



The process of making the worker through the schools of Sociology of Work

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Abstract

The article examines the process of worker production through four main schools of thought in the Sociology of Labor. The Functionalist School, through Durkheim and Parsons, analyzes how work, although leading to anomie and egocentrism due to specialized division, can at the same time promote social inclusion through organic solidarity and informal social norms. The Microsociological approach and the Chicago School focus on everyday informal relations in the work environment, emphasizing the importance of participation, social networks and trust, with Simmel underlining the tendency towards apathy due to money. Max Weber, finally, emphasizes the interpretive understanding of work, proposing that the worker is included in work based on social, cultural and ideological factors, with the "spirit of capitalism" providing the moral background for modern work culture. A common thread in all approaches is the concept of the "tacit employment contract", that is, the informal, socially mediated agreement that explains why and how a person remains in his job.

Keywords: Sociology of Work, Effort made, Implied employment contract, DurkheimParsons, Chicago School, Simmel, Max Weber, Karl Marx, Functionalist school

Import

The most important problem with industrial labor is that it has managed to break down the institutions and bonds of solidarity found in pre-capitalist communities and replace them with a modern ideology of self-interest, through the development of concepts such as property and competition.

Chapter 1: Functionalist School: Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons

Another essential parameter of change, for Durkheim (1984), is the specialization of labor. He believes that the specialized division of industrial labor is what pushes people to the knowledge of a single object and thus forces them to act based on individual interest, in order to entrench their invented uniqueness (Durkheim 1984). With this mechanism, access to labor, the stratification of tasks and professions, and the lack of understanding of needs among people develop.

However, as for Adam Smith (1999), so too for the French positivist, work, as a situation, has a partly positive aspect: work can also function as a social space / factor in the creation of a well-ordered society, without conflicts (Durkheim 1984). In the broader functionalism of things, Durkheim (1984) "sees" the integration of people into work as a potential integration into a new mechanism of "solidarity", this time "organic" and not "mechanical" as in pre-capitalist communities. However, while this organic solidarity is inevitable, it is not "innocent", since due to the non-rational

way in which the division of labor is carried out, the integration of people into industrial labor produces and reproduces social "anomia", that is, dysfunctional social relations (Durkheim 2000). (For clarification, here we should emphasize that for Durkheim, anomia does not concern a legal term, but is a situation in which the individuals of a society are not in a position to perceive themselves as part of the functioning of a social whole).

For Durkheim (1984), the tacit employment contract is achieved through the sense of selfish interest promoted by the industrial division of societies in modernity, that is, through lawlessness. The belief in a life without the need for solidarity bonds between people nurtures individuals who define their daily lives and work on the basis of selfish interest (Durkheim 1984). The need for personal progress and development offered by modern ideology entrenches people and creates that consensual condition in which someone is pushed and remains in their work, protecting their personal existence within the workplace (Durkheim 1984). However, the lawlessness that promotes the tacit employment contract for Durkheim (1984) is not exclusively a product of modernity. Both in the mechanical solidarity of communities and in the organic solidarity of societies, man is led and conformed to a task: through tradition and customs in the community, through social relations, behaviors and selfish interest in society (Durkheim 1984).

Durkheim's (1984) belief in a new kind of solidarity - the "organic" - offers the reader the feeling that another kind of tacit labor contract can be achieved, this time from the optimistic side of a French theorist. That is, that the person remains in his work and participates in the personal and collective effort, through the social integration he experiences upon entering the workplace. The importance of work as a space of social integration and reproduction is also found in neo-functionalists, such as Parsons (1970), but also in the School of social interaction.

