

PROBLEMS, SOLUTIONS, AND RESILIENCE: A DILEMMA EMERGED FROM INDIVIDUALISTIC EXPLANATIONS FOR SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract

This paper tries to demonstrate three problems that emerge when we try to define knowledge within Max Weber's Sociology: the indetermination of semantic acts, the paradox of magical contents, and the presupposition of meaning for meaning creation. We demonstrate how it is possible to solve two of them with the work of the American philosopher John Searle due to their converging hardcore theoretical assumptions. Nevertheless, because of their similar individualistic position to explain social knowledge there remains one of the problems, which is a dilemma. At the end, we indicate the limitations of the individualistic assumptions.

Introduction

Although Max Weber's work does not directly try to understand the role of knowledge in society, such as the Sociology of Knowledge inaugurated by Karl Mannheim, his works abounds in terms and concepts related to knowledge, which is vital to understand society. The importance of knowledge is, for instance, explicit in his religious studies. Moreover, we can assume that if knowledge is a human product, then it should also be based on his social action theory [SAT]. However, when we try to define what knowledge is within his theory, relating it to his SAT, three broad problems emerge: 1) the indetermination of semantic acts; 2) the paradox of magical contents; and 3) the presupposition of meaning for meaning creation. Besides, I hypothesize that through the definition of the terms intellectualism and intellectualization (and other related terms), it is possible to define what knowledge is within Weber's writings. For the sake of simplicity, intellectualization must be seen as a developmental process of the acts involved with intellectualism. At the second part of this paper, we attempt to solve these problems based on the work of the contemporary American philosopher John Searle. To do so, we briefly summarize some of his theories of mind, language, and society, demonstrating the proximities with Weber's theory and they could solve the problems raised at the first part. Searle's theorizations not only can represent an interesting update

to Weber's theory, but also it may still contain similar problems that have to do with an individualistic hardcore on their theories. At the end, we point out some theoretical necessities engendered by their similar hardcore assumptions.

I. Problems

The most important text to understand what is *intellectualism* is Weber's *Religious Communities* [*Religiöse Gemeinschaften*]¹. After a long reconstruction of the term, we abridge it as the following. *Intellectualism* is an effect of the inner "anthropological need of meaning," which involves a cognitive act of meaning attribution/constitution to the things in the world (Cf. WEBER, §7 Religious Communities, esp.: 265 & 273). For Weber, humans must attribute meaning because of his very ontological conception of the world. Accordingly to the Neokantian conception accepted by him, the world has no meaning itself², converting human reasoning in the chief subject of the establishment of a meaningful world. As matter of comparison, the same conception is defended by George Simmel in his *Philosophy of Money* (2004), esp. chapter I & II. The outcome of this cognitive act is a meaningful content; we can also call it a semantic content. When these contents are piecemeal amassed, they generate a "thought" that is system-like, such as the metaphysical and the ethical thought. The systematic organization occurs because meaningful contents must be subjected to the logical demands of thinking, which is taken for granted for Weber as an anthropological need. Moreover, he recognizes that much involved in this task of organization of semantic contents belongs to the act of interpretation, or even to a special type of it, a "constructive interpretation." In sum, from an individual cognitive act, meaningful contents are created similarly to building blocks that will after a long process be organized in a systematic fashion.

Even though intellectualism is more explicit when he writes about social layers involved with textual production and interpretation, every domain, every operation of human thinking that both seeks to attribute meaning to the world and organize these meanings is related to intellectualism. In this sense,

- 1 See, Max Weber *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 22-II. Before the edition of the collected works, this text was part of the posthumous and popular text *Economy and Society*, organized by his wife Marianne Weber.
- 2 Currently, there are some works that carefully explore the connection between Weber and Neokantianism, esp. his connections with Heinrich Rickert, see for instance BURGER (1976) and OAKES (1990). For more information about the first period of the "neokantian movement," see KÖHNKE (1991).

religion, philosophical speculation, metaphysics, and theoretical and conceptual thought in general belong to intellectualism. Likewise, it includes magic, providing us the most emblematic case to explore epistemological problems and *the paradox of magic* or even *the paradox of the disenchantment of the world*, i.e., how magic can be a product of intellectualism and then be shunned by it. Another operation of intellectualism is the objectification of thought, i.e., the objectification of the previous meaning attributed. Although Weber lacks a proper consideration of language, he recognizes its importance, arguing that the objectification mostly happens in written language. Therefore, the definition of and intellectual is taken by the writing ability.

The objectification of knowledge requires a special type of interpretation, a chain of acts that we might call instead *constructive interpretation*. The ordinary sense of interpretation is the understanding of some meaningful contents accordingly to the individual's previous background, enabling him to grasp meaning. In this special type of interpretation, not only the meaning of a statement, a belief, an idea, and a theory is grasped, but also its content is reshaped and expressed or posited based on the individuals' background and interests, no matter if these are known or unknown by them. Hence, although the individual operates mental acts, his previous background attaches him to social groups and social layers. The dependence degree of an intellectual of its respective group and layer is quite variable; actually, it is only verifiable case by case. It includes factors such as the degree of freedom of action of the intellectual regarding previous and established intellectual propositions, the concurrence against others intellectuals, and political powers that tries to interfere in the intellectual work (Cf. WEBER, §7 Religious Communities: 266). In sum, according to Weber, the intellectual work and the cognitive act of meaning attribution to the world or to the things in the world are always connected with a set of already established knowledge, which is sedimented through time and constitutes a meaningful background (or a *semantic context*). Weber exemplifies in *The Economic Ethics of World's Religion* (WEBER, 1989, 1996, and 2005) how these cognitive acts of reorganization of some aspects of a semantic content is reshaped based on previous interests and semantic background or context, which is what we called *the process of intellectualization*.

