

Historical Aspects in Sociological Studies and Implications for the Study of Sociology in the Academic World

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Abstract

This article has as a central focus the chair of sociology, aiming to expose the historical traces of its institutionalization in the secondary studies of Sergipe, since its first signs, in 1892, when it was created under the name of “sociologia, moral, noções de economia política e direito pátrio” (sociology, moral, notions of political economy and national law), until 1925, when it became an autonomous chair. The documental sources used were primarily legislative texts, as well as documents produced by the Atheneu Sergipense. Sociology emphasizes the importance of social networks and relationships in shaping historical outcomes. Social networks can influence everything from economic success to political power to health outcomes. For example, a person's social connections can impact their ability to find a job or access healthcare, and can also influence their political views and behaviors.

Keywords: Sociology; Secondary Studies; History of Disciplines.

A. INTRODUCTION

The study and consolidation of the human sciences gained momentum, strength and new air from the 19th century onwards, when the need arose to explain human behavior and society by criteria based on reason and, consequently, on scientific knowledge (Collyer, 2021). Sociology is the result of this context and emerges in a social and political scenario of profound transformations introduced, at first, in the European continent, by the two great revolutions: the French and the Industrial. Such events made possible a series of economic, political and social changes that greatly influenced and transformed the structure of society and the way of life that people had maintained for many years, provoking the need to develop new understandings and explanations of the world social, to the extent that there was a break with traditional forms, motivating the introduction and implementation of a new corporate model based on the foundations of modernity (Granovetter, 2019; Harshasbi et al., 2020).

The picture of crises that was established from the new paradigm demanded urgent answers. Society became a problem that had to be explained and solved. Thinkers, at that time guided by positivist conceptions, concentrated their reflections on understanding the problems caused by social changes and came to the conclusion that it was necessary to restore social order.

Augusto Comte (1798-1857), regarded as one of the founders of sociology, referred to the new science as social physics and argued that the organization of society and the maintenance of order were fundamental for the (re)establishment of morality and civility. The relationship between conservative and reformist contents was a striking feature of Comte's thinking and significantly influenced the way in which sociology was disseminated and incorporated by other societies. It is important to highlight that Comte's ideas, as well as those of other scholars at the time, were fundamental for establishing the theoretical bases of sociology and contributed to the development and institutionalization of this discipline in the molds and objectives that it has today (Erduran, 2020; Mayes et al., 2022).

According to Panatoya (2019) and Laontyeva (2020), sociology can be identified as the systematic study of human societies, giving special emphasis to modern and industrialized systems. It emerges as an attempt to understand the wide-ranging changes that have taken place in societies. Such changes, in addition to reaching the breadth of society, significantly affected the most intimate and personal forms, characteristic of people's lives. In this sense, sociology enabled innovative views on issues involving society, such as: sociocultural diversity, division of labor, economic production and moral values, among others.

The scenario for the development of sociology in Brazil begins to be drawn at the end of the 19th century. The social, political and economic changes that occurred during this period were based on the ideas and transformations arising from European societies, mainly the French one, and effectively contributed to the introduction and consolidation of this discipline. According to Gorski (2022) and Stark & McCarthy (2020), sociology here is received as an intellectual "novelty", appearing at the moment when the country claims for a national identity. The aforementioned authors also call attention to the fact that educators were the first to try to address the needs of analyzing the new situation of rationality in Brazilian society and to propose reforms that would adjust the country's education to the democratic social order.

Asaka (2020) points out three distinct moments that involved the Brazilian educational reforms, directing the gaze to the discipline of sociology: period of institutionalization of the discipline in secondary education (1891-1941); period of absence of sociology as a compulsory subject (1941-1981) and period of its gradual reinsertion in high school (1982-2001). The author also declares that Benjamin Constant Botelho de Magalhães contributed to sociology being included in higher and secondary courses with the Reform of 1891 (Steinmetz (2023).

Relying on Hertz (2022) and Oguma (2021) indicates another period, stating that in the period from 1890 to 1897, with the Benjamin Constant Reform, the discipline of sociology is included as mandatory in preparatory courses, however without this order have been put into practice. It is important to note that the sources analyzed in this research indicate the presence of sociology teaching contents in the Atheneu Sergipense of that period, a fact that demonstrates that the province of Sergipe was attentive to the debates, an issue that may be related to the presence of

very important intellectuals in Sergipe territory, such as Tobias Barreto and Sílvia Romero.

