NEW DIRECTIONS IN SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY

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Rezumat: Cercetarea socială se apropie din ce în ce mai mult de crearea unei viziuni hermeneutice asupra realității sociale. Ca atare, cercetarea socială, cu precădere cea de natură calitativă ar trebui realizată pornindu-se de la o statuare ontologică, epistemică, axiologică, retorică și metodologică. Cunoașterea și acțiunea le vedem ca forme ale unui același metaeveniment de instituire a sensului pe care individul îl aplică lumii "decupând-o ca realitate". Perspectiva ontologică este corelată cu natura realității văzută în manieră pozitivistă ca dat exterior obiectiv și diferit de cercetător și de care acesta se poate detașa pentru a-l cerceta, sau o construcție socială rezultată în urma permanentei negocieri a interpretărilor între actorii care compun realitatea socială. În aceasta a doua perspectivă cercetătorul modifică realitatea socială prin însăși actul de a-l cerceta.

Cuvinte cheie: paradigme epistemologice, perspectiva ontologică, perspectiva etică, constructivism, postpozitivism

Abstract: Social research approaches more and more in creating a hermeneutic vision of social reality. Therefore, social research, in particular the qualitative, should be achieved starting from an ontological, epistemic, axiological, rhetorical and methodological statutory. We see knowledge and action as forms of the same meta-event of establishing meaning that the individual applies it to the world "by cutting it as reality". Ontological perspective is related to the nature of reality seen in positivist manner as external objective given and different of the researcher and to which it can detach from to investigate, or a social construct resulting from the continuous negotiations of interpretations between the actors that compose social reality. In this second perspective, the researcher changes social reality through the very act of research.

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Résumé: La recherche sociale se rapproche de plus en plus de créer une vision herméneutique de la réalité sociale. En tant que tel la recherche sociale, en particulier celle de nature qualitative devrait être fait à partir d'une loi ontologique, épistémologique, axiologique, rhétorique et méthodologique. Connaissance et action, nous les voyons comme formes d'une même méta événement de l'établissement du sens que l'individu applique au monde «en le coupant comme une réalité». Point de vue ontologique est lié à la nature de la réalité vu de la manière positiviste, comme un donné objectif, externe et différent de la chercheur et il peut déployer pour enquêter, ou une construction sociale résultant des négociations continues des interprétations entre les acteurs qui font la réalité sociale. Dans cette seconde perspective le chercheur a changé la réalité sociale par l'acte même de la recherche.

1. Introduction

Social research approaches more and more in creating a hermeneutic vision of social reality. Therefore, social research, in particular the qualitative, should be achieved starting from an ontological, epistemic, axiological, rhetorical and methodological (Creswell 2007) and ethical statutory. We see knowledge and action as forms of the same meta-event of establishing meaning that the individual applies it to the world "by cutting it as reality". Therefore, the meta-event represents a triad formed of the line knowledge-action on one hand and of imposing will that applies knowledge-action to the world as force that extracts the reality from the continuum potential, on the other hand. Simona Branc (2008:86) identifies two main paradigms based on qualitative research namely objectivism and constructivism. The first assumes that information about the social world can be analyzed in order to reveal a reality or a social structure "beyond the data collected" while the second paradigm reveals how data or speeches are organized and created through social interaction (Sandu 2010a).

The purpose of this article is to make a methodological synthesis of qualitative approach in the field of cultural memory research, from the perspective of different contemporary paradigms, especially those of postmodern nature, of postmodern research of social space.