Once we have exposed the acts involved in meaning and knowledge constitution through the acts of meaning attribution and intellectualism, how they can be wed with Weber's SAT?

We can assume that the most important human feature for Weber is how individuals behave and act collectively. Weber states in *Methodological Foundations of Sociology* (1922), "We should call a human behavior by 'action' (no

matter if it is an outwardly or inwardly doing, omission, or toleration), if and inasmuch as an actor or actors connect a subjective *meaning* with that behavior” (WEBER, 1922: 503). A subjective meaning is what differentiates an ordinary behavior from an action. However, what is a subjective meaning?

As we have seen before, the world for Weber has no intrinsic meaning. All meanings are a product of human relation to the things and its meaning attribution. Two processes led to the meaning formation: a process of abstraction, in which inferentially we select some patterns of reality abstracting them, and the process of systematization of the abstracted forms obeying a principle of logical coherence. Thereby, at the very beginning of meaning formation, the representational element corresponds to reality. However, it can only be conceived and transmitted through a specific conventional mode⁴. The meaning attribution gives understandability to part of the world by mental representations; it creates a world of meaning, a *semantic context*. Then, meaning is subjective, i.e., it effectively exists inside one’s mind (or brain), but it has to be directed to something external to the mind. In this manner, every action directs itself to something objective by a subjective intended meaning. What is meaningful is comprehensible; in other words, others can understand everything that has some meaning. Weber believes that an act of understanding something meaningful (i.e., some representation of the world made by human action) presupposes an expression of something meaningful by someone. This is a tacit *principle of expressability*⁵.

In many cases, a meaningful, i.e. understandable, action is not in psychological processes at all; in other cases, it exists only to specialists; as the mystical processes are not adequately communicable processes, because words are not accessible to their experiences, they are not fully understandable (WEBER, 1922: 503-4).

It is possible to see here a close relationship between someone’s actions and language, and also a close relationship between communication and thoughts. What holds them together is some rudimentary conception of *intentionality*

- 3 He had the same conception seven years before, in his text *Some Categories* [1913]. An action for him is “a specific understandable behavior to objects, and it means that it is through some subjective intended or possessed meaning (subjective)” (WEBER, 1922: 405). Thus, the acting is always bound to an intended meaning to the world because it is an act to objects. A portion of this phenomenon, which sociology aims to understand and elucidate, is the meaning related to others’ behavior. It happens when the acting is co-determined by the meaning of other’s behavior and when the action course is explicable by this effect.
- 4 This distinction fits perfectly to Frege’s classical distinction between Meaning and Reference (*Sinn und Bedeutung*) (1948), which influenced Searle.
- 5 John Searle defends it in the same way.

that Weber has. So, although the meaning exists inside one's mind, it relates to something external to the mind because it represents a state of affairs of objects, and because it is a human action construction through individual *interaction*. Therefore, the meaning is external and not psychological. In sum, when an individual connects its behavior (then it could be a simple state of mind) to a meaning subjectively intended, but referential to something external to the mind, there is aboutness or intentionality, that is a mental directness to something external to the mind.

The semantic context provides for individuals forms of intelligibility, communication, and tools for understanding reality in order to guide their actions. As we have seen, it is historically sedimented, consisting of a complex of human actions to attribute meaning to the world, in many different levels, requiring means of objectively possibilities for mutual understanding. It is a tacit agreement, which could be based on Weber's concept of *consensus*. He argues: "There are complexes of act in community without a purposive agreed order whereby 1) they [the individuals] behave as it had in fact occurred, and by which 2) this effect was determined by the specific type of meaning relation that the acting of individuals has" (WEBER, 1922: 428-9).

This complex and tacit type of intentioned actions and meanings can only occur when a sedimentation of behaviors, actions, and meanings are believed as existing and as being valid. An example given by Weber was the linguistic community, which also shows us how he conceives language:

A linguistic community [*Sprachgemeinschaft*] is represented (...) by innumerable individual actions (...), which are guided by the expectation to obtain from the other 'understanding' of certain intended meaning. This happens in mass among a crowd of men by a similar meaningful use of exterior similar symbols, in an approximate manner, 'as if' the speakers would orient their behavior following a purposive, agreed, grammatical rules (...) (WEBER, 1922: 429).

The language used by a linguistic community is the expression of countless complex actions that have communication as purpose. Linguistic communication would be therefore completely understood by its pragmatic use, thus, the meaning of a word could only be realized and understood inside a particular context. The language would be established and guaranteed by consensus, i.e., by the assumption that such individuals of the linguistic community exist and talk to each other with some rules that are required if someone want to be understood. As Weber states, the continued existence of a 'linguistic community' means "a behavior which directs itself by its 'utterances' under certain average probabilities, existing within a circle of men, to be understood, and therefore

‘consents’ to expect this effect within an average meaning” (WEBER, 1992: 431-2). The individual comes across with existing symbols whose meaning is approximated to the subjective meaning, which he or she uses to communicate. Moreover, the individual stumbles upon rules of use of these symbols. The member of a linguistic community would inherit semantic and syntax. Furthermore, the symbols of language represent “ideas.”

