

## **Marx and Piaget: theoretical and epistemological approaches**

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**ABSTRACT – Marx and Piaget: theoretical and epistemological approaches.** The present paper aims at showing the closeness between Piaget's and Marx's thoughts concerning basic theory and epistemology issues of sociological research. Specifically, about the way both authors study the relation between these parts and the whole social aspects, the relation between the material action and social representation, the relation between sync and diachrony and finally the relation between scientific and ideological activities. In such perspective, it will be analyzed Piaget's studies regarding sociology and his agreement points with Marx's thesis. The results of such research prove the existence of real nearness between both thoughts and what was analyzed.

**Keywords: Piaget's Thought. Marx's Thought. Action and Representation. Synchrony and Diachrony. Science and Ideology.**

**RESUMO – Marx e Piaget: aproximações teóricas e epistemológicas.** Este estudo propõe mostrar as aproximações do pensamento de Piaget com o de Marx em função da pesquisa sociológica de ambos os autores. Essas aproximações se manifestam nisto: as relações entre as partes e o todo societário, as relações entre a ação material e as representações sociais, as relações entre a sincronia e a diacronia e o papel das centrações e descentrações na formação das representações individuais e coletivas. Nessa perspectiva, analisaremos principalmente os estudos de Piaget sobre tais questões. Não deixaremos de analisar alguns estudos do próprio Marx e de seus seguidores sobre questões análogas, a fim de verificar supostas aproximações. Os resultados da nossa pesquisa evidenciam aproximações teóricas entre ambos os autores.

**Palavras-chave: Pensamento de Piaget. Pensamento de Marx. Ação e Representação. Sincronia e Diacronia. Ciência e Ideologia.**

## Introduction

Claiming that Piaget has given meaningful contributions for researches in sociology may be an amazing fact; more amazing is affirming that between his thought and Karl Marx's exist theoretical and epistemological approaches.

Lucien Goldmann (1970), well known French Marxist Sociologist, in his work *Marxism and Human Sciences*, highlights that the positive method in human sciences and the Marxist method have achieved an accurate definition with the term *genetic structuralism by Jean Piaget*. The same author, in another theoretical work, states that "Most concrete works related to society or life, subsequent to Marx, from Freud to Piaget, own a genetic and structuralized inspiration" (Goldmann, 1972, p. 70-71). Piaget (1975a), in his first synthesis work, published originally in 1950, when defining basic concepts of sociological research, points out similar points of views to postulates and Marx's theses.

Not less important is the claiming by Czeslaw Nowinski, saying that the evolution of Piaget's thought – when passing from the theory of genesis of first ways of thought balance to the dialectical theory of affiliation of structures, while process of balance and continuous re-balance - show a convergence with the method created by Karl Marx. Such author writes that Piaget's theory "[...] get closes to the methodology elaborated by Marx in the Capital and the similarity of methods between genetic psychology and Marx's theory is striking, indeed" (Nowinski, 1967, p. 878-880).

In the present work, it will be highlighted the analyses and utterances by Piaget which show us the closeness of his thought with Marx's thought, concerning basic concepts of sociological investigation. However, it is necessary, also, to show Marx's and his followers' statements concerning such concepts, the ones allow us to validate the postulate closeness.

It would be hard to deny Piaget's contribution for the sociological researches. The studies of De la Talle (1992), Freitag (1984), Habermas (1983), Goldmann (1971; 1972; 1979) e Dongo-Montoya (2009; 2012; 2014) have shown such contribution. However, one must say that there are few works which are based on this contribution for a definition of sociological research to recover common points between Karl Marx and them. Analyzing Dongo-Montoya's work (2014) one can find, in a secondary way, some elements of closeness between Piaget's and Marx's thoughts.

There were few works about sociological nature, by Piaget. Nevertheless, these studies, which were organized in a monography *Sociological Studies (1965/1973)*, had as a starting point, the results of epistemological and psychological researches. Such studies have not only consisted of a simple application with psychological concepts to collective field, but also, an effort of building a new way of thinking about concrete sociological issues and finding common mechanisms between sociology and psychology.

Piaget has got interested as in sociology as psychology, since he used to understand that the development of such recognition area could contribute in a meaningful way for the development of sociology. As it is known, the genetic epistemology has as a support source psychogenetic as well as socio genetic investigations.