Complementary to postmodern deconstruction, constructionism kept from this its antirealistic character, the focus on plurality of experiences and interpretations in a plural world, or even a plurality of worlds, as well as the correlation of meanings of words with interpretive will. It detaches from this through the central idea of social or cultural mediation of interpretation. There is no

unique meaning to correspond to a unique truth, but a plurality of meanings, mirror images of the whole in various levels of fractal existence. Constructionist epistemology refers to the emergence of scientific, social and cultural paradigms as a „negotiation" of interpretations offered to data derived from empirical reality or from other areas of knowledge such as theory, models, etc. Any type of speech, including educational (Esi 2010:33), is interpreted as a "social reconstruction of reality" based on an interpretative consensus. Meanings of concepts, as they are taken from scientific language in the educational discourse are a paradigmatic model, relatively independent of the scientific one where it comes from. From constructionist point of view, the cultural derivation of the meaning of concepts underlies the semantic convergence of any socio-cultural paradigm (Sandu 2010b). In the mentality plan the deepest restructuring takes place, moving from understanding an objective, knowable, and unique world to the model of a plurality of worlds whose indeterminacy is theoretically predicted.

This new epistemology renounces the claim to explain the cause of reality in favor of a better understanding of it, especially the adequacy of consequences with the experimental results. Epistemology has become a particular type of discursive pragmatic that is a coherent system of rules of meaning, capable of producing "a construct called truth". Besides epistemic and scientific discourse, other types of discourses, where the educational discourse is no exception, have inter-subjectively defined their own constructs on the concept of truth. Thus, we have a truth of theological, political, etc. nature (Gergen 2005). The language convention proposed in scientific discourse on truth is socially privileged in contemporary society. Other types of discursive conventions had their period of monopoly on "the construct of truth".

2. Ontological perspective

Identifying the ontological perspective, through whose lens the researcher sketches his social world, will be the one that will dictate the epistemological and methodological option of the research. Reflection on the ontological perspective is rarely seen in social research, as it is considered implicit in the epistemic paradigm. The two extreme positions are represented on one hand by realism as positivism or post-positivism and on the other hand antirealism expressed as constructionism in its various meanings. Realistic perspective assumes the implicit existence of a world external to researcher and independent of him and his representations (Searle 1995; Nightingale and Cromby 2002).

Antirealistic paradigm (Nightingale and Cromby 2002) states the impossibility of postulation or investigation of a reality independent of connoisseur subject. Gergen (2001) postulates the supremacy of language over knowledge of reality. Language is the instrument through which social reality is constructed.

Rorty (1979) shows that language functions not only as a tool for social construction of knowledge but it is itself a construct resulted from social interactions. Knowledge is not a reflection of objective reality but a social construct that is reality itself established for the subject. As we mentioned previously, we see social construction of reality as a process of "creating sense" that cuts out reality through the triad: will, knowledge, action. We prefer to introduce into this equation also the sense creating will, because we consider it is the one directing the knowledge-action towards a process of establishing the reality, of construction of it. With the lack of willingness to participate in co-creating reality, the individual reacts to a world of meanings which are foreign. He does not participate in the negotiation of interpretation but only exercising interpretive will (Culianu 2004).

Based on these distinctions allow us to advance the classification of science into: nature sciences and social sciences on one hand and instrumental or technological sciences that can transform nature and society. Just as naval engineering refers to the study of technologies that can be used to make objects float and get maximum output from them, so the psychotherapies, management etc. aims to identify technologies that can produce a social construction of a desirable reality in a given interpretative paradigm. In other words, we can see the language sciences, including sciences using language for social change, as technologies of social reconstruction of reality.

We affirm that the construction process of reality is not a denial of the existence of an external world but an establishing of relationships between connoisseur subject and the social external world that we capture as reality through language and communication. We understand Gergen's constructionism rather as a form of apriorism than skepticism.

Language co-constitutes reality (Nightingale and Cromby 2002) as it is not pure objectivity, but it appears to us as a world of meanings, institutions, interpretations. Therefore, ontological interpretation distinguishes regarding the nature itself of the social and its relationship to the connoisseur subject. Reality in constructionist view is not only subjective but also multiple, individuals as actors in the creation of meaning establish their own reality (Creswell 2007). Social reality has as many faces as many subjects are involved in co-constructing it. Therefore, the researcher of social will have to identify significant voices not only the evident ones but also the latent within social reality.

