

Thinking About Crime: A View Through the Lens of Social Reflexivity

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Abstract:

This research article aims to analyse social and personal processes within the framework of the theory of social reflexivity, in order to understand different types of personal and social behaviours related to social reflexivity that play a role in the interaction between structure and agency in the creation of criminal behaviour from a postmodern perspective. The article focuses on the theory of social reflexivity as developed by Anthony Giddens and discusses how this theory can be used to understand crime and social deviance. Through these cases, the reconciliation between competing theories of reflexivity in ongoing action and temporary strategies of behaviour guided by consciousness can be understood. Anthony Giddens has played a pioneering role in the social analysis of the interaction between structure and agency. We also attempt to discuss his methodology, highlighting some of the limitations of the theory as well as the additions and contributions it has made to the study of social origins, socialisation and the ongoing reproduction of social projects of knowledge, vigilance and distance.

Keywords: Interaction, social construction, social theory, social reflexivity, crime.

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1- Introduction:

In an ever-changing and dynamic world, individuals and communities are constantly faced with multiple and diverse challenges. To meet these challenges, individuals and communities develop new ways of thinking and acting in accordance with the needs of life and society. This ongoing process of change and development is an aspect of social reflexivity. The theory of social reflexivity suggests that social ideas and behaviours influence social reality, while social reality reflects and influences social ideas and behaviours. This means that individuals and communities are not only products of the social structure, but also actively shape it. Anthony Giddens played a pioneering role in developing the theory of social reflexivity by arguing that structure and agency are interactive and mutually influential. Individuals and communities can influence social structure through their ideas and behaviours, and social structure can also influence individuals

and communities through the constraints it imposes on them. Social reflexivity thus becomes a useful tool for understanding social and personal processes, helping us to understand how individuals and communities affect each other and how social reality can change.

In the field of criminal sociology, the theory of social reflexivity can be used to understand the role of the interaction between structure and agency in the production of criminal behaviour. Social structure can contribute to crime by creating conditions that lead to crime, such as poverty and unemployment, while agency can contribute to the creation of crime through individual behaviour.

On this basis we ask the question: **How do social and personal processes interact in shaping social structure, agency, social reality and criminal behaviour?**

2- The concept of Reflexive Sociology:

Reflexive sociology is a project developed between 1930 and 2002 by the French thinker Pierre Bourdieu to systematically understand the nature of society by understanding the self as part of it. Rather than pretending to be a scientific and neutral explanation of sociology, reflexive sociology seeks to acknowledge its practical, interesting and controversial immersion in social reality and its problems. The reflexive project is essentially a project of self-social interrogation, recognising that our worldview is largely shaped by our position within it, and that social reflexive concerns about the nature of knowledge are manifested in attempts at social explanation. (Susen, 2007: 133)

3- Knowledge and Reflexivity: The normative foundations.

Reflexivity forms the normative foundation of reflexive sociology, if only because it enables individuals to see society and themselves as an integral part of it. Therefore, reflexive sociology is not only the study of society in general, but also the social study of the foundations of society. (Bourdieu, 1976 :104)

Reflexive sociology seeks to distinguish itself from 'mainstream' sociology in three main ways: by defining itself as a project of scholarship, vigilance and distance.

4- Reflexive Sociology as a Scientific Project:

Reflexive sociology is the scientific study of society. Sociology is seen as a scientific endeavour in itself. Social sciences, according to Bourdieu, can be defined as the methodical attempt to uncover the fundamental mechanisms that causally determine the constitution and evolution of the social world. Reflexive social sciences see themselves as part of the social world. Thus, sociology is a study of the social and through the social. The interpretive power of sociology as a science derives from its reflexive ability to withdraw from its inevitable immersion in society. The scientific ambition emphasised by the social sciences is not a denial of the synchrony 'about

existence' and 'in existence' of society, but, on the contrary, a methodological attempt to understand the complexity of this immersion (Bourdieu, 2000: 29).

