structural changes that complete and harmonize the inadequate relationships between instrumental rationality and communicative rationality, between the system and the lived world.

#### **4. The Subject Constitution Processes According to Modern and Contemporary Authors**

##### **The Classics of Sociology**

To begin, I consider it opportune to clarify that the meaning given in this text to the expression constitution of the subject, has a historical-social bias and, therefore, I will speak of the processes of construction of the subject not in a general sense, but of a historically determined subject, that is, the protagonist of contemporary society. Society by some authors called “post-modern or post-industrial” and, by others, network society or global society. When considering the discourse of classics and contemporaries of sociological theory, I assume that the individual-society relationship is also understood as the relationship between the subject and society, in the sense that the individual is assumed as a historical and social subject<sup>11</sup>.

In the 19th century, the consolidation of the capitalist production system and its social, political, and cultural expressions in Europe will provide the elements that will serve as the basis for the emergence of sociology as a science. Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) developed his work in a scenario of great crisis in France. Just remember the Franco-Prussian War and the annihilation of the Paris Commune (1870-1871). This is a period in which poverty and unemployment walked side by side with the great technological progress and the growth of industrial production in Europe, causing the strengthening of workers' associations and organizations, as well as the outbreak of strikes and the intensification of struggles. social. Émile Durkheim's concern is with the social order. Tomazi (1993).

The basic element for Durkheim, social integration, appears in his work through the concept of solidarity, which allows the functional articulation of all elements of society. For the French sociologist, society prevails over the individual. Homologating the concept of individual to the concept of subject, we will have the transliteration that the subject is shaped by society. Society constitutes the individual. Society is, for this author, a set of norms of action, thought and feeling that do not exist only in the consciences of individuals, but are constructed externally, that is, outside the consciences of individuals. In other words, in life in society, the individual is faced with rules of conduct that were not directly created by him, but that exist and are accepted in life in society and must be followed by all the individuals who constitute it. Tomazi (1993).

Following this reasoning, Durkheim states that the social facts - the object of study of sociology - are precisely these collective rules and norms that guide the lives of individuals in society. Such social facts are different from the facts studied by other sciences because they originate in society and not in nature. These social facts have two basic characteristics that will allow their identification in reality: they are external and coercive.

Another important concept for Durkheim is that of institution. For him, an institution is a set of norms and rules of life that are consolidated outside the subjects and that the generations transmit to each other. The family, church, army, school, and business are examples of these multiple institutions. Thus, for Durkheim, it is society, as a collectivity, that organizes,

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<sup>11</sup> The expression historical subject has been the object of two fundamental theses throughout history: the individualist thesis and the group thesis. The individual as subject is the traditional thesis... History is a sum of individual and free wills. There are circumstances that shape the development of these wills, but they are undoubtedly the most notable personalities that mark the historical course. The group as subject: from a certain version of Marxism, social classes -mainly the proletarian class- were seen as historical subjects. FGV (1986).



conditions, and controls the actions of individuals. Institutions socialize individuals, make them assimilate the rules and norms necessary for common life. Tomazi (1993).

While for Durkheim the emphasis of analysis is on society, for the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) the analysis will be based on the actors and their actions: For Weber, society would not be something external and superior to individuals, like Durkheim. For him, society can be understood from the set of reciprocally referred individual actions. Therefore, Weber defines social action as the object of sociology. (Tomazi, 1993). Thus, Weber will say that whenever a significant relationship is established, that is: some kind of meaning between various social actions, then we will have social relationships. There is only social action when the individual tries to establish some kind of communication from his actions with others. Not all action, from this point of view, will be social, but only those that imply some meaningful orientation towards other individuals. Weber establishes four types of social action:

- a) traditional;
- b) affective;
- c) rational in relation to values and
- d) rational in relation to ends.

Both in the conceptualization of social action and in the definition of its different types, we can see that Weber does not analyze social rules and norms as external to individuals. On the contrary, social norms and rules are the result of the set of individual actions, with agents choosing, all the time, different forms of conduct. Collective ideas, such as the State, the economic market, and religions, only exist because many individuals reciprocally guide their actions in a certain direction. In this way, they establish social relationships that must be continuously maintained by individual actions.