On his sociological works, Piaget postulates that, although the differences between sociology and psychology both face the same basic problems, since they study the human practice – individual and collective – in their adaptation to physical and social environment. Therefore, as in the individual behavior as collective behavior, certain basic problems present themselves in an analogous way: relation between the whole and the parts, relation between material actions and representations, relations between structure and genesis, role of scientific and ideological activities during the formation of individual and collective representations (science and ideology).

It is based on theoretical solution for sociological problems of this research that we will try to find convergences between Piaget's and Karl Marx's theses. We believe the convergences when analyzing these subjects are not at random, but they come from a common starting point. Underlie both authors' works a relational and dialectical conception of the study about social reality and the explanation of awareness and representations from the material human action.

On the same way psychology was led to understand that data from awareness do not explain anything in a casual way, and the only casual explanation must rebuild from awareness to practices, it means to the action, sociology, finding the relativity of over structure towards to infra-structure, does not make use of ideological explanations, but makes use of action explanation: actions taken in common sense, in order to assure life in a social group according to a certain material way, concrete actions and techniques, which extend into collective representations, in lieu of deriving from them, concerning applications (Piaget, 1973 [1965], p. 24).

So, similar to Marx's theses, which explain the relations between infra structure and over structure, Piaget establishes relations between casualty of collective practices and the implications of collective representations. The implications of such representations, either pre logical or almost symbolic (like the varied ideologies), either when they coordinate logically, like in the rational collective representations (scientific thought), their explanations must forward, at the end, to practices or human actions.

While Piaget tried to overcome, in psychology area, the dichotomy installed for centuries between awareness and practice, Marx tried to overcome, in sociology area, the dichotomy between social awareness and material action. However, it is essential to highlight that, for both authors, the overcoming of such dichotomy demands recognizing that the evolution of social relations and the awareness do not happen in a linear and mechanical way.

It is about theoretical points and basic epistemologies that we are able to begin finding closeness between the thought of these great authors. This way, instead of look for, *the priori*, contrast and theoretical divergences, it would be advisable that critics and Piaget's readers study and read about this, as a way to find true conceptual differences.

### **Relation between the Whole and the Part: the relational conception and the non-dissociation – person-society**

The classic sociological theses by Comte and Durkheim represent a meaningful progress towards to conceptions that had as a basis the medieval creationism and the innate conception of *human nature*. However, the advance of sociological reflection by these authors has put the person and the society in a unilateral determination of the whole social.

So, observing and analyzing the concrete social realities in a whole, it was considered the person and their mental behavior as results only from action social totality and not from an active reality, which could interfere in building the whole.

The new relation established between person and society has led to fundamental problems of sociological explanation, such as: if the person constitutes the element, and the society constitutes the whole, how does the whole modify the elements by the ones they are made of?

Does people modification happen only by coercion and by characters' imposition preexisted in the whole? Where do these preexisted characters come from?

Among the presented solutions, concerning the relation between person and the whole, it is possible to recognize three, with nuances which characterize them.

First, it is seen the atomistic scheme, which rebuilds the whole adding properties of elements. Historically, such point of view has explained the characteristics of collective by attributes of people's innate human nature, without noticing that in this way they were changing the causes by effects of human socialization.

Second, the solution presented by Durkheim may be characterized as an emergency scheme, whereby the whole is not the result of sum of elements supposedly structuring, but, on the contrary, the whole adds a group of new properties to the elements structured by it. Still, one question must be answered: where do the new properties come from? Do these properties emerge spontaneously from grouping the elements? How does the second point of view explain the collective awareness? It is interesting to highlight that, this second point of view, although it rejects the individual awareness when explaining the whole, it appeals to *human spirit* to explain the collective awareness. So, Durkheim sociology, when denying to Psychology the origin of collective awareness, ends up attributing to itself such origin.

The collective awareness, heir to innate powers or *a priori* to spirit, presents, with effect, this inconvenience of keeping an awareness, or an unconscious focus, it means, inheriting from this substantialism and from this spiritual causality, whereby sociology only dispenses with psychology, to transfer all its responsibility to itself: the transposition of positions is apparent and consists of simple displacement of genetic problems, without real renovation (Piaget, 1973 [1965], p. 33).

