Communication as analytical unit in Luhmann and Habermas

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Abstract: The present paper compares the communicative definitions of "the social" proposed by Niklas Luhmann and Jürgen Habermas from a systematic perspective. From the results reached, the reciprocal receptions between the authors are discussed and a renewed theoretical interpretation of divergences and convergences is proposed. The hypothesis of the work states that Habermas and Luhmann, based in the concept of communication, converge in a radically dyadic and multi-leveled conception of the sociological analytical unit, however they diverge in its analytical segmentation.

Key words: Luhmann, Habermas, communication, dyadism.

Resumen: Este trabajo compara desde una perspectiva sistemática las definiciones comunicativas de "lo social" propuestas por Niklas Luhmann y Jürgen Habermas. A partir de los resultados alcanzados se discuten las recepciones recíprocas de los autores y se propone una renovación de la interpretación teórica de divergencias y convergencias. La hipótesis es que Habermas y Luhmann convergen en una concepción radicalmente diádica y multinivelada de la unidad de análisis sociológica sobre la base del concepto de comunicación, pero divergen en la segmentación analítica que hacen de ella.

Palabras clave: Luhmann, Habermas, comunicación, diadismo.

Introduction: communication as sociology's analysis unit

In this work we collate the definitions of "the social" in the General Theory of Social Systems (GTSS) by Niklas Luhmann and the Theory of Communicative Action (TCA) by Jürgen Habermas. We are interested in particularly approaching the communicational redefinition of "the social" which both authors did between the 1970's and 1980's. These redefinitions share some aspects in common. Our objective is to identify them, relieve and compare them in view of obtaining fundamental theoretical consequences related to sociology's analysis unit.

These common topics are usually overlapped, however, by the self-called confrontation between "paradigms", which prevails in the dialogues between GTSS and TCA. This way, in order to compare those redefinitions, we assume the need of an analysis perspective that transcends such petrified polemic and be capable of establishing an integral comparison schema and of focusing and disaggregating complex definitions of "the social". To do so, in this work we assume a systematic perspective focused on collating analysis units.

The debate between Luhmann and Habermas is one of the most important in postwar European sociology. Its conceptual richness is noticeable, either because it was nurtured by the authors for three decades, or because of the amplitude of the controversy scope over the years (intersubjectivity, rationality, functionalism, dialogism, normativity, etc.), or because of the vast bibliography accumulated as of the 1970's (as mere instances: Maciejewski, 1974; Söllner, 1982; Rasch, 2000; Bonacker, 2002; Bolz, 2012).

Nevertheless, when assessing it from our comparative objective, the debate does not offer systematic contributions. There were and there are still reciprocal receptions, this is to say, works exclusively interested in strengthening one debate stance and refuting the other, but without systematic purposes, uninterested in integral comparisons of both research programs. Because of this, it comes as no surprise that, in the history of the debate, systematic efforts are relatively lower in volume and recent in time.

These works moved from the center of attention to reciprocal receptions in order to focus on the agreements between GTSS and TCA. Operation from which results as distinguishable as promising came out. We can mention, among others, works by Strydom (1999), Chernilo (2002) and Mascareño (2009). Strydom identified a spectrum bordered by concurrences between both programs in Parsons's reception, from which it stated the

triple contingency. Chernilo devised a general comparison schema for the symbolically generalized media, with it he collated Luhmann's and Habermas' proposals and found divergences and confluences. With similar results, Mascareño broadened Chernilo's proposal with the problem of emergence and, besides, extended the *corpus* of authors.

Our research project follows this line. We want to analyze with systematic intent the main programs of late postwar European sociology and especial attention is paid to GTSS and TCA, owing to the depth with which they redefined sociology's category system from communication and the intention to generate a "paradigm shift" in the discipline from this. In this context we compare in an integral manner the general theoretical fundaments (ontological, epistemological, methodological, sociological, discursive) of both programs.

In this work we gather some results already reached; we know, regarding the ontological component, that two of the programs, together with Latour's, concur in rejecting what they called "Occident's ontological project" and accepting an ontologically weak and factually strong structuration of the real (Pignuoli-Ocampo, 2016b). Once in sociology's field, we set off from the platform, somewhat generic and in need of accuracy and detail, that both Habermas and Luhmann concurringly reject the reduction, collectivist and actionalist at once, of the concept of communication (Pignuoli-Ocampo and Zitello, 2008).

In like manner, we have the proposed hypothesis that both authors agree on locating the relation between structures of meaning and analysis units at a specific structure level, where the latter keep a conditional statement relation with the former so that the properties of meaning of the structure lack causal power on the units, as it is noticed in Habermas' intersubjectivity concept and Luhmann's penetration (Paladino and Pignuoli-Ocampo, 2014). Lastly, we frame this background in the thesis that the performative components with a paradigm-shift intention of GTSS and TCA are similar.