Parsons (1970), although a theorist of macro-models and high levels of theoretical abstraction, within the holistic "systems" of one-off functions that he constructed to describe societies and human action, included in his theory a series of factors that interpret the "system" of work with subjective, non-rational and non-objective elements, based on the way in which one is integrated into work. With the also known as "AGIL paradigm", Parsons (1970) speaks

- a) about social norms that construct people's "idea" of adaptation to work before they enter it (Adaptation)
- b) for goals that are constructed and set before or after entering the workforce and that define in advance the requirements of both employers and their future employees, and vice versa (Goal Attainment)
- c) for the need to be able to integrate into various social groups - systems, of colleagues, employers, competitors and to survive in them, in order to feel secure that they can continue working and being in production (Integration)
- d) for the informal terms that the employee is called upon to negotiate daily, within an indistinct network of power, relationships and interests (Latency).

Parsons (1970) with AGIL severely criticizes the representatives of the idea of economic needs in work, as he explains that the worker never reaches the threshold of work without considering anything beyond the salary he desires. On the contrary, an entire system of ideas and traditions, which have little to do with economics, constructs the criteria and expectations of man for work, while even when he joins it, the networks of adaptation that he is going to encounter, are not specific to economic factors, but concern social, cultural and other informal stakeholders (Parsons & Smelser 1984).

Thus, the implicit employment contract for Parsons (1970) is achieved from the outset within the social norms created by society's perceptions of future entry into work, but much more through the person's effort to be adaptive, so as to combine his goals with the informal networks of interests he encounters at work and in which he must participate. The person's stay at work and the degree of effort he makes are the result of the informal factors that bind him to join a system of values - as if he does not make this commitment, the system has the ability to "exclude" him (Parsons 1970).

Chapter 2: Microsociological Approach – Chicago School

For the microsociological approach, integration into work, the context of integration and people's interpretations of their work are seen more through the prism of social relations and networks of the respective field of work development (Savage & Alan 2005). Quite earlier than Robert's distinction Merton (1938) for "explicit" and "implicit" social relations, both the speaker of microsociology Georg Simmel (1993) and the Chicago School will focus their studies on the everyday and mainly informal networks that people form, inside and outside of work.

According to Simmel (1993), the relationships that develop in an environment such as the workplace are rational in the sense of interest ("intellectualism" or "dominance of the intellect"), while at the same time they constantly interact and crystallize meanings and institutions (Gagas & Kalfopoulos 2004). The relationships are secondarily economic or formal, but much more they are relationships of trust, which can at any time strengthen or weaken basic components of work, such as, for example, efficiency or the development environment (Gagas & Kalfopoulos 2004).

At the same time, Simmel (1993) "sees" money in modernity as the driving force for giving meaning to work: never before has a 'means' such as money taken on so radically and so relentlessly the character of an absolute final 'goal' (Gagas & Kalfopoulos 2004). For the German philosopher, the tendency of modern people towards the executive nature of the monetary economy (internalization of the philosophy of money) gradually makes them apathetic characters: initially towards the things around them, then towards others and finally towards themselves (Simmel 1993). The dominance of the Blaise character in modernity, that is, the man who has ceased to react to the stimuli around him (Simmel 1993), together with the power of the monetary philosophy seem to constitute here the central components of the tacit labor contract. On the one hand, the apathy of modern man towards everything and on the other hand, the "absoluteness" of the economic purpose, maintain and strengthen people's stay in their work and their will to make an effort within it - always in combination with the informal social contracts / relationships that develop daily in the city and the factory (Savage & Alan 2005).

The Chicago School (Savage & Alan 2005) will attach great importance to the human relationships that are established in a factory. According to its studies, in contrast to economic approaches, the motivation to work and the strengthening of the personality of the worker are achieved much more through the latter's participation in the production process or decision-making, than through economic practices. This is because work, if examined at a spatially defined micro-level, will be found to contain informal and subjective forms of network organization of interests, which result in the entrenchment or integration, the exclusion or grouping, of some against others (Savage & Alan 2005).