The *first problem* arises as a realization of Weber’s theory. As he does not have any organized theory about language and a poorly developed theory of mind, firstly he cannot reduce to his SAT such mental and cognitive acts of meaning creation and objectification, which means, in fact, its publicizing through a common mean or language. Even meaning communication is jeopardized because of the lack of a theory of language. It is not clear what warrants for him the mutual comprehension. On the one hand, it is due to shared values belonging to a community in an historic individuality formation and on the other hand, the very human condition (the universality of human existence, the anthropological needs, and certainly human’s mind) provides such mutual understanding. In this sense, we would need some more developed apparatus in order to be able to consider the meaning existing in the different forms of speech, in the meaning formation and in the constitution of ideas.

Nonetheless, we could realize that Weber presupposes a huge importance for semantics and communication; at least, by this far he still does not elaborate any theorization about it, nor relates it to language. It makes that Weber fails to recognize an important distinction between *language dependent facts* and *language independent facts*, as it is provable in matters of knowledge consideration, like the following magic examples. As I am going to show, the speech act theory of John Austin and John Searle provide us with enough tools to accomplish such task. Moreover, Searle’s theory of mind, esp. with his concept of *intentionality*, enhances Weber’s own conceptions (we will also see how Searle’s theory can do more than that). Although Weber has no rudimentary speech act theory, he has some space in his theory to include it. Therefore, there is the indetermination of semantic acts.

The *second problem* arises when we try to define the ontological, epistemological, and logical status of knowledge for Weber. The best way to present its limits is through the analysis of magical knowledge.

Weber states, “the religious or the magical motivated actions are, in its original essence, directed to *this world*” (WEBER, 2001: 121). As we know, “this world” means a *meaningful* part of the world, which was produced by the attribution of meaning. In the case of religion and magic, the meaningful world is a domain of supersensible entities that can interfere in human world.

Accordingly Weber reasoning, such supersensible world is *logically necessary* in the development of human thought, for it is the *systematization* of the cognitive acts of *abstraction* involved in the attribution of meaning. Abstraction seeks to minimize the contingency of the manifold sensible experience of reality organizing it. The meaning of “abstraction” for him is the same of the meaning of “concept,”⁶ in which both of them belong to *inductive logic*, i.e., extracting common characteristics of a variety of cases to produce a generalization or a *form*. Thus, if the process of abstraction produces a supersensible idea of “spirit,” for instance, then there must have been a common characteristic of everything in the world in the standpoint of certain group. In this case, Weber assumes that it is “the representation of certain beings veiled ‘behind’ the action of natural objects, artifacts, animals, or men; each one them charismatically qualified” (WEBER, 2001: 123-4).

The magician seeks to get practical effects from reality acting upon the supersensible domain⁷. In this sense, he acts under a basic rationality criterion: the adequacy of certain means to attain certain ends. At the same time, his reasoning is logical. Hence, for the magician his action is adequate and logical, thus perfectly rational. However, how is it possible that an action be at the same time rational and invalid or rational and inadequate? If the purpose of magic is *to control* reality in its own benefit, then the adequacy of the procedures is *necessary* in order to attain the desired effect upon reality. Yet, the belief in perfect rationality of action does not ensure factually its perfect rationality. As Weber says, “in its original form, a religious or magically oriented action is precisely a rational action: though it is not necessarily a means and ends-oriented action, yet it is oriented by the *rules of experience*” (WEBER, 2001: 121). “*Rules experience*” suggests both the existence of an *objective* reality, which is independent of human thought, and a way by which certain human cognition grasps the objective experience transforming it into a subjective experience.

Weber supposes that inside the individuals’ minds the *adequacy of knowledge* to reality is intertwined with the *belief in the validity of knowledge*. Consider the following example, “Just as the sparks caused by the act of rubbing a piece wood against the other, the ‘magic’ mimicry of the [magic] expert attracts rainfall from heaven” (WEBER, 2001: 121). From the standpoint of our

6 In his texts on *Roscher* and *Knies* (1903-6), he assumes, “the term ‘concept’ (...) is used by me to designate a mental image, still it be an individual one. Such mental image was built through the logical elaboration of the empirical varieties. Its end is to get knowledge on what is essential” (WEBER, 1922: 5). Note how the “logical elaboration of the empirical varieties” means a generalization belonging to inductive logic procedure.

7 Assuming Searle’s conceptions, as we will see, this kind of action could be understood as an attempt of a directive speech act.

current scientific understanding of nature, we could say that there was an *adequate* procedure of knowing and controlling of nature: the heat generated by rubbing a piece of wood against the other *causes* combustion; there is also a *non-adequate* procedure: the symbolic procedure that aims to attract rain. Yet, Weber continues, “And the sparks that were generated by friction are in exactly the same way a ‘magical’ product as well as the manipulation of the rainmaker engenders rainfall” (WEBER, 2001: 121-2).