Third, the relativism scheme or concrete sociology postulates that the whole social is not, neither a group of previous elements, nor a new entity that emerges spontaneously from the reunion of elements, but it is a system of relations, in which each relation engenders a transformation of its terms. This is Piaget's point of view.

For Piaget, defending the relations or interactions as a basis of social organization, different from many critics thought, means reaffirming a dialectic and relational position.

According to this author, the individualist character of some sociology, which also appeals to interaction, derives much more from insufficient psychological analysis than from the concept of interaction. So, according to him, when some authors explain the social life, they do it through elementary psychology that attributes to the person a pre made logic or a collection of permanent instincts, without observing that the entities considered by them as basic individual facts, depend on the deeper interactions. As it is known, Piaget's psychogenetic research (1936/1977; 1937/1996) has shown that *logic of actions* and the practical notion of real world depend on deeper interactions, which produce in the material action plan. They do not meet pre formed, neither in instincts nor external data of social environment.

The common defect for sociological explanations is aiming at constituting, beforehand, sociology of awareness or even of speech, while in social life or individual life, the thought proceeds from action and the society is essentially a system of actions, whose elementary interactions consist of actions modifying each other, according to certain laws of organization or balance: technical manufacturing actions, moral and law actions of collaboration or coercion and oppression. Intellectual communication actions, of common research or mutual critic, briefly of collective construction and of correspondence of operations (Piaget, 1973 [1965], p. 34).

Concerning solidarity between person and society and about the non-dissociation of the whole and the part, we can observe an analogue statement by Marx, which leads us to the first closeness between these authors.

Above all, what matters is avoiding the idea that *the society* is something abstract that faces the person. The person is a *social being*. The manifestation of life – even when it does not show directly like a

communal manifestation, made in association with other men – is a manifestation and affirmation of *social life*.

The individual human life and the specie-life are not different things, while the way of existence of individual life is a more *specific* one or more general of specie-life, or the existence way of specie-life is a more specific way or more general of individual life (Marx, 1975).

Bertell Ollman (1975), well known English researcher of Marxist theory, defends that the novelty of Marx's theory is proposing the *social relation* as an object of study. According to him, based on Marx's perception of social reality; the special relation is the minimum unit of investigation. According to this author, the understanding of such unit would be the basis for understanding the Marxist sociology, whose goal of study is the society, but the society conceived in terms of relations or non-dissociable interaction.

So, for the third point of view, the interactionist or relational, conflicts between sociology and psychology are not possible to exist. Both subjects have contributing, on the contrary, to clear up the two additional aspects – individual and social – each of the practices by the person in the society; it is about fight, cooperation, or any intermediate variety of common behavior.

Therefore, for Piaget, each social relation or social interaction constitutes a totality in itself, producer of new characteristics and transforming the person in their mental structure.

From interaction between two people to totality constituted by the group of relations between people from the same society, there is, therefore, continuity and, definitely, the conceived totality appears not like sum of people, neither a reality superimposed to people, but from a system of interactions modifying these ones in their own structure (Piaget, 1973 [1965], p. 35).

## **Relations between Material Actions and Collective Representations**

For Piaget, it is from the analysis of the person over the environment that proceeds the explanation of individual representations, and it is from the analysis of collective actions – inter individual interactions – that the explanation of awareness and of social groups' representations originates, and not the opposite.

As known, for Piaget, the awareness and the several ways of individual representations settle their roots in sensorial motor schemes. For example, the concept constitutes the extension of sensorial motor schemes while it internalizes and reorganizes face to new challenges from the environment (new temporal- space distances and social interactions that take into consideration others' point of view).

Similar to Piaget, Marx opens a concrete sociology, which is based on human action, like his statement: "It is not people's awareness which

determines their way of being; it is their way of social being which determines their awareness” (Marx, 1977b, p. 24).

According to Piaget, therefore, the conception essentially concrete by Karl Marx provides a singular better view than the idealist conceptions.