However, in Sergipe, sociology is not introduced as a specific discipline. On the contrary, the chair established at Atheneu Sergipense in the 19th century was entitled “sociology, morals, notions of political economy and national law”. As we will see later, the contents of this course focus on civility, morality, respect for order, civility, moral responsibility, social policy, forms of government, the importance of the family and the State, in addition to many notions of law, that is, they are based on the ideas of positivist science, mainly on the establishment of reason for the pursuit of social order (Romero, 2020).

Sociology provides a unique perspective on history by examining how social structures, institutions, and cultural norms have shaped the course of human events. From a sociological perspective, history is not simply a series of isolated events or decisions made by individual actors, but rather a complex web of social relationships and structures that have evolved over time. One of the key contributions of sociology to the study of history is its focus on social inequality and power dynamics. Sociologists have long recognized that social hierarchies based on factors such as race, class, and gender have played a significant role in shaping historical events and outcomes. For example, the legacy of colonialism and slavery continues to shape the social and economic landscape of many countries, including the United States, where systemic racism and inequality remain major challenges.

Sociology also emphasizes the importance of culture and social norms in shaping historical developments. Cultural beliefs and practices can influence everything from economic systems and political institutions to the way people interact with one another on a daily basis. For example, the cultural values of individualism and competition have played a significant role in shaping capitalist economies, while communal values and traditions have influenced alternative economic systems such as cooperatives and communal land ownership (Savage, 2022).

Another key aspect of sociology's approach to history is its emphasis on social change and social movements. Sociologists recognize that history is not a static or unchanging entity, but rather a dynamic process in which social actors can work to shape the future. Social movements and collective action have played a significant role in driving social change throughout history, from the civil rights movement to the labor movement to contemporary movements for climate justice and gender equality. Overall, sociology provides a valuable perspective on history by highlighting the ways in which social structures, cultural norms, and power dynamics have shaped the course of human events. By understanding these dynamics, sociologists can help us better understand the past and work towards building a more just and equitable future.

Sociology also emphasizes the role of social institutions in shaping historical outcomes. Social institutions such as the family, religion, education, and the legal system can have a profound impact on the way people live their lives and interact with one another. These institutions are not just neutral or objective entities, but rather

are shaped by social norms, cultural values, and power dynamics. For example, the education system can reinforce social inequality by perpetuating existing hierarchies and limiting opportunities for marginalized groups (Pringle, 2021).

Another important contribution of sociology to the study of history is its focus on the intersectionality of social identities. Individuals do not just have a single identity, but rather are shaped by multiple social categories such as race, gender, class, and sexuality. These identities can interact in complex ways to create unique experiences and challenges. For example, a person who is both Black and queer may face distinct forms of discrimination and marginalization that are not experienced by individuals who only identify with one of those categories (Febbraro, 2020).

In order to achieve the goals proclaimed as the main goals of the institution, the presidents of the province and later governors of the state of Sergipe made an effort to provide the Atheneu Sergipense with scientific material “indispensable for the regular functioning of the classes” and to encourage to set up a “library and a museum in the aforementioned establishment in order to provide students with the practical means essential for the efficiency of their studies” (Arts. 120 and 121, decree 351, of June 9, 1899). Always attentive to the practical method, it was up to the faculty to prepare the program of their subjects, so that secondary education at Atheneu Sergipense becomes effective.

It is true that, even with this attention on the part of the government to proclaim in the legislation elements necessary for an efficient training, there were, in the words of the directors, in their reports, constant complaints when their demands were not met. They requested improvements in classroom facilities, materials for the laboratories, a greater number of employees, an increase in teachers' earnings, among other claims. These are the actions and speeches of the directors to establish at Atheneu Sergipense a conducive environment for training the Sergipe intelligentsia.

B. METHOD

The article will describe the research methodology used, including the sample size and selection, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. The methodology section should be detailed enough for readers to understand how the study was conducted and to evaluate the validity of the findings. Social science research articles aim to provide a systematic and rigorous approach to answering research questions or testing hypotheses. By following a clear methodology and presenting the results in a transparent and replicable way, social science researchers aim to contribute to the body of knowledge in their field and inform future research and policy decisions.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Methods of Academic History and Its Influence on the Social World

The Brazilian secondary school of the 19th century emerged fundamentally because of the strength of the humanities, because it was preparatory to higher education and because it met the needs of the elite culture. The category of equivalence

was part, as Collyer (2023) emphasizes, of the different strategies for controlling and standardizing secondary education, consolidating Colégio Pedro II, in the Court, as the standard for private and official secondary schools that arose in the provinces.