The *analogy* of both procedures leads them to a status of equivalence of logical *validity* – and hence *adequacy*. If there is equivalence between the pragmatic actions to manipulate the world and the symbolic actions to the same purpose (i.e. the friction of wood to make fire and the “rain dance” for rain), then for the actors the criterion of *adequacy* of knowledge with reality (a *truth’s* criterion) is *pragmatic*. Therefore, if the conclusion of the thought and its action are eventually true, adequate, or effective (i.e., when fire is produced or rain is obtained), then the premises must also be true as well as its related procedures. Thus, to the extent that a plan of action that aims to manipulate the world works, but through non-adequate assumptions, it will remain valid and will be in effect more efficacious than the best of the theories that explains the world. That would mean the effectiveness of an action worth more than any theory closer to the truth, but which does not have the same effectiveness, even if these successes are caused by successive coincidences.

In sequence, Weber conveys another important expression: “Just we, from the standpoint of our current view of nature, could differentiate objective ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’ causal attributions, while the latter could be seen as irrational and its corresponding action as ‘magic’” (WEBER, 2001: 122). This endorses the idea of *semantic context*. All that is false (i.e., a false or non-adequate causal attribution) in the current scientific view of nature (belonging to our current semantic context) is evaluated as magic. The ideas and beliefs in a magic (semantic) context enable the magical action. It is through an established context that we have the prior suppositions on what is correct or incorrect, what is true or false, and, if something fails to satisfy the rules of experience, it is possible to find explanations (*ad hoc*) for the failure. The conditions of a failed explanation occur only when we achieve another causal explanation to the event under examination. Thence, how is it possible to obtain new knowledge?

Weber’s allusion to the “standpoint” suggests a neokantian understanding: It may indeed exist approaches toward some truth, but the task of apprehending the world revealing the truth would be *endless*. It seems that, even though an old knowledge about reality or an old procedure to get a desired effect from reality still has *practical effects*, they might be judged as being *false* as soon as

a new knowledge or procedure judged as *more adequate* is obtained. In other words, when a new knowledge or procedure performs correct or adequate causal attributions on reality, which was tested, proved, and accredited as being true, later on the relation of the ideas that forms such knowledge or procedure is formalized as a valid argument and, thereafter, becomes part of the *semantic context*. Explaining it through the previous examples of the analogy of friction of wood to make fire and the “rain dance” to get rain, on the one hand, when it was discovered in our scientific view of reality that a certain amount of heat is necessary to burn a chunk of carbon basis material. Then it is a true procedure and a valid form of knowledge the set of assumptions in which the friction of wood produces heat, by which combustion is actually generated. On the other hand, when it is discovered what causes rainfall is a chain of causal events that has nothing to do with a symbolic procedure such as a rain dance, then the procedure and the knowledge becomes inadequate; moreover its justification becomes *invalid*. A historical example was Stahl’s phlogiston theory as adequate explanation for combustion until it became false due to a new knowledge, Lavoisier’s theory of combustion. In conclusion, while the old procedure, knowledge, or belief, is not downgraded, it is impossible to say that any agent has acted irrationally. However, we still do know how is possible to identify a false belief and motifs to abandon it, unless it does not get the intended effect from reality. In addition, without knowing what allows it, not only the development of knowledge or merely its change is impossible to determine, but it becomes also a *paradox*.

As we are looking for the change of a set of knowledge, procedures, or beliefs, it is important to understand what Weber means by the term rationalization. Although some authors such as Rogers Brubaker (1984), Jürgen Habermas (1984) argue that there is a manifold of meanings for rational and rationalization, or authors such Wolfgang Schluchter (1979) who tries to systematize three main streams of meaning for rationalization; contrariwise, we argue that regarding knowledge it has two different meanings. According to Weber,

It is one thing when you consider the kind of rationalization that a systematic thinker performs on the image of the world, i.e., an increasingly theoretical domain of reality through increasingly precise and abstract concepts. It means something else in a methodical sense, the apprehension of an almost certain goal, given through an increasingly precise calculation of adequate means (WEBER, 1989: 117).

The former is a theoretical rationalization, whereas the latter is a practical rationalization. It creates a dual truth condition: what is true for the theoretical rationalism is the *coherence of concepts*, whereas what is truth for the empirical

rationalism is the *correspondence to reality*. It is a division between “world of ideas” and “empirical world.” The problem of this conception is that *the conceptual domain is prior to the empirical domain*, since reality has no intrinsically meaning. In addition, we can only verify the truth of our statements when we get the intended effect, even if we have based our action in a false assumption. In this manner, “the magic, for example, experienced a ‘rationalization’ as systematically as physics” (WEBER, 1922: 488). Although Weber holds such indeterminacy posture, he does not defend relativism; on the contrary, he still has a realistic conception.

The problem then is the following, despite Weber does not doubt the real effects that knowledge can have from reality, esp. the effects we have been obtaining through scientific work, he cannot establish a relationship of correspondence between knowledge or representative or even theoretical statements about reality and the reality. This happens because it is impossible to know what reality is. In fact, we attribute meaning to reality and our forms of knowledge are related to such meanings or even they are equal such meanings. Since he cannot deny reality, his only and perhaps intuitive solution is the proposition of a “pragmatic truth.” Something is true as long as it produces the desired effect. It would be a plausible solution, unless any cognitive meaningful content did not have to relate to other contents in a systematic way. It certainly creates a holistic situation; nevertheless, it also engenders a total indeterminacy. In other words, it is simply impossible to know what makes any knowledge be false (though we can still enhance our meaningful contents set in a system relation through an improved coherence). However, such procedure cannot shun magic. Then the rationalization may only through time create a more coherent system of magic. In this sense, something as a disenchantment of the world is a paradox. Therefore, Weber’s claim about the disenchantment as distinctive feature of the Western world could only happened by chance.