The merit of Karl Marx, is, having distinguished in social phenomenon an effective infrastructure and an oscillating superstructure between the symbolism and appropriate awareness, in the same meaning (and Marx make it explicitly) where the psychology is obliged to distinguish between real behavior and awareness. The substructure are the effective actions or its operations, consisting of work and of techniques and linking people in society to nature: *material relations, says Marx, one must understand that from the most material practices production, there is an exchange between people and things, it means, non-dissociable between active people and objects.* It is this activity, in interdependence with objects reactions that characterizes, essentially, the ‘dialectic’ position, opposing to classic materialism (Piaget, 1973 [1965], p. 87-88, my emphasis).

In contrast to idealist thinkers, for him, the first assumption of entire human history is the existence of live human beings, the first historical act, which distinguished itself from animals, is not the fact of thinking, but the act of producing in their ways of living (the work). We can highlight the materialist and dialectical thought of Marx when criticizing the German philosophy idealism from century XIX, in his classic work *The German Ideology*.

The production of ideas, representations, awareness, are firstly and directly, linked to material activity and to people’s material interchange, as a real life language. The awareness cannot be another thing but conscious, and people’s being is their process of real life. And if, in all ideology, people and their relations are shown inverted like a dark camera, such phenomenon has happened due to its historical process of life (Marx, 1977a, p. 36-37).

It is in this perspective of analysis that we can find a second convergence between Piaget’s thought and Marx’s sociology, since, for this author, contrarily to Augusto Comte and Durkheim’s theses, which could explain social facts due to *collective representations*, the social actions explain the representations.

### **Question of Sync and Diachrony in the Social Development**

The explanation of social development presents difficulties that obey to the need of taking into account the synchronic analysis, which considers inter - relations between parts and whole in a certain balance (structure), and the diachronic analysis, which considers the transfor-



mations that occur in the passage from a state to another (genesis). If we take into account both analyses, the question to be answered is the following: May the social development be considered as a tendency to a terminal balance, like in the mental evolution, or does it consist only of a variation of phases, sort of balanced, or imbalance, sort of deep?

The different theoretical solutions, which tried the integrative analysis of structure and genesis, have shown tendencies to favor or to sacrifice one of them and, with that, to present dualist solutions.

For Piaget, there are two reasons for the tendency to epistemological dualism. The first one is related to the content of social reality that is not fully composed or organized, while it participates of fortuitous and disorder, in which the sociological thought would have to adapt itself. The second one refers to causal and implicative nature about social facts. The causal explanations refer to material actions that join the transformation process of the states (genesis); and the implicative one refers to the reached balance, which is expressed in the rules and social norms. Therefore, the second cause of difficulty for sociological explanation is found in the passage from causal relations to implicative relations.

The existence of fortuitous and imbalance in the development of societies take us to a hard challenge in order to integrate diachrony and sync. It would be easy to think of diachronic and synchronic synthesis if the group of social facts were submitted to laws of a guided evolution or a gradual balance, without disorders or imbalances.

It was the intention of Comte and Spencer, builders of great evolutionary laws, wanted to reach, but such tries were considered inconsistent.

Face to these inconsistent solutions, Piaget reminds that the development of individual thought happens through processes of imbalance and successive conflicts until reaching a state of balance, sort of stable. On the same way, in the domain of social development, this author agrees with Marx when he postulates the existence of imbalance and conflicts, sort of deeper, before constituting a social organization founded in values of equity and social justice.

The Marxist conception from a chain of economic facts to a stable state of final balance shows, the existence of fights and continuous oppositions; so it is conceivable the history as a succession of not so deep imbalances, preceding further equilibrium (Piaget, 1973 [1965], p. 51).

The possible solution for second difficulty, articulation between causality and social facts' implication, is even harder since a causality relation is diachronic, is connected to a time succession, while an implication bond is synchronic, which consists of relation of logical need and, therefore, timeless. For Piaget, social facts of implicative nature – like the rules, the values and the signals – come from a common action, directed over the nature, although these three social facts result from relations that exceed the causality and constitute implications.



Something that really matters at this moment is asking: How do various sociological theories link causal connections to implications?

Piaget reminds that psychological theories oscillate between causality and implication, when get close to organicist type, logic type and operatory type. The same way, sociological explanations oscillate from resource to material factors (population, geographic area and economic production), to collective awareness and to operatory explanation which connects the implication relations to causal actions.

