The Critical Theory Perspectives for Contemporary Analysis

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Abstract

Due to the divergency in the applicability of Critical Theory for the analysis of non-European contemporary social issues, this paper aims to investigate its effectiveness in social analysis. For this, it uses are the reconstruction of the Critical Theory of Habermas and Honneth, as well as its application in various studies. In the end it is possible to perceive the Possibility of using Critical Theory for social analysis, as well as the need for the continuity between Communicative Theory of Action Theory and Social Recognition for a better understanding of reality.

Keywords: Critical Theory; Jürgen Habermas; Axel Honneth; Sociological Theory

Introduction

In the Critique of Power [1], in a chapter devoted to analyzing Habermas's theory of society, Honneth presents what he judges to be flawed in the Habermasian diagnosis. Firstly, it explains how the view of a society divided into the world of life and the system as two autonomous spheres undermines social analysis, since it cannot grasp social reality as a whole, as it ignores that even the system is linked to social norms from the world of life. This problem, according to Honneth, comes from the tradition of Critical Theory.

Also, he points out that by following the division between world of life and system, he creates the idea that asymmetries of power originate in the system, with the world of life as something symmetrical in intersubjective relations; however, according to Honneth, the world of life also has power asymmetries that must be taken into account in the analysis.

Thus Honneth criticizes Habermas who, in doing so, misses the possibility of a critique of the reality of the system; likewise, it forgets to understand communicatively mediated reality as relationships that occur through conflict. According to the author himself

He not only gives up the possibility of a justified critique of concrete forms of organization of economic production and political administration. Habermas loses above all — and this again makes him heir to the tradition of critical social theory we have investigated here — the communication-theoretic approach he had initially opened up: the potential for an understanding of the social order as an institutionally mediated communicative relation between culturally integrated groups that, so long as the exercise of power is asymmetrically distributed, takes place through the medium of social struggle (p. 303) [1].

Still, according to Honneth, these problems configure what he calls sociological deficit, that is, they ignore the social action that exists between the system and the world of life. Therefore, the Habermasian analysis focuses on a rational logical construction that broadens the view of Adorno and Horkheimer, however, lacks feasibility when contrasted with the actual experience of individuals.

In trying to deal with the problems posed by the Dialectic of Enlightenment, however, not only did he ignore the asymmetries of the world of life, he also ignored, according to Honneth, that the system is also permeated by social relations and disputes that eventually shape it. Meaning:

What is common between the approach of communicative action theory and the dialectic of enlightenment is precisely the problem that had to be faced and which Habermas did not fully address: since Horkheimer's inaugural work, "Traditional Theory and Critical Theory", In this intellectual aspect, there exists a conception of society that has two poles and nothing to mediate between them, a conception of society between determinant and imperative economic structures and the socialization of the individual, without regard to social action as a necessary mediator. This is what Honneth calls the "sociological deficit of Critical Theory" (p. 15-16) [2].

However, this work aims, through the analysis of case studies, to demonstrate the Critical Theory as still valid for analysis of social reality, expressing the need for continuity between Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action and Honneth's Theory of Social Recognition.

Critical Theory: Between Habermas and Honneth

Habermas, attentive to criticism, seeks with the launch of Law and Democracy (1992), to answer these questions, giving the right the role of translator and mediator. Thus, actions of law can translate into the system communicative actions of the world of life and, in so doing, allow the world of life, which until then had only resilience to the system, to modify it. For "since law intertwines not only with administrative power and money, but also with solidarity, it assimilates, in its integrating achievements, imperatives of different origins" (p. 62) [3,4].

This new reading Habermas brings to the relation between system and world of life serves to explain, in his view, how these two aspects of social reality are linked, which is a response to Honneth's criticism of total separation, and also allows us to glimpse a possibility other than the colonization of the world of life by the system.

However, Habermas maintains the view of autonomy of both spheres and, therefore, maintains the origin of social pathologies. Since "as an organizational means of political domination, referred to the functional imperatives of an economically differentiated society, modern law remains an extremely ambiguous means of social integration. Very often the law confers the appearance of legitimacy on illegitimate power" (p. 62) [3].

