Cognition Sociology in the USA with Pragmatic Approach of Behaviorism

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ABSTRACT

Cognition is understanding and perception. Cognition is not just a subjective issue, but it has social basis and it emerges in the group. According to this, we can talk about construction of reality in the framework of a social issue which is reflected in cognition. Social cognitions are constructed from person's procedure of speaking and thinking about reality. Cognition sociology refers to study of relations between thinking and society. Cognition sociology relates history of thoughts and the way of historical evolution of thoughts in epistemology aspect at societies. Cognition sociology in the US is pragmatic, people and language-oriented and the social conditions and certain cultural play role in its creation. The cognition sociology in US due to its approach and type of work has three branches: Behaviorism pragmatic, theoretical of European type and applied. In this paper the first type is investigated; the opinions of Dewey [4,5], James [7,8], Cooley [3], Mead [9,10], Peirce [11,12], Berger and Luckmann [1,2].

INTRODUCTION

Cognition sociology had growth and progress in different countries including Germany, France, UK, Italy and US. Since during its life history US has never been emerged to a socialist revolution, for this the cognition sociology has been away from encountering and disputes of left and right parties so the intense contrast between two central concepts of social existence and social awareness is not forming a major node in American cognition sociology. As well as due to lack of concentration of old civil movements in the American social living space we hardly confront rationalism, ideological and historical thinking approaches in cognition sociology. Undoubtedly the thinking approach in the pragmatism which composes the current worldview of Americans has been effective in orientation of sociology and cognition sociology of this country. Because, believing in pragmatism, the useful one is prioritized to thinking. The general orientation of US cognition sociology is mostly considering being away from philosophic thoughts and referring to ethnographical researches and measuring public thought and the major policy of investigations method in this knowledge is mostly composed of micro sociology research's method.

The work of major pragmatism philosophers in US is provision of guidance in the field of Cognition sociology. Where pragmatism emphasizes on organic process of educating the thinking act and human behavior, this philosophy makes the field for specifically sociological considerations which seek to relate social process with thinking process.

2. Pragmatic approach of behaviorism:

Pragmatism includes theories of meaning, cognition and behavior. This movement confronted a world in which contrasts such as science against religion, positivism against romanticism, witnesses understanding against sensory experience, worldly aspirations and democratic enlightenment against aristocratic and religious regression has appeared. The pragmatism movement united elements such as science and religion, theory and action, theoretical thought and analysis. Pragmatism was influenced by theories such as the theory of evolution and modern statistical methods of reasoning. The theoreticians of this philosophy are efforts to explain the behavior of humans in society in a way that this philosophy can be known the mother of contemporary behaviorism. Pragmatism is dominant on all American dignities in a way that cognition and philosophy of that country is intended for practice. Non-abstract sciences and cognition which are not useful in practice and are sole curiosity and internal and moral satisfaction has no place in the American culture and cognition. Due to

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being pragmatic, Americans take all cognition to reductionism and they analyze them in micro level. Cognition sociology As well as refers to micro and daily investigations.

Where pragmatism emphasizes that the thinking essentially is dependent and raised from social situation, it has started research about relations between a thinker and its audiences. American pragmatists avoid the traditional view based on hard differentiation between object, thinking and subject. Instead of assuming a close relation between object and subject, they were claiming a deal between them. In a way that Wirth [14] believes that the truth specially in the social territory is not solely a simple adjustment between thinking and existence, but it has the favorite color of research to its respective subject, color of its points andvalorizations and briefly his defined color of the subject he pays attention to [14].

Pragmatism school was an objection against the German “Idealism”, however that was the outcome of known idealism. The attraction of Hegel for Dewey is mostly in the unity ideal which the absolute penetration of idealism is concealed in it. From the view of Peirce, there is a close relation between idealism, Hegel and pragmatism. The other approach which influenced the philosophy of pragmatism is “Scientific Psychology”. Along this we can mention to the works of James called as the “Psychological Principles”. As well as “Behaviorism” especially the thoughts of “Watson” had great influence on this school.