3. Epistemological perspective

The epistemological perspective formulates the relationship between researcher and the object of his research (Alexa and Sandu 2010). We believe that there is generally a positive correlation between involvement of researcher in the

studied environment and quality of knowledge obtained. In direct line with the ontological assumptions about the nature of reality, the researcher will reflect on the possibility of knowledge and how this knowledge can be formulated. The researcher who assumes a realistic assumption will consider knowledge as possible and reality as measurable. Causal explanation is preferred to measurements which tend to be considered valid if and only if they have statistical significance, they proffer a causal explanation of phenomena and eventually they have predicative power on the course of social events. The researcher who starts from a constructionist assumption, according to which social reality is multiple and is the result of negotiation of interpretations, will favor the understanding of phenomena from epistemological point of view (Kamil 2011:68). Validity is rather concerned with completeness of knowledge sources and "voices" that are heard. Knowledge is contextual, generated theories can be extrapolated without any claim to assume universality. Universality is "suspected" to disregard the specific subjective particularities of human world (Creswell 2007).

The researcher himself is the instrument of knowledge process, his sensitivity to data making him receptive to certain aspects and causing him to ignore other aspects. Due to particularities of qualitative research of constructionist nature, the use of triangulation (Stanculescu and Marin 2011:133) is preferred for both data sources, research methods and researchers in the process of production and interpretation of data (Creswell 2007).

Triangulation means looking over data from many different perspectives: whether the data is collected from several sources on the same subject or data are obtained through different methods and many researchers are reflecting on the significance of data.

4. Axiological perspective

Researcher dealing with social reality through qualitative methodology assumes a subjective and valuing involvement usually expressing publicly the option for support either one or another of the categories considered disadvantaged by the author (Alexa and Sandu 2010). Qualitative research is not intended to be value free (Creswell 2007). Abandoning the principle of axiological independence, the researcher often aims to be just a "voice" of a category considered to be marginalized, such as minorities, women (Raducu 2011:18-19), children (Cojocaru D., Cojocaru S. and Ciuchi 2011), he adheres to an ideology that he considers to have pragmatic character.

The ideology of human rights, protection of minorities, of the best interests of child, each of these has a central value and generates social knowledge, especially in the form of action research. Qualitative researcher not only declares his adherence to a paradigm but he acknowledges the restrictions that the paradigm

adopted will impose to the universe of research. Thus, he will be aware of the limitations of his research within the conceptual paradigmatic frameworks that he assumed. He will declare in the research report both the epistemological paradigm and axiological orientation taken into consideration.

Archie Bahm (1971) drew attention to the myth of value free science. On the contrary, Bahm (1971) shows that all knowledge is saturated with values at all its levels in both its production of knowledge stage and in the dissemination. The author shows that the idea of benefit knowledge is based on a decision value. Knowledge generates a certain type of material and spiritual benefits that we consider to be good, desirable. Therefore, we post knowledge and science as the supreme form of knowledge in a dominant position in our construction of social reality. Other historical periods have privileged knowledge of religion and thus have generated inquisition as an instrument to impose the dominant form of knowledge.

Another axiological aspect involved in the very foundations of knowledge and which undermines the assumption of science lacking axiological and focused solely on objectivity, is that objectivity itself is a value. The ideal of objective knowledge restricted to limit the influence of the values system of the researcher on the results is also rejected (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). The choice of one or another methodology has an intrinsic axiological component, choice being made in terms of "better adequacy" of result to the onto-epistemic paradigm of the researcher. The two authors propose a way out of epistemic duality quantitative-qualitative by using mixed method. Qualitative research can formulate a series of results that will form hypotheses for the quantitative approach of the research. To justify the option for mixed method, the authors refer to theories of pragmatic truth and the need of giving up controversy on the nature of social reality (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004).