That is, Habermas now understands law as a mechanism that can not only allow the influence of the world of life on the system, but as a way for the logic of instrumental rationality to enter and colonize the world of life. In this sense, the author maintains the autonomy of each sphere, as well as the origin of the pathologies of the world of life in the system.

Thus, the critical Honneth can be maintained, since the dualism maintained by Habermas ignores that system and the world of life are not completely autonomous, but keeps within itself aspects of communicative and instrumental rationality, so that the world itself the life has power asymmetries that cannot be explained by the state or the market. To this question Honneth himself offers a way out, the struggle for recognition.

Honneth follows Habermas in that he no longer considers it possible to be guided by metaphysical thinking, since the intellectual needs of the present time call for empirical proof; Thus, it seeks in Donald Woods Winnicott's Theory of Absolute Dependence and George Herbert Mead's social psychology for the means to reconstruct the young Hegel's theory of intersubjectivity into a post-metaphysical theoretical framework.

According to Honneth, Hegel creates a theory that correlates the creation of ethics with relationships between individuals, because it is only through these relationships that Hegel understands the formation of the Self, due to the need for mutual recognition. Thus, through a certain situation of disrespect, a fight for recognition would start, in which, from an intersubjective negotiation, the autonomy of the subject would develop, so that
Finally, the Hegelian conceptual model finds its theoretical closure in the third thesis, which claims for the series of three forms of recognition the logic of a formation process mediated by the stages of a moral struggle: in the course of the formation of its identity and each accomplished stage of communitarization , the subjects are compelled, in some way transcendentally, to enter into an intersubjective conflict, the result of which is the recognition of their claim to autonomy, which has not yet been socially confirmed (p. 121) [2].

This teleology, supported by Hegel for the development of reason, seeks empirical support, at first, in Winnicott. According to their research, autonomy in the individual is generated from a set of phases of disconnection between mother and child, stages that generate recognition of the other being as an individual, so that mother and child generate mutual recognition. Likewise, by perceiving the mother's care and respect for herself, the child is allowed a positive relationship with herself, generating self-confidence.

While it also seeks in Mead the naturalistic objectivity for ethical development and forms of recognition. According to Mead, the human being becomes aware of the world lived from conflicts. Conflict opens the possibility of understanding the action, once the individual becomes able to understand in himself the expectations of the generalized other regarding his attitude.

Being able to recognize the other as an object of group consideration, the subject also recognizes himself as a member of the group, and so begins the process of recognition. To this process Mead relates the concepts of "Me" and "I", both dialogical subjects in the subject's personality, representing the other's image of me, and the responses given to conflicts, respectively.

That is to say, "only insofar as it assumes the attitudes of the organized social group to which it belongs in relation to organized social activities based on the cooperation with which it engages, can it develop a complete identity and possess the one it has developed"(p. 136) [2].

In this sense, Honneth argues that Mead›s theory allows us to speak of recognition, since the subject not only recognizes the other from internalized social norms, but also recognizes himself as a member of a group that has expectations about him. «Mead 's own proposal is to speak here of a relationship of mutual recognition: 'It is this identity that can be maintained in the community, which is recognized in the community insofar as it recognizes others" (p. 136) [2].

Thus, it is possible to understand the importance of the community for social minorities, and the struggle not as the struggle of a group, but the struggle of all people for the right to be who they are, which is evident in the identity struggle's issues. So are groups that in recognition internal, search m external recognition from the standardization of acceptance, seeking reframe the social norms of non - recognition.

Understanding himself as a member of a particular group, the subject, according to Honneth's presentation of Mead, creates expectations about three areas which, as a member of the group, are expected to have access: The right, the affectionate dedication and the solidarity.

The law arises from the expectations of self-control due to the recognition of intersubjectively accepted norms, and the expansion in the sphere of acceptance occurs in two ways, the growth of their individual autonomy and that of self - respect. As a result, for Mead, social evolution occurs through the struggles for recognition, that is, in the search for the expansion of individual rights in both spheres.