3. Opinion of some famous thinkers in the field of behaviorism pragmatic:

3-1. Dewey opinions (1902-1925):

With publishing the book “The Origin of Species” of Darwin in which the theory of evolution had great influence on practice, religion and philosophy, Dewey was greatly affected. However, it should be said that the book the origin of species had amazing influence on the philosophers founding pragmatism such as Peirce, James and Dewey. Taking the effects from biology, especially Darwin’s thoughts, Dewey applied principles of “Organic” evolution in his philosophy in a way that he called it contemporary “Reconstruction of Philosophy”. Dewey believes that human is a creature who lives in accordance to the nature and the situations dominant on that and his behavior is a phenomenon resulted from nature in a way that the behavior of each part of nature is based on the general law dominant on nature [5]. Dewey and Peirce believe to evolution in logic. Before Darwin, the world of philosophy and knowledge has been based on Aristotelian logic to great extents. The previous scientific logic believed that the creatures have a fix form and at last they are formed based on the existence of primary cause.

According to Darwin theory of evolution, a kind of continuance is dominant on nature. Evolution from simple state to complicated one is a permanent act in nature. The creatures are imposed to the pressure forced from outside. And their reaction is by the objective of creating balance. The opinion of Dewey, since the living creature is in stressful situation and movement in the environment and is trying for their adaptation with the environment, it brings evolution in the living creature and the environment. The efforts of living creatures are along the objective in a way that in their behaviors they act selectively and they show certain behavior. The only creatures have the power of having and using meaning who have “Mental Life” and mental life results from spiritual-physical feelings. Meaning is interaction quality of living creature and environment. It is objective, because they express the natural states of interaction with things and forces in environment. What induces the significant objectivity against subjectivity is language. Since the human uses language the most, it has the ability to create, understand and use the meaning, because it has the mental life. As well as, the meanings are the signs of events. Thus, the meaning is ordered and combined. Since growth of meanings is obtained via experience, it can be said that it is the Genetic Process. This process forms the behaviors of individuals [6]. In this way, Dewey analyzes the genetic growth of knowledge for human in the same way. From his view, the cognitive structure of person is a set of meanings which emerges in its behavior and it is achievable for person for forming its relations with the material and social environment.

The opinion of Dewey, experience is including interaction between the person and the environment dominant on it, in other words, the action in which both the person and the environment are evolved. The opinion of he, the nature itself is the large and complicated interaction of different types and one of them is experience. Some of these interactions are among the things that we know them as physical factors and relations.

The opinion of Peirce [11], our imaginations is our perceptions from the effect of our feeling toward phenomenon. The thought is leader of our actions and our habits are formed by our thought. Dewey philosophic thought were greatly influenced by analyses of Pierce; pragmatism and emphasis on results of practice and his believes regarding the meaning and cognition process and the relation between cognition and practice. However it should be said that the pragmatic philosophy had influence on Dewey thoughts too: First, the relation between practice and knowledge exists and the meaning can be created based on the context; second, knowledge is made of understanding the meaning. The objective of knowledge is reaching to the results of actions.

Dewey [4] not only propounds the theory of dependence of thinking systems to the social type which is the place of such thinking systems, but he also propound the theory of relation between professional roles and thinking styles:
The professions determine the fundamental methods of activity, for this formation and repetition of habit are controlled by professions. These habits themselves are something more than a practical and apparent activity. Professions determine the major methods of satisfaction and the criterion of success and failure. In the same way, they are equipped with efficient categorizations and definitions of value: the professions control the desirability processes, besides they determine set of things and the important relations which are considered and also the important and attractive qualities. These subjective life orientations result in emotional and thinking properties. Type of professional activity is so critical and incisive that causes creation of a plan or model of the structured organization of subjective specifications [4].

3-2. James opinions (1907-1950):

James tries to connect the body and subject based on his physiologic-ethical extraction of habit, in a way that he mixed activity with awareness. Moreover, James considered the awareness states as separates existences. Besides, he was not emphasizing on social context as an evolving agent in formation of subject. Mead went beyond James in two terms: he interpreted the subject as a special pattern of behavior and not a set of special existences. Besides, he realized these patterns rose from mutual interaction of person and society.