Reflexive sociology is the scientific endeavour to understand society by becoming immersed in it. The reflexive understanding of social 'reproduction' involves sociologists consciously immersing themselves in society. The strength of this science lies in enabling individuals to think critically about their integration into society. Reflexivity is understood as a scientific capacity rather than an intrinsic capacity of the subject (Bourdieu, 1980a: 7-8).

5- Reflexive sociology as a project of vigilance:

It refers to the study of social activity with constant vigilance. More precisely, it insists that the objective view of sociology must be objective in itself. Thus, sociologists need sociology itself, because the social analysis of the social world is structurally dependent on the position of sociology in the social world.

Expressing reflexivity within society requires dismantling its status in the social universe.

Through critical self-awareness, the background of sociology can be highlighted and competence can be shaped. The subject is empowered by the power of mental vigilance, which must be accompanied by constant self-criticism. The reflexive tendencies of sociologists reveal their special status in the social world for studying social conditions in order to produce social works.

In 2021, a study entitled "Criminal Behaviour of Neighbourhood Gangs in Algeria as a Psychological Approach" examined the phenomenon of criminal behaviour among neighbourhood gangs, particularly their involvement in drug trafficking and distribution. This particular type of criminal behaviour focuses on the role of women in transporting and concealing drugs or distributing them in university residences, nightclubs, hotels, schools, and educational and training institutions (Lazazga, 2021: pp. 54-55).

Therefore, reflexive vigilance is practised as a continuous self-reflection and a form of psychological analysis of behaviour with a scientific spirit.

6- Reflexive Sociology as a Project of Distance:

Reflexive sociology as a project of distance conceives the study of the social as a critical project that is not only carried out as a science accompanied by vigilance, but is also achieved through cognitive distance. Essentially, this cognitive distance in Bourdieu's sense is achieved through two cognitive ruptures:

First, it entails a separation from the ordinary world view, and second, it entails a separation from the school's world view. In the first, Bourdieu emphasises the scientific nature of reflexive sociology, which emphasises the social embeddedness of reflexive sociology. This double cognitive rupture is thus contradictory in that it seeks to question two conditions of reflexive

thought, namely being in the world and being outside the world. Ordinary existence in the world represents the anthropological foundation of human life, which is unavoidable, while existence outside the world represents the normative foundation of human reflexivity. However, it is possible to go beyond this.

Reflexive sociology is a simultaneous attempt to navigate both unreflexive commonality and avoidance of transcendental distance. Reflexive sociology seeks not only to distance itself from much proximity, but also to distance itself from excessive distance. To understand the contradictory nature of this endeavour, we need to look more closely at the relationship between ordinary knowledge and scientific knowledge. The reflexive sociological problematic of this relationship is based on five cognitive assumptions (Susen, 2007: 135)

First: the distinction between ordinary knowledge and scientific knowledge is not only a conceptual difference but also an existential one.

Ordinary knowledge is an integral part of everyday life, governed to some extent by practical common sense. Scientific knowledge, on the other hand, is rooted in the plurality of critical thought, guided by reflexive theoretical orientation. In short, the distinction between ordinary knowledge and scientific knowledge must be made because they represent two completely contrasting forms of knowledge.

Secondly: it is argued that the distinction between ordinary knowledge and scientific knowledge should not be merely a hierarchical qualitative distinction. The superiority of scientific knowledge over ordinary knowledge lies in its distinctive quality of being free from the illusions embedded in its practical application. In other words, the mediating reflexivity of scientific knowledge is no longer limited to the immediate spontaneity of ordinary knowledge. The ordinary must be displaced by the extraordinary in order to achieve a reflexive distance from the mundane proximity of everyday life. (ibid:136)

The superiority of scientific knowledge lies in its ability to question what is taken for granted. Scientific knowledge surpasses ordinary knowledge because the former has the capacity to foster critical distance in dealing with the ordinary world, while the latter tends to endorse complicity driven by immersion in the ordinary world.

Third: according to this hierarchical distinction between ordinary knowledge and scientific knowledge, the latter should be given decisive priority. The task of scientific knowledge is to free itself from the illusions of logical assumptions that permeate the taken-for-granted everyday (ibid:136).

