

**PHD THESIS IN:**

**SOCIO-HISTORICAL PREMISES, DEVELOPMENT, STRUCTURING AND FIRST  
EVOLUTION OF SOCIOLOGY IN ITALY (1861-1962)<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract**

The research project proposes a chronological reconstruction of the birth, development and early stages of Sociology structuring in Italy, from national unification to the establishment, in 1962, of the Higher Education Institute of Social Sciences of Trento. The construction of a chronology imposes the assumption of a historical perspective, indispensable for an analysis that aims to outline, in a temporal sequence, the forms assumed by a knowledge linked to a history of individuals, ideas and facts and "their mutual relationships within a given society" (Mills, 1959, p. 16). The general goal presupposes the elaboration and implementation of a series of specific objectives, firstly based on the reconstruction of the "structure of that particular society as a whole", in its social, economic, political, cultural components and their relationships (ibid).

The investigation tries to consider the socio-historical premises that determine, from the middle of the 19th century, even if in a contradictory and discontinuous way, the development of social analysis with its theoretical and methodological instruments, and the various legitimation and delegitimization phases faced by sociology in the scientific and academic fields. In the whole process related to the development of sociology, it should be taken into account that when a discipline rises, it is only the product of individuals not yet completely coherent with the theoretical apparatus - that is going to be defined - and to which they are also part, but it is supported - in its manifestation- by other closed disciplines (while others will clearly oppose its establishment), and then much of this initial process generally takes place outside the university.

The research starts mainly as an attempt to recover a piece of memory from the history of Sociology in Italy, through a bibliographical and documentary work that tries to put together a series of sources, all too often, distant from each other. The method used is intentionally interdisciplinary, with the aim of keeping history, sociology, statistics and communication together, from classical approaches to the most recent developments. The red thread that runs through them is the history which is reconstructed from a social point of view and is capable of keeping together economy, politics, law and everyday life. A choice that is also reflected in the type of sources used, primary and secondary, ranging from texts, to scientific and non-scientific articles, to encyclopedias, to audio, video and statistical sources up to oral ones.

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The research is divided into three chapters, in the first two - following the chronological order as the basis of presentation, passing through the history of the country - big efforts have been made to rebuild, from the writings of a series of authors, the main thematic, theoretical and empirical sequences that have characterized social analysis and the birth of Sociology in Italy. Instead, the last chapter is dedicated to the reconstruction of a particular history, the evolution of co-authorship in six Italian journals through the Social Network Analysis approach, three of which purely sociological and the other three based on general culture, which have paid particular attention to social problems, constructing and proposing methods of empirical investigation and theoretical interpretation.

The first chapter focuses on the historical period that goes from 1861, the year of the Unification of Italy, to Fascist Era. The national unification and the current economic changes made the representatives of the new state aware of the necessity of a knowledge of the superior empirical reality with respect to the past, a need for knowledge directly linked to a will to intervene on reality. The instruments of observation and direct verification on the field, developed by the Social Sciences, were looked at with renewed interest by the state administrators, and by a series of intellectuals belonging to different disciplines, who recognized in them a series of methods useful to facilitate knowledge and interpretation of reality. The main players in the application of these new instruments were parliamentary investigations, through which various questions of undoubted relevance for the constitution and socio-economic development of the country were dealt with. A period of close collaboration between public administrators and various professional figures throughout the country began thanks to the establishment of ad hoc interdisciplinary research groups. Starting from these historical evidences, it has been carried out a reconstruction of the parliamentary "inquiries" in the social sphere conducted between 1861 and 1915, year when the First World War required from the state administrators to face different needs. Through the consultation of the online catalogue of the Parliamentary Library Pole, the parliamentary investigations in the social field have been manually extracted and imported into Excel sheet, and the main themes and problems analysed during the years in question, through the application of text mining procedures, have been identified. The Excel matrix - which contains information on the author, catalog, title, year, format, library, locations and extra information - elaborated through the Rstudio software in order to be subjected to text mining procedures, thanks to which it has been possible to extract twenty most significant terms on the basis of a temporal periodization formulated by the Treccani Encyclopedia in the Italy section, which divides the years from the Unification of Italy to 1915 into four macro-periods: 1861-1876; 1877-1887; 1888-1900; 1901-1915. From the empirical evidence resulting from this first particular form of research, the reference context have been then reconstructed, paying particular attention to individuals, ideas and facts that have characterized this history in which, Sociology as a discipline, is