These components were directed against the "crisis of sociology" in order to strengthen its intervention in diagnoses and alternatives in the disciplinary context and so dressed their conceptual innovations in statute and the intentions of a "paradigm shift" (Pignuoli-Ocampo, 2015b)-

It is time to move to one of the fundamental problems in sociology: the definition of the analysis unit, this is to say, the conceptual elaborations devoted to answer the question: "what is the social?" By definition of "the social" we understand a conceptual elaboration that supposes the structuration of the real and introduces a qualitative differentiation of a

specific order of reality which is auto-logically indicated as "social". Every definition of the "social" thus delimits the field of phenomena and the range of problems considered object of sociology.

Owing to the prevalence of reciprocal actions, finding the method to compare such definitions is part of the research problem. In this work, we will assume the multileveled perspective of the research program as a systematic methodology, which had been already used to collate Luhmann's and Latour's (Pignuoli-Ocampo, 2016a) and Husserl's, Schutz's and Luhmann's (Pignuoli-Ocampo, 2015a)[1] sociological fundaments. This systematic design, in line with Ritzer (2001) and Mascareño (2008), compares *theoretical architectures.*

It is assumed that sociological theories conceptualize a common core of fundamental problems toward which the elaboration of concepts orients and upon which they organize their theoretical architecture. Seen this way, concepts that aim at the same disciplinary problem are functionally equivalent and are comparable, even though they are in various materials and use heterogeneous terminologies. From this perspective, we can establish functional equivalences between the definitions of TCA and GTSS and collate them, avoiding the misunderstandings and homonymic fallacies of purely terminological collations.

As it is known, as of the middle of the 1960's and mainly the 1980's, both Habermas and Luhmann relaunched their programs from a set of conceptual innovations based on the *communicational redefinition* of "the social", this is to say, from theoretically establishing communication as sociology's general analysis unit.

In the case of Luhmann, such definition focuses on the synthetic model of communication. This supposes a criterion of sociality based on mutualism, a conditional statement on the basis of the double contingency and the analysis unit segmented on the concept of communication as a summary of three selections. In Habermas' case, this definition focuses on the model of generation of understanding of communicative action. This supposes a criterion of sociality supported on intersubjective recognition, a conditional statement based on the illocutionary force of language and the analysis unit segmented in the concept of communicative action as illocutionary success.

Given the complexity of these communicational definitions of "the social", our methodological proposal consists in disaggregating them into thee basic aspects: sociality criterion, conditional statement and analysis unit.

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1 For the epistemological and methodologic substantiation of this perspective, see Pignuoli-Ocampo (2017).

The first criterion evokes the distinctive, necessary and sufficient properties to predicate, define and delimit the imputation of sociologic quality to a determinate referential construction: GTSS produced it around the concept of mutualism; while TCA, around intersubjective recognition.

The second refers to the conditions of possibility, which in the author's judgment, are not necessary for the formation of social entities in the world: GTSS produced it around the concept of double contingency; and TCA, around the concept of language's illocutionary force. The third is the determination of the analysis unit, which segments the unit, relates it with its conditions and describes its sociologic properties as a social entity inside the world: for GTSS such unit is the concept of communication as a summary of the three selections; and for TCA, communicational action as illocutionary success. In table 1[2], we summarize the equivalences.

Our hypothesis is that the authors concur in criteria on sociality, conditional statements and analysis units, because of the common assumption of a markedly dyadic sociologic schema at the three levels, while they widely diverge on the segmentation of such analysis units.

Selecting the materials was not difficult. We selected Luhmann's works that belonged to the "autopoietic period", which began in the 1980's, when he proposed the categories related to communication, emergence of social systems and *autopoiesis*. This *corpus* focused on the main work of the period: *Soziale Systeme* (Luhmann, 1984) and we broadened it with a later article that reinforces it (Luhmann, 1990).

As regards Habermas, we selected material from the "linguistic turn", which started in the 1970's and reached its peak with *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Habermas, 1981), where he built a sociologic object based on the relation between communicative action and rationality oriented to understanding; we broaden with preparatory (Habermas, 1984) and later works (Habermas, 2002).

The exposition follows this layout: broaden the discussion on the tension between reciprocal receptions and the required abstraction to perform a systematic analysis of analysis units, then we collated each axis separately: sociality criteria, conditional statements and analysis units. Finally, we obtain conclusions.

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2   Tables 1 and 2 are in the Annex, at the end o this document (Editor's note).

Preliminary discussion: reciprocal receptions and required systematic abstraction

Our comparative objective faces an important obstacle: critically dialogue with the primacy of reciprocal receptions between the authors. This obstacle is noticed in what Colomy (1991) called imputation strategies between contemporary theories. The authors and research programs maintain matching and dissenting dialogues and receptions with other authors and contemporary programs. These criticisms and imputations reciprocally made between the authors become an obstacle when the comparison circumscribes to them, against a broad and systematic exploration of convergence and divergences between them. Identifying this sort of difficulty is especially relevant to propose a theoretical comparison between Luhmann and Habermas, capable of critically dialoguing with the abundant receptions the very authors made of one another.