That is to say, "in every historical epoch the accumulation of anticipations of extended relations of recognition accumulate again, forming a system of normative pretensions whose succession forces social evolution as a whole to a permanent adaptation to the process of progressive individuation" (p. 143–144) [2].

This process allows more and more the rights hall to be expanded, as well as to what types of individuals these rights can be extended; that is, it is the recognized expectation of having such rights, based on a group of shared values, that allows the subject to understand himself as someone of importance to the group, as Honneth, supported by Mead describes.

The practical understanding that such an actor has of himself, his "Me", will then be so constituted that he makes him share with other members of his collectivity not only moral norms but also ethical purposes: if he can be understood, in the light of common norms of action, as a person who has certain rights over all others, so in the light of common axiological convictions, he can be understood as a person who is of unique importance to all. (p. 152) [2].

Mead then, along with Hegel, presents the category of affective dedication, understood primarily as a relationship of intimate affection, comprising "love and friendship" (p. 157) [2], and the category of solidarity, which arises in more restricted groups, having the characteristics of universalist equality and the affective bond, where the subject is recognized for contributing as part of the group.

With this, Honneth makes clear his influences, and as he seeks in social psychology the empirical means of evidence of Hegelian thought, having, at the end of the investigation, the three spheres of validation of recognition: love, law and solidarity.

From the contributions of Sartre, Marx and Sorel, Honneth understands that the three had their insights deepened in the phenomena that accompanied the time, and that even though their conceptions were strongly grounded in the idea of conflict in the search for recognition, this concept did not spread. in the social sciences. This is so because the concept of social struggle retained the constitutive role in social analysis.

Thus, Honneth proposes to present a paradigm that reconstructs the links between the social struggle of social movements and the feeling of disrespect. And it intends to demonstrate this new paradigm with empirical evidence. Honneth, however, does not expect this model of struggle to replace the utilitarian model, but to complement it, since other reasons have historically been shown for the

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struggle to take place.

According to Honneth, the way social struggle takes place is from the moment it is generalized, that is, when it comes out of individual intentions and can become the basis of a collective movement. Thus, love would not be a feeling capable of generating a social movement, since the forms of love manifestation occur in primary relationships, that is, individualized.

By contrast, the forms of recognition of social law and esteem already represent a moral framework of social conflict, because they depend on socially generalized criteria according to their entire functional mode; In the light of norms such as those constituting the principle of moral imputability or social axiological representations, personal experiences of disrespect can be interpreted and presented as potentially affecting actions to other individuals as well (p. 256) [2].

Thus, in these situations, individual experiences can be understood in experiences of disrespect shared by an entire group, which can become motives that direct the actions of collective demand for the recognition increase.

In this sense, there must be in the group a semantic bridge capable of creating a collective identity, so that the unique experiences are shared with a common moral meaning. This common identity presupposes patterns of recognition of autonomous individual beings who, having expectations of recognition frustrated by society, trigger a moral sense of disrespect, expressed in a collective semantics that communicates the common identity of the group, which can become the basis of Resistance movement:

In this sense, the emergence of social movements depends on the existence of a collective semantics that allows one to interpret experiences of personal disappointment as affecting not only the individual self but also a circle of many other subjects. As George H. Mead saw , the doctrines or moral ideas capable of normatively enriching our representations of the social community fulfill the condition of these; for, along with the perspective of expanded recognition relationships, they open at the same time an exegetical perspective under which the social causes responsible for individual feelings of injury become transparent (p. 258) [2].

From this perspective, Honneth includes EP Thompson›s studies, which place everyday moral representations as motivators of resistance in capitalist industrialization, since what is bearable or not would be guided by the moral expectations of the subjects.

Still contributing to the same line of research as moral

expectations is Barrington Moore's idea of implicit social contract, realizing that the set of rules tacitly accepted by social groups that determine reciprocal recognition norms are capable of creating a sense of disrespect when violated, hurting the inherited identity of the group.