Durkheim's explanation would be centered as in implications (rules, norms and signs) as about material action (the action of social total over the people). The social causality reduce itself to social coronation, which is the pressure from groups on the people; the implication refers to collective awareness, which are the representations produced by social life (norms, values, signs, symbols). The inherent causality to action of the social whole over the people and the system of implications from collective awareness builds a simultaneous whole.

According to Piaget, there is an inconsistent explanation by Durkheim, which is the fact that, from the beginning, the implications and the material causes are put in the same plan, instead of proceeding to an analysis of many types and levels of interactions, which can be heterogeneous and present varied relations among their elements of causality and their elements of implications.

Pareto's explanation seems to postulate a causal origin, since the social equilibrium is limited to a composition of material forces. The thing is that, for this author, such forces reduce themselves to species of instinctive tendencies, which manifest themselves in people's awareness under a form of feeling and ideas, it means, implications. Such affective tendencies or interest tendencies are permanent and represent not only causes, but also, values (implications). So, for Pareto, like Durkheim, causes and implications are given, from the beginning, in constant proportion.

On the other hand, Marx's explanation has as basis the analyses of interactions, in which are taken into consideration the factors of causality and implication, in distinctive dosages, according to different levels of social organization.

The start point for this Marxist explanation is causal: the production factors while interaction between human work and nature, while interaction between people in their productive activity, that determine the first forms of social group. However, even from the beginning, the implicative element shows connected to values of work. The work is an action and the effectiveness of these accomplished actions in common, determines a normative element.

From the beginning, Marxist model places itself, over the *operatory explanation* basis, people's behavior in society, determining their representation and not the opposite. And the implication develops gradually, from a preliminary causal system, which duplicates, but does not re-

place it. With the society being differentiated in classes, and with many diverse relations of cooperation (inside a class), or fight and coercion, the norms, values and signals (including ideologies), diverse super structures take place (Piaget, 1973 [1965], p. 56, my emphasis).

For Piaget, the Marxist model is placed, from the beginning, over an operative place: the behavior of people in society determining its representation and not the opposite.

Such observation could lead to the thought of Marxist model depreciates the elements of implications which characterize super structure, opposing to causality that characterizes the infrastructure. But this is not totally true, if we observe the way Marx interprets social equilibrium reached by society when the socialism is instituted. In this way of social organization, the rules and moral rational values play important and decisive role. So, the cultural values, while manifestation of implications, have an increasing role in social interactions. Consequently, in contrast to Durkheim and Pareto, who merge themselves in only one, causality and normative implications, the Marxist explanation dissociates synchronic and diachronic, differentiates the respective parts of causality and implication, in many levels of social interactions that it distinguishes.

Therefore, there would be a convergence between Piaget's and Marx's analysis concerning the way of analyzing the relation of genesis and structure in the collective development, in contrast to Durkheim and Pareto. The operative explanation would be the common basis between Piaget and Marx, since both authors believe that the organization and reorganization of human action (individual and collective) go through conflicts and deep imbalances until reaching equilibrium states, relatively stable.

Besides that, for both, the relations of implications become more and more important while the reached equilibriums become more stable. Piaget's readers will observe, in this interpretation, the strength of his theory of equilibrium (1975b) and the importance of his works about the contradiction (1974) and the dialectic (1980), formulated by him in the last decades of his life.

The sociologist Lucien Goldmann (1972), in a clear way, uses this theory to show the transformations that take place in societies. It was observed at the beginning of this work that the biologist Czeslaw Nowinski (1967) also points the strength of this theory (equilibrium theory) by Piaget, in the advance of his dialectical conception and, in this way, in convergence with Marx's analysis method.

### **The Concentration/Centralization and Non-Concentration/Decentralization in Collective Representations Formation (Ideologies and Science)**

The possibility of reaching objectivity when interpreting physical and social world depends on the activity of the thought which over-

comes human tendency to consider external reality from expectations and interests of human being or their own social group. This tendency is bigger in the most elementary forms of knowledge, as in individual person as in collective groups, because due to this domain of investigation we can find new coincidences between Piaget's and Marx's conception.

The sociological analysis of development for collective thought leads to results concomitant of individual thought development. Therefore, in both developments we can highlight three meaningful moments.