As it is known, polemics between Jürgen Habermas and Niklas Luhmann are one of the most important intellectual interchanges in the field of social sciences in the second half of XX century. Its theoretical richness is undeniable. However, a comparative systematic treatment of its proposals cannot be reduced to commentary on such receptions, as only are they rich in contributions, but also in omissions, incorrectness and elisions. An instance is the elision that they gave one another regarding interaction.

For Habermas (1981-II: 557; 1984: 24), Luhmann was a systemic holistic who radicalized functionalist rationality. For Luhmann (1990: 6), Habermas was more an actionalist of communication, renovator of emancipatory rationalism. Habermas elided Luhmann's effort to build a dyadic emergentism of communication, and he, conversely, elided the former's effort to study the general structures of understanding on the basis of articulation (and not on identification) between acts of speech and action.

A systemic correction of this reception shall restore the elided elements and enquire on divergences and concurrences alike. In this case, we notice that *both* programs, without disregarding their divergences, concur in the rejection to individualist and collectivist traditions and in the defense of the interactionism's antecedence on the third radical position. In view of this, we will revise, on the one side, divergences with the goal of finding out those aspects in which indeed there is opposing stances; and on the other, those aspects less confronted, with more coincidences, which are theoretical nucleuses more prone open to conceptual convergences.

Our proposal requires a comparative schema with enough abstraction to identify functional equivalences between heterogeneous terminologies related to sociology's analysis unit. To do so, we will retake the schema we already used to collate Latour's and Luhmann's sociologic foundations (Pignuoli-Ocampo, 2016a). We start from the recent debate on the *dimensions* of sociality's conceptions (Heintz, 2004; Lindemann, 2006; Bedorf *et al.*, 2010; Albert *et al.*, 2010, among others). The supposition of the debate is that sociology traverses a multi-paradigmatic stage, in which different definitions of the disciplinary object coexist and the possibility of comparing them from a meta-theoretical perspective is discussed.

To do so, we propose the concept of dimension of sociality upon which there is a comparative schema. The dimension of sociality is the magnitude unit with which the social quality is theoretically defined in the frame of the conception of a sociologic object and it is assumed that the fundamental dimensions are three: 1) a monadic dimension, whose units are the social properties attributed to the individuals and/or their actions and /or their representations; 2) a dyadic dimension, whose unit are the social properties attributed to the constellation *ego/alter ego*; and 3) a triadic dimension, whose unit is the social properties attributed to a term deemed *tertium* regarding the individuals, previous and internal to them, capable of organizing them.

Our proposal consists, firstly, in locating the definitions in the space of properties produced by these three dimensions of sociality. Second, analytically disaggregating them according to the magnitude unit(s) that rule(s) them. Third, interpret and compare them according to their distribution over the dimensions and the game they establish. The model of basic analysis considers *monadism* the conceptions in which monadic definitions prevail; *dyadism*, those in which dyadic definitions prevail; and *triadism*, when triadic definitions prevail. In like manner, it accepts their possible combinations.

Sociality criteria

In this section we collate the sociality criteria of GTSS and TCA. We will present them separately: mutualism and intersubjective recognition. Then, we will distinguish convergences and divergences.

GTSS: mutualism

Mutualism is the specific criterion of emergence by the multiple constitution of "the social". Mutualism means that the alteration (*Änderung*) of one's states corresponds to the alteration of the others' state (Luhmann, 1984: 65-66). This requires self-referential processors that make sense and understand (*Verstehen*) and the formation of a specific situation from their concourse, inside which they are capable of co-orienting themselves.

Because of this, Luhmann establishes mutualism as a general premise of the multiple constitution (mutualist or dialogical) of "the social" and as a GTSS sociality criterion. As such, it has emergent properties: it meets the legalities of the world (thermodynamic, physical, chemical, biochemical, organic and psychical), however it implies the quantitatively novel appearance of mutualist co-orientation.

Being founded upon an *alter ego / alter ego* constellation of the self-referential processors, mutualism has dyadic properties. It cannot be satisfied by a system's unilaterality, as it requires the concourse of, at least, another alter ego, thereby it is not a monadic criterion, nor does it require the concourse of a third party (*tertium*) that generates multiple constitution and orders the constellation; therefore, neither does this follow a triadic criterion, as it is ruled by the principles of self-reference and third excluded.

TCA: intersubjective recognition (intersubjektive Anerkennung)

Intersubjective recognition is the act of recognizing the listener as an *alter ego* by the speaker, which is carried out by means of expressing in an illocutionary speech act. By intersubjectively recognizing other subject, in the first place their action capability is recognized as a premise for cooperative coordination; second, their competence to understand or grasp propositions and intentions; and third, their capability to accept, reject or criticize the validity of the offered intention. Habermas underscored that illocution has a binding effect (*Bindungseffekt*) between actors that takes place in order to understand each other and coordinate their actions and distinguished that the realization of intersubjective knowledge is the fundamental sociologic property of the illocutionary component, as it fixes the *social* nature of its realization. As such it has generative properties, as enacts recognition in the world by means of a speech act.

