**Perspectives on Historical Sociology**

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**ABSTRACT**

Only by historical analysis can we discover what makes up man since it is only in the course of history that he is formed.

**Keywords:** History, Society, Homo-Sociologicus, Historical Cycles, linear discontinuity, linear continuity.

**Book Review**

THE PERSPECTIVE OF HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY: The Individual as Homo-Sociologicus through Society and History, JIRÍ SUBRT, Charles University, Faculty of Humanities, Prague, Czech Republic, Emerald Publishing Limited Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK, First edition 2017.

Professor JIRÍ SUBRT studied sociology and economics at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. In 2009, he founded, in collaboration with Johann P. Arnason, the Department of Historical Sociology at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, which he still heads. This faculty is the main center of study in the Czech Republic that gives attention to the work of Norbert Elias. However, in addition to Elias' influence, other sources of inspiration are also drawn, such as S. N. Eisenstadt, I. Wallerstein, T. Skocpol, C. Tilly, and M. Mann. EVEN DURING HIS EARLY STUDIES, Professor JIRÍ SUBRT showed his primary interest in historical sociology. Another historical-sociological theme that JIRÍ SUBRT has devoted himself to since the early period of his studies is time, in three thematic areas:

1- the long-term process of development and transformation of human ideas about time;

2- the forming and transforming of temporal structures within social systems;

3- the role of time in general sociological theory. Inspired by Patrick Baert, he understands historical sociology as a temporalized sociology. The theme of time directed Subrt to study Norbert Elias's works.

This professional interest resulted in the book The Civilization Theory of Norbert Elias. This first work brought Elias's work systematically to the Czech professional public. JIRÍ SUBRT became editor of the first extensive handbook on historical sociology in the Czech language. Together with Bohuslav Šalanda, he was the founder of the journal historical sociology in 2009, which publishes texts in Czech and English. In addition to Elias' themes, JIRÍ SUBRT deals with the issues of historical consciousness and collective memory, Central European development, mass communication, and problems of contemporary sociological theory. He has published works in Czech, English, and Russian. He summarized his views on historical sociology in the book The Perspective of Historical Sociology: The Individual as Homo-Sociologicus Through Society and History. (Emerald publishing 2017), which I am going to turn to now.

This lavishly illustrated book is a walkthrough analysis of historical sociology. In his splendid book, JIRÍ SUBRT provides a sober overview of the modern theories in historical sociology, enjoying currency in some corners of academia. Moreover, many readers are dedicated to digging into the interdisciplinary field of historical sociology, such as Philip Abrams, Richard Lachmann, Dennis Smith, and Theda Skocpol. However, the book of professor JIRÍ SUBRT on historical sociology distinguishes in several ways from other earlier published books on historical sociology. The most enduring contribution of the abovementioned book is to provide a nuanced understanding of historical sociology by resting upon the earlier contribution in historical sociology and bringing about new insights concerning the dynamic of the field of historical sociology. One of the creative devices professor JIRÍ SUBRT uses in the book is his excellent and elegant prose that flows throughout the book without bumps and awkward breaks. Such tactics, of course, do win the battle of misunderstanding and are hallmarks of fluent language. In other words, it is a "student-friendly" book. Apart from that, the significant fusion of classical theories with the new changes in view and practices in contemporary historical sociology is of substantial importance. By implying such an approach, professor JIRÍ SUBRT intends to give a better and explicit understanding of the new development in the field of historical sociology.

The book is organized into seven similarly structured parts. In the book's first part, JIRÍ SUBRT examines the relationship between history and sociology and the bumpy ride that led to the emergence of historical sociology as a discipline during the 70th. Although various forms of intellectual endeavor established strict distinctions between sociology and history in terms of their logic and their method, the complete separation between history and sociology never occurred. However, in the later years, we witness a shift from this view which argues that sociology and history are closely and intimately related. Sociology can not be separated from history, and history can not be isolated from sociology. This remark reminds us of G.E. Howard's statement, "History is the past Sociology and Sociology is the present History." During his relatively brief analysis in the first part of the book, JIRÍ SUBRT argues that historical sociology should seek to create a space of dialogue between history and sociology. The better the communication and cooperation between these two disciplines, the minor division between sociology and history.