In James view, the truth appears as an annex or the result of confirmation in historic process. The imaginations are only real by then they help us in creation of a satisfactory relation with other sections of our experience. The truth occurs in an imagination. The imagination gets real; the truth of an imagination is made of events. The authenticity of imagination is in fact an event or process: The process of confirmation of itself and the process of its being confirmed. James [7] talks about five specifications of thinking process: Any thought intends to be a part of awareness of a person, the thought is palpably in continuance; the thought is always working with things independent to it; the thought absorbs some parts of these things and eject some others, it is accepting or rejecting the whole time and in one word, it selects among them [7].

Awareness is something flowing. The river or flow, are the most natural metaphors for describing awareness. Awareness is something flowing. The river or flow, are the most natural metaphors for describing awareness. Awareness is the flow of thought or subjective life. Qualitative continuance in thought is relied in the fact that sudden apparent ruptures are ruptures of thought objects and not the thought itself. Awareness of a certain moment may in fact be conditioned to awareness superior to that in terms of time. The human thought considers the things independent to itself: it means it is subject or cognition that has been before. Any mind state is determined by the previous context of that to some extent. Thus, repeating a general state of mind in the same way is unlikely. The awareness is flowing; only the totality of awareness and world of realities subjects have a fix property. The primary reality which remains unchanged during the mind’s change does not exist; no two imaginations are exactly the same as each other.

The opinion of James [8], continuance means continuance of awareness in time intervals and qualitative continuance of awareness at all times. From his view, the parts of our awareness are related internally and they remain belonging to each other. The Community is reinforced by memory and reminding is like direct sense.

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James believes that inside the human race, there is a substantial common point that the things and aspects are selected and emphasized based on that. However, he says nothing about the social and cultural aspects of selection and among the pragmatists, Mead and Dewey emphasized on these issues: if the experience is confined by habits related to accuracy and these habits in their place are connected to the social tradition, then the experience itself or at least a part of that is the product of society, product of culture in general and the special cultural models raised from class, profession etc.

3-3. Cooley opinions (1966):

Cooley [3] finds the cognition the result of practice. In his belief, the origin of imagination from love, freedom or justice and social cognition is the result of experience in primary groups (family and playing groups). Cognition and its organization are the result of institutes constructed by primary groups. Institutes such as government, church and law are somehow the product of cognition organization. The opinion of Cooley (1966), cognition is related to awareness. The opinion of him, “Self-Consciousness” means what I think about
myself, “Social Awareness” means what I think of other humans and “Public Awareness” means having the relation and discussion between group members based on common imagination from persons and organizations.

Communication is the mechanism that causes formation and evolution of mutual relations between humans. “Social Cognition” is gained in communication process, while “Object Cognition” is the result of contact with physical nature and sensory perception. Social cognition is the result of contact with thinking content of others in the procedure of communication and achieving that requires understanding others. The speed of dispersion of cognition via media and vast human access to the degree of cognition, two communicative specifications are among the specifications of modern society. The opinion of Cooley [3], human “Imaginations” are hard social realities which are assumed as a kind of social cognition. From his view, large social units such as nation or era transfer thoughts or emotions to human [3].


Mead is one of the thinkers who influenced the cognition sociology in the USA to great extents; in a way that behaviorism is the theoretical basis of Mead. But, he presents it different from classic behaviorism of Watson and Skinner. Opposite to their view, Mead considered the internal experience. In this framework, cognition is located in relation to physical and thinking procedures and in this way the contrast prevalent between body and cognition is dominated. The objective of Mead was the way of formation of cognition from behaviorism viewpoint. Mead takes efforts to investigate the formation procedure of cognition and thinking from the social viewpoint and via the society.

Mead’s social behaviorism viewpoint has social origins by emphasizing on the fact that the subject itself is a social product. From the social psychology aspect it became a necessary basis for some of the statements of cognition sociology researchers and theoreticians. From this point, the axis of Mead’s word understood the essence of subject, the subject which is created via relation rising from the state of behavior and movements of person in a social process with experimental context. Therefore, since the subject is a social creature and is originated in social relations, there would be no doubt on social determination of cognition and thinking.