In sum, reflexive sociology, as a project of distance, seeks to navigate beyond unreflexive commonality and excessive distance. It seeks to establish a reflexive distance by challenging the ordinary and freeing itself from the illusions of practical application. The distinction between

ordinary knowledge and scientific knowledge is not only conceptual but also existential, with scientific knowledge possessing the capacity for critical reflection and distance from the ordinary world.

Fourth: the distinction between ordinary and scientific knowledge reveals their different social functions. Whereas scientific knowledge embodies the enlightening task of revealing the hidden, ordinary knowledge embodies the vital function of reinforcing the social order. It not only enables the reproduction of the social, but also makes the existence of the social order possible in the first place. Reflexive sociology does not seek to abolish the ordinary, for the ordinary is inevitable. However, reflexive sociology assumes that this inevitable function of ordinary knowledge is precisely what should not be relied upon.

If the primary function of ordinary knowledge is to make social order possible, then the central function of reflexive scientific knowledge is to allow us to question that very possibility. Thus the essence of the ordinary is the unconsciousness of consciousness, the unenlightened 'to be enlightened'. Social life can only be thought on the basis of the unthought. In short, ordinary knowledge is more fundamental than scientific knowledge because it forms the functional basis of social existence (Susen, 2007: 137).

Fifth: it is assumed that the distinction between ordinary and scientific knowledge is based on the non-structural analogy between the ordinary actor and the social researcher. The cognitive distinction between the ordinary and the scientific derives from the objective gap between ordinary individuals, whose social actions are guided by natural instincts, and reflexive sociologists, whose task is the problematic intersection of sound judgement and social action.

The cognitive contrast between ordinary knowledge and scientific knowledge is rooted in an objective gap between socially disadvantaged and privileged actors. This assumed non-structural asymmetry has profound consequences for the theorisation of the social, as it presents the social itself as an unremarkable, non-reflective condition, while sociology is presented as a distinguished, reflexive case. In short, the cognitive difference between ordinary knowledge and scientific knowledge is embodied in the objective gap between socially disadvantaged ordinary individuals and privileged social researchers.

In terms of knowledge and practical application, moving from the philosophy of knowledge to the sociology of knowledge means recognising that knowledge is always socially embedded. Even the most abstract notion of scientific knowledge cannot escape its structural dependence on the tangible reality of social practice. Reflexive sociology seeks to show that different forms of practical application produce different forms of knowledge. Thus, epistemology must be understood as social cognitive theory if it is to move beyond mere theoretical contemplation.

Bourdieu's attempt to reveal the intimate relationship between knowledge and practical application is evident in the concept of 'doxa' within a particular social formation. The more

stable the objective structures are and the more they are fully reproduced in the actions of the actors, the greater the scope of 'doxa', which is taken for granted. This is because self-necessity and self-evidence in the realm of common sense are validated by objective consensus. What is essential is taken for granted because it is taken for granted by the self-reinforcing nature of objective structures. The commitment expressed in the ideological relationship to the social world is the absolute form of legitimation through the misrecognition of arbitrariness (Bourdieu, 1980a: 43-45).

7- Knowledge and practical application:

Moving from the philosophy of knowledge to the sociology of knowledge means realising that knowledge is always socially embedded. Even the most abstract scientific thought cannot escape its structural dependence on the tangible reality of social practice. Reflexive sociology seeks to show that different forms of practical application produce different forms of knowledge. Thus, epistemology must be understood as social cognitive theory if it is to move beyond mere theoretical contemplation. Bourdieu's attempt to uncover the intimate relationship between knowledge and practical application is manifested in the idea of 'doxa' in a particular social formation. The more stable objective structures are and the more they are fully reproduced in the actions of agents, the greater the scope of doxa, which is taken for granted because of the self-necessity and self-legitimacy of the world of sound logic, verified by objective consensus. What is taken for granted is taken for granted because it is tradition. The commitment expressed in the religious relation to the social world is the absolute form of recognising legitimacy in spite of the false recognition of arbitrariness".(Bourdieu, 1972: 165-166)

8- The debate about reflexive sociology:

The debate about reflexive sociology is essentially a debate about the nature of the social sciences. Likewise, the debate about the nature of any scientific social project is always a debate about the specific frame of reference in which it appears. Reflexive sociology can be seen as a direct response to a context in which the social sciences appear fundamentally divided by a misguided but powerful opposition. "Of all the conflicts that artificially divide the social sciences, the most essential and destructive is that between subjectivity and objectivity". As a critical science of the social world, reflexive sociology sets itself the task of "overcoming the contradiction between these two patterns of knowledge while retaining the advantages of each" (Bourdieu, 1990: 43).

