

Abstract

The habilitation thesis entitled “From Epistemological Inconsistency of Sociology to the Study of Entelechies” integrates a series of issues and ideas having been selected, analysed and presented throughout my scientific and academic activities in the post-doctoral period of my professional manifestation, that is from 1999 until present-day. In different articles/ studies published in specialised magazines, chapters in collective volumes and author books, I have approached the issue mentioned in the title above while starting from the premise that: *sociology is a science facing an identity crisis while the solution to overcome this profound deficiency is epistemological*. Throughout the study, but especially in *its first section*, I have passed in review a relatively huge number of epistemological inconsistencies testifying for its identity crisis. I would only mention here a few: *owing a varied and non-unitary conceptual system, maintaining unjustified rivalries with other humanities, impossibility to totally overcome subjectivism of researchers and interpretations, inability to achieve error-free investigations, partial confirmation of nomothetic character and conclusions limited to restrained generality, superficial acceptance of the statute of factotum or cure-all science, assumption of a big-sized object of study (society) which is also difficult to be precisely demarcated*, etc. Due to these inconsistencies, the power of sociology is always to suffer from and reactions to revive it should be therefore understood as natural manifestations of it.

Among the many reproaches having been brought to it, the one referring to the object it studies seems to be the most justified. If, as far as it is concerned, some convincing, evident and rational clarifications should be brought to it and they should be easily accepted, then the identity crisis of sociology would be minimised. Automatically, all the other inconsistencies should be more easily overlooked. From this reason, in the very section 2 of this study I have named entelechy as an object of study to the science about society: “*the huge dimensions of the social space would compel sociologists to orientate their approaches on its essences. Repeated changes of appearances of the social would force every time the sociologists to report themselves to what is essential in society, respectively to what has been maintained for a while as if it had enjoyed an atemporal existence. Sociology would therefore come to delimit a clear object of study – entelechies of the social environment – despite its immensity and dynamics*”. On this occasion I

have explained the fluency of the relationship between social and sociology, and anticipated the normality while establishing *social entelechies*, on the one hand, and *entelechies of sociological thought*, on the other hand. Moreover, in *section 3* of this study, I have presented the epistemological motivation for having chosen entelechy as an object of sociology, while arguing that, among the landing of profoundness useful in explaining the social, entelechy finds itself on the third place, after the *interrogation and causal relation*: “sociological knowledge naturally orientates ourselves towards the next landings of epistemological profoundness: *to formulate interrogations* about what is not known, *to reveal causal relations* with a view to attenuate the weight of the unknown /undesirable and *to identify entelechies* or recurrent contents related to the object to be known”.

If through the first three segments of the structure of the study I have tried to persuade to the correctness of choosing entelechy as an identity object of sociology, in *section 4*, I proposed myself to explain how any entelechy would “*sediment*” itself. Since it is about a processual feature of constructing it, I have shown through several examples the four long-term stages of its imposing itself: a. “birth” of the *need for* it and reactive manifestation of individuals in relation to the pressure of necessity they are required to meet; b. optimisation of chances to satisfy the need for individual participation to situations of interpersonal communication on the experience; c. correlation of the solutions having been identified to participating persons to social and cultural dialogue, detachment of similarity elements and, based on it, *delimitation of social types* or production of typifications; d. normativism of typifications, respectively confirmation of any social type through a series of concerned norms. Practically, at the end of the fourth stage, namely the moment when a social type benefits from normative support, the entelechy is fully established and has all chances to activate for a considerable period of time. Although, in my opinion, societies follow the same objective phases as they do when establishing entelechies, there are differences between them given by the rhythm of this process, the contextual factors mobilising them, the degree of social subscription to the contents of the norms and, especially, by the types of sediment entelechies. Conclusions drawn at the end of the chapter dedicated to establishment of entelechies would therefore confirm the emergence of these differences: “a. each stable social unity (society, community, residential environment, corporation, social class, statutory position, etc.) owns a life scheme having been ordered by an ample and constraining network of entelechies; b. any entelechy is a complex, processive and objective construction

entailing an impressive series of (individual and group, rational and irrational, natural and socio-cultural, etc.) factors and, depending on the dynamics of the determinative factors in every social environment, it amplifies /decrease its importance and modifies some content elements or even disappear”.

In the last chapter of the study I find it necessary to compare entelechy to the unanimity, consensus, conformism and tradition, only to conclude that sociologically there are **two types of entelechies** that are important: *social* entelechies, that is all those concrete instances being responsible for the way in which the generic man (economically, socially, morally, legally, etc.) represents himself beyond any peculiarity on the level of current concrete societies – and entelechies of *sociological thought*, respectively all theoretical and methodological algorithmisations being available to several specialists science about society and being ordered by them so that they can be called “disciplinary matrices”, “exemplary models”, typical examples to solve problems”, “paradigms”, etc. While noticing the difficulty and subjectivism of differentiating types of entelechies, I have resorted to two tools to minimize this shortcoming: *a paradigm to longitudinally delimit cultural answers*, which could help in identifying social entelechies, and a *social scale to modulate normality* through which I could demonstrate the importance of knowing entelechies of sociological thought. Nevertheless, correct delimitation of social entelechies according to the natural order of their evolution represents a more important objective than establishing optimal entelechies of sociological thought. Consequently, any principle driven attempt to provide for a mapping of social entelechies becomes an epistemological gain more convincing than the establishment of high perseverance tools of sociological thought.

Finally, the entire study may be synthesized by the following statement: **the social is being structured and it functions through entelechies while sociology may optimise its epistemological foundation, public image and social-cultural impact through assumption of the statute of a science of entelechies.**