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## RATZENHOFER'S SOCIOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

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The untimely death of Gustav Ratzenhofer has had the effect of giving his name a certain precedence among the sociologists to which it would not have been entitled by the date of his writings. There was also a distinct note of independence, a courage of unpopular convictions, a willingness to accept the rôle of a voice crying in the wilderness, in Ratzenhofer's personality, which is gradually winning him a hearing.

This *Journal* will presently publish a review of Ratzenhofer's posthumous work. Meanwhile some of the most striking traits of this important sociologist, both as a man and as a contributor to our science, are in and between the lines of the introduction to the book, so that a translation of it will certainly be welcomed by our readers. It is in full as follows:

By the side of that science which deals with individuals, stands on equal footing the science of the reciprocal relationships of human beings. Such is their connection that neither individual nor social life, each treated by itself, can be understood. That biology and psychology, as sciences of the sensible and intel-

<sup>1</sup> *Sociologie: Positive Lehre von den menschlichen Wechselbeziehungen.* Von Gustav Ratzenhofer. Aus seinem Nachlasse herausgegeben von seinem Sohne. Mit dem Bildnis des Verfassers. Pp. xv+231. Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1907.

lectual occurrences in the life of individual men, have had the start of sociology, as science of the reciprocal relationships of human beings, and that the latter is only now coming to have a secure foundation, although from the beginning social relationships have been inseparable from individual life, is explained by the fact that it is human nature to take itself as the center of the All, and that it is difficult to reach scientific comprehension of social interrelations. Today it has become a certainty that psychology and sociology can thrive only in the most intimate correlation, corresponding with the causal correlation between individual and social life. Both sciences derive their thought-element, however, from philosophy, which should be the synthesis of all human insight.

Because the reciprocal relationships of human beings are an utterly distinct scientific territory, although they are in correlation with all other scientific territories, they constitute a distinct philosophical problem, namely the sociological, which remains unsolved, even if we presume that the cosmological, the psychological, the mathematical, and the logical problems are closed. The social relationships of men, or properly of all organisms, are in a word subject to a regularity which is immediately contained in no other order of regularity, but pertains to this order of relationships as an added factor. It is the task of epistemology (*Erkenntnistheorie*) to make out the causality of all problems, and to determine the relationships of the different orders of regularity in the realms of the cosmic, the physical, the organic, and the social.

Philosophical insight into the origin of the reciprocal relationships of human beings, into the essence of the social forces, and into the regularity of their operation, constitutes, as a portion of positive philosophy, "sociological epistemology" (*sociologische Erkenntnis*). This remains within the boundaries of philosophy.

When, however, research crosses the boundaries of philosophical epistemology, by investigating the biological and psychological elements of social life in the light of their practical facts, the realm of sociology begins. The latter, as science of the

reciprocal relationships of human beings, determines the fundamental characteristics of social development, in order to derive from this basis theorems of the ways in which social phenomena may be controlled in the interest of civilization.

Upon its philosophical basis, therefore, sociology will classify the phenomena of the reciprocal relationships of human beings, it will search out the factors of social development, and within this process it will try to determine the workings of natural law in general and of sociological law in particular. Sociology is not called to investigate the numberless incidents of social life, but its province is to work over the results of minute investigation of particular types of occurrences, for the purpose of arriving at a unified survey and comprehension of the coherent regularity of all social phenomena.

Sociology must regard the aggregate of human knowledge as the source of its insight, from which to derive those facts and theorems which correspond with the above purpose. Sociology can consequently not make its way into the microcosm of phenomena. It must devote itself to the total of the same, on pain of never performing its task.

Because it is the genius of modern science everywhere to press after the particulars, and because, thanks to Hegel's premature fantasies, it has been regarded as beneath the dignity of science to search for the great correlations, the few attempts that have been made to compose sociology in its full circumference have not obtained high repute. On that account some investigators who were in search of a sociology betook themselves to special provinces of social development, and thus became uninvited competitors in every possible branch of knowledge, particularly in national economy, criminal psychology, race psychology, demography, etc. Because there has been as yet no official psychology, while the demand for a science of social relationships was not to be disregarded, many, especially German scholars, presently developed, on the other hand, out of their special fields, sociological researches. Thus history was sociologically pursued (e. g., Lindner, Lamprecht); also economics (Wagner, Schmoller, Sombart); geography (Ratzel); psy-

chology (Wundt); and other sciences. Of course the result of these researches was not raised to the full value of a sociology. In a word, sociology was not able to differentiate itself from its auxiliary sciences.