5. Methodological perspective

Methodological perspective regards how the researcher builds his research approach. From philosophical perspective, we are interested primarily how different philosophical trends will generate methodologies of valid social knowledge and philosophical assumptions behind either one or another of the methods of knowledge. In this regard, we illustrate the use of phenomenological method in researching social reality. Phenomenological research seeks to describe the meaning of life experiences related to a concept or phenomenon attributed by individuals. Research focuses on what participants have as common experience in order to extract the meaning of a phenomenon as object form of human existence (Creswell 2007). The researcher is careful on how individuals experience reality and what they believe they have experienced. Experiences of individuals as

conscious experiences are the starting point of the phenomenological approach on the social. Suspending judgment on the nature of reality, refusal of subject-object dichotomy, the principle of intentionality of conscious acts taken from Husserl's philosophy become principles of social research (Creswell 2007).

The question we ask is: What kind of knowledge will lead to the application of this methodology? Will it be a philosophical knowledge? In other words, knowledge about the essence of social phenomena will be generated, or will be a scientific knowledge to explain a certain phenomenon. Our view is that we can not set a limit on the nature of knowledge results, but we can generally distinguish scientific knowledge of the philosophical through contamination of the first by direct impact with data and with second character of the latter.

6. Rhetorical perspective

Rhetorical perspective concerns how the language used by the researcher is adequate to the message that he wants to transmit. Qualitative research, especially the post-modern and constructivist, use personal language based on definitions that are built during research after direct contact with research data such as Grounded Theory (theory based on data) and will be completed by a set of assumptions to be generated through successive inductive processes. Generated assumptions have local validity and theoretical construction value. They are not normally subject to a deductive validation process only within research based on mixed methods.

7. Ethical perspective

In addition to the five perspectives presented by Creswell (2007) we will add the ethical perspective. Being a research full of the researcher's subjectivity, the former will fill the later at the same time with ethical responsibility towards social significance of the research, towards the precision in using methodology, honesty, the presentation of limits of the research including epistemic and methodological and towards the needs of the subjects participating at the investigation.

Ethical character of the purpose of the research (Vicol and Astărăstoaie 2009) should result both from the proposed research and the results. Social research generates practice either at the level of policies and institutions or at the level of individuals. Ethical character takes into consideration the justification of possible practices that will result from the perspective of individual and public good (Cojocaru, D. and Sandu 2011). This good is always defined through a paradigm of social, utilitarian, communitarian etc. philosophy. Research itself may have an unethical purpose ranging for example from manipulation of voting intention through polls to the establishment of another social order based for example on distributive justice instead of retributive. The purpose of social

research can not be confined to mere knowledge of a social phenomenon as knowledge exerted on this phenomenon changes in the very process of knowledge. The value of the research is another ethical dimension (Vicol and Astărăstoaie 2009) that is analyzed in terms of social significance of results and in terms of potentialities of social progress following the completion of research. From the perspective of research design, it must be plausible, honesty being an ethical value, important in social research. Validity also raises an ethical issue related to manipulative potential of the social research. Respect for autonomy of individuals participating to research as generally accepted value is correlated with the use of informed consent (Ioan and Stângă 2009).

This represents a decision made by a competent individual who has received the necessary information that he understood and made the decision to participate without being subjected to any constraint (Ioan and Stângă 2009).

The general principles of ethics of the research are:

- The principle of benefit namely: after the research, real benefits should result for both participants to the research and society reflecting ethical obligation to maximize benefits and minimize risks (Vicol and Astărăstoaie 2009);

- The principle of non-injury means an obligation to do no harm by doing research (Vicol and Ioan 2009);

- The principle of distributive justice as fair distribution of risks and benefits of research (Stângă and Ioan 2009);

- The principle of confidentiality of subjects and data protection. This principle aims to disclosure of information regarding research participants and the anonymity of the information in processing data (Stângă and Ioan 2009).