inserted as a Science of Positivism, ending up, when not engaged in research related to Criminal Sociology, right back with a positive reflection about itself. The parliamentary investigations also saw private individuals and non-state institutions conducting researches, but the field research was never paired to a theoretical reflection on the methodological aspects and the conceptual construction of the discipline. The dualism, or rather the awareness, not always implemented, of a relationship between theoretical construction and empirical research will mark the entire history of the relationship between Social Sciences and Sociology in its various perceptions, and will determine the main obstacles to the legitimization of Sociology. In the early 1900s, opposition to sociology by idealism was added to internal weaknesses. The conclusion of the first decade of the twentieth century seemed, also for the few concrete initiatives followed the social investigations, to see the practice of research running out. The First World War was followed in Italy by the establishment of the fascist political regime which did not lead to a total elimination of social disciplines but rather to each of their forms of autonomous expression. The regime was interested in describing the social reality without highlighting its conflicts and internal contradictions: for this purpose some institutional areas were maintained, and others created, both for the conduct of social investigations and for the teaching of Sociology.

The second chapter opens with the Reconstruction and traces the Italian social history up to the years of the economic boom. With the fall of Fascism, sociological studies resumed, albeit between continuity and breaks with the past. During the second post-war period, old and new forces opposed the development of the discipline: the idealist tradition, interpreted by Croce, the communist tradition, in line with the position of Gramsci, the Christian Democratic tradition and the Catholic one. A characteristic feature that parallels the entire history of the discipline to date, is the influence of the Catholic and laical traditions on the intellectuals theoretical and methodological approach, which will give shape to two antithetical but also often convergent worlds. If the support of the world of the Italian Left to the fledgling social disciplines struggled to arrive, the contribution that some figures, even politically important, of the Catholic world offered to its development was immediate. Among them we remind: Don Luigi Sturzo which assumed a different position from the official one of the Church towards social disciplines and, with his proposal of a "historical" and "concrete" Sociology, offered a valid contribution to the identification and constitution of the Social Sciences (Sturzo, 1930; 1935; 1950); Father Gemelli, whose group was gathered in the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Catholic University of the Sacred Heart) of Milan, which will contribute with the International Journal of Social Sciences to the establishment of a useful structure for a debate on the scientific basis of the Sociology; and later, Achille Ardigò which, with his Administrative Social Studies Center of Bologna, defined in new terms the relationship between the political and the sociological sphere.

However, all these uncoordinated areas found correspondence but the key driver of the discipline recovery and development came from outside national borders. The US contribution of that period, somehow coherent even if not mechanically coordinated with the Marshall Plan, was a progressive provision of Studies of Human Sciences, including many sociological ones. In this framework, this reality was also questioned and pitted against the communist one, but perhaps pursuing the idea of a scientific development which should have been carried out along a specific path. Technical and organizational instruments were exported from US to Italy to respond to a substantially unknown reality. Their influence opened the way for the development of Sociology in Italy in three directions: the theoretical and technical teaching of Scientific Management in the North, the studies on peasant realities in the South, the progressive institutionalization of Sociology in the academic world. In the 1950s and 1960s, a process based on the need to build a discipline with a logical and epistemological basis gave to Sociology the status of official science. During these years a southern intellectual, not belonging to the academic world, starting from a deep reflection on the man-nature dualism (Croce, 1949) proposed a re-reading of history from the point of view of the "subaltern popular world" (De Martino, 1949), in the light of a renewed role of intellectuals towards political power. The public and professional legitimacy of the sociologist figure is inextricably linked to the political context to which it refers, and more precisely to the reform project implemented by the first center-left government. Between 1958 and 1962 sociologists established a close relationship of collaboration with policy-makers, assuming an important role in the construction of the transformation design of the Italian society. Sociologists became part of important research institutes such as Svimez and Ilse, and were included in the staff of various industrial relations offices of large companies. In these same years a series of conferences and congresses were held to discuss the rapid transformation of Italian society to which sociologists not only participate, but took authoritative positions. Anyway, the contradictions inherent in the close bond established with the centres of power did not take long to arrive, and were publicly expressed in 1962 at the V World Congress of Sociology in Washington. The conclusion was the incompatibility between the short timeframe of the policy and the long one of the scientific research for the identification of viable alternatives; moreover, it was highlighted the risk of a distortion of the function of sociology as a mere response instrument to political and economic needs. The unanimous solution identified, both by the small group of sociologists active within the university and by the professionals, to avert these risks and obtain a position of autonomy inside and outside the academy, was to push towards the institutionalization of the discipline. The moment came when the reform of the school and university seemed to open new spaces to Social Sciences and Sociology, until then confined to marginal positions compared to bachelor's degree programs in Law and Political Sciences, but the strong opposition of the jurists drove the government

to undertake the exact opposite direction, that was delineating with the Maranini-Miglio Project in 1964 through the downsizing of the Social Sciences role within the faculties of Political Sciences. A closure that however came after important experiences, such as the inclusion of Sociology in the faculty of Political Sciences of the Catholic University of Milan in 1959 and the establishment in 1962 of the Higher Institute of Social Sciences of Trento; an experience, this latter, which brought a new beginning to the history of sociological discipline in Italy.

