

## Author's comments

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We would like to thank the patience and goodwill of the renowned researchers who had the kindness and took the effort to read our work. We feel deeply honored with the consideration and attention devoted to our article by these names of great prominence in Social Sciences and Health in the Portuguese-speaking world.

At first, we would like to point out that the article, as you might have noticed, is just a brief attempt to establish a history of ideas of the Social Sciences, especially of Social Anthropology, in order to suggest a difference in the object that we thought has not been highlighted with the due emphasis by the historiographical tradition that focuses on the theme of structural-functionalism or systems theory, which is the problem of *dynamics* and *social change*. Also associated with the chronic aspect of the inter-relationship between action and structure. Therefore, in principle this work seeks to draw a small overview about the constitution of Social Anthropology, and only then runs into the issue of systemic dynamics. Our main goal, as noted by Professor Madel Luz and Professor Francisco Romão, beyond that of tracing a brief history of the above mentioned socio-anthropological school of thought, is to point out to the fact that it highlights the permanent and a-historical characters of societies, seeking, on the other hand,

to demonstrate that these elements, both symbolic and empirical, when infinitely conjugated form different historical and cultural processes and sets. That was the main function targeted by the text. And in so doing we sought to demonstrate, without following any particular author or academic stream, hopefully with some success, using (a)s the same methodological tools that remain extremely useful for research, both theoretical and field research. In fact, the central object of this study is not eating or even commensality. The theme of eating became asymptotic, as Professor Luisa Silva reinforces in her reply. Serving more as a support to the theoretical argument than as object of study, eating presents itself as an adjunct in the text. This is due to the simple fact that it is not the main object of the study, and, therefore, any other theme could have come in its place.

In order to clarify the questions related to the central theme of the article, we need to highlight the meaning of the word “structure” in the text and, therefore, its connection with what we mean by social change. “Structure”, as used here, is the set of elements that constitute the *function* of the spirit - thought - similar to the Kantian *a priori*. This is not an essential unchanging frame similar to the Platonic concept of “Idea”, but the set of universal elements and functions of the mind. In this aspect, these elements that are universal functions can be infinitely combined forming various distinct and always dynamic cultural tops. Even though they may seem eternal (such as they would in primitive and traditional societies), these tops change, for the classification system or set changes at different paces according to the needs or problems regarding the environment surrounding the system. Thus, both the symbolic system (the set of classification functions) and the social system (the empirical social organization with its organizations, roles and institutions) that are interconnected change or transform to adapt to their surroundings in order to survive; in other words, aiming for their maintenance and expansion. Thus, we associate, as was said, the rationalist conception of structure with the empiricist or British conception, seeking to leave the traditional metaphysical view of structure. Thus, the symbolic system rebuilds, from preexisting elements (structures), new ways of seeing and ranking the world, just as the social system (practices, organizations and institutions) also recreates ways to adapt and adjust to the problems that threaten it; a process that leads to dynamic and social transformation. Indeed, both internal and external problems serve as a necessary element of social dynamics in a movement that could lead to the overall improvement of the system or its failure. We view, from this perspective, the concept of gastro-anomie used by Claude Fischler.

If, on one hand, as shown by Professor Luisa Silva, this concept is useful to point out the institutional flaws and corruptions expressed by the failure of commensality, on the other hand it holds solely on this aspect of the question in a typical movement of Social Sciences theoreticians that is the description of a part of the social reality, without, however, trying to observe the possibilities of change and adaptation that it brings. The concept has been, remains and probably will remain

useful for describing the force with which capitalism and contemporary societies produce a lack of solidarity and social cohesion - it is very useful to present the problem -, but it is also necessary to understand how and in what way societies, namely social agents, deal with problems and how they try to develop strategies and tactics to support them or overcome them contributing to produce the system dynamics. On the other hand, we do not deny that there is a continuity in the process of certain elements (representations and practices and their structures); maybe we have not been clear on this point, since we see social dynamics as processes of systemic adaptations that tend to keep their “frames” formal; on the other hand, we perceive structural changes (in the sense of practices) as changes in which not only the symbolic context changes, but the social system itself also transforms, which modifies the whole building constituted by the social relationships - however, what we mean by structure remains, as it is an *a priori* or formal function of the mind no matter the content that it organizes.

Thus, changes in eating processes occurred over millennia, there is not much to discuss about it, however, the function of commensality, in spite of all the contemporary gastro-anomie, is remade and maintained over time, even if sometimes weakened. The fact that a large number of people eats alone on counters without producing solidarity association does not preclude, in other circumstances, even sporadic, the conduction of commensal relationships with friends or family, even at MacDonald's tables and stores. The value of taste or its improvement or perceived degree of civilization does come into judgement here.

Thus, we understand that questioning is a way to better understand the concepts and theories of the authors only seen as instruments (always to be improved or even abandoned if necessary) and that the issue concerning the concept borrowed from Durkheim that we pointed out in Fischler's of gastro-anomie concept, would be: for whom modern eating, or American *fast food*, is “meaningless”? Or which group of Western society also takes biopower or normativity, in Foucault's terms, as the power or motivation for the production and construction of meaning? Producing from it a counter-power, or counter-biopower, even momentary, eventual, and allowing for escape lines from the systemic oppression. As the author pointed out numerous times, the power also produces, not only oppresses, and where it exists there is also counter-power and, in that sense, it would be possible to double the forces that act in us from and within their own agencies. It is up to the researcher to understand how actors and groups prepare these new practices and new ways of seeing and perceiving the world or even feeling it. If society is a machine that makes and produces gods and beliefs, the human being is a production plant of constant senses and meanings, its ability to survive as a symbolic and cultural being depends on it.

As a modest and respectful provocation, we ask the following question: the association of the potential of sanitary-hygienic rules of an antiseptic commensality with a future health project

organized on virtualized social networks that both structure and are structured by a promotion of aestheticized health rather than the classical opposition to diseases - would it not be a structural change, not in the way we conceive a structure, but in the way the studied authors conceive it?

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