The most important origin of awareness from Mead’s view is dialectic contrast between me and the social me. The human subject stands against the daily and historic reality and the human itself helps in regulation of cognition and obliged with situation. Mead defines the dialectic construction of cognition in contrast to “Me” which is representing the objective construction of society and the “I” which is representing the subjective construction. The forms of awareness from Mead’s view are: getting aware of the form me which occurs in non-symbolic period of human history civilization and playing the social role become possible by the role playing function and in a faithful relation in social work division. In this period, the subject with its faithful specification and object with the specification of the minimum rate of social separation makes performance of only one role possible. Likewise imitating from the role of animals in the period of primary migration of human in the primary period of history. The social awareness of this period is imitative; getting aware of the form me which occurs in the period of simple games of history. In this period, the subject with the symbolic specification and object with more separation in the system of roles provides the possibility of role taking and performing two roles at the same time. Like the game of king and people roles and ignoring the third role. The social awareness in this period only understands the dual connection and is afraid of understanding the third role and thus tries to omit it. Like the unaccepted role of Socrates; getting aware of the form me which occurs at the period of collective games and more separated times. At this period, the subject with the symbolic quality and object with the maximum separation of roles can make more roles in the work division network. However, the character in this period is superior to the organization of role. Therefore, the social organization is changed to settle its character. For instance, the national self-conscious is from this type of awareness; getting aware of the form I which occurs in the symbolic period and the other generalized historical step. In this period, with symbolic specification in subject it causes the maximum role taking in object, by superiority of role organization on character organization. Thus, in modern societies, a governmental positions only an ordinary person in the social work division organization after completion of its organizational role [10].

The opinion of Mead [10] order between mind, self and society is right indicative of his thinking and theoretic cognitive and sociological plan. With propounding this thought that awareness in fact is an internal dialogue which is done by public tools, it means that awareness is a private experience which happens by application of significant social symbols and be organized based on a general other, this made the possibility for accurate investigations on the connection method of thought and social structures. He with emphasis on the point that in its nature, the thought is dependent to social situation, in fact he was providing the field for distinguishing the relations between thinker and his audiences.

Mead sees creation of cognition a procedure connected to human relations, in a way that cognition and social practice are kinky to each other. He by taking the mind, self, thinking and meaning from the context of social practice via description of mechanisms such as role taking and perspective systems he has provided a range of refereeing frameworks for cognition sociology. The opinion of Mead [9] cognition and thinking are the result of human mutual interaction. Fulfillment of thought is dependent to implicit and social symbols [9].
Mead greatly prioritized mind’s flexibility. Despite providing a basis for common meaning of symbols, this flexibility lets a mutual practice to be conducted in situations where a certain stimulus does not have the same meaning for all individuals. The humans have this mental ability to continuously adapt themselves with each other and the existing situation and in this way to realize the meaning of a special symbol. He argues that the meaning in its origin rises not from the mind, but from the social situation. Before the mind finds awareness, the meaning is present in social practice. The meaning raises not from the mental processes, but the mutual practice processes. Humans learn symbols and meanings during social mutual practice. Social symbols have functions: symbols made human able to confront the material and social world via naming, categorizing and reminding the flood of meanings they encounter in the world; symbols improve human ability for understanding the environment; symbols increase human ability of thinking; symbols increase the ability of solving different issues; symbols let humans pass beyond the time and place and even themselves [13].

Humans can have selections in the practices they involve due to the power of meanings and samples to some extents. The opinion of Mead, the social mutual practice has two forms that he calls them as dialogue of hints and application of symbols or significant hints. The mean of Mead from hint and gesture is a part of current practice which is understood by a responsive organism. Hint and gesture means that before responding it is interpreted and meant and the mutual practice forms based on significant symbols and what makes the meaning is general and not special which is formed based on social common interpretation. The opinion of Mead [10], a significant gesture for a person using it has the same meaning that it has for the person the gesture is meant for. Thus, significant hints and gestures have a common meaning and in expression of Mead [10], they evoke a common meaning by the person using that gesture and the person the gesture is meant for. This aspect lets the significant gestures to be used for control of behaviors. Since the meaning is prioritized, and the meaning and its symbol are determined by the society and community, in order to cognition the things, humans and their surroundings and his imaginations, the human gives a special meaning to them, the meaning and symbol that the society has given to it; thus cognitive sociology is the basis for its epistemology; since in terms of face and content it is created by community; it has a dialectical relation with the social structure.