Reflexive sociology seeks to transcend this contradiction in order to expose the artificial methodologies and counterproductive results that divide the social sciences, using the compelling and constructive insights of each. The centrality of Bourdieu's endeavour to overcome the binary divisions within the social sciences is no exaggeration, as is repeatedly emphasised in the literature.

9- Social reflexivity: Anthony Giddens.

In recent years, reflexivity has become a popular concept in the social and human sciences. However, what falls under the umbrella of reflexivity is diverse. With the use of reflexivity somewhat inflated in the social and human sciences, Martin O'Brien (1999) noted that the concept of reflexivity is used in a confusing way, much like the concept of lifestyle, as it encompasses areas of social theory, research ethics and qualitative social research in general. (Simburger, 2014: 57)

The concept of reflexivity in academic discourse can have different meanings. Lynch and Woolgar (1988) referred to it as 'foundational reflexivity' and 'benign reflexivity'. (Lynch; Woolgar, 1988: 99-116) Bruno Latour (1988) discussed reflexivity as "reflexivity above the red" and "reflexivity below the red". (Latour, 1988: 155-176) Bourdieu (1992) referred to it as 'objectifying reflexivity'. (Bourdieu; Wacquant, 1992) Tim May (1999) coined the terms 'conjunctural reflexivity' and 'referential reflexivity'. (May, 1999: 184-192) Scott Lash (1994) referred to it as 'cognitive reflexivity', 'aesthetic reflexivity' and 'interpretive reflexivity'. (Stanley, 2000: 71)

It is important to note that these forms of reflexivity are not entirely distinct. In academic work, the idea of reflexivity is a blend of reflexive aspirations in practical work across all dimensions of academic life. It is a feature of all human activity and a condition of modernity, where thought and action are always linked. (Giddens, 1990: 3)

Giddens describes the existence of pre-modern or traditional societies in which a separation from established customs and values, i.e. acquired behaviour, is a key feature of modernity. Today no one judges our personal development or our lives except ourselves. There is no such standard that anyone in the modern age can claim to hold us to, and there is no such value or ethical law that is universally established to apply to everyone without question. On the other hand, in traditional societies, or the influence of tradition on the future, Giddens points out that repetition plays an important role. "The past we are talking about is more common than the individual... any context of abolition of traditions provides greater freedom of action than existed before - we are talking about the liberation of people from the shackles of the past. In traditions, the past constitutes the present through shared beliefs and emotions. (Giddens, 2005: 61)

A comparison can be made between trust and risks (threats and uncertainties) in pre-modern (traditional) and modern times in terms of their general context. Giddens emphasises the difference between pre-modern and modern eras specifically through the dialectical relationship between trust and risk. It is important to see the points of difference between them in order to better explain the differences between premodern and modern societies in general, especially in terms of social reflexivity.

In pre-modern civilisations, reflexivity was limited to reinterpreting and explaining traditions. In modernity, however, reflexivity takes on a different character. Daily routines and everyday life are not inherently tied to the past. Traditions can be justified, but only in the context of inertia or habit (Giddens, 1990).

In modernity there is a break with traditions and traditional systems. Giddens rejects evolutionary theories and tries to define the discontinuity more precisely. He notes that certain social forms have not been found in any previous historical period. Modernity is multidimensional, incorporating institutions and elements from different traditions (Marx, Weber, Durkheim).