It is evident that history, the branch of knowledge which assumes the task of making out social phenomena, their genesis, and their consequences, is a principal source of sociological theorems. Indeed in the case of history we have to do with that division of knowledge which up to the present time has regarded itself as called and competent to comprehend instructively the reciprocal relations of human beings as philosophy of history. This vocation has, to be sure, proved to be in vain, because the history lacks the essence of science.<sup>2</sup> Yet history furnishes the bulk of the material for making out the social process. The finest fruit of competent historiography is the support which sociology finds in it for the erection of its system. At bottom the true goal of historiography is sociology. Whatever falls outside of this purpose belongs in the realm of art and of ideals. In spite of the high significance of historical knowledge for sociology, the natural sciences are its foundation, especially those which aim at knowledge of human beings. In this connection biology is the proper source of scientific intelligence, and with it anthropology and ethnology, as next in importance; then history of civilization and statistics as auxiliary sciences at once associate themselves. Geology, paleontology, and geography must always be looked to as advisers. Over this wide realm of the scientific founding of sociological thinking, philosophy (*sociologische Erkenntnis*) must as it were keep watch, in order that the vast unity of all natural evolution may never be lost from sight. Sociology therefore has no limited field of research, like the social sciences, whose theoretical structure gains in certainty in the degree in which the investigator sticks to his

<sup>2</sup> Here follows a long note referring to the author's *Wesen und Zweck der Politik*, Vol. III, p. 445; *Die Kritik des Intellects*, p. 137, and to Bernheim's *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, 3d and 4th eds., pp. 626 ff., 685, etc. Of the latter author Ratzenhofer remarks that loyalty to his old colors made it impossible for him to come fully over into the promised land of sociology which he had approached so near.

specialty. It rather demands categorically the most comprehensive thinking and knowledge. Everything in the sociological field which is capable of specialization into a technology belongs no longer in sociology in the narrower sense, but to the application of its theorems, and this principally affects the theory of politics.

Sociology is not, like most branches of knowledge, a distinct portion of our insight, but in correspondence with its object it extends over our whole knowledge. In the social relationships all the efforts of our intellect flow together, to permit man and his groupings to gain a share in the achievements and purposes of all thinking. The social relationships are not a species of phenomenon in the realm of nature, like the plants or electricity, or in the life-process, like law or religion, but they are *human life in itself*. Whatever produces, qualifies, impels, and destroys us human beings—all this makes up the social relationships, and in social life the deeds of human beings have their last echoes. Hence the science cannot be a specialism (*Fachstudium*) but merely a synthesis of all knowing, like philosophy.

If therefore, on the one hand, from most branches of knowledge something extends over influentially into sociology, on the other hand sociology furnishes the most fundamental impulses for the sciences of law, of the state, and of economics, by means of which these may at last become true sciences, and have thoroughly purposeful effects.

The need of a comprehensive insight into the reciprocal relationships of human beings becomes more imperative as social complexity increases. Although it remains a duty of specializing science, indefatigably to work for intelligence about the depths of being and becoming, it is not less the duty of synthesizing science to make these results profitable. It is constantly becoming more evident that science cannot possibly accomplish its utmost, if it merely strives for the minute, and dissolves itself in subdivisions. We are coming to see rather that this tendency can be only an auxiliary phenomenon in intellectual development, because all creative work has its conclusion not in unraveling but in combining.

The division of labor is, and always will be, merely a technical trick. All completeness in art and science has its roots in unification.

No one thinks more pessimistically about the final value of all research than the specialist who is always seeing new gaps in his object. He is consequently not qualified to appraise the synthetic purposes of sociology. The sociologist, supported by philosophy, must know when the possibility of a fruit-bearing synthesis is present. This turning-point of an adequate mass of scientific preliminary knowledge appears to have arrived since the complete opening-up of the surface of the earth, and the beginning of world-commerce. Through these facts the highest and last object of sociology, so to speak, the social universe, has presented itself to view. To investigate its laws is the order of the day.

Attainment of the proposed end seems to me to be assured through positive monism as *Weltanschauung*, and through monistic positivism as heuristic method. Monism presents all being to us as the work of a unitary principle of all phenomena, and incidentally society as subject to the inclusive regularity of nature. In this method resides the guarantee, however, that sociology will never lose itself in unproved assertions; that in directions in which special research has reached only negative results, sociology will abstain from dogmatic conclusion, so that, without surrendering the universal purpose of a sociology, the necessary increments and interpretations will have to be reserved for the future.