This illocutionary updating performs the situation of the speech in the world in the shape of *alter ego / alter ego* constellation between

the reciprocally recognized subjects because of it and generates an understanding horizon between them, because of this the intersubjective has dyadic properties. This cannot be attained by isolated subjects, as neither forces nor illocutionary acts are created *ex nihilo* by any subject nor are these held in them an their internal nature, but they are hosted in the natural language, whose theology is oriented at understanding.

Therefore, recognition does not depend on the isolated subject, they only develop language command to use it, so it is not monadic. Likewise, the illocutionary enactment *supposes* illocutionary forces as a given power, but it is neither determined nor caused by such power. This way, change from the power to the act of the subjects in a speaking situation is neither caused nor determined by language, but by the very situation generated by the execution of illocutionary acts at a determinate time and place. Language is the *Medium*, it does not intervene in a causal manner in the constitution of the situation nor is its efficient reason, because of this it does not have a triadic statute, nor does it need a sociality criterion with such statute.

Convergences

We find two significant convergences: *1)* the interactional, situational and reciprocal base; and, *2)* the centrality of alterity. The first deals with the convergence of both programs on the single, interactional, situational and reciprocal base of the sociality criterion. As for the interactional character, they reject the criteria of individual or supra-individual base and embrace an interactional base, since they demand the concourse of at least two agents, as observed in the GTSS definitions of mutualism and TCA intersubjective recognition.

This demand cannot be met at individual level because the concourse cannot be reduced to one of them in singular, neither can it be met at supra-individual level because the base is not independent from such concourse. Concourse is the interactional base that establishes the single bases (neither dual nor fragmented) of multiple composition for the sociality criterion. This convergence is of the utmost importance for it establishes the non-contradiction between the programs, regarding the definition of "the social".

As for the situational character, programs temporarily and spatially anchor the concourse: this occurs inside the world, at a determinate point in time and temporality, in a segment of determined extension and spatiality. These time and space provide the concourse with situational unit. Regarding the reciprocity of perspectives, Luhmann and Habermas concur that the

concourse situational unit is not mere objective co-existence of agents, but formation of reciprocal perspectives in the participants. This implies dislocating egocentric perspectives and opening perspectives oriented to the other agent and vice versa. This reciprocity does not mean conformity nor harmony among reciprocal perspectives, but mutual attention only.

The second convergence is that Luhmann and Habermas include a component of alterity in a central place in their proposals. For them, the sociological conception of alterity not only shall consider the construction of *alter* from the perspective of *ego*, but also and more fundamentally the construction of *ego* as *alter ego* of its *alter ego* within the interaction and vice versa. This duplicity is irreducible and follows its own dynamic within this frame. This radical dislocation of its egocentric perspectives is the alterity component that both programs incorporate in their sociality criteria.

Divergence

In this element we find significant divergence between the proposals' interactionist accents; both consider interaction as sociality's base criterion, however their emphases differ. Habermas considers it essential for communicative action, it is its platform and unit. For Luhmann, it is one of the possibilities of mutualism, it is not the only and as a double contingent can be spatio-temporarily uncoupled without losing its unicity.

Conditional statements

In this section we collate the conditional statements of GTSS and TCA. We will represent them separately: double contingency and illocutionary forces and identity of meanings. Then, we will separate convergences and divergences.

GTSS: double contingency

Double contingency is the "transition" toward the system (Luhmann, 1984: 148). That is a necessary condition, but not sufficient, for the emergence of social systems, as it possesses the mutualist property, but it is not communicational nor does it have an operative unit. In function of the problem of how social order is possible, the category of double contingency indicates the emergence of a threshold of social meaning irreducibility.

The category establishes three conditions to produce this threshold, which officiate the categories of the dimension, namely: a specific problem: *1)* a specific problem (indetermination of the other's behavior); *2)* an experience full of meaning (the co-experience of reciprocal alterity); *3)* and the emergence of a situationally differenced order of reality.

As for the problem, there is double contingency if and only if the problem of the indetermination of the action's social meaning appears. This occurs when at least two systems understand and assume the other system's behavior as a premise for its own behavior. At that moment, the impossibility to determine with certainty the other's behavior and, correlatively, the indetermination of the proper behavior appear simultaneously.

This is a concrete and constant problem (*Dauerproblem*) from the perspective of the *alter egos* (or actors), who have to deal with it in a self-referential mode; as they do, they produce effects incapable of solving it definitively, but they establish a reference of meaning, which enables that at other time the problem can be dealt with again, from the state generated by such an effect.

As for experience, the double contingency supposes the co-experience of the other's irreducible difference and alterity. This experience implies that participant systems co-experience divergence among their perspectives. This creates a circle of reflexive expectations that forces them to select according to them. The double contingency implies the emergence of the social dimension of meaning and the emergence of a selection zone. The first forms the double horizon *ego/alter* and dislocates ego-centric expectations. The second forms the situational horizon that coerces the selection, and as such it is irreducible to the participant systems.