Giddens disagrees with explanations of postmodernity, such as Jean-François Lyotard's interpretation. Lyotard believes that modernity creates grand narratives that people accept as absolute truths. Giddens, on the other hand, argues that modernity undermines all certainties. All knowledge is open to question and likely to be revised. This is particularly evident in the social sciences, especially sociology, which Giddens sees as the most important mode of thought in modern social life (Giddens, 1991:2).

Modern society and reflexivity are intertwined concepts.

Modern society is 'reflexive', meaning that it is increasingly capable of self-directed action.

This is very different from "natural societies" where there is a direct relationship between the individual and the sacred realm through tradition.

In modern society, the individual separates from the sacred and a self-producing, self-regulating and self-organising system is created in its place. The dissolution of limited societies and their rigid rules gives individuals the freedom to choose their own lifestyles, but it also forces them into reflexivity, the "striving" for consciously guided behaviour. As Michel Foucault sees it, this is the flip side of the "existential insecurity" that the chaotic yet organised processes of globalisation bring (Giddens, 1999:74).

"Beck" argues that we need to free ourselves from established social perspectives and consider the dynamics of extreme risk and the globalisation of modern institutions. "Ulrich Beck, like Giddens, is concerned with the reflexive modernity of the risk society. The idea of "Beck" and "Giddens" is a reflexive idea of modernity as opposed to simple modernity, which is just another name for industrial development and can be understood as a predictable process that can have evolutionary or revolutionary characteristics. Industrial growth is accepted as a healthy development. The basis of "Beck's" work is the transition from the first to the second modernity, i.e. the transition from simple modernity to reflexive modernity. The idea of reflexive modernity can be understood as an updating of the update or extremism of modernity, which dissolves the premises and foundations of industrial society. (Beck, 2001)

This late modernity not only brings the comfort of commodity wealth and the dominance of instrumental scientific-technical rationality, but also opens up opportunities for individual critical thinking about these changes and their social effects. (Beck, 1992)

The advance of social reflexivity in reflexive modernity means that 'individuals have no choice but to choose what they are'. (Giddens, 1994:126; Kalanj, 2000:32)

There are also interpretations that rely on the presence of reflexivity "always" and change it only in the sense of increasing our interpretive possibilities, i.e. the possibilities of understanding. "We can understand that this world is made up of our traditional and reflexive practices. And I think this is a fundamental point in understanding our society and the nature of reflexive modernity. Reflexive modernity is nothing but the theory of structuration".

In summary, Giddens' concept of structuration theory aims to bridge the macro and micro aspects of social analysis. In reconfiguring the concept of structure, Giddens draws on contemporary sociological movements known as "the return of the self" or "the return of the actor".

In a study entitled "Women's Crimes in Algerian Society: The Crime of Murder as a Case Study," the comprehensive and partial social analysis provided a framework for understanding the interaction between individual and social factors faced by women in terms of mental health, psychological disorders, aggressive behaviour, domestic violence, physical and psychological abuse, disrupted family relationships, poverty, unemployment, social marginalisation, whether they live in rural or urban areas, that shape their criminal behaviour. (Mazouz, 2018: 30-67)

In structuration theory, we can observe the beginnings of reflexive individualisation, or at least a shift towards individualisation in a different way than before, where the self is given a significant or very minimal role. This theory actually represents a rupture in the dichotomy between partial and total structure. Giddens argues that the distinction between the partial and the total is not particularly useful, but that their integration is useful, criticising purely partial or total theories. According to structuration theory, the primary field of study in the social sciences is not the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of some form of societal totality, but the social practices governed by time and place. (Giddens, 1984)

Structure is not external to actors, but exists within memory and social practices. Consequently, it is possible to avoid being controlled by structure. The presence of unintended consequences is also important. Human actions can lead to unintended consequences, which can act as a feedback mechanism on the action itself. Even though these conditions may be beyond human control, individuals still strive to exert control over them. According to Giddens and racial method scholars, actors are never products of culture, but knowledgeable and capable agents who reflexively monitor their actions. "The constitution of actors and structures is not independent of each other; the characteristics of social systems are cultural products" (Ritzer, 1997: 391).