Here, the tacit employment contract is achieved more through the sense of participation in a space or an organization of people, such as the workplace. However, as Parsons (1970) points out, this need for participation is not necessarily real - as Durkheim (1984) may have believed-, but may also be the result of the forced and imposed effort on the person to integrate into the informal network of interests that is presented at work, in the interest of personal survival, something that even Weber (1978) would agree with, as he considered that "people's interests construct their ideas and not the other way around" (Watson 2005).

Chapter 3: Max Weber

The German sociologist, attributing enormous importance to the influence that labor relations have on society, tries to introduce the terms "interpretation", "understanding" and "social action" into the study of labor (Weber 1978). Since, in fact, he considers that the phenomenon of labor is impossible to study separately from the social context in which it is realized, he sees the relationship of the above concepts within a dialectical scheme: man transforms at all times his experiences and experiences into actions and ways of survival and vice versa (Weber 1978).

According to Weber (1978), in order to understand work, one must first investigate how someone ends up practicing a profession and, moreover, how, once in this profession, he interprets his place in work and society. Work may contain a framework of economic quantities and concepts - profit, sales, losses, salary and balance sheet -, however, for Weber (1978), the way in which it is carried out mainly contains social criteria, ideological and cultural. The social aspect of work, which

Weber (1978) invites us to penetrate in order to understand it, cannot be explained if the scientist does not include in his analyses the institutional/legal framework in which it occurs, the mores and customs of the society in which it takes place and the interpretations of its people.

Specifically, for Western culture, he will note that work is materialized on the ethical/ideological basis of an accepted rational capitalism that structures society as a whole on the dominant idea of a philosophy of profit (Weber 2006). This philosophy is based both on its cultural context ("breaking down the structures that constitute traditionalism"), and on its institutional one ("its development by the state and its employees") (Weber 2006).

Weber (2006) was the first to identify that the social legitimization and development of industrial labor required, above all, a moral basis, a "spirit," for societies to move from their traditional form to the new life model of modernity. This spirit, as a goal or "calling" that transcends any other idea, cannot be removed from the investigation of the way in which people understand and interpret their work (Weber 2006). For Weber (2006), even the rationality that he identifies in every "action" or "relationship" that concerns people's work does not exist as a priori natural property, but it is seen socially and examined in the context in which it develops.

In the case of Weber (1978), the tacit employment contract acquires a real theoretical substance, through his suggestion of an accepted ideological basis that defines and presupposes things. Since he invites us to observe how the worker himself gives meaning and understands (verstehen) (Weber 1992) the value of his work and how he acts on it, the more general "spirit" or "calling" of the new capitalist era is what lies behind his actions and pushes him to find and remain in work (Weber 2006). The values, expectations and aspirations that he forms in the course of his life in combination with the more general ideological basis that these will be achieved "since he is worthy of achieving them", constitute the main factors that achieve the informal consent of the worker to make the daily effort to work. Weber's (1978) contribution to the concept of the tacit employment contract is also demonstrated by the fact that his neo-Weberian followers will later be the ones who, together with the neo-Marxists, will bring its concept and significance to the theoretical and research forefront.

Chapter 4: Karl Marx

For Marx (1976) industrial relations are relations of inequality, and as such they are examined throughout his work. Although he, like Adam Smith (1999) and Emile Durkheim (2004) considers that "labor" constitutes a unique human property to transform nature and fulfill his human existence (Marx 1989), however he is quick to distinguish it from "wage employment" or "hiring of labor" (1976). According to Marx (1976), industrial labor for him is a new relation of social inequality that, while replacing older forms of exploitation, also places the individual within one or more labor markets, with novel consequences for man and his social reproduction.

Thus, since for Marx (1976) labor is a social process identical to human nature (Watson 2005), industrial labor can only be "a distorted abstraction" of the innate human capacity to work, as the conditions and structures of this labor oppose the falsified nature. The violent imposition that labor power received, according to Marx (1976), during industrialization as it was transformed from a human capacity to transform his environment, to the ability of the capitalist to exploit it in order to develop further capital, brings problems both to labor itself and to society at large. Advocating with Adam's position Smith (1999) that industrial work pushes man towards a routine which he tends to experience uncritically and that in a society the division of labor also reflects its social relations, Marx (1976) focuses his criticism on the very process of labor production, industry and its social consequences.