When the three conditions are met, there emerges a form of meaning and a contingency mode specifically and irreducibly social inside the world. They organize the double contingency with the form of reflexive expectative: "I do what you want, if you do what I want", whose negative form, in the case of conflict, is: "I do not do what you want, because you do not do what I want". This sociological definition is what Luhmann (1984: 153) called *theorem* of the double contingency and as it establishes a situational form of mutualist reinforcement to be chosen it states the necessary condition of meaning of communication and remains as a permanent condition of it.[3]

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3   For broader representations of the concept of double contingency, see Lindemann (1999), Vanderstraeten (2002), Pignuoli-Ocampo (2013b), among others.

TCA: illocutionary forces and identity of meanings

TCA conditional statement rests upon the internal relationship between subjectivity and language. This conditions intersubjectivity doubly. Firstly, it is in the relation of intersubjective recognition with the illocutionary forces and acts.[4] Secondly, it is the seat of the identity of meanings associated to meanings intersubjectively recognized as shared. One conditioning or the other imply the same definition of intersubjectivity.

The first definition associates the generation of intersubjectivity with the theory of speech acts; the second associates the supposition of intersubjectivity with meaning. Habermas articulates them systematically in the concept of intersubjective recognition, which therefore, becomes complex.

In relation to the first definition, Habermas (1981-I: 430) assumes that illocutionary forces (*illokutionärer Kräfte*) are the nodal points of societalization networks (*Vergesellschaftung*) to the extent that they offer schemas to produce (*Herstellung*) interpersonal relationships. These forces are the societal infrastructure of language and they themselves are in flow. Illocutionary lexicon is hosted in the natural language, it thereby varies according to each language with consolidated grammatical expressions or more flexible ways such as performative verbs, sentence particles, intonation.

Habermas places them in the conditional statement, since illocutionary sources are necessary condition but not sufficient reason for the illocutionary speech acts. The distinction between power and act inside the same language *medium* is key: language enables the binding effect making these forces available as potential for the subjects of speech and interaction, however it setting into motion depends on the execution (or not) of the illocutionary by the subjects when the intersubjective goal of coordinating their actions plan takes place.

Regarding the second definition, Habermas postulates that language is the seat of intersubjective semantics, as it hosts the identity of meaning in a speaking community.[5] The community measure of this second definition of

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4 The notion of illocutionary force comes from the pragmatics in speech acts. In Austin (1982: 117), the *forces of an expression* designate the modes in which a proposition has to be understood, "how to take them". Habermas sociologically reinterpreted the recognition potential in them.

5 Lafont (1993: 169) pointed out that with the inclusion of the world life as background knowledge, Habermas returned from Humboldt to Gadamer and no longer considered understanding's conditions of possibility only from the standpoint of participants in

intersubjectivity is supported on shared-background knowledge, inertially holistic as it is incomprehensible as a totality, the validity intentions of the speech acts, as it relates such intentions with shared aperture and signification.

Such is the base for the validity of speech and Habermas places it at the conditional level, since the intersubjective recognition of the shared meaning of the validity intentions opens a new horizon of accessibility, criticism and agreement for the speech acts executed by subjects in a speech situation; thus, it does not forces understanding between them, only makes it possible.

Habermas articulates both definitions of intersubjectivity at a specific point of the double conditioning of communicative action: the illocutionary generation of the speech situation supposes the intersubjective recognition of validity intentions in the shape of acceptable sentences, under the alleged counterfactual supposition of understanding between them

Convergences

In this element we find two significant convergences: *1)* the double use of sociality criterion; *2)* the inclusion of a third conditional term. The first one is the *double use* of the criterion of sociality by Luhmann and Habermas, who, on the one side, defined with it the sociologic quality of the analysis unit, and on the other, they established the conditions of such units. This is to say, for the programs, the conditions and units fulfill the same sociality criterion, without homologating because of this, as in both cases the conditional statement fixes the units' factual and logical premises and has broader amplitude.

The second convergence comes from the previous. Both programs propose a *third* conditional term that possesses a social quality because it meets the sociality criterion, but it is not social unit because it is not an analysis unit. It is broader than those, as it is the case of double contingency in GTSS and illocutionary force in TCA. As in the units, conditions are intra-mundane.

However, there are some differences: conditions lack occurrence ontological statute, they have ontological or medial ontological (TCA) or troublesome (GTSS) statutes, but they are no units. With no social conditions there would be no social units, but those are not social units. We observe so in the double contingency: it enables communication, but it is not

communication (a fronte), but also from the conditions of possibility which have to be given (a tergo) so that it can take place.

communication. The same is valid for intersubjective recognition: it enables communicative action, without being one such action. This convergence clarifies the programs' stances: social conditions allow identifying the sociologic object, but are not the object.

Divergences

The modality of conditional statement is a very interesting systematic problem, as it is the point of the broadest divergence between the definitions of the social in both programs. These programs do not differ much in the dyadic bases nor in the units as social conditions do. We notice that Luhmann puts forward a conditional statement based on social meaning, characterizes the third term (double contingency) as a factual problem, he proposes a logical schema based on transition and organizes it around the difference in incongruent perspectives.