The agents (actors) perform routine operations, but they also have motivations for their actions, including desires that lead to reflexive monitoring and rationalisation. Vision is constantly involved in action, but motivations are often unconscious and unrecognised as reasons for action, although they play a significant role in human behaviour. Between Giddens' discursive and practical consciousness, the former is the ability to make things and is expressed in words, while the latter is what is usually done and is not expressed in words.(Giddens, 1984:17)

Structure refers to the structural features (rules and resources) that enable the "integration" of time and space in social systems, allowing similar social practices to appear in different temporal and spatial domains and to take on a methodological form. The essence of the theory lies in the idea of structural duality. That is, the formation of actors and structures does not represent a "duality", i.e. two independent sets of phenomena, but rather the duality of the structural features of social systems, where they are both means and products of practices that reorganise themselves. The moment of action is also a moment of reproduction in the contexts of daily performance in social life.(Giddens, 1984)

Structure is not external to the actors, but exists in memory and social practices. Therefore, it is possible to avoid uncontrolled structures. Unintended consequences are also important. Human actions lead to unintended consequences that can be a reactive force to the action itself. These conditions continue to elude human control, but we still try to control them. According to Giddens and racial methodologists, actors are never merely cultural products, but knowledgeable and capable agents who reflexively monitor their actions: "The formation of actors and structures is not independent of each other; the characteristics of the social community are cultural products".(Ritzer, 1997:393)

The system is seen as both means and products of the practices of actors, and these features of the system are organised in terms of feedback through the practices of the actors themselves.

Within the class model, Giddens identifies motives for action (which may be partly unconscious), practical reasoning (elaborated reasons for action) and reflexive monitoring of action (the actor's knowledge of what he is doing).

Rationality always involves discursive or verbal awareness, while reflexive monitoring may involve only discursive awareness or a combination of discursive and practical awareness. Giddens does not see social reality and societies as structures for discourse, but he does recognise that discursive and practical rules are fundamental to social order. He introduces the concept of 'rules as resources', similar to the concept of methodological rules, as a way of understanding social action and social structure and synthesising the two (Marshall, 1994: 205).

There are four types of reflexivity that Giddens discusses. The first two are:

9.1 Reflexive practices of observation: Giddens first introduces the concept of reflexivity by referring to the everyday observation of behaviour in which all members of society necessarily engage. Initially, his discussion of reflexivity was associated with the rationalisation of actions rather than the constitution of society (Giddens, 1993).

9.2 Simple institutional reflexivity: In pre-modern societies, the focus and intensity of institutional reflexivity was limited. Modern reflexivity establishes two new types of reflexivity:

a) Intensified institutional reflexivity: The intensity of institutional reflexivity increases with modernity, and in modern societies nothing escapes it, not even knowledge itself. The reflexive appropriation of knowledge becomes fundamental in this context.

b) Reflexive projection of the self: Giddens links modern reflexivity to the construction of the individual as a reflexive projection, which increases the individual's capacity to reflect on himself and to monitor his actions. It also increases the individual's ability to observe what they are doing, sometimes enabling them to modify or completely change their behaviour in the light of the 'knowledge' and expertise available to them. To be a reflexive actor is not only to be an actor aware of one's actions, but also to have a concept of personal identity. This concept is necessarily linked to the person's trajectory, life history, self-narrative and self-identity (Bryant; Jary, 2001: 13-14).

10- Reflexivity in Reflexive Sociology:

Reflexivity in reflexive sociology refers to the dialectical relationship between macro-level 'values' and significant methodological implications. This means that social research should focus not only on structures and systems, seeking cold causal explanations, but also on social action itself as manifested in diverse human behaviour. It also encompasses 'the outcomes of communication and interaction between individuals and their knowledge of the world as they seek to understand and interpret behaviour, while being aware of the weight of history in shaping the present' (Lydaki, 2012: 297).

The divisions that have historically existed between the interpretive (flexible) understanding of meaning and the scientific (rigid) interpretation are no longer acceptable. Humans, as externally determined and internally driven beings, create meaning (which cannot be predicted) and have the inherent ability to redefine it. It is also possible to provide logical evidence of patterns that help to explain and predict or deviate from the human construction of meaning. Selfhood does not have to preclude regularities, since different individuals feel their selfhood in similar ways about similar things (Thompson; Ellis; Wildavsky, 1990: xiii).