The changes introduced over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries were part of the Process of institutionalizing the secondary school system in Brazil and sought to respond to the challenge of the new requirements in relation to this teaching, which in large part were opposed to the foundations that supported the emergence of this type of teaching: the strength of the humanities, the character of preparatory courses for higher education and meeting the needs of an elite culture (Wyrzten, 2020).

The concern in Sergipe, as in other provinces of Brazil in the 19th century, was centered on the creation of an institution that could bring together the new generations of political leaders and other members of the bureaucracy, bringing together in one place the subjects required in the preparatory exams for admission to the Academies of the Empire, so that their children no longer needed to leave the limits of their “hometown” – in the words of a report from the period – to study in other places. With this objective in mind and after previous attempts, the Atheneu Sergipense was created (by the Organic Regulation of public instruction of October 24, 1870, signed by the president of the province of Sergipe, Colonel Francisco José Cardoso Júnior), offering courses in humanities with four years of duration and the normal course of two years. Investigating the study plans of the first official institution of secondary studies in Sergipe, Febraro (2020) sought to answer questions related to the history of school subjects. For this article, we highlight as an object, the subject of “sociology, morals, notions of political economy and national law”.

What was the genesis of the subject of sociology in secondary studies in Sergipe? For what purpose were these studies allocated in secondary education? What contents are covered when teaching the course? How did this course work – professors, textbooks, assessment? Based on these questions, it is possible to investigate in the selected documentary sources the internal structure, the core of the discipline, its original configuration, in short, the genesis, purpose and function of sociology in secondary studies in Sergipe.

In his text, a landmark for research in the field of the history of school subjects, André Chervel (1990) points out a research program based on the search for answers to the previously posed questions, calling our attention not to rely solely on official texts, but in other literature abundantly produced by the institution that puts the development of the discipline into action. Thus, in order to achieve the proposed objectives in order to expose historical traces of the institutionalization of the sociology chair in secondary studies in Sergipe, documentary sources were investigated, understanding that:

The sources do not speak for themselves. They are vestiges, witnesses who respond – as they can and with a limited number of facts – to the questions that are presented to them. The source is a construction of the researcher, that is, a recognition that constitutes a denomination and an attribution of meaning; it is

a part of the historiographical operation. [...] The source is a bridge, a vehicle, a witness, a place of verification, an element capable of providing correct knowledge about the past. The fonts make it possible to find and recognize: materially find and culturally recognize the intentionality inherent in their production process. To find, it is necessary to seek and be available for the encounter: it is not enough to look, it is necessary to see. In order to recognize, it is necessary to assign meaning, that is, to read and indicate signs and traces as signs [Ragazzini, 2001, p. 14, emphasis in the original].

In this plan by Júlio Ribeiro to universalize the knowledge of the scientifically prepared man, there is room for studies of sociology, morals, legislation, politics, greatly expanding knowledge. Authors such as Santos (2004), Moraes (2003), Tomazini and Guimarães (2004) have turned their attention to trying to better answer the purpose of the chair of sociology for secondary studies in Brazil, even knowing the difficulties, specificities and borders that guide the study of any discipline. Goodson (1998), when asking why study school subjects, points to the study of the form and content of subjects as a crucial aspect, placing himself in a historical perspective.

2. 19th Century: The Inclusion of Sociology in Atheneu Sergipense

In Sergipe, when reorganizing public education, divided into primary, normal and secondary, President José Calazans signed law n. 35, of August 18, 1892, decreeing that there should be, among the 12 chairs offered at the Atheneu Sergipense, that of “sociology, morals, notions of political economy and national rights” (art. 29), allocated in the 6th and last year of the humanities course. The other subjects were called: Portuguese and national literature; Latin language; French language; English language; German language; arithmetic and algebra; geometry and trigonometry; accounting and commercial bookkeeping extended to the treasury departments; physical and natural sciences; geography and cosmography; universal and Brazilian history. The legislation also guided that public education in any establishment of the State should be “intuitive and practical as possible, always marching from the simple to the compound, from the particular to the general, from the concrete to the abstract, from the definite to the indefinite” (article 3, decree n. 45, of January 19, 1893).