In addition to collective identity and resilience, the group also enables the subject to regain some of the self - respect lost at the time of denial of recognition, given that the group recognizes the individual in his or her way of life, which leads individuals, mutually, to the strengthening of esteem.

Honneth, then, establishes that these conflicts are generated by experiences of disrespect for the three forms of recognition - love, right and esteem -, added to the social conditions that allow the formation of semantically articulated movements for the struggle of recognition, thus seeking the reaffirmation of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem, in order to understand and be understood intersubjectively as an autonomous and individualized member within society.

Thus, the process of moral learning already outlined above is understood as the broadening of the patterns of recognition, and of the members to whom this recognition is given. In doing so, Honneth advances in relation to Marx, Sorel, and Sartre because
Only now are they embedded in the juridical relationship, with the possibilities of universalization and materialization, and in the community of values, with the possibilities of individualization and equalization, normative frameworks that can become accessible through the emotionally charged experience of disrespect and be claimed in struggles. resulting therefrom; The humus of these collective forms of resistance is prepared by subcultural semantics in which common language is found for feelings of injustice, referring, however indirectly, to the possibilities of broadening the relations of recognition (p. 267) [2].

In developing his theory of social recognition, as presented earlier, Honneth intended it to be tested for empirical evidence, precisely to meet the scientific standard of falsifiability as well as secondarily reproducibility.

That is to say, it was intended as a theory within the social sciences that was based on the mold of the scientific method, moving away from the wholly metaphysical path of Hegel's German idealism.

This may lead to consider how far the Theory of Struggle for Recognition proves to be a valid way of investigating social change, while researchers have contributed to the theory test in the empirical field. Like this,

In Brazil and internationally, discussions are being developed about the relevance, scope or adaptability of the Recognition Theory, which revolve around two main points: 1) the individualistic conception of autonomy and its implications on the understanding of the role of collective action in struggle for recognition; 2) the difficulties of theoretical and methodological operationalization of its conceptual system in empirical studies, associated, still, to the European or even German civic parameters, on which the author builds his notion of normativity (p. 36) [5].

To the first point, Honneth understands that the individual, at the moment of the struggle for recognition, is a collective subject, constructed intersubjectively so that his semantics is the semantics of the social group. The second deals with the possibility of applying the Theory of Recognition to the different realities of German society, where such a theory was formulated.

Critical Theory and Social Analysis

In a case study carried out in the Church of the Metropolitan Community of São Paulo (ICM-SP) (SOARES, 2019), there is a struggle against the deprivation of rights taking place both in the world of life, such as the theological disputes that occur on homosexuality, gender identities and roles; as far as the system is concerned, since this issue is brought into the sphere of legislation and politics, that is, Honneth's criticism is highlighted. Still, the denomination›s struggle is for the expansion of rights, seeking the acceptance of their way of life, that is, for the access of a group to the recognition of their claim to autonomy, which has not yet been fully socially confirmed.

This is a broadly worked question, both in the discursive sphere, through the encouragement of the struggle and the deconstruction of ideas, as well as in the practice of ICM-SP. It is presented in political and public actions, interviews with the press, participation in LGBT parades, Congresses and LGBT themed seminars, collective weddings and so on (Idem, Ibdem).

Still, a case study by Sobottka [6] on a group of women seemed to show a divergence between the Theory of Recognition and Brazilian daily life, since women, suffering violation and vexation, did not mobilize towards fight for recognition. However, the researcher realizes that the reasons for which there was no organization are explained by the Theory of Recognition itself, namely the lack of linguistic and symbolic means of expression and the difficulty of ethically informed sharing generated by the forms of organization of social life. . Which leads the researcher to conclude that

In this political and experiential situation was possible

to verify that the theory of recognition can indeed be operationalized and contribute to empirical research in contexts quite different from the one that served as a reference. It helps the researcher to formulate and frame issues that the narrative protagonists could neither articulate nor frame within a larger context of unequal social relations (p. 700) [6].