8. Transgenerational approach and the use of qualitative methods

Culture is the means by which individuals construct the meaning of their experiences. Ethnography involves the study of culture as a privileged way of acquisition of knowledge, used in interpreting own experiences in building lifestyle and particular ethos (Engebretson, 2011). The cultural heritage shapes beliefs and core values of the individual, such as those related to life, welfare, death or care. An event generating meaning, from the perspective of anthropology of health, can be from the perspective of chronic disease (Engebretson, 2011) shared by community members. The idea of cultural memory should be extended from the simple analysis of ethnic groups and their cultural heritage features to the religious values or other private factors of the lifestyle. Simona Branc (2008) shows that transgenerational memory "reinforces the culture of each social group and the feeling of belongingness to a community".

In the context of transgenerational memory individuals are both producers and receivers of cultural memory and individual memory becomes a way of

perceiving the collective memory (Branc, 2008). Groups are becoming structural frames of individual memory (Branc, 2008). In transgenerational context the qualitative research takes the form of oral history interviews, of life story etc. Transgenerational research reveals precisely the features of en event existing in the cultural memory of a community that individuals perceived it at different ages. Cultural capital takes three forms: internalized, objective or institutionalized (Branc, 2008). Habitus is a set of rules that guide the individual to act in a certain way. Pedagogical action can be implicit, anonymous and diffuse or explicit performed by socialized agents. Simona Branc considers pedagogical action is a form of symbolic violence, thus habitus can be seen as a set of predispositions that will generate a certain kind of behavior. The author believes that since birth the child is under pressure from the subjective world of traditions, beliefs and prejudices (Branc, 2008).

Miller shows that the recollections which individuals are exposing actually represent individual memories of how history has influenced a person's life (Miller, 1994). Semiotic analysis of lifestyle and behavior takes into account the habits and traditional practices as storage of a deep cultural sense to be identified and analyzed as the transgenerational core of the universe of meanings in the community. Oral history as qualitative anthropological research methodology is used for transgenerational studies in the field of cultural memory. The method of life story is taken into consideration from which the meanings of events are cut in the context of resettlement of cultural memory (Branc, 2008). The field takes the form of transdisciplinary studies with anthropological and historiographical centrality. We mention in this context the recent volume of researcher Ion Xenofontov: Războiul sovieto-afgan (1979-1989) Studiu de istorie verbală. Percepții. Documente/ The Soviet-afghan War (1979–1989). Study of oral history. Perceptions. Documents, issued by Lumen Publishing House in 2011. He has the merit of making recent history in an audition of second voices. The soldier, officer, combatant in general is seldom seen by the eye of official history, always observant only of winners. War is such an act, which reconstructs the life of those who live it (Xenofontov, 2011). On the contrary, war is no longer an anxiety to the inevitability and often futility of death, nor an apotheotic moment of a hero who had his chance. The perspective brought by Ion Xenofontov is one of the combatants, not the fighter. The difference between the two terms is the epistemic focus on the individual who acts as the military rather than the heroic projection that we invest him with, that of fighter. Oral history paves the way for studies concerning the relocation of cultural memory. Interviews regarding war addressed directly to former combatants of the war in Afghanistan will differ from reports of combatants in Iraq, in Kosovo or even those of the present war in Afghanistan. These differences arise not necessarily from different features of the war but from the differences of approach to the war in different generations of soldiers.

Transgenerational approach of war as life experience for combatants allows differentiated understanding of permanency culture: heroic experience versus terrifying experience.

Simona Branc shows that oral history interviews allow the establishment of social genealogies (2008). Narrative perspective aims at a reframing of the elements of the past through the current interpretive grid that the narrator approves. Transgenerational perspective concerns the application of narrative methodology to subjects belonging to different generational cohorts. Therefore, patterns and cognitive structures, mentalities and intimate sphere can be identified in the functioning of social systems. Transgenerational cultural memory represents a "constructive" dimension in creating the identity of an individual. Thus, narrative methodologies allow the realization of dynamic evolution and reconstruction of behavioral patterns transmitted transgenerationally.