Marx's (1976) analysis, "capital", "capitalism" and the "production process" are not abstract concepts, but relationships. Unequal relationships that the person working in industrial employment experiences with his employer. The employer owns the capital and the means of production, while the worker is forced to sell his labor power to ensure a living from the work offered to him. Furthermore, the employer requires the worker to work more than he or the industry needs, in order to produce the required capital, thus extracting

surplus value from him . value) of his labor (Marx 1976). For Marx (1989) the result of this relationship is the “worker”, his construction.

The worker, according to Marx (1976), does not exist, he is constructed. He is constructed precisely through this relationship he acquires with wage labor (Marx 1976). He is the result of an asymmetric economic, political and social power that has been exercised over a specific human force, the labor force - since in order to reach the factory he has lost the freedom of his labor, that is, his capacity to produce based on his abilities, his desires and his experiences (Marx 1976). The worker, for Marx (1976), is the result of the production process and not its beginning or means. A process that begins long before man enters industrial labor. A process that ideologically constructs / prepares the worker for his inclusion in wage labor, that is, for the purchase from the employer of availability and free time, in exchange for a defined place of activity and tasks (Marx 1976).

The worker constructed by industrial relations has as his main characteristic the fact that he is not able to enjoy the value of his work, since he controls neither the means nor the final product (Marx 1976). In contrast to the “anomie” that Durkheim (2000) posed as a problem , for Marx (1976) the problem of industrial production is the alienation/alienation of people. Their alienation or alienation

- a) by the nature (of their work and the human one)
- b) other people (inside and outside the workplace)
- c) the product produced (whether they participate in its manufacture or not)
- d) d) themselves .

The social result of this process, for Marx (1976), is the legitimization of the process itself. The construction of industrial production and the industrial division of labor “naturalize” the historically and socially constructed class structure of capitalist societies and their unequal social division - and vice versa (Marx 1976). Thus, what he considers to be the most important achievement and problem of capitalism and industrial labor is achieved: the reproduction of labor and capital - while he foresees the solution of the problem exclusively through the fundamental conflict generated by the very one-sided inequality of capitalist relations (Marx 1976).

The tacit employment contract in Marx (1976) is also a result of alienation. Alienation constructs the false consciousness of the worker, the one that does not allow him to see his proletarian position and come into contact with his work. The false consciousness in turn gradually gives rise to the “faith” in work, as something inevitable, even beneficial. The result of this process is the consent and acceptance of control for people even before they enter the workplace. To this consensus, Marx (1989) responds again with his belief in a future rupture, through the acquisition of true consciousness , which will come through the very process of production of labor - thought, for the contradiction of which he has been severely criticized by liberal thinkers, such as Popper (2003).

Epilogue

The article examined the production process of the worker through four main schools of thought in the Sociology of Labor. The Functionalist School, through Durkheim and Parsons , we showed that it focuses on how work, although it leads to anomie and egocentrism due to specialized division, can simultaneously promote social inclusion through organic solidarity and informal social norms. On the other hand, we saw that the Microsociological approach and the Chicago School focus on everyday informal relationships in the work environment, emphasizing the importance of participation, social networks and trust , through informal and invisible networks of power. Max Weber , as well as Karl Marx, we have seen that as the proponents of radical theories in the Sociology of Labor, they emphasize the interpretive understanding of work, proposing that the worker is included in work based on social, cultural and ideological factors, with the "spirit of capitalism" providing the moral background for modern work culture, but also social inequalities being legitimized through this spirit. What we have seen , ultimately, is that the characteristic that connects all approaches is that the concept of the "tacit labor contract", that is, the informal, socially mediated one , is the one that manages to answer the question of why and how a person chooses a profession and becomes trapped in it.

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