In drawing the line of argument further in the first part, JIRÍ SUBRT argues that historical sociology is not only influenced by history but also shaped by different opposing theoretical paradigms that exist in sociology. Generally speaking, heterogeneous theoretical approaches within the discipline of sociology such as consensus and conflict, individualism and holism, micro and macro-levels (or micro-and macro-perspectives), positivism and anti-positivism, and quantitative and qualitative methodologies contribute to the basis of historical sociology.

In the book's second part, JIRÍ SUBRT concentrates on a human society experiencing processes of change. Any study of social processes has a historical character in the temporal and spatial field and interrelates to certain philosophical assumptions and theoretical constructions. By this approach, the author brings what he means by the temporal and the spatial dimensions of life, which, in his opinion, are essential components of social change processes. Given the abstract nature of temporalized sociology, the author outlines different views and concepts of time and space from historical and contemporary sociological theory. The author emphasizes the externality and regularity of social facts that are believed to span a homogeneous social space and endure over time, revealing a particularly linear conception of time and a homogeneous understanding of social space. Furthermore, he considers non-linear sociological theories which emphasize the importance of incorporating a processual sense of social reality grounded in people's social actions within a homogeneous society. Within the framework of non-linear sociological theories, the spatially oriented theories of some other social theorists consider the social world to be multi-dimensional and partitioned into distinctive social spaces, fields, or sites that are relationally configured with their internal logics, regulative principles, and social rhythms.

The author uses the term social change to describe the variation of social processes and interactions from a historical, sociological point of view. This change could also illustrate structural change and the reshaping of values and ideologies. From a historical and sociological point of view, social change could also be identical to progress, development, or evolution. Social change may be continuous or discontinuous, deep or superficial, fast or slow, and short or long. The author outlines three main theories of social change is as follows:

* The theory of historical cycles
* The theory of linear discontinuity / linear continuity development
* The theory of evolution

Unlike the theory of social evolution, which views the development of society as progressing in some new, unique directions, the idea of historical cycles argues that events and stages of culture and history generally repeat themselves in cycles. In further developing the line of argument, JIRÍ SUBRT represents a comprehensive set of theoretical approaches within the following sociological tradition for shedding light on the theory of historical cycles. Vilfredo Pareto considers the social change in history as a cycle of elites; A. Sorokin avers that social change in history is developed by cultural sub-systems (the pendular theory of social change), and Spengler depicts social change as a change in culture and civilization.

The theory of linear discontinuity consists of both theories of developmental discontinuity and breaks. Karl Marx is one of the prominent figures in the following tradition, and according to historical dialectic, the production of forces and production relations lead to antagonism. According to the next view, social change leads to a break from earlier social, economic, and cultural arrangements. The new structuralism, instead of focusing on searching for latent structures that are relatively stable for an extended period. Anthony Giddens replaces breaks with episodes, large-scale episodes, and long-standing sequences. Time-space instead of production forces and production relations. For Giddens, history is contingent according to different episodes appearing in other time spaces and the social formation that brings forth that development. The theory of continuous linear evolution considers history as a sequential and processual form. Max Weber emphasizes the unintentional nature of the course of history and challenges the teleological view of history. Elias emphasizes long-term development and processuality, integration, disintegration, and rise and fall. Both Weber and Elias take a position concerning social change that is not quite evolutionistic.

Evolutionary theories assume that societies gradually change from simple beginnings into even more complex forms. Early sociologists beginning with Auguste Comte, believed that human societies evolve in a unilinear way- that is, in one line of development. A similar trend can be seen in Emile Durkheim, who argues that society moves from simple to differentiated and from mechanical to the organic community. Talcott Parsons focuses on the system's adaptive capacity that leads to increased differentiation in culture. Smelser's interpretation of social change assumes the significant role of social actors, whereas Luhman emphasizes the social system similarly to Talcott Parsons.

At the end of part two, the author touches upon the new approaches, such as chaos and crisis theories, as a form of social change to provide us with a broad understanding of contemporary theories about change processes.

