

# Teoretická sociologie

2021 Podzim





# Reality and Utopia



# Dialogue

- „At the core of normativism as an epistemic mode is the understanding that knowledge itself has a politics. From this premise, normativism draws the following implication: that when an investigator researches other people — even others long since dead — she constructs a dialogue between herself and her subjects.“
- „The philosophical problem of “what is a norm” is not what is at stake... [in the] epistemic mode for producing maximal interpretations — a mode whereby the investigator involves herself in a dialogue with her subjects that has as its subject normative validity.“







# Ethnography and history

- Normative maximal interpretations rely upon subject-to-subject dialogue so as to recover utopian and dystopian consciousness, and ultimately construct compelling social criticism. But there is another purpose for dialogue between investigator and investigated — to get into the meaning of social life in certain time and space.







# Relocating facts

- „Both realism and normativism use theory to produce ultimate and organizing referents for the research text. Theory relocates the facts in a second conceptual space, a larger world unknown to the facts themselves: a world of the fundamental structures of the social (realism) or a world of the fundamental problems and possibilities of critique (normativism).“







# Practical effect and explanatory theory

- Theory brings to bear the critical force of well-articulated utopia upon the empirical world, but in doing so, it brings together the intellectual's political philosophies with the utopian capacities immanent in social life as lived and experienced.
- „[I]f the social is denaturalized, then the question of the institutionalization and maintenance of social realities becomes connected to the question of how the social life is normatively imagined.“







# The concept-dependency of social life

- „That the “social world,” though different than the “natural world,” can also be thought of as an “intransitive” realm, to which the “transitive” theories produced by social research attempt to correspond.“
- „That though societies are “open systems” and thus subject to unpredictable historical changes, they can still be studied scientifically, despite the lack of experimental conditions for studying these systems. The reason for this is that societies already contain — as a part of themselves — a protoscientific conceptual account of themselves.“







# Reference and mechanism

- „[T]he premise of the realist epistemic mode — that at its core, the theoretical meaning-system is grounded in much the same way the factual meaning-system is: by reference to a reality that can be reported on. Theory, according to realism, reports upon a deeper social reality.“
- „There are aspects of social life here and there, and perhaps especially in modern social organizations, that function mechanistically. [But] realism’s constant use of ontological language makes it hard to keep in mind that mechanism is a metaphor, [referring to a clock] producing regularities via hidden machinery.“







# Subjectivity

- „Meaning and subjectivity in social life — or, in Bhaskar’s terms, the concept-dependence of social structure — provide a great deal of dynamism to the social object, particularly in so far as they are unrealistic.“
- „Subjectivity, understood literally as that element of the world that continually exceeds its objective constraints, gives to the social object of study a distinct historical dynamism and cultural difference.“