What is needed, then, is to conceptualise and shape the constructive and dialogical possibility of a culturally bounded sociology that is historically informed, theoretically expansive,

experimentally accountable, cognitively aware and seeking interpretive validity (Reed, Alexander, 2009: 36).

Furthermore, sociology resists any simplistic construction as a system based on a fixed or 'essential' frame of reference. In this sense, it is a system that needs to be continually achieved or reinvented in new contexts (Holmwood, 2009: 1-16).

Of particular interest is that the experimental responsibility of sociology means that the dialogue between selfhood (reflexivity), history, objectivity and mutual subjectivity does not (and should not) reduce existential questions to cognitive questions (as Kant did) or empirical facts to performative questions. It includes descriptions, interpretations, mental constructions, symbolic categories or abstract conceptual frameworks.

The American feminist scholar Donna Haraway (2004) argues that we must fruitfully combine "radical historical contingencies" with a critical reflexivity of language and a strong commitment to experimental accounts of the real world. This reflexive, dialogical stance sees "the subject of knowledge as a representative and an agent who allows the alignment of many perspectives, each larger and more coherent than its own" (Van Heertum, 2005: 5).

In reflexive and dialogical sociology, objectivity is reintroduced in a more reflexive and dialogical way. Rather than the disappearance of objectivity, a form of reflexive objectivity emerges in which research can adopt a position in which balance, fairness and reflexivity replace value-free criteria. Scholarship can then return to studying uncertainty rather than attempting to overcome it, thus reclaiming the central question of accountability for official responsibility. Researchers can acknowledge their biases and prejudices and, as far as possible, communicate them to the public. They can be transparent about their political goals and present a project for positive social change alongside the dominant orientation (Van Heertum, 2005: 14).

The interpretive task (or project) of reflexive sociology is both irreducible and dialogical. It requires addressing specific issues through comprehensive understanding and analysis, with a strong orientation towards the real world and relevant general problems. In this context, reflexive sociologists must always refer to the meanings of actors and their inherent capacity to deliberately reframe meanings as a necessary condition for the adequacy of any social account. (Holmwood, 2003: 7-58)

In conclusion, the study of reflexive social theory is proving immensely valuable as a useful tool for understanding social and personal processes in the modern world.

It is a dynamic and flexible theory that can help us to understand how individuals and societies influence each other and how social reality can change over time.

The theory helps us to understand social change and how it occurs. It also shows, explains and clarifies how ideas and social behaviour can lead to changes in social structure, and how that

structure can in turn lead to changes in ideas and social behaviour that result from the interactions of individuals and communities in different roles of agency that shape social and personal reality, where they are active factors in shaping reality rather than mere products of it.

The Conclusions:

The article discusses the interaction between structure and agency in shaping social reality. It argues that the interaction between structure and agency is a complex and intertwined process in which each continually influences the other. Structure and agency are two sides of the same coin, and understanding one requires understanding the other. Structure refers to the material and symbolic elements that organise society, while agency refers to the capacity of individuals and communities to act and influence social reality. The article suggests that the interaction between structure and agency can occur in two directions. First, structure can influence agency by imposing constraints on human behaviour. For example, laws and social norms can limit individual agency. Second, agency can influence structure by changing social ideas and behaviours. For example, social movements can lead to changes in laws and social norms. Structure and agency are complex and intertwined processes, with each constantly influencing the other.

The article also discusses the potential of reflexive social theory to help understand crime and social deviance as products of the interaction between structure and agency. Social structure can contribute to crime and social deviance by creating conditions that lead to criminal behaviour, such as poverty and unemployment. On the other hand, agency can contribute to crime and social deviance through individual behaviour, such as deviant behaviour and criminal acts. Understanding reflexive social theory is useful for understanding social and personal processes and how individuals and communities influence each other. It helps us to understand when and how social reality can change, including the propensity for crime and social deviance.

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