Since all preconditions to formulate the *third problem* have already been presented, we can state it briefly. Assuming as a start point both a meaningless world and an individual cognition that attributes meaning to reality, we can face some problems. As we have seen, two cognitive procedures shape and reshape our meaningful world or semantic context, the abstraction and the interpretation along with its special form. In a given context, not only cognitive procedures presuppose the existence of any already established meaning in order to have a direction, but also a previous set of meaningful contents is required for understandability of meaningful reality. Unless the interests that guide these mental procedures are not exclusively non-meaningful, such as instinctive behavior, then the direction of these procedures are submitted

to meaningful already established contents, such as values and ideas. If the guidance of our cognitive actions is ruled solely by our nature, then biologists and sociobiologists must be the fittest scientists to study the phenomenon of society.

It is easy to realize that such constructivist argument does not have flaws when considered in an already existent context. In fact, in any case we take to analyze human social life, we can presuppose the previous context that should have created meaning for men. All the same, if we take a single idea, we must assume at moment 0 (zero) any already established set of meaningful contents created by human cognition and shared by other individuals in a common vehicle of communication. But if we exclude all already meaningful cognitive contents of the explanation, seeking to know the moment 0 of meaning attribution by men's cognition, there is then only one way to have an acceptable explanation: if we assume that men already have a set of systematic cognitive contents since the very beginning. Such argument may assume for instance the form of a timeless world of ideas, or ready-made-man that suddenly appear in this world with some semantic background as a religious explanation argues. Therefore, if we do not accept such foundational arguments, then we inevitably fall into an *infinite regress*.

Regarding our analysis of knowledge on Weber's theory, we have to consider that it implies in the acceptance of some sort of innatism, which could be a religious metaphysics or genetic necessity, which are position that surely have their defenders. This view only becomes problematic when it is confronted to another widely accepted and well-founded theory that rejects it such as evolutionary biology; otherwise, it is a reasonable argument as long as it states its start point or ultimate explanation.

On the next part of this text, we explore if and how far the set of theories of the philosopher John Searle can solve the problems constructed until now. As it is possible to realize, we are assuming that Weber's work and Searle's shares deep and convergent questions, positions, and solutions. Furthermore, as an operational hypothesis, we are assuming that Searle updates Weber's theory in several points without prejudice.

II. Solutions

We believe that the first problem, the indeterminacy of semantic acts, can be solved by Searle's theory of *speech acts* and *intentionality*. The last has several parallels with Weber's embryonic conception of intentionality within the SAT⁸. Likewise, Searle's concept of *collective intentionality* is even closer to Weber's idea of *social relation*. The former has no parallel on Weber and other social theorists' work. Searle criticize them on this topic,

In giving an account of language, I will try to overcome the curse of all social (and political) theorizing from Aristotle through Durkheim, Weber, and Simmel to Habermas, Bourdieu, and Foucault. All the philosophers of politics and society that I know of take language for granted. They all assume that we are language-speaking animals and then they are off and running with an account of society, social facts, ideal types, political obligation, the social contract, communicative action, validity claims, discursive formations, the *habitus*, bio-power, and all the rest of it (...) The problem with all of them is that they do not tell us what language is (SEARLE, 2010: 62).

Nonetheless, to understand language, we have to understand mind. Searle's development starts here. For him, our mental states relate to and represent reality via *intentionality* and its *intentional states*. An intentional state consists of an intentional content, which is the object of the intention, in a type of intention or psychological mode, which can come in the form of beliefs, desires, intentions, fears, hopes, etc. Moreover, its condition of satisfaction (i.e., its conditions of fitting reality) is determined by the psychological mode. Thus, different directions of fit represent them. Let us illustrate it:

A belief can be true or false, depending on whether or not the propositional content of the belief actually matches the way things are in the world that exists independently of the belief. For example, if I believe that it is raining, my belief will be true, hence satisfied, if and only if it is raining. Because it is the responsibility of the belief to match an independently existing state of affairs in the world, we can say that the belief has the mind-to-world direction of fit (SEARLE, 2001: 37).

- 8 Gottlob Frege's theory of meaning already had also an embryonic of intentionality (see, BAR-ELLI, 1996). It is well known that Searle was widely influenced by Frege, among many other analytical philosophers. In this sense, it is easy to show their connections. On the other hand, I tried to show in my dissertation, NERI (2014), how there could be theoretical closeness on epistemological issues between Weber and Frege, especially via the neokantianism of Baden and its predecessor, Frege's professor Hermann Lotze.

However, not all intentions are true (adequate to reality) or false (inadequate). When we talk about desires, for example, they are fulfilled or frustrated. It happens because “desires represent not how things are in the world, but how we would like them to be” (SEARLE, 2001: 37). In that case, we have a world-to-mind direction of fit, for reality should fit the desire, and not the opposite. There are some intentions that do not have any direction of fit, which is typically the case of emotions. Abridging the relation possibilities between mind and word, we have a) *beliefs and other cognitive states* that have mind-to-world direction of fit; b) *volitive* (e.g., desires and intentions) *and conative states* that have world-to-mind direction of fit; c) and *emotions* that have no direction of fit.