On the individual development field, the first moment occurs when the child builds systems of practical actions, which coordinate themselves in a flexible way and allow reaching a start of non-concentration or objectivity. This is the moment of finishing for practical intelligence or sensory motor and practical construction of real world. The second moment starts when the child reaches representative activity and assimilates the reality with their own point of view. This is the moment when child's adaptive activity, in representation plan, shows animist, artificial and realist explanations for physical and social phenomenon. In the third moment, the assimilation of real with schemes coordinated in an operator group system determines the decentralization of the person.

The evolution of individual knowledge consists of, not only a direct and simple integration of initial schemes in ulterior schemes, but also, a gradual inversion of sense that takes out the privilege of their own point of view out, in order to insert it in a system that subordinates it to the reciprocity of all points of view, guaranteed by the operations.

On the other hand, in the collective thought, analogue to individual thought, we can find three essential moments of construction: first, there are, in different societies, the techniques connected to material work and to actions that the person takes over the nature; they are efficient susceptible relations and, consequently, of objectivity, but relations whose awareness remains partial, because it is connected to obtained results and not to understanding of mutual connections between states in which the transformations pass through.

In a later moment, there is a scientific or operator thought, which extends, partly, the techniques, although it is completed with understanding of relations and, mainly, adding coordinate actions in systems of composition, which are the calculus, deduction and explanation operations.

The modern Science constitutes the clearest expression of objectivity process in the world. Galileu's physics and causality by Renè Descartes represent the first most meaningful achievements in people's operator activity when explaining nature's phenomenon.

An immediate succession between technique and science is not something that has always existed. On the contrary, a middle term was inserted, whose role was, sometimes, an obstacle for scientific knowl-

edge; it is the group of collective thought forms, neither technical nor operator, just proceeding for simple speculation. These forms of thought are the ideologies of all genres, cosmogony or theology, politics or metaphysics, which establish themselves between primitive collective representations and the reflexive systems (Piaget, 1972).

It is important to highlight that such term is essentially socio centric, focused on dominant values from a society or from a social class, and, so, the scientific thought, like individual operator thought, need to be unfocused.

Well, the most important result from sociological analyses conducted about this term, neither technical nor operator, of collective thought, was to show that it is essentially socio centric, while the technique and the science constitute two species of objective relations between person, society and universe; the ideology under all forms is a representation of things focusing on the universe about human society, about their aspirations and about their conflicts (Piaget, 1973 [1965], p. 79).

Therefore, we can say that Piaget's hypothesis concerning collective development of knowledge demands, inevitably, a process of not focusing, analogue of individual thought.

As the advent of operator thought supposes, in the person, to be unfocused regarding to ego centric thought and the person himself, which is necessary to allow the operation to extend the actions they proceed, also, the scientific thought has always demanded, in the social development, to be unfocused, which is necessary to allow to the scientific thought, keep on the techniques in the work their roots are placed (Piaget, 1973 [1965], p. 79).

Marx's operator sociology connects science to techniques and provides an important critic instrument for ideologies. It allows finding the socio centric element even in the most refined products of metaphysic contemporaneous thought.

So, for both authors, the pursuit of objectivity subordinates itself to a preliminary condition: not focusing on concepts concerning super structural ideologies and concerning concrete actions where social life is based on.

Nothing is more meaningful, concerning the necessity of not focusing, than comparing idealist conceptions for collective development (such as the law of three states by Augusto Comte, awareness theory by Durkheim) to Marxist concepts of technical infra-structure and ideological super structure, inspired by live feelings of imbalance and social conflicts. These three authors agree with socio centric character for ideologies, while Comte and Durkheim see in the science the natural extension of socio morphism thought. An operator sociology like Marx's, brings together, on the contrary, the science to technique

and provides, concerning ideologies, a remarkable critical instrument, allowing find the socio centric element even in the most refined products of metaphysic contemporaneous thought. *The pursuit of objectivity by scientific thought subordinates itself to a preliminary and necessary condition, which is not focusing on concepts concerning super structural ideologies and concerning concrete actions where social life is based on* (Piaget, 1973 [1965], p. 80, my emphasis).