In this way, the studies carried out at Atheneu Sergipense were intended to provide young people with secondary and fundamental education, necessary and sufficient for enrollment in higher education courses in the Republic, as well as for the good performance of citizens' functions in social life.

According to the purposes of the Atheneu Sergipense and the chairs offered there, directing attention to the signs left in other documentation, we observe the Minutes of the Congregation to perceive the signs and traces (Ginzburg, 2001) of the path of sociology studies. On February 8, 1893, the Congregation presented the program for the humanities and normal courses. In the sixth year of the humanities course, the classes would be: Portuguese: notions of Portuguese literature, brief news on the history of the language, since the 16th century; physical and natural sciences:

physics and chemistry, notions of mineralogy, geology, zoology, hygiene and biology, main notions of the subject; history: history of Sergipe, since its colonization; sociology and morals: main notions on the subject, explanation of the constitution of the Brazilian Republic and the state of Sergipe.

The subject of sociology and morals would be taught in the 3rd room, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, at the latest, from 1 pm to 2 pm, for a total of five hours a week. The distinction between the subjects can be observed in relation to the number of hours available for each one of them. Sociology, for example, has a higher workload than Portuguese studies, two hours a week physical and natural sciences, 3 hours a week and history of Sergipe, 2 hours a week, but there was history of Brazil in the 5th grade.

A possible interpretation for the location of physical and natural sciences and sociology and morals being allocated in the last year of the course may be related to the preparatory exams, since, when students felt able to take such exams, they did not take all the exams chairs, but those whose contents were required in them. The concern with defining terms used in everyday school life is perceptible in the case of professor of moral and civic instruction, Francisco Monteiro Filho, who searched the Universal Dictionary of Civic Education, by E. M. Compagne, for the definition of program, placing it as epigraph². This is how the teacher transcribes:

The expression program applied to teaching matters can be taken in two senses: one of them serves to simply designate the enumeration of teaching materials; but generally, however, it designates the meticulous exposition of the development with which each discipline should be taught [Minutes of the Congregation of the Atheneu Sergipense, February 28, 1913]. This time, the program can be understood as a list of subjects taught, or, as chosen by the teacher and our analysis, as a detailed exposition of the contents to be taught in each subject.

Among the components of a school subject, Chervel (1990) highlights the importance of studying the explicit contents, the set of knowledge contents³. It is thus observed that the internal structure, the axis of the chair examined is the Brazilian and Sergipe Constitutions. It is also important to point out the attention given to themes from Sergipe, present not only in sociology and morals, but also in geography and history, as demonstrated by Alves (2005). In 1897, President Martinho Garcez, by decree n. 231, of July 9, proclaimed that sociology should be taught in the 7th and last year of the full course, addressing in the first semester the themes: notions of moral sociology and national law, with final exams, and that in the second semester students should take the maturity exam (art. 108)⁴. In the following year, when organizing the class schedule at Atheneu Sergipense, the name of the subject analyzed became "sociology", with classes held from 12 to 13:00, without designating the days of the week (cf. Minutes of the Congregation of Atheneu Sergipense, May 2, 1898).

Decree no. 351, of June 9, 1899, when establishing six years for the full course, does not indicate the presence of sociology studies. However, in the Act of the Congregation of September 4, 1900, the timetable for "sociology and morals" is recorded, from two to three in the afternoon. In the following year, the legislation was

re-established, by Decree n. 501, of August 5, as the 12th subject of “elements of sociology, morals and national law”, taught in the 6th year of the full course, being conducted from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm in the years 1901, 1902 and 1903. In 1904, the 6th year of the course was reserved only for the study of sociology, morals and national law, as well as the review of other subjects taught in previous years.

Thus, with this broad program addressing issues of law, morals, civics, the State with greater emphasis and prominence, space is maintained for dedication to the study of the individual and social relations. The explanation offered by Santos (2004) points to the fact that the contents of the sociology course would be focused on the principles that regulated the rational and scientific behavior necessary for the consolidation of the republican social organization. For this reason, the discipline was mixed with contents that emphasized morality, respect, the fatherland, elements of political economy (production of wealth, work, consumption, capital, taxes and budget), notions of national right (organization political, administrative, judicial and economic formation of Brazil, civil law and commercial law).