Habermas also bases his proposal upon the social meaning, but unlike Luhmann he characterizes the third term (illocutionary) force as the mediation, he proposes a schema of power/act for language and organizes it around the identity of meanings. It is not possible to group: the authors agree on one thing, but oppose on other. It is interesting to underscore that divergences start from a dyadic social criteria focused on alterity. This demonstrates that, in the first place, divergences are heavily marked, but so are convergences and the former start from the latter; secondly, dyadism offers great flexibility to produce conditional matter.

Units of analysis

In this section we collate the definitions of analysis unit of GTSS and TCA. We will present them separately: communication understood as "summary of three selections" and can communicative action as "illocutionary success". Then we will difference convergences and divergences.

GTSS: communication as a summary of three selections

In previous works we analyzed Luhmann's communication concept; here we retake its salient points (Pignuoli-Ocampo, 2013a). According to the author, communication is a summary of three selections: Information-*Mitteilung-Verstehen* (Luhmann, 1984: 203). It is a complex operation, whose emergent

unit is ordered as follows: "information" selection (the topic, that on which there is an opinion) is initially processed by an emitter (*alter*), who selects a *making in the world* (*Mitteilung*) —gesticulation, an oral, written allocution, telecommunicatively disseminated or symbolically codified— to be observed by a determinate receptor (*ego*) *toward* such "actuation" is directed (Luhmann, 1984: 195-6).

However, since communication is mutualist, it cannot be reduced to an emission's unilaterality, as it needs *ego* "to act understanding" (*Verstehen*) and distinguishes between such making of the emitter in the world aimed at it (*Mitteilung*) and its "information" decoding. Decoding is not passive, but *produces* information and reintroduces it in communication's unit. Communication's information is not reduced to the emitted message. *There is communication* if and only if, *ego* manages "to act understanding". We read in Luhmann (1984: 203): "if communication is understood as a summary of three selections, as information unit, *Mitteilung* and *Verstehen*, then communication is carried out when and to the extent verstehen is generated. Everything else tales place "outside" the elemental unit and presupposes it".

By synthetically closing, a communication can only be accepted or rejected with a new communication that links with the previous communication. These recursion of links between communications generates a limit for meaning that differentiates the social system. This is why Luhmann considers communication as sociology's analysis unit.

From mutualism's standpoint, GTSS understands the social as an emergent phenomenon *by virtue* of, not *against*, irreducibility to participants, this is to say, *by virtue* of, and not *against*, the individuals' individuality. The social emerges as a *differenced* order, whose properties are irreducible to their precursors, which it still supposes. For its part, as dyadic, mutualism is not alien to interaction, but disowns the unspecific versions of this principle and tries to adjust to the problem of unit, difference and alterity.

TCA: commutative action as illocutionary success

Habermas (1981-I: 128)[6] defined *communicative* action as symbolically mediated interaction, at least between two subjects capable of language and action who intersubjectively recognize one another and which by verbal and/

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6 Unlike other "linguistic turns", Habermas does not conceive action as an epiphenomenon of the language structures, but as an interactive performance enabled by them.

or extraverbal means establish an interpersonal relationship for the purpose of understanding each other on the world and coordinate their action plans. Communicative action then supposes speech act executed by a subject in view of being, first, understood (*verstand*) and then accepted as accorded (*annehmen*) by the other subject in speech situation. The dual structure of acts orders the symbolically mediated interaction: the locution component is articulated by means of grammatically understandable sentences referring to the state of things and the illocutionary component is articulated with validity pretensions proposed via illocutionary components, this establishes and regulates the interpersonal relationship.

Habermas (2002: 117) calls illocutionary success to the effective concretion (*einlösen*) of an understanding between the actor and communicative action is attained to the extent illocutionary success is accomplished, this is to say, when actors accept the reciprocally proposed validity pretensions and coordinate their action plans through the mechanism of linguistic understanding. Because of this, Habermas (1981-I: 151 and 370)[7] considers that the consecution of illocutionary success is the *original* mechanism to coordinate social actions, because it is the basic way in which "*ego* can 'connect' (*anschließen*) its actions with those of the *alter*".

Rejecting the validity pretensions does not end communicative action, but opens in it a virtual sphere in which validity pretensions are thematized with the intention of being argumentatively justified and accepted from the rationalization of motives and norms.