Therefore, there are different qualities of mind engagement that individuals have toward an intentional content. The representation of some external state of affairs is not the only task of the mind, for the connection between subjective senses to an external object always happens in particular modes. That is very important, since not every state has to fit the world; contrariwise, either the world might fit our mental states or there must have no direction of fit. These arguments provide also the base for Searle’s theory of speech acts, once *language* and *intentionality* have analogous structures because the former derives from the last, except for language’s declaratives (speech) acts that creates reality without a material basis. Furthermore, as Searle states, the speech act theory is “a branch of the philosophy of mind” (SEARLE, 1983: 160), but it is also “a part of a theory of action” (SEARLE, 1969: 17), as we must see.

What actually is analogous to intentionality structure is one sense of language. Language can be distinguished either a semantic device used to *represent intentional representations of the world* (SEARLE, 1983) to communicate them to others through speech acts, or a system of rules depending on social conventions. The last definition lies on John Austin’s core argument that we perform actions with words, named by him as *performative utterances* or merely *performatives*. What enables us to act in some circumstances with words is that, “there must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances” (AUSTIN, 1962: 14). This sense is closer to Weber’s conception of language presented above. Clarifying the former, “what typically gets communicated in speech acts are intentional states, and because intentional states represent the world, what gets communicated by way of intentional states is typically information about the world” (SEARLE, 2010: 71). Therefore, the speech acts are a linguistic function over a mental function. If for intentionality there were conditions of satisfaction on a mental content

in a psychological mode to fit reality, then for speech acts there are (linguistic) conditions of satisfaction. These are speaker's intention in producing certain utterance (illocutionary force) on propositional contents that have conditions of satisfaction determined by the type of illocutionary force, to fit the previous mental conditions of satisfaction. For Searle, that is the meaning of "meaning," i.e., "conditions of satisfaction on conditions on satisfaction."

Accordingly his taxonomy, there are five possible forms for speech acts: a) Assertives: they commit the speaker "to the truth of expressed proposition" (SEARLE, 1979: 12), they have a word-to-world direction of fit; b) Directives: they are attempts "by the speaker to get the hearer to do something" (SEARLE, 1979: 13), they have a world-to-word direction of fit; c) Commissives: they commit "the speaker S to do some future action A" (SEARLE, 1979: 14), they have a world-to-word direction of fit; d) Expressives: they express psychological states and has null direction of fit. The last kind of illocutionary act we have are the e) Declaratives: they create reality by the very succeeding of the speech act; they have a double (word-to-world and world-to-word) direction of fit. As Searle argues, "this is one of the most important powers of language, the power to create a reality by declaring it to exist" (SEARLE, 2006b: 11). All of them presume *intentionality*.

Searle must now provide reasons explaining how and why semantic mental product through communication can exist shared by many people. Even in a pre-linguistically stage, how men can act together toward the same intentional object? To do that, he employs his concept of *collective intentionality*. He says that to understand how these shared cognitive contents exist, "there must be continued collective acceptance or recognition of the validity of the assigned function; otherwise the function cannot be successfully performed" (SEARLE, 1995: 45). For him, there must exist a deontology as function of gluing society. However, as we are going to see, Weber's SAT can absorb Searle's collective intentionality and deontology.

Searle's idea is that every social fact is any fact involving collective intentionality, which he calls *We-intentions*. No kind of collective intentionality expression can be reduced to individual intentionality (I-intentions). "We-intentions cannot be analyzed into sets of I-intentions" (SEARLE, 2002: 93). In this sense, another level of propositional contents does not correspond to a single person. An example of a shared content is money: "if everybody always thinks that this sort of thing is money, and they use it as money and treat it as money, then it is money. If nobody ever thinks this sort of thing is money, then it is not money" (SEARLE, 1995: 32). The *status function* is this collective continuous recognition/belief that something counts as something else in a

specific context. Although when we cooperate, we share a propositional content of intentionality, the achievement of the collective action is only possible by the belief that the others will do their parts in the collective endeavor. A good example is a performance in an orchestra; though we have a song as product of a collective performance, every individual does its singular part.

As well know, Weber emphasizes the difference between action and social action. In order to be a social action, there must exist a collective or social orientation, i.e., directness to others. For instance, there would not be any social action if someone had directed its action by the expectation of material objects' behavior. It must involve another human being. The paradigmatic example that Weber employs is the event of an accident between two cyclists. There is no social action when two cyclists collide by accident; however if they try to avoid the collision, it is a social action. After the collision, many actions are social, as a discussion, a simple conversation, apologizes and even fights. It is realizable here that the social action is pre-linguistic, as everything else in Weber's theorizations. Furthermore, social action is verifiable because its content, which directs it to another individual behavior or action. On the contrary, no simple reactive behavior is a social action, for it has no sense direction to other's behavior or action. In another example given by Weber, the mass action is not intentional in this collective/social sense because it is a result of an action naturalized in his mind/body. Every time someone accepts any disposition learnt from others in order to achieve an end, there is no social action.

In sum, Weber makes a distinction between action and social action that Searle does not do. As we know, human beings do not act directed by an exclusive and solely external content; they also share the same content in their directness. When it happens, Weber calls it social relation. That is the main feature of collective behavior, what makes the social world possible. What constitutes it is the probability of the action of many directed by the same content. These contents could be conflict, friendship, concurrence, love, pact, etc. It is possible to realize that the contents have empirical existence, being exterior to the subjective meaning intentioned by the individuals, even though they rely on the individuals. For example, any institution stops to exist as soon as there is no one left directing its actions to the maintenance of such institution, even though a person believes that this institution still exists.