Another example of application of culturological research from transgenerational perspective is represented by clinical anthropology (Kleinman, 1987). It directs towards sensitive cultural issues, investigating how they are identifiable within cultural heritage of different communities. The role of context and of cultural heritage is examined from transgenerational perspective on the experience of health and illness (Kleinman, 1987) and on how manifestations of various diseases differ from one society to another and from one generation to another. Reporting to the disease and social representation of health are part of the cultural context where traditions regarding the deep meanings of life are managed from diachronic perspective. Ethnographic studies focus on the cultural side of the disease, consistent with the act of putting a set of remedies whose value is mainly cultural (Burghele, 2003).

Thaumaturgy practices are technologies of power originated in the centrality of life in traditional culture. From the anthropological point of view, health is the primary original human state, being the ontological condition of human beings. The concept of health has an anthropological centrality depending on this human state. Interpretation of health and health behavior as cultural heritage differs from generation to generation, the anthropological research being transgenerational. Corporality and its social significance also represent structural elements of mythical thinking, whereas the body marks the presence in the world of the deep reality of the individual/ person. The vision of the body is also dependent on the cultural peculiarities of the cohort which the individual belongs to. Corporality anthropology is also an element that requires a transgenerational approach through elements of visual anthropology. Dinesh Bhugra (2004) considers that the transition from a sociocentric culture to an egocentric society creates alienation. Capturing alienated mechanisms requires a diachronic analysis on cohorts to see correlations in time between the modernization and alienation process. Culturological and anthropological studies aimed at the dynamic of

cultural memory and its impact on the meanings attributed to a situation, circumstance, behavior, etc., are dependent on transgenerational perspective.

9. Epistemological paradigms in qualitative research of social space

In what follows, we understand paradigms as a main set of values and beliefs that determine the actions of individuals (Guba 1990).

Based on John Creswell (2007) we will present four important paradigms in qualitative analysis of social space: post-positivism, constructionism and constructivism, participatory inquiry, advocacy and social neo-pragmatism.

9.1. Post-positivism

Post-positivist researchers assume a scientist approach of social knowledge focusing on logical analysis of empirical data. Data will be collected and interpreted through rigorous methods which include the use of information technology, using multiple levels of analysis of data collected through various techniques used in order to ensure rigor. Research aimed at a cause-effect analysis starting from priori hypotheses based on a theoretical knowledge (Creswel 2007). Post-positivism rejects radical assumptions of positivism such as the uniqueness of social reality, accepting the influence of values of the investigator and of the research framework used by him on the research results (Dobrei et al. 2011).

Post-positivist researchers assume that they will not fully capture the social reality (Baban 2010). Mostly the mixed methods will be chosen in order to include both an explorative part and one in which data obtained from exploratory to be validated.

9.2 Postmodern perspectives

Postmodernism should be seen as a family of theories and perspectives that share reporting to requirements of today's world from multiple perspectives such as race, gender and group affiliations. There are highlighted issues of social hierarchy and control of individuals in hierarchical systems, multiple meanings of language, importance of marginal and otherness, the presence of meta-narrations taken as such regardless of social conditions (Creswell 2007).

9.3 Constructivism/ Constructionism

Both meanings refer to the way in which individuals operate with constructs understood as operational definitions of reality clippings. It is mainly a psychological approach (Alexa and Sandu 2010). Constructivism places the formation of constructs at the level of interactions from social environment, the individual endorsing and redesigning them in the social environment. Constructionism is seen as part of the postmodern paradigm due to models

relativization and reporting „reality" to negotiate interpretation. Contructionist epistemology is by its structure close to postmodernism, to Lyotard's vision according to which our image of reality is a „narration", a consensus of discourse - considers Hacking (1999:196).