The thinker Karl Marx (1818-1883) also contributed to the discussion of the relationship between the individual and society. Unlike Durkheim and Weber, he considered that the relationship between individual and society cannot be thought of separately from the material conditions in which this relationship is sustained. For him, the material conditions of the whole society condition the other social relations. Therefore, the study of any society should start from the social relations that men establish among themselves to use the means of production and transform nature. (Tomazi, 1993).

**Figure 3** – Predominance of productive forces over society according to K. Marx.



Source: Authors.

These social relations of production are the basis that conditions the rest of society. For Marx, therefore, production is the root of the entire social structure<sup>12</sup>. But his main objective was not to elaborate a general theory about society, but to study the society of his time, capitalist society. According to Marx, in capitalist society the social relations of production define two large groups within society: on the one hand, the capitalists, who are those people or subjects who own the means of production (machines, tools, capital, etc.) to transform nature and produce goods; and, on the other hand, the workers, also called, as a whole, in Marx's time as the proletariat, those who have nothing but their bodies and their willingness to work...

The production of capitalist society only takes place because capitalists and workers enter into a relationship. This type of relationship between capitalists and workers leads to the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist. Therefore, Marx considered that there was a permanent conflict between these two classes as historical subjects. Tomazi (1993).

Thus, the concept of class in Marx establishes a group of individuals who occupy the same position in the relations of production in each society. The class to which we belong decisively conditions our social performance. It is primarily the class situation that conditions the existence of the individual and his relationship with the rest of society. To end the brief presentation of these important authors of classical sociology, I want to return to the conclusions of J. Habermas in the book *Knowledge or Interest*. According to Habermas (2014), the type of sociological interpretation characteristic of the functionalist school represented by Durkheim seeks social control, differing from the Weberian perspective that seeks to understand the social action of individuals and Marxism, which have an emancipatory interest, that is, that is, to provide conceptual elements that will allow a process of emancipation of the subjects to be carried forward.

### **Paulo Freire and Edgar Morin**

Paulo Freire is best known as a theorist of the philosophy of education, but his pedagogical system is inspired by if in an ontological horizon of emancipation through dialogue with other men, dialogue mediated by the world. The human being is understood as a subject of history, as a “becoming”, and not simply as a passive object of the doing of others. In the thought of Paulo Freire, the human being is “an unfinished being conscious of his incompleteness and with an ontological vocation to be more”. Freire adds that “the human being is, par excellence, a being of action and reflection”. In the thought of Edgar Morin, “the human being is a complex synthesis of multiple uni-dualities: homo faber/homo ludens, homo sapiens/homo demens”. The concept of uni-duality is clearly expressed in the following maxim: “the human being is, at the same time, fully biological and fully cultural<sup>13</sup>”.

In the book: “Os Sete saberes...”, Morin deepens the various aspects of the human condition in contemporary society, particularly his idea of planetary consciousness<sup>14</sup>. On the other hand, it illuminates the reflection on the limitations of human knowledge in the title *The blindness of knowledge*. A unique presentation by Morin (2005) regarding a cosmic view of the subject can be found in item 9: “*Computo ergo sum*” - the notion of the subject - in the second part of his book: *Science*

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<sup>12</sup> “The general result at which I arrived and which, once obtained, served as a guideline for my studies, can be formulated in a few words: in the social production of life itself, men contract specific, necessary relationships independent of their will, production relations which correspond to a determined stage of development of its material productive forces. The totality of these relations of production forms the economic structure of society, the real basis on which a legal and political superstructure is built, and to which certain social forms of consciousness correspond. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political, and spiritual life. It is not the conscience of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, it is their social being that determines their conscience. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, or what is nothing more than their legal expression, with the property relations within which they had hitherto moved. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations become their shackles. A period of social revolution then survives. With the transformation of the economic base, an entire huge superstructure is transformed with greater or lesser rapidity”. (Marx, K. *For the critique of political economy*. In: *Philosophical Economic Manuscripts and other selected texts*. 2nd ed. São Paulo: Abril Cultural, 1978. Os Pensadores Collection, p. 129). Cited by Tomazi (1993).

<sup>13</sup> “The human is a being at the same time fully biological and fully cultural, which carries within itself the original uni-duality”. Morin (2001 page 52).

<sup>14</sup> “We can, however, explain our purpose: the search for hominization in humanization, through access to earthly data. for one organized planetary community.” Morin (2001 pg. 115).



with conscience<sup>15</sup>. In my opinion, Freire and Morin can be considered legitimate heirs of the Hegelian philosophy that is expressed in the following axiom: “What matters are not the determinations - or qualities - of being, but its relations” (Hegel, 1968).