Between social relations and collective intentionality, it seems that there is a huge parallel. The first feature is the shared content. Secondly, there is the belief that certain proposition content exists and is valid. It is the base for all human productions, for all human epistemic objective reality. We can see the beliefs that direct actions supporting the existence of all institutional reality,

for example, money, property, the State, rights, any kind of order, any kind of convention, power and every form of deontology. Thirdly, the social relation cannot be reduced to individual social actions. In a singular case, even though the agents direct their action toward the same content, what really happens is unilateral action by all the participants. If the content is a love relationship, each of the parts should act by it. In a battle, each division makes different moves in which every individual makes individual attacks or defenses, and even so they are having social relation of cooperation.

We have seen that language represents intentional states of affairs, which are expressed in a formalized way by a speech act. Moreover, the linguistic symbols “symbolize something beyond themselves; they do so by convention, and they are public” (SEARLE, 1995: 66). Therefore, the speech act is a public performance. It makes the case for the speaker that he or she has to obey some rules of a specific language and assume its conventions in order to be understood. Thus, the communicative public performance already implies both the individual relation of commitment to certain conventions in order to be understandable and the belief or expectation that the other will do the same.

One of the meanings of commitment “involves obligation or other deontic requirements” (SEARLE, 2006a: 17). These deontic characteristics entail a fundamental point of Searle’s argument: language in its social character comprises deontological features, which are created by a Status Function Declaration. The assignment of function can be expressed in this formula: X counts as Y in context C.

We make something the case by representing it as being the case. So when I say ‘that woman is my wife’ or ‘he is our leader’ or ‘that is my hut,’ these categorizations contain two levels of meaning. At one level, there is simply a pre-existing relationship; but when I describe that relationship in a certain way, when I say that the person or object now ‘counts as’ something more than the existing physical facts, I am adding a deontology to the person or object – and that deontology extends into the future. That deontology is created by a Status Function Declaration (SEARLE, 2010: 85).

Status function assignment is an intentional act of imposing a representational condition over an object. We can see that, at some level status functions assignment can generate a process of meaning assignment, which is always reported to a context. This “Count as” structure in a specific context provides a semantic structure, it “iterates upward more or less indefinitely, and spreads laterally across many different kinds of institutions” (SEARLE, 1995: 15). Thence, we can affirm that this semantic structure in a specific context is what composes the reconstructed concept of semantic context. It is still remarkable another

proximity to Weber, the meaning assignment as a product of intellectualism. As the meaning assignment to reality, there are no intrinsic functions on human independent reality; it is always relative to intentionality. In both cases, we do not need any language to formulate logically this structure; however, in order to have a complex formulation, we do need language. In order to be correct the both must be believed as being correct. Moreover, the both carry the previous context influence, which can express a system of beliefs. It entails a superposition of this previous context contents on the explanation of an external thing, as the following example:

It is, for example, intrinsic to nature that the heart pumps blood, and causes it to course through the body. It is also an intrinsic fact of nature that the movement of the blood is related to a whole lot of other causal processes having to do with the survival of the organism. But when, in addition to saying 'The heart pumps blood' we say, 'The function of the heart is to pump blood', we are doing something more than recording these intrinsic facts. We are situating these facts relative to a system of values that we hold (SEARLE, 1995: 14-5).

A consequence of the status function assignment for Searle is the creation of institutional facts. The function related terms along with the institutional terms do not have the same importance within Weber's vocabulary. The institutional facts are created by language in explicit performative utterances. The performatives corresponds to declaratives class of speech acts. The institutional facts are not in isolation, they are "typically parts of huge and complex holistic structures" (SEARLE, 1995: 15). Moreover, they are different from social facts because they involve some forms of deontic powers that provide us independent reasons for action. As we have seen, that conception is close to Max Weber's conception of power. At last, deontic powers require language, "once you have a language you inevitably have entire systems of deontology because language is itself deontological through and through" (SEARLE, 1995: 16).

Since everything that exists within human social reality exists only because the representation of its existence, the same is valid for deontology. It can exist only if it is represented as existing. As Searle argues: "All institutional facts are created by the same operation: the creation of a reality by representing it as existing" (SEARLE, 2010: 93). At this point, it is still missing another important characteristic; whatever exists in social reality exists only because of the belief of its existence. Then, we are still lacking the definition of how we can achieve this collective belief.

In conclusion, we solve Weber indeterminacy of semantic acts developing the idea of intentionality as proposed by Searle, in which we have types of mental acts that have different relation to reality, and the communication of

the intentional states, which are information about reality, through speech acts. After that, recognizing the close parallels between social relation and collective intentionality, we can understand *speech acts as a linguistic/communicational form of social relation*, which are directed to other *intentional minds*. Having said that, we show below how it helps us to solve the second problem, *the paradox of magic*.

If we accept some important distinctions about the ontology of social world and reality, it is possible to overcome the problem of the *paradox of magic*. We begin with the following question, “we are confronted with a social and institutional reality that is for us objective, yet exists only because people believe it exists. In a sense, it exists, at least in part, in the minds of the individual participants in the society” (SEARLE, 2007: 11). Thus, what does it mean that society can hold together? How cannot we fall into a solipsist conception? In addition, how shared true knowledge of reality is a possible basis on that assumption? We have to make some distinctions.