3-5. Peirce opinions (1868-1929):

Peirce emphasized on the abstract, general and social state of science. The evolutional path of his thought is almost a path from epistemology to ontology. The opinion of Peirce [11], for more expanding, the science requires a modern foundation of methods. He says, by now knowledge has developed via witnesses understanding, because witnesses understanding of scientist are formed by the same phenomenon which has been the subject of such understanding. Witnesses understanding is for the reality that our subjects are formed and adjusted in an environment in which the things act based on the laws discovered witnesses. The opinion of Peirce, all scientific reasoning is relied on three types of seduction of induction, hypothesis and exemplification [11].

Instead of emphasis of Descartes on critical doubt and sole emphasis on sense, Peirce [12] emphasized on belief. He realized the belief related to practice. Thought or research rises from understanding and motivational field and it is speedup with doubt. Research is the active process of transition from doubt to belief. Despite the doubt, belief is a calm and induced state of preparation for action which exists in the nature of habit and is more like a station. It is what we are ready to act by relying on it. Belief is composed of signs and implicitly it refers to other signs. In this way, it has always an intermediate [12]. Instead of certainty, Peirce emphasizes on his vagrancy doctrine.

From the view of Peirce [11], sense is the result of education, evoking previous meanings. Any cognition includes one presented thing or the thing we are aware on and an action or its sense via which cognition is presented. The first is called the objective element and the second as subjective element of cognition. Some senses are determined as a result of innate conditions. In terms of reference, emotions are external. The will is a kind of focus of attention or abstract which is probably concentrated on a desired objective.

The opinion of Peirce [12], the whole thought is embraced by signs, because all imaginations refer to cognitions raised from experimental orders. The thoughts are continuous and any thought evokes and determines another thought. All thoughts are fallible and dependent to each other. All cognitions are expressed by signs and for this they refer to each other and they are infallible. Cognition of self-awareness is possible by referring to exterior realities.

From the view of Peirce [12], believes are the habits making human compatible to the environment, while failure in compatibility to the environment results in doubt. The objective of research is to achieve a stable belief. The belief which can stand in long-term, we call such believe actual and the thing related to that as reality. The research is an effort to conquer doubt and achievement of belief and doubt is the sole unmediated stimulus of that. The sole objective of research is settlement of belief. The nature of belief is settlement of a belief and various believes are distinguished via different practical methods rising from that belief. The whole work of thought is to create practical henbits. In order to determine its meaning, it’s enough to see what habits this thought provides. Belief is concealed in general orders or cases that belief is expressed by them. The duty of
thought is creation of practical habits and the identity of a habit is dependent to the point that how that habit can lead use to practice.

Peirce’s pragmatism is a theory on meaning. The opinion of Peirce [12], both fallible believes and the actual ones have meaning. The truth is an absolute and ideal limit of an endless research. The pragmatic doctrine is the one that in its best state clarifies voluble theories for research. Peirce defined the truth as a belief which finally shall be agreed upon by all researchers, while from the view of James [7], a belief is only actual when indeed action happens on that and it brings satisfactory and palpable results experimentally. In brief, the truth shall be considered as the connector of the satisfactory and palpable outcomes with the actions resulting from certain believe. Especially, the issue of truth is the issue of a certain experimental relation with other experiments. For this, likewise the active and observer creatures it is always achievable for us [7].


Berger, Luckmann and Schutz connected the phenomenological sociology to German classic cognition sociology, American pragmatism sociology and the classic theories of Durkheim and Weber and they founded a theory called social constructivism. According to this theory, reality only exists by presence of practice and actives and the reality is made by actives. The practice facilities shall be investigated in relation to its meaning specification. The meaning is product of awareness and that is the primary subjective material of cognition which finds a social aspect.

The opinions of Berger and Luckmann, [1] there is a dialectic relation between active and social construction. The things are in halos of interpretations and people’s common meanings. Social awareness is the dialectical resultant of structural social processes and systematic object of society and people’s specifications close to the social life constructed in the process of socialization. Although object is constructed by dialectic of social processes and is involved to dialectic relation with construction and personal specifications, it is constructed by dialectic between nature and society. This dialectic shows itself in the constructed social-historical situation [1].