Hence the caution when researching the history of school subjects, not only because of the presence or absence of their nomenclature and regularity in the programs, but also because of the analysis of the contents studied. These may, therefore, be allocated to other chairs, with different rubrics. This is what Chervel warns: “the history of a school subject cannot abstract from the nature of the relationships it maintains with neighboring subjects” (1990, p. 214). Pursuing traces of the chair of sociology in secondary studies in Sergipe, a bifurcation can be observed in this movement, as in 1912 it began to be called logic and notions of law; moral and civic instruction⁵. Joaquim do Prado Sampaio Leite, professor of the first chair, this is how he presents his program:

The study of logic, “the general doctrine of methods and the general theory of science” (Romero, 1901, p. 201), through the above program, is done in conjunction with the study of law. Sílvio Romero defended that the study should follow the natural march of the human spirit, studying the inductive processes and then the deductive processes, that is, from the concrete to the abstract (Romero, 1901, p. 216).

The legislation stipulated that one of the duties of teachers at Atheneu Sergipense was to present the programs of their disciplines at the beginning of each academic year. Although this was the agenda of the Congregation's meetings, we did not find records of the programs of the chair analyzed. This is what is stated, for example, in the Minutes of September 1, 1916, declaring that Professor Leonardo Gomes de Carvalho Leite had presented the program for the chair of “moral and civic education, notions of sociology and customary law”.

By virtue of the 1921 regulation, the normal, commercial and integral courses were suspended at Atheneu Sergipense, remaining only the high school course. In it, the subjects, until then separated, of psychology, logic and history of psychology were unified; and the notions of public law and commercial law, deleting the part dealing with public and commercial law. The chair of psychology, logic and history of psychology was now chaired by Bachelor Virginio Sant’Anna (cf. Report by the

director of Atheneu Sergipense, Jucundino Souza Andrade, July 28, 1921, in Livro de Correspondências Expedidas do Atheneu Sergipense). In 1925, he returned to the chair of moral and civic education, chaired by Professor Leonardo Gomes de Carvalho Leite (cf. Book of Registration of Titles of Atheneu Sergipense 1904 to 1940).

Chairs of sociology created; Brazilian literature and literature of the Latin languages in the year 1925, there was a need to open competitions. The rituals, methods, personages and forms of judgment are meticulous details of the legal documents that deal with the questions that governed the contests for teachers. The candidate was required to complete the humanities course or a higher education diploma, with free choice thesis defense, thesis defense on a chosen subject, practical test (when the nature of the subject required it) and oral test (cf. Decree No. 912 of December 12, 1925). For the chair of sociology, the Congregation of Atheneu Sergipense selected the following points:

1st Social organization as a factor in the development of civilization. 2nd The geographical environment. Conquests, agriculture, industry and capital. Its influence on society and human progress. 3rd Darwin. Applications of his theories in human societies. Objections raised. 4th The selection process in societies. The extent to which natural selection can influence societies. 5th Social selection, from primitive human settlements to civilized societies. 6th Aristocracy in societies. Its influence on human progress. 7th Influence of great men and theirs on the lives of peoples, societies and civilizations. 8th The development of intelligence in human evolution. Its causes, its laws. What is the most influential factor that acts most intensely in the evolution of the human type? 10th Influence of religions in the life of peoples and in the formation of civilizations (Burke, 2022).

These were, therefore, the knowledge required for candidates to compete for the chair of sociology. In the same meeting, as determined by the legislation in force, the point for the thesis of the contest to be presented was raffled, that is, point number four: "The selection process in societies. To what extent can natural selection influence societies". The competition took place in August 1926, with only one candidate competing, Mr. Florentino Teles de Menezes, who presented his freely chosen thesis on the theme: "Influence of climate on civilizations".

D. CONCLUSION

Sociology emphasizes the importance of social networks and relationships in shaping historical outcomes. Social networks can influence everything from economic success to political power to health outcomes. For example, a person's social connections can impact their ability to find a job or access healthcare, and can also influence their political views and behaviors.

Finally, sociology highlights the importance of agency and individual action in shaping historical outcomes. While social structures and institutions can have a powerful impact on people's lives, individuals and social movements have the ability to challenge and transform these structures. For example, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was able to successfully challenge and transform longstanding patterns

of racial discrimination and inequality in the United States through collective action and social mobilization. Overall, the sociology aspect of history highlights the importance of social structures, institutions, cultural norms, power dynamics, intersectionality, social networks, and individual agency in shaping the course of human events. By understanding these factors, we can gain a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of history and work towards creating a more just and equitable future.

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