Different from Durkheim's idealism and from individual forms of dealing with the problem, for Piaget the essentially concrete conception by Karl Marx would provide, concerning ideologies problems and rational forms of collective thought, a panorama that converges on knowledge psychogenesis data. According to Piaget, therefore, Marx's merit was distinguishing in the social phenomenon an effective infrastructure and super structure that oscillate between symbolisms and an appropriate rising awareness, in the same way psychology has to distinguish effective behavior and awareness.

For Marx, the infrastructure constitutes effective actions or operations, consisting of work and technique that link people in society to nature. Such relations are production material relations, where there are exchanges between people and things, between active subjects and objects.

It is this activity of subject in interdependence with objects' reactions that, according to Piaget, characterizes, essentially, the *dialectic* position by Marx, opposing to the mechanical materialism, which attributes a receptive or passive role to feelings.

On the other hand, according to Piaget, the social superstructure is for infra-structure what the person's individual awareness is for their behavior. So, as individual awareness may be either an apology of itself – a symbolic transposition or an inappropriate reflex of behavior – or a thought that conquers the reality, in the same way the social superstructure will oscillate between ideology and science.

If Science reflects a technical action over the collective thought plan, the ideology constitutes, essentially, on the contrary, a socio centric symbolism, focused not on the whole society, which is divided e subjects to oppositions and fight, but on sub collectivities, which are the social classes with their interests (Piaget, 1973 [1965], p. 88).

It is about the systematic of such symbolism that Marx's disciples are based on.

Goldmann's researches (1970; 1972), which extend G. Lukacs's research, show that the creation of big speculative systems constitutes, essentially, the satisfaction of thought and dominant necessities related to social class development during a certain period of national societies' history.

So, according to this author, the fight of European bourgeoisie against feudalism and, later, its freedom formed many ideas that have been dominated the metaphysic western thought.

This way of analyzing is extremely important, because from the sociological point of view, it is possible to interpret, accurately, ideologies and their real extension, avoiding a double abuse: placing them in the same plan as scientific thought or depreciating them and taking out all their functional meaning.

Actually, an ideology is an expression of values, in which a group of people believe, besides that, has a positive and distinct role from science. The ideology shows a position which it defends or tries to justify, while science recognizes and explains.

## Conclusion

1. In face of sociological conceptions – atomistic scheme and emergency scheme – about the relation of person and society, Piaget proposes interpreting society as a system of elations or interactions between people. Based on that, between Piaget's and Marx's thought could have a common start point: the relational conception of social reality. Such point of view, allows us to support the non-dissociation between people and society.

2. Differently from idealist theoretical conceptions, for Piaget awareness and individual and collective representations, explain themselves by person's material action about objects (in the epistemological way). For Marx, he relations between person and nature explain how social representations assume their forms. So, for both authors, there is an operatory explanation for awareness and social representations, that allow us to overcome a mechanical view about vulgar materialism.

3. Expecting overcome the difficulties when integrating diachrony in sociology arear, Piaget highlights Marx's conception to take into account social and imbalance conflicts as previous forms for equilibrium states reached by society, as well as a succession of causality and implication factors according to different levels of organization for social interactions. Marx's explanation is causal: the production factors, as interaction between human work and nature, are the factors which determine rules and social representations forms. However, while society assumes more balance forms (socialism), the implicative aspect seems to be more important.

4. Regarding subjectivity or objectivity of social representations, it is important to recognize that, for Piaget, the intermediate aspect, which happens between technique and rational forms of representation, is the ideology expressed in different forms. On the contrary, for Marx, the pursuit of objectivity by scientific thought subordinates to a preliminary condition: decentralization/non-concentration of concepts regarding to super structural ideologies and their relations with concrete actions where social life is based on.

5. Due to some observations of closeness between scientific thoughts by Marx and Piaget, it is necessary a systematic study about Marx's sociological thought. This study will allow us to verify the pertinence of our assumptions.

It is necessary to keep on researching about such comparison, so it will be possible to understand in a better way the real differences and closeness between them, besides it will allow go ahead when understanding social reality in its interface with individual processes.

6. It is a fact that a deeper understanding about sociological processes, concerning its relation with social and knowledge representations formation, will make it possible to criticize in a more objective way, the traditional education and the educational proposals founded in democratic and cooperative relations, involving actions of all people, progressively decentralized.

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