In social dialectic of reality cognition has a central role. The opinions of Berger and Luckmann [1], cognition is made in procedures with special frameworks by three tops of “Externalization”, “Objective to” and “Internalization”. In this dialectic framework, integration of objective and subjective reality is guaranteed; the society is the product of human and human is the product of social mechanisms. Cognitive meanings mainly develop via language and they are stored as cognitive saving. Social institutions are transmission institutes of special cognition. The opinions of Berger and Luckmann [1], the experimental cognition sociology investigate the social structure of cognition. Berger finds the cognition sociology duties in two points: Provision of a regular description of awareness, finding contexts of awareness; relating awareness structures of daily life to institutions or certain social reality, in other word, investigation of awareness in the field of certain social situation [2].

Berger and Luckmann have been influenced by some approaches in the cognition sociology: In the anthropological routes by Marx; in the meaning of social reality by Durkheim that he believes that the sociological realities shall be considered as things; in emphasis on the structure of social reality via subjective meanings by Weber, in a way that he believes that the issue of cognition for sociology and history is the set of subjective meanings of practice; in explanation of internalization process of social reality in the form of symbolic meanings and notions affected by the principal role taking theory of Mead and the compatibility or harmony theory by Blumer.

Berger was interested in the theory of correlation and the relationship between individual awareness and structural conditions in modern societies such as the structural conditions, economy relied on technology, bureaucracy, development of urbanization and public media. Luckmann emphasized on the role of language as an “Abstract-Objectified” structure of signs which is in connection of correlation to social structure. He As well as referred to the flow of using language in which cognition is transferred via language, in a way that the languages are the themes of special worldviews. Advent of religious and political language and other expertise languages is the result of genesis of special cognition in these areas. The opinion of Luckmann, the communicative forms is at service of agreement of practice procedures and has a critical role in cognition sociology. As Schutz emphasized, the most cognition of human is achieved by social mechanism; it means its origin is others. Relation is in fact the social procedure of cognition. Cognition and practice are mixed in the framework of the concept of communicative practice.

The most important achievement of pragmatism philosophy is the concept of probabilities which find it innate and internal of the scientific method, in a way that via which one can understand the complicity of the world. The followers of this philosophy believe that the method is not only a tool for deformation of the physical structure of society, but it has the power to take the thinking life toward evolution. For this it can be said that this philosophy controls the philosophies such as “Phenomenology”, “Existentialism” and “Humanism”. Any of the mentioned philosophies are “Holistic”, while pragmatism tries to explain the relations between elements via scientific methods. The pragmatism and social behaviorism tradition in the US has investigated the relation between the station of minority and creativity or thinking visions, history of social
theories, relation of thinking methods of university faculties and the academic structure and function, and culture.

4. Conclusion:

Cognition is an internal and mental event. In other words, the cognition, however; always in interaction with out and about, but it is an internal experience that will be added to the reality. Here different aspects of mental activities of witnesses to visions of like will not be ignored. Factors like enjoying from life, business interests, inherent enthusiastic, love, belief in realities and belief in truth cause the emergence of cognition. As well as other factors such as power and its relation, influence, practice and active, economic, political and social structures bring about cognition. Power relations including the government, official privileges, legal structures, a hierarchy and personal structures, custom, traditions, the rule and rationalization. Active creates action through knowledge, awareness, skill, supervision and the ability. The structure influences through financial resources and rules.

In the pragmatic approach of behaviorism, cognition sociology refers to micro investigation and emphasizes on relation of object and subject. As well as, this philosophy is taking efforts to relate the social process with the thinking process; subject is social construct and is rooted in social communications. In terms of cognition sociology of US, thinking systems are related to the type of community. In other words, the subject, thought and meaning are constructed by the text of social practice; the relation of thought with the demand of social field. Thinking methods are rooted in institutional framework; class, occupation, culture, values, ethnicities and power structures are assumed as existential basis of cognition. Cognition is related to physical and thinking procedures and it is related to implicit and social symbols; awareness is produced by applying social symbols and thinking is related to social structure. Context, meaning and knowledge are three element related to each other in cognition. Cognition is the produce of community, communications, awareness, experience and practice.

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