Illocutionary success, therefore, establishes the analysis unit of communicative action, first as it identifies the original mechanism of linguistic understanding; second, as it allows distinguishing between weak communicative action, whose illocutionary success is supported on expressions of unilateral wills and only guided by pretensions of truth and veracity, and strong communicative action, whose illocutionary success extends to normative reasons, which are referred to shared value orientations, at the same time that subjects recognize their autonomy and link their will

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7 Alexander (1991: 64 f.) criticized Habermas for confusing communication with *agreement*. Habermas (1991: 238) riposted, firstly, that TCA, in line with formal pragmatics distinguishes on the one hand, *Verständigung* from *Annehmen*, a distinction that concerns the process of reaching an agreement, and on the other, between *Verstehen* and *Akzeptabilität*, a distinction that concerns comprehension's internal interconnection; we might add that the first distinction, which already rebates Alexander's criticism, is proper to the conditional statement on the intersubjectivity of language, it does not belong to the defining of analysis unit.

independently from their preferences (Habermas, 2002: 117-118); thirdly, as it identifies the mechanism to rationalize the reasons and norms proper to (strong) communicative action;[8] fourth, as it establishes the measure to set the uses *derived* from the illocutionary success in other sorts of social action, mainly in the case of strategic action, whose mechanism to coordinate action is neither based on understanding nor reasons, but on interests, however it is incapable of coordinating actions without plaguing locution success. Something similar occurs with instrumental action, which is not social action itself, but which can be articulated in plexuses of communicative action, thereby it finds a coordination mechanisms in illocutionary success.[9]

Convergences

In this element we find a substantive convergence: dyadic analysis unit. It rearticulates convergences around the new place prepared for the social, separated from actionalism and holism, and the interest in interaction's disciplinary background. It is the concept of minimum constellation organized around, at least, two *alter ego's* that in virtue of the reciprocity of their orientation coordinate selections.

In the concept of analysis unit such constellation is defined as *one* and only one occurrence qualified as social, which supposes but not reduces to any of the constellated *alter ego's* (it is not monadic), whose unit only comes from this constellation and from no other component or condition exterior to it (it is not triadic). For Luhmann and Habermas, it is necessary and sufficient the concourse of at least two *alter ego's* that produce reciprocal perspectives and coordinate at determined time and place; from it and only from it, a novel event is shaped, provided with duration and specific irreducible unit, relationally contingent.

Such a concourse or constellation can be a social unit because of its multiple dyadic composition, as noticed in Luhmann's communication concepts and Habermas' communicative action, beyond who (or what) is an *alter ego* for them. This convergence at the level of analysis unit is of the utmost importance for our research, as it supports the theoretical convergence on the dyadic property of the sociologic quality.

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8 Habermas (2002: 49) introduced this distinction late owing to Wellmer's (1989) and Lafont's (1993) criticisms about the inconsistencies in his theory of meaning.

9 Habermas (1981-I: 393-4) underscored that his distinction between communicative action and strategic action is not only analytical, but supported on rational fundaments.

The programs converge in the dyadic definition of analysis unit and declare the *only* base for their systems of categories. This way, from the convergence in the dyadic analysis unit, they reject monadism, triadism and combinationism. Regarding monadic perspective, programmatic criticisms to individualism and the ontological criticism to elementalism.

The authors impugn sociologic monadism; in the first place, the social elements are units, not mere individual or micro elements (rejection to the principle of simplicity); second, the constellation is not an aggregate of individual elements but a novel quality (rejection to the principle of additivity); thirdly, dyadic properties are not predicates related to individual priorities, such predicates fall into a fallacy of mistaken level (rejection to the principle of reduction); and in the fourth place, the dyadic constellation is not caused by individual actions (rejection to ascending epiphenomenalism).

In respect of the triadic perspective, programmatic criticisms to holism are retaken as well as the ontological criticism to the whole/part model. Both authors impugn triadism, or sociologic collectivism, because in the first place, the dyadic unit of the constellation neither derives nor keeps correspondence with another simultaneous unit (rejection to the principle of transitivity); second, dyadic properties are not predicates related to collective properties (rejection to the principle of reduction); and thirdly, the constellation is not produced by supraindividual entities (rejection to descending epiphenomenalism).

As for the combinationst perspective, the programmatic criticisms to dualism and ontological criticism to aggregationism. Luhmann and Habermas impugn sociologic combinationism, in the first place, because there is not a sociologic meta-unit between simultaneous occurrences (micro/macro, action/structure) causally independent (rejection to the principle of parallelism); second, because dyadic properties are not predicates related to the conjunction of linked properties (monadic-triadic), as these are still individual (monadic) and collective properties (triadic), their conjunction does not suppress previous criticisms and fall into wrong concretion fallacy (confounds its method with what it observes), dyadism has a specific unit and facticity, whose order neither comes from nor is explained by combining levels (rejection to the principle of conjunction); and third, the dyadic constellation is not the effect of a combination of other level causes (rejection to the multicausal principle).

Divergences

In this element we find a significant divergence: the segmentation of the dyadic analysis units. It is to be found in the analytical segmentation each author introduced in the dyadic constellation to distinguish and indicate their analysis units. Their origin point are the analytical criteria provided by the adopted standpoints. These, being applied to the dyadic constellation, segment it in distinct analysis units and explain why, even though conceptually dyadic, the analysis units diverge: Luhmann took the analysis unit from the systemic perspective as a reference and segmented operative dyadic units; while Habermas followed suit with the analysis unit of the perspective oriented to understanding and segmented agreement dyadic units. This divergent segmentation is relevant as it identifies the point at which standpoints produce divergences between convergent conceptions.