Thus, it is possible to understand that Communicative Action is a prerequisite for the fight for recognition, showing a continuity between both theories, being necessary for the understanding of social reality from the Critical Theory.

A similar conclusion seems to reach Vidal [7] when researching the identity construction of the Brazilian poor in his claim of respect. In conducting his research with the poor in Recife and Rio de Janeiro, Vidal realized that not being understood as a worthy member of society is a more serious factor than the financial condition itself.

Thus, in a country as unequal as Brazil, my research in Recife and Rio de Janeiro suggests that, for the poor Brazilian city, the feeling of belonging to humanity is much more important than the reduction of social inequality. This man almost never condemns social inequality itself, but rather the way in which, in everyday life, members of the middle and upper classes make him feel socially inferior, whether in public spaces or at work. What he wants above all is to be recognized as a legitimate member of society. Respect is the keyword of your speech about social injustice (p. 267) [7].

Vidal adds that the poor Brazilian citizen, in his research, demonstrates a conception of normative moral life, which helps to highlight the notion of inter subjectively constructed law; It also points to Honneth's notion of self-respect from the broadening of access to Labor Justice (p. 280) [7]. In this sense, Honneth's criticism of the non-applicability of his Theory of Recognition in different realities seems to be contradicted by these works.

Still, the need for discursive actions for the articulation of struggles for recognition of minority groups, very present in the attempts to deconstruct in the public space, evidence the continuity between the Theory of Communicative Action and Theory of Social Recognition.

Therefore, the Theory of Recognition, with continuity of the Theory of Communicative Action, following the scientific method of analysis, not only demonstrates to have evidences of its applicability, but was also able in the demonstrated studies of pointing trends - in order to dictate probable and possible phenomena within, predictability limits of the social sciences - as well as to explain their dynamics of functioning.

Therefore, the way analysis of empirical data plotted here demonstrates the applicability of recognition theory, that started with Adorno and Horkheimer through Haberma's different rationales and two frames of operation, and ending at Honneth who continues Habermas's work focusing on the moral relations of struggle for recognition that would occur in the world of life and have implications for law.

However, in two thousand and eleven *Das Recht der Freiheit* is launched*: Grundriß einer demokratischen Sittlichkeit* – Freedom's Right: The social foundations of democratic life - where Honneth revises and expands his Theory of Recognition. Honneth works with five situations of recognition instead of the three of his theory presented in Fight for Recognition, adding the market and the democratic sphere.

On constatera à la lecture du Droit de la liberté que cette conclusion m'a forcé à distinguer cinq formes de reconnaissance au lieu des trois initialement distinguées : la reconnaissance du respect juridique, du respect moral, et les trois formes de reconnaissance accordée de différentes manières dans les institutions de l'« éthicité », celle des relations personnelles, celles de l'économie médiatisée par le marché et celle de la sphère démocratique [8].

The book Freedom's Right is divided into three sections. In these, resuming the Hegelian thought, the author is concerned with using his normative reconstruction to demonstrate three distinct forms of freedom, the negative, also called legal, the reflexive, also understood as moral and social freedom (p. 208) [9].

According to him, the legitimate values of liberal-democratic societies are based on the idea of individual freedom. Thus, the analysis of these societies is based on the realization or not of this freedom and, therefore, all forms of struggle for recognition would have been based on the pursuit of individual freedom.

In Honneth's reading, all struggles for social recognition «wrote in their banners the motto of individual liberty.» More than that: in modernity "the demand for justice can be legitimated publicly only by referring, in one way or another, to individual freedom" (p. 208) [10].

In this sense, the widening of normative contents demonstrates moments of inconsistencies and ruptures that prevent the guarantees of individual freedom. Thus, it is "to clarify the extent to which ethical practices and institutions do not yet fully and satisfactorily represent the universal values they incorporate" (p. 189) [9].

Honneth begins his investigation for legal freedom, which would be linked to a system of subjective rights that were built throughout history, creating a space for the protection of the individual that sustains the autonomy of his life plan independent of socially dominant values; these subjective rights being reserved to the private sphere, in which individuals could exist disconnected from the communicative requirement to justify their life choices and individual values.