### **Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu**

Norbert Elias (1897-1990) rejects the individual versus society dichotomy, understanding that both are produced by constant individual interactions in complex structures of social networks. In: *The Civilizing Process* (1994-1995) argues that the emergence of Western European civilization was the result of the long interaction between individuals in social networks that imposed patterns of self-control in sexual behavior, in war, at the table, etc. In other words, new social figurations emerge from the interaction between psychological dynamics (the feeling of shame and disgust in relation to barbaric habits) and social dynamics (explicit in the notions of refinement and civilization). According to Norbert Elias, historical processes occur through the interaction between changes in human behavior and in the personality structures of individuals (psychogenesis) and the emergence of theories of social development, state, and nation development (sociogenesis). Bourdieu (1930-2002) faced the subjectivism versus objectivism dichotomy with an approach called structuralist constructivist. It recognizes that social action is constrained or conditioned by social structures; these, however, are socially constructed.

A social action is structured by fields and agents are guided/coerced by the habitus incorporated throughout their life trajectory. Some of the concepts that expand the field of reflection on the social action of subjects are related to what the author calls symbolic/cultural capital. For BOURDIEU (1998), reality is built in the struggle of different interpretations, in the symbolic world -of language- The sociologist would have the function of revealing the meaning or hidden interests in the different representations. The social scientist, having a considerable symbolic heritage, could try to change the game in the world of representations, contributing to the transformation of society<sup>16</sup>.

### **J. Delors**

At the beginning of this article, I did not intend to consider the most well-known work Jacques Delors (2003), “Education: a treasure to discover”, but I ended up accepting that it was pertinent to try to establish a bridge with the thinking of J. Habermas. Delors' contribution, particularly Chapter IV entitled *The Four Pillars of Education*, is invaluable. Undoubtedly, learning to learn; learn to do; learning to live together and learning to be, are part of a broader process of constituting successful subjects in an increasingly complex, interconnected, and dynamic world.

These four competences can be formulated as levels that constitute the subject, as follows:

- Conceptual and scientific level
- Experimental and technical level
- Emotional, ethical, and aesthetic level
- Management and consultation level

The first two levels refer to the theoretical and practical dimensions in the process of construction and reconstruction of knowledge, that is, the mastery of the conceptual elements of scientific systems and the ability to operationalize this theoretical knowledge into effective practices in the experimental field. The level of operational competences also includes the domain of research processes and techniques in each area of the different disciplines. In fact, this creative convergence of

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<sup>15</sup> “The human being is both singular and multiple. We said that every human being, like the point of a hologram, carries within itself the cosmos” Morin (2001 p. 57).

<sup>16</sup> The sociologist is opposed to the dilettante (technician of opinion who considers himself a scientist) insofar as he calls into question evidence” Bourdieu, Pierre. *Counterfires*. Oeiras (Portugal): Celta, 1988.

theory and practice, through research, constitutes the stage for the development of technologies that can be appropriated by individuals, social groups and communities or even more complex societies.

The ethical level refers to the development of human values that guarantee professional integrity, such as: truthfulness, reliability, impartiality, equity, courtesy, sacrifice, love and service to humanity, the pursuit of excellence in work and the elimination of any prejudice of race, nationality, sex, religious belief, or political views. In turn, the administrative, management and consultation level seeks to promote interdisciplinary and group work, develop the ability to consider the various scientific problems in a holistic view and train subjects - future professionals - in decision-making through consultation.

## **5. Some Paradoxes in the Process of Subject Constitution in Contemporary Society**

The reading presented here would be unquestionably limited if it did not take into account the recognition that multiple processes of constitution of the subject coexist in contemporary society. These multiple processes happen simultaneously in a given society and, in many cases, can be divergent and even antagonistic. Let's look at the case of the peripheral populations of large metropolises such as Rio de Janeiro or Mexico City, where parallel processes of constitution of subjects develop in the city, such as neighborhood militias and drug traffickers.

From another perspective, we can also consider the indigenous communities of a country like Brazil or Colombia, or regions that can be considered nations within a larger nation, as in Spain: Catalonia and the Basque Country. It may happen that some subjects incorporate elements of different processes, a kind of cultural miscegenation, thus creating original arrangements. Therefore, we must be aware that there is no ideal process or universal validity, but multiple processes in this great cauldron of contemporary society that Effendi (1973) encompasses in the principle of unity in diversity.