When we talk about social change, many ideas and terms are associated with it. In part three, JIRÍ SUBRT collects together various theoretical definitions and descriptions of analysis that have been offered in historical sociology (including all from the classic to new ones) to indicate the range of different conceptions and the issues that arise from them. In the following parts, the author provides us full details of classical sociological theories to the new ones. There are also some remarks on related topics such as analyticity, definition, and methodology.

In part four, the author carefully examines social structures, systems, and social stratifications. The main discussion here is the extent to which individuals are the constituent parts of the social system. Focusing on the emergence of social facts through a social process, the theories of structuralism, post-structuralism, and structural functionalism are carefully analyzed. Society is seen as a structure with interrelated parts designed to meet the biological and social needs of the individuals in that society. The view that social systems are not fixed entities, but dynamic is quite evident throughout his theoretical discussions. Orders and conflicts are discussed concerning social structures and systems. Beyond the debates of charges and disputes, the author argues that post-structuralism rejects invariable rules and orders, which was appreciated by the tradition of structuralism. In this part, the author concludes his discussion by discussing Luhman's theoretical views and Wallerstein's theory on the world system. Drawing upon the notion of Luhmann, social systems are constituted on three levels: Lowest Level, Middle Level, and Highest Level. This approach refuses Parson's AGIL sociological scheme. World-system theory is a multidisciplinary approach to world history and social change that emphasizes the system's dynamic characteristics. The capitalist world is not the product of an accumulation of capital or the protestant ethics; as Max Weber proposed, it is the product of long-distance commerce and the exchange of goods between regions: core, semi-periphery, and periphery.

In part five, Elias's historical sociology and his civilizing process theory have been discussed in detail. Drawing from historical sociology in this part, the author discussed the approaches of other scholars who have been prominent figures in the discipline of historical sociology, such as Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt and Jaroslav Krejcí. Elias's figuration theory and a civilizing process concerning sociogenetic and psychogenetics were discussed in detail. Sociogenetic and psychogenetic processes are independent of each other. Sociogenetics is related to the evolution of states, power, order, and social structure, whereas psychogenetics is the development of human personality, manners, and ways of behavior. The works of Elias consider of great importance for historical sociology. In his works, Elias traces the historical developments of the European habitus and the particular individual psychic structures molded by social attitudes. Elias traced how post-medieval European standards regarding violence, sexual behavior, bodily functions, table manners, and forms of speech were gradually transformed by increasing thresholds of shame and repugnance, working outward from a nucleus in court etiquette. The internalized self-restraint imposed by increasingly complex networks of social connections developed the psychological self-perceptions that Sigmund Freud recognized as the super-ego. The second volume of the civilizing process looks into the causes of these processes and finds them in the increasingly centralized early modern state and the increasingly differentiated and interconnected web of society.

Jaroslav Krejci's exploration of humanity and civilizations throughout history, major historical events, and processes in the history of humankind are looked at to understand the currents of history. Jaroslav Krejci analyzes the whole history of civilization and considers historical events such as feudalism and the development of science. By bringing sociological and historical insights to this broad subject, and particular attention to different types of knowledge (such as religion and its impact on state, law, labor, and ownership), his works offer insights into the future of civilization and shifting global power. From a historical and sociological point of view, Eisenstadt contributed significantly to understanding cultures and societies. As a sociologist, Eisenstadt has focused on the interplay between cultural and structural change processes and inherent tensions and antinomies rather than on the uniform development process. Eisenstadt researched broad themes of social change, modernities, and civilizations. One of his arguments in the political systems of empires is the axial age. It is based on specific symbolic orientations. He considers modernity as new axial age. To explain the emergence of modernity, Eisenstadt argues that tension between transcendental and mundane orders led to the modern axial age. Axial age is a methodological tool to explain the transition from one axial age to another. According to Eisenstadt, every axial age is based on specific symbolic orientations.