Constructionist model is seen in the manner proposed by Jean Francois Lyotard as a deconstruction of the concept of reality to the level of social construction, of "narration", of discursive practice generating consensus. Paul Gross and Norman Levitt (1988) state that science is a highly developed set within a particular culture and particular historical circumstances of a body of measurable knowledge in terms of real world. It is a discourse for a special interpretative community created within a complex network of social circumstances, political opinions, economic priorities and ideological climate, all together being the inevitable environment for both scientists and those involved in education. Gergen shifts the interpretative focus from reality to reality context and the social network that generates interpretative agreement.

Constructionism can be used methodological, based on the importance of the epistemic subject in the social construction of truth. The concept of truth has therefore significance in relation to a socially accepted fact or experience. Social constructionism can be applied to a series of theories that have as a starting point Gergen's work, of which the following articles can be considered defining: *The movement of social constructionism in modern psychology* (1985), *Towards a generative theory* (1987), *Affect and Organization in Postmodern Society* (1990), *An invitation to Social Constructionism* (1999), *Organization Science A Social Construct* (1999), *Postmodern Potentials* (2000).

Gergen (2005) states that constructionism is concerned mainly with explaining the processes by which people come to describe, explain and take note of the world they live in and it includes them. Campbell, Coldicott and Kinsella (1994:18) believe that the constructionist view proposes a model through which reality is created in the process of communication and with language tools, each individual influencing and shaping the responses of others. Constructionist emphasis is on the network of interactions between individuals in the communication process. Significance and meaning of words are not given on a correspondence theory of truth but especially of a theory of social negotiation of the meaning and indirect of substitution of the concept of truth with the concept of adequacy and verisimilitude. Continuing Campbell's idea, Van Nistel Roof (acc. Haar, 2002:21) considers that the illusion of ontological rupture between subject and object should be eliminated and replaced by a construct of inter-subjective reality. Analyzing Van Nistel Roof's opinion, Van der Haar (2002:16) considers the fundamental concern on constructionism as a sensification process - creation of meaning- through which individuals give a meaning to the subjective experience on reality. Individuals are thus capable to produce different and parallels realities.

9.4 Participatory research and advocacy

Participatory research is based on specific studies of marginal persons belonging to minority groups or excluded and therefore the main themes will be: domination, oppression, alienation and authority. Participatory research aims to determine a difference in the lives of participants and therefore researchers have a work agenda (Creswell 2007).

It consists of an empowerment process for increasing self-determination and self-development. Research participants become co-researchers and experts in problems concerning their own life (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995). Participatory research is used in public health especially in the study of people with disabilities, chronic illness, elderly, gay communities, but also in poor rural communities belonging to certain minority. All these are groups and populations whose voice is little or not at all heard in society and thus the researcher is often involved becoming himself a voice in favor of vulnerable groups in the public arena. Aiming to "give voice" for the purpose of making known the point of view of vulnerable persons and groups, a change in the system of values and practices of people belonging to these groups will also be analyzed. Another purpose of this research is to provoke public debate in order to generate a change in social conditions of vulnerable groups.

9.5 Neo-pragmatism

This approach allows maximum freedom to choose research methods and techniques, researchers not being committed to any ontological or epistemological view (Creswell 2007). Social world is not an absolute unity thus research should cover both the individuals and groups, balancing between micro and macro social usually using the mixed methods. Dualism between objective and subjective reality although recognized, it is considered counterproductive. Social knowledge is independent of the intrinsic nature of social reality (Creswell 2007).

10. Interpretative communities

Interpretative communities belong to different philosophical orientations, with their own scientific literature and appropriate interpretive grid. Interpretative research subjects are part of disadvantaged or marginalized population category. Research procedures such as collecting, analyzing and explaining data, representativeness and research ethics, emphasizes the interpretive moment (Creswell 2007). In conducting the research, the subjects have a privileged place, being considered co-researchers. Therefore, a partnership is formed between all those participating in research (researchers and subjects) focusing on the multitude of perspectives resulted from "the stories of participants". Researchers are open to

the imbalance of power that can be created in the research. The focus is on respect and encouragement of differences and individual specific (Alexa and Sandu 2010).