Let's see:

Far from tending to subvert the current foundations of society, it tries to broaden its base, to mold its institutions in accordance with the needs of a world in constant change. It does not conflict with legitimate commitments or undermine essential allegiances. Its purpose is neither to suffocate the flame of a healthy and intelligent patriotism in the heart of man, nor to abolish the system of national autonomy so essential when seeking to avoid the evils of excessive centralism.

It does not ignore or attempt to suppress the diversity of ethnic origins, climates, history, language, and tradition, thought and customs that distinguish the peoples and nations of the world. It urges a broader allegiance, a yearning greater than any humans have ever felt. It insists on the subordination of national motives and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world. It repudiates excessive centralism on the one hand and rejects any attempt at uniformity on the other. Its motto is "unity in diversity". (Page 22-23). In other words, Morin (2001) also reaffirms this principle<sup>17</sup>.

## **6. Final Considerations**

If rethinking the world led us to recognize a new scenario, in which a new historical subject acts in contemporary society, certainly, Habermas' work provides us with better elements for a comprehensive interpretation of the ongoing globalization process. This process is faced by the theories of classical sociology with a certain degree of difficulty, either as a result of the conceptual limitations of the prevailing paradigm, based on the triad:

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<sup>17</sup> "Those who see the diversity of cultures and tend to minimize or hide human unity; those who see human unity tend to regard cultural diversity as secondary. On the contrary, it is appropriate to conceive of unity that ensures and favors the diversity that is inscribed in unity" MORIN (The Seven Knowledges, p. 57).

- a. growing process of bureaucratic rationality,
- b. constitution of nations, and
- c. in the development of productive forces or, in the case of some contemporary authors, by epistemological reservations that they have not sufficiently clarified.

Several and relevant processes of subject constitution are left out in this article, such as: genetic, psychological, legal, religious, aesthetic, etc. Also, numerous authors, such as Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) and Robert K. Merton (1910-2003), recognized representatives of the functionalist theory; Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) and Louis Althusser (1918-1990), from the Marxist side; and George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) and Ervin Goffman (1922-1982), representatives of Symbolic Interactionism. No less important are Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) and Charles Wright Mills (1916-1962) from the Weberian branch. Finally, Zygmunt Bauman (1925-2016), without a doubt, cannot be ignored<sup>18</sup>.

About an epistemology of knowledge, I want to bring to light the reflection of the Polish physicist Jacob Bronowski (1992) for whom “the scientist's method is the artist's method” in the sense that everything text is an approximation to the full apprehension of the reality. For this reason, every text is a pre-text, that is, it is never finished, complete, also because it can reveal the author's interests and reflect the influences of the social scenario in which it is produced.

Therefore, the new scientific paradigm of Boaventura de Sousa Santos can be reformulated in a way to consider some new elements:

1. All knowledge is self-knowledge.
2. All-natural scientific knowledge is social scientific.
3. All knowledge aims to become common sense.
4. All local knowledge can reach the level of global knowledge.
5. All knowledge of reality constitutes it.
6. All knowledge expresses a level of ignorance.
7. All knowledge is passionate - it presupposes interests.
8. All knowledge embodies analytical and synthetic thinking.
9. All knowledge presupposes a methodological and epistemological perspective.

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<sup>18</sup> Emeritus Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman was born on November 19, 1925, in Poznań. In the early 1970s, he took on the position of full professor at the University of Leeds, where he came into contact with the intellectual who would profoundly inspire his thinking, the Icelandic philosopher Jí Caze. Sociological studies allow him to reflect on the anguish that reigns in human feelings, emotion awakened by the rush to find the perfect partner, always kept as an ideal goal, never as a concrete reality. Dissatisfaction is therefore constantly present in the sphere of human affectivity. People want to interact, seek the experience of affection, but do not want to commit. It is what Bauman calls liquid love, experienced in a universe marked by fluid bonds, which do not remain, do not tighten, disobey the law of gravity, that is, the absence of weight. Bauman believes that relationships for two cannot unfold apart from the social scene, from the rules of the game established by global society. For the sociologist, the fluidity of bonds, which marks contemporary society, is inevitably inserted in the very characteristics of postmodernity.

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