Influenced by Elizabeth Ascombe’s distinction between institutional facts and brute facts, in which the last are logically prior to the former, once “institutional facts exist, so to speak, on top of brute physical facts” (SEARLE, 1995: 35). Searle distinguish what is *subjective ontological* from what is *objective ontological*, and what is *subjective epistemological* from what is *objective epistemological*. “Epistemically speaking, ‘objective,’ and ‘subjective’ are primarily predicates of judgments” (SEARLE, 1995: 8). Ontological is equal to modes of existence. “In the ontological sense, ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ are predicates of entities and types of entities, and they ascribe modes of existence” (SEARLE, 1995: 8). Thenceforth, social reality ought to be an epistemic objective entity, which is ontological subjective because the dependence of human existence. Knowledge as we are trying to determine is an epistemic objective entity, also an ontological subjective entity, but it tries to represent what the reality is, no matter if that reality is a brute fact (intentionality independent) or an institutional fact (intentionality dependent).

We assume that this distinction could be raised from Weber’s conceptions, as in fact we did it, although without this sharp definition. It means that we still can suffer the same indeterminacy about the status of truth if we do not assume a realistic posture defending a truth theory of correspondence. If we assume the existence of a completely external independent reality, there is no way of dismissing external realism. As Searle states “ontological objectivity implies external realism” (SEARLE, 1995: 152). At this point, we can defend that Searle and Weber agree with each other. Searle’s conception is: “Realism is the view that there is a way that things are that is logically independent of

all human representations. Realism does not say how things are but only that there is a way that they are" (SEARLE, 1995: 155). However, the hardest issue is how can we know that we know reality truly?

At first, we have to comprehend *knowledge as a collection of speech acts*. It is a language dependent fact, which makes it an epistemically objective entity that intends to represent the truth's condition of a state of affairs of reality. It does not matter if knowledge does that on brute facts or intentional facts. We must also comprehend that despite knowledge's conventional representational status, it is directed to reality, i.e. knowledge assumes that there is a possible way of representing some truth of reality. Therefore, *knowledge should be viewed as having a word-to-world direction of fit*. The core of a knowledge expression, as a theory, a supposition, maybe an idea, must rely on *assertive speech acts*. Nevertheless, how can we know when certain propositional content of an assertive corresponds to reality? Short answer, we only know that when we got the expected effect from reality.

Now it is possible to restate the problem of magic. The knowledge produce by magic is made of speech acts with *world-to-word direction of fit* and not *word-to-world direction of fit*. Magical knowledge is a set of directives and declaratives speech acts that presuppose something *false* (inadequate) about the world: *the presupposition of intentionality for the natural world*. Thence, there is some confusion between the boundaries of brute facts and the social and institutional facts. In other words, there is some confusion between intentionality dependent facts and non-intentionality dependent facts. Nevertheless, this kind of free-intentionality natural world supposition depends on the background (Searle's concept) or the semantic context (our Weber's reconstruction concept). In this sense, the development of knowledge depends on realizing the non-intentional characteristic of the natural world, displacing the belief in supersensible entities with intentionality. Therefore, the distinction between epistemic and ontological features of reality together with realism are necessary to understand how magic can be overcome by adequate knowledge. This point solves our second problem.

III. Resilience

As we hope is clear, Searle's work could fulfill some gaps within Weber's work, especially his conception of knowledge. However, about the problem of meaning presupposing meaning, Searle is not able to overcome. Therefore, regarding

to the third problem, we conclude stating a dead-end for an individualistic/constructivist position about knowledge because the dilemma its faces.

Postulating a pre-linguistic individual mind as the building block for human knowledge, we fall on the same problems, either an *innatism*, or an *infinite regress*. Searle's argument is valid if and only if there must have been a moment in which some semantic contents or functions, products of meaning attribution or function attribution emerged at once, a "semantic big bang". Without realize, Searle's philosophy is strictly dependent upon his poorly developed concept of *background*. However, there is no novelty here, be it Weber's semantic context or the German "*Weltanschauung*", Searle's "background", Schütz and others phenomenologists' "*Lebenswelt*," Popper's "Third World", Archer's "Cultural-System", and so on, since it is a *consequence* of a given starting point.

In other words, every theorist, who has as a hardcore concept a *dualistic idea* of the division between subjectivity and objectivity, recognizing on the former the primary force of construction a virtual world, fall in the same position. In the beginning, there are only mental individualities trying to grasp reality and attributing meaning to it. Although there are other mental individualities around, they cannot communicate directly, i.e., there is no principle of empathy. The only mean to express and know each other's inner states is by communication, most likely linguistic communication. Somehow consensuses emerge, and some meanings, once created in isolation, start to be intersubjectively shared by others. In addition, these meanings set together are organized in a systematic form, creating this semantic systematic level. Every new human being will have to learn or even incorporate such systematic semantic level, accordingly his group, to be able to understand reality and communicate with others.

In conclusion, because we always take as starting point an already made society along with its semantic contents, we can try to examine how some contents are created and change, how they influence social life in some aspects. When we have to explain in details how the interchange between the systematic semantic level and the individual interact our answers become simply too unstable, lacking determinacy. The sociologists can keep researching based on that, because there is some pragmatic effect that we get from reality. However, if we want to solve this problem, we must take a step back and reevaluate some of our deepest theoretical assumptions; otherwise, we will always face the same dilemma.

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