In part six, the author gives us a journey through the ideas and forces combined to help the emergence and transformation of modernity. JIRÍ SUBRT, from a historical, sociological point of view, describes how sociological theories, social revolutions, wars, nationalism, and conflicts have transformed human society and changed the outlook of modernity. First of all, the author describes the emergence of modernity through the original accumulation of capital (Karl Marx), a new human mentality (Max Weber), a new human psyche (Norbert Elias), and discipline and surveillance (Michel Foucault). The second great driver of modern society is the formation of the state and citizens. Social revolutions have changed the relationship between citizens and the state. The birth of the contemporary nation-state resulted from bourgeois, conservative, and peasant revolutions. As a result of these social revolutions, governments built more and more sophisticated and complicated partnerships with their citizens as democratic methods of rule began to spread around the modern world. The discourse of nationalism helped shape modern identities and movements not only in Europe but across the globe. Education was one of the leading forces which paved the way for nationalism. Nationalism is not a monolithic phenomenon; It is multi-facial. While in England, nationalism is affiliated with the state as a whole, in France, it is affiliated with the language, and in Germany, with ethnic and cultural sameness.

Although the idea of progress from the Enlightenment is still very much with us, from other perspectives, the advent of modernity has also been a story of tragedy. We have bought our new freedoms at a very high price indeed. Perhaps we have never been close to collective insanity or planetary extinction. Nevertheless, modernity has wreaked havoc on our inner and our landscape. We can pick up aspects of the catastrophe in various areas, such as totalitarianism, anti-semitism, wars, conflicts, violence, and discrimination. Rather than seeking to resolve modernity's contradictions, the author argues that we should accept its Janus-faced character. We should think of second modernity, neo-modernity, or post-modernity. Modernity can not eliminate evil and dangerous frictions endemic to modernity but can suggest new lines of social amelioration and emotional repair. In drawing the line of argument in this regard, the author represents a range of twentieth-century theorists who struggled to comprehend the Janus-faced character of modernity, such as anti-modern, post-modernism, neo-modernism, network society, post-industrial society, and reflective modernity. Thus, modernity reached a new phase at the end of the 20th century: the move from radicalized modernity to second modernity.

In the concluding part, the author examines the complex social experience of individuals and society in the context of history. This part reveals how culture shapes an individual's identity and ability to function in relationships. He also discusses the problematic paradox of cultivating creative thinking and reflective action of the individuals in a society that influences society. Finally, the author raises questions if everything depends upon individuals or, rather, everything depends upon society. How could we, from a historical, sociological point of view, bridge the gap between individuals and society?

Reflecting upon the following question, the author discusses the idea of dualism: either there is no society without individuals, or at the same time, there are no individuals beyond the influence of cultures. In refining the concept of individualism and holism, the author carefully expands the essential elements of these two concepts from different theoretical points of view, such as structuralism, functionalism, symbolic interactionism, and phenomenology. Both ideas of nominalism and realism are challenged, and it has been argued that society does not exist outside individuals and individuals but does not exist outside the community.

In the final section of part seven, the author describes individuals as people assigned different social roles in everyday life. In turn, different norms, values, and thus social expectations are connected to which they have to bow; the Homo Sociologicus man. A distinction is made between must, should, and can expectations. Since expectations originate in society and the individual has no influence, he can not escape them. This can even go so far that the individual internalizes norms and thereby penalizes himself negatively in the event of non-observance or positively in the event of observance (examples of this are the feeling of shame and pride). However, expectations, norms, and values rarely originate from the society in which the Homo Sociologicus lives but mostly from smaller groups relevant to the respective role. As a result, everyone is subject to an individual mix of norms and expectations that determine their actions. The theory of Homo Sociologicus, as the author refined in this part, has therefore often had to put up with the reproach of denying people free will.

The book is written very well, and it is beneficial for the new students who want to acquire a piece of extensive knowledge about historical sociology. The book grabs readers on the first page and does not let go until they have reached the end of the book. It has rich and compelling content and engages the reader from the first page onward. The book is filled with sharp, constructive dialogues with earlier theories about historical sociology. This is a welcome book with a leading analysis of contemporary historical sociology. Nevertheless, this book, despite its variability and the theoretical overlaps in each part of the book, provides an essential contribution to our understanding of history and sociology. It is, indeed, a fitting tribute to historical sociology.