According to the author, this could lead to pathology where legal freedom was confused with negative law, so that these would become the guide of life plans.

Already, moral or reflexive freedom consists in the possibility of questioning the norms of values already established, opposing them to new norms that, it is supposed, could be consented among all individuals.

As the human being could question the institutions that did not pass the universalization test, according to Honneth, the possibility of two pathologies would occur. One is that the individual is socially isolated, becoming a moralist who disregards his context and acts as a moral legislator; This situation could lead to a second pathology, in which the individual considers the social order totally unfair and immoral, which would call for its destruction, leading to terrorism.

Finally, according to Honneth, social freedom - to which he devotes two-thirds of the book - it becomes the fabric by which social relations exist and therefore where individual freedom can be exercised in a positive way, unlike the other two forms of freedom that ensure the removal or revision of social relations.

Regarding the other two, Honneth states that they behave in a «parasitic» manner in the face of praxis of social life that not only always precedes them, but also owes their right to exist. The legal and moral freedom allow the individual to move away - up or shut - down before the requirements linked to pre-existing social relationships, but are unable to create themselves «this shared intersubjectively reality within the social world". Honneth's central thesis , in this sense, is that "individual freedom achieves a socially experiential reality and socially lived only in institutional constructs that have complementary obligations linked to [social] roles, while in the spheres of law and morality, "officially" for it, it has only the character of a mere detachment or a reflexive revision" (p. 210) [10].

This form of freedom, according to Honneth, does not generate pathologies, since the pathologies are misunderstandings derived from errors generated by the

forms of freedom, and the misunderstandings encountered during the exercise of social freedom would not come from themselves, but from other forms of freedom. Then, the author proposes to study the historical development of the spheres of social freedom, understood in three: personal relations, market and democratic state.

Personal relationships are presented in their process of extending the right to individual liberty, which favors the broadening of the other underlying forms of freedom. It can be said that personal relationships communicate with the spheres of love and solidarity presented in the struggle for recognition, while the market relates to the sphere of recognition of law and the democratic state needs both spheres of recognition.

Cannot be said ICM to work in the struggle for this form of freedom, as its discourse is intended to confront established norms, justifying the need for recognition of its specific way of life. The case study by Sobottka presents the pathology, since attempts to resolve the disrespect were sought in formal and legal means, which were either non-existent or inefficient.

Nor can it be said that in the case studies presented there is a search for moral freedom, since there is no attempt to moralize, with specific normative content, being valued personal reflection and respected individual life, but the struggles occur for the insertion in a socially established right, yet denied to the group. Still, they don't seek social isolation, but on the contrary, insert themselves in society and dialogue with it.

However, it is possible to understand the case studies acting within the pursuit of social freedom, ICM, as a recognized legal entity is placed in the market sphere, having legal recognition and financial obligations [11], women seeking public security policies, and citizenship [6], and low-income populations in the struggle to expand access to citizenship rights [7].

When taking into account the expansion of Recognition Theory made by Honneth, is possible to get a sequence of what has being exposed so far in which Honneth continues habermasian theory in the sphere of social movements. For while Habermas understands law as a translator between the world of life and the system, Honneth understands the democratic state as the medium that encompasses the market and personal relations, which has its language form in law [12-28].

Conclusion

So it is still possible to say that the theory of social recognition, based on the development of Communicative Action of Habermas, as a result of the rationalization process, proved to be a valid mean of analysis to case studies. This is pointed by the studies cited here.

This is because it was possible to perceive, through different case studies, the possibility of applying Critical Theory, as understood in the works of Honneth and Habermas, both by the possibility of discursive use in the deconstruction and construction of discourses, as in the practice of struggle itself. Once the categories were demonstrated by the studies.

Still, it was possible to demonstrate the continuity between the Theory of Communicative Action and the Theory of Social Recognition, both being necessary for a better understanding of the process of broadening rights and social inclusion.

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