Due to different interpretive lens, collaborative researches (interpretive communities) are open to different and experimental dissemination environments, including theater performance and poetry (Creswell 2007).

11. Feminist theories

Feminism approaches differently the theoretical and pragmatic orientations, in different national contexts and dynamic development. Feminist research focuses on social policy issues, violence, social justice, gender inequality and challenges of contemporary society (Creswell 2007). Feminine movements are trying to "give voice" (to be known) to opinions and concerns of women within literature, without the ideas that arise in this context being exploited or distorted. Dissemination of knowledge results sometimes takes alternative forms such as performance, dramatic reading. Ethical dilemmas are involved including the establishment of positive relations between participants etc. (Alexa and Sandu 2010).

12. Queer theory (eccentricity theories)

Eccentricity theories are an orientation of postmodern/ poststructuralist nature, based on radical deconstruction, especially in matters of gender. The focus is on construction and social reproduction of identity and how it "performs" in different social environments. Researchers should be aware of the authority and influence that they exercise in interviews.

Characteristics of eccentricity theories:

- Challenges produced by separation of gender and heterosexual/ homosexual sexual conduct,
     - Decentralization of identity,
     - Fluidization of gender categories,
     - Prejudices/ stereotypes about homosexuality are criticized,
     - Power is exercised through discursive strategies,
     - Avoiding normalization strategies,
     - Academic work may take ironic, comic, paradoxical form,
     - Homosexuality approaches are frequent.

These characteristics are common objects of study such as movies, videos, novels, poems, and photos (Creswell 2007). Concepts such as stupidity, failure and lack of legitimacy are analyzed (Halberstam 2008). Far from being a critical analysis, the theories of eccentricity (Queer Theory) suggest an overcome of post-humanist ideologies in ethics, political philosophy and gender studies (Adair 2002), but also in cultural anthropology.

13. Disabilities theory

Researchers noted that disability is seen as a difference between people and not as a medical failure (Alexa and Sandu 2010). Therefore, people with disabilities become vulnerable and are often discriminated (Pothier and Devlin 2006). Approaching people with disabilities as different is reflected in research by way of addressing the questions. Research on disability is used to investigate how parents, teachers and school administrative staff define school inclusion of children with disabilities (Creswell 2007). Disability issue is often identified in terms of social justice, both from a contractualist ethical perspective (Becker 2005; Cudd 2008) and from the perspective of ethics of care (McKenzie and Blenkinsop 2006).

14. Mixed methods and hybrid theories

Ştefan Cojocaru (2010a) defines the process of hybrid theories as a form of discovery, construction and argumentation of new theories starting from elements of different paradigms. Mixed methods is seen by Stefan Cojocaru (2010b) as a use of combined methods in social research aimed at accurate and fair description of the complexity of social reality. Mixed methods have the advantage of reducing errors inherent in the application of any methodology, on one hand, and to generate deeper and broader meaning, on the other hand. Mixed methods are a clarifying process generating depth within evaluation process of social reality, while hybrid theories generate social innovation through trans-paradigmatic character.

Conclusions

In other words, knowledge is not a "search for truth" but an establishment of meaning. Ontological perspective is related to the nature of reality seen in positivist manner as external objective given and different of the researcher and to which it can detach from to investigate, or a social construct resulting from the continuous negotiations of interpretations between the actors that compose social reality. In this second perspective, the researcher changes social reality through the very act of research. At the level of dominant paradigm in current epistemology, we identify, under the influence of quantum physics development in particular, a paradigm centered on connoisseur subject, seen as an epistemological counterpart, to the idea of objectivity of the world.

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