The third and final chapter opens with an attempt to reconstitute Social Network Analysis birth and evolution, basing the study on its relations with graph theory and Information Design, in order to present a particular field of research, implemented by SNA, concerning the analysis of the evolution of scientific collaboration, applied in the present research to the study of six Italian journals. In the development and affirmation of Sociology in the academic field, journals have played an important role as a tool for theoretical and methodological debate, contributing to the construction and the dissemination of social analysis and Sociology as a discipline. Between the late 1950s and the 1960s, journals mainly sociological and general culture reviews multiplied: in line with the growth of literacy and publishing market but also thanks to an unprecedented intellectual development. It was carried out an attempt to reconstruct both sociological journals from 1883 to 2017 -which also contributed to the reception of foreign production until then rare in Italy – and those one of general culture from 1900 to 2017 through the consultation of different sources (the OPAC SBN catalog, various publishing houses online websites and some printed texts). The information collected have been organized into Excel spreadsheets which contains information on periodicity, publisher, collaborators, editorial staff, editorial secretary, editor-in-chief, founder, reference institution, possible suspension and recovery of activities. These six journals have been chosen among those which gave a great contribution to the affirmation of Sociology: ‘Quaderni di Sociologia’, ‘Rivista di Sociologia’, ‘Studi di Sociologia’, ‘La Lapa’, ‘Inchiesta’ and ‘L’Orsaminore’. The first three represented a real reference point for the Italian sociology scientific community; the latter, although not strictly sociological, have made an important contribution to the setting process for research methods related to the study of social problems. The research started with the collection and digitization of journals covers (first, second and back), summaries and advertisements of other journals shown on the ones in question, from their publication year until the end of 2017. The accomplishment of this work was not easy to be succeed: it was necessary to access several Italian universities libraries and use a portable scanner, because among all the libraries consulted the only one which made available a scanning service is the Central Library of the University of Salerno. Moreover, given the wear conditions of numbers of these journals due to time, it became necessary a graphic recovery work by the use of Photoshop software. The digitization process ended with the

creation of indexed PDFs for each journal which, thanks to the application of OCR (Optical Character Recognition) technology presents among Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro Extended program options, allow an easy consultation and the possibility to carrying out search by numbers or words. The use of these technological tools has also facilitated the creation of a databases essential for the co-authorship networks generation, as next research methodological step. Six databases have been manually constructed in CSV format for each individual journal containing a series of information, including: journal title, subtitle, year of publication, year number, volume number, periodicity, publisher, direction, editorial staff, collaborators, price issue, subscription price, summary (author, article title, section) etc ... The first challenge faced dealt with the variables homogenization process, in order to obtain from each journals database only one that could contained all of them, the result was a worksheet containing 15.835 records x 63 variables. Starting from the complete database, a series of variables have been then extrapolated (journal name, year of publication, edition number, issue number and author), in order to apply the Social Network Analysis procedures using Rstudio software. The research aimed to detect the structure and evolution of the co-authorship networks that linked the aforementioned journals. Considering a 10-year timeframe, the research focused on which authors wrote for different journals, which are these journals and which of the authors have worked together despite the collaboration with different publishing houses and which have been the topics covered. It was decided to carry out a mere networks descriptive analysis which would have not therefore involved the interpretation of network indexes and the application of predictive models. Rstudio software helped to clean the database and generate the matrices, while the graphs have been generated using the Pajek software. Finally, the research results are presented in the last paragraph of this chapter.

The present thesis comes with a methodological Appendix and a section called 'Other materials' which contains Paola Borgna and Paolo Ceri speeches, made during a seminar held at the University of Calabria dedicated to Luciano Gallino, that have been reported in full; two interviews, personally conducted, with Prof. Franco Crespi and Prof. Giovanni Bechelloni; and the results of an analysis of the Italian sociological production, through the consultation of the OPAC SBN catalog, considered significant within the framework of the Italian socio-historical development in general and Sociology in particular along four years: 1950-1963-1968-1980.