This general divergence explains particular divergences between Luhmann and Habermas in regards communication, and deserves a paragraph of its own. Both frame dyadism in communication and the analysis unit of TCA and GTSS differs, nevertheless. This is not explained by an alleged actionalism of the former, nor by an alleged holism of the latter, as suggested by reciprocal receptions, but by the distinct segmentation of the dyadic constellation. This is to say, divergence does not come from the argument composition, as in this the authors do not diverge, for both *there is* dyadic constellation, but in segmentation and in its base is the distribution of the fundamental components; on the one side, the *Verstehen* ("understanding") or *Verständlichkeit* ("understandability", "intelligibility") component, and on the other the *annehmen/Annahme* or *Akzeptabel* ("accept", "acceptance").

Both Luhmann (1984: 203) and Habermas (1984: 209), we reiterate it, take up conceptions on a dyadic base and difference them: the first ("understanding") for both implies orientation toward *ego* by *alter*; the second ("acceptance") for both implies the no-rejection of *alter* to a proposal by *ego*. However, they distribute it in divergently in relation to their respective analysis units: Luhmann includes the concept of *Verstehen* in the analysis unit, he deems it the third selection of communication, whose unit closes with it, while he excludes the concept of *Annahme* from it, which he considers a fourth selection whose value is processual.

Conversely, Habermas includes the concept of *Annhame* in the unit, he considers it the concretion of action coordination, whose unit closes with it, while he hosts the concept of *Verständlichkeit* in *alter ego* and in

the construction of sentence, only linked to the unit of understanding in a conditioned and subordinate manner by means of the theory of meaning ("we understand a speech act when we know what makes it acceptable").

The different distribution of these components explain the different segmentation of analysis units: for the "summary of three selections" of GTSS comprehension is enough, while the "communicative action" of TCA demands acceptance. From this, the methods applied to the intentions diverge. Luhmann states a *universal* concept of analysis unit, which comprehends everything related to field, whereas Habermas proposes a *general* concept, common to *particulars*, which emphasizes the *originality* of the communicative action, where other forms of social action *come from*, in this originality the intensions and pertinence of rationality for the object and its field come into play.

This divergence in the segmentation of analysis units produced a long chain of divergences between TCA and GTSS. However, we are interested here in pointing out that the divergence between programmatic intentions has a multiplying effect on them. Schluchter (2008: 49) rightly summarized this use: "Luhmann demands too little from communication's rationality potential; Habermas, too much". This is because Habermas' universality pretension on rationality comes into play in virtue of a segmentation that includes the issue of rationality in the unit of the social via the acceptance or substantiation of validity intentions, with which a relatively high threshold to produce dyadic social units was established.

Luhmann's universality intention, on the contrary, took him to subsume the rationality of motives as a possible case of summarization of three selections, with this he established a relatively low threshold for the emergence of dyadic social units. This is to say, by making the analysis unit independent from acceptance, GTSS enters the field of object *before* TCA, with which there is a *broader* initial access to it.

However, declaring TCA dependent introduces the problem of social order as a normative dimension at the level of analysis units, a problem that GTSS unfolds: it distributes the problem of social order at the level of conditional statement, acceptance at personal level and normativity at the level of structure modulation. None remains at the level of analysis unit.

Conclusions: marked and multileveled dyadism

Along the present work we collated the communicational definitions of "the social" by Luhmann and Habermas. In all the analysis axes we find

convergences and divergences, with a significant difference in number and quality in favor of the former. Even if in the initial statement they are comparable, we pondered the convergences as they rebate the reciprocal dimensions and imperative standards. We do not deny the divergences with this emphasis, we rather ponder them. In table 2, we order the results.

Judging by the results, we conclude that the communicative analysis units of GTSS and TCA keep important similitudes in criteria of sociality, conditional statements and analysis units; and a significant contrast point on the segmentation of dyadic units. Similitudes indicate convergences between the definitions of "the social", compelled to conceptually produce a heavily dyadic sociological schema at every definition level; while the nodal point of divergences is the analytical decisions related to that base.

This is particularly evident in the segmentation of analysis units on the constellation *alter ego / alter ego*. We underscore that divergences do not come from the sociological base, since both programs assume a dyadic base and criticize monadism and triadism.

Seem systemically, the analysis units have a common element and another opposed. Regarding the first, in the three axes we notice an elaboration oriented to triadism; it establishes a sociologic quality with a fierce opposition against monadism, triadism and combinationism, the latter considered an aggregation of the two first. As for the opposing element, the segmentation of the analysis unit locates the divergences at the level of minimum analytical unit.

From these elements it comes that the programs produced in parallel, in a convergent manner however, the same starting point: criticize the "sociologic traditions" and define "the social" in a markedly dyadic way. This is, for its part, congruent with an ontologically weak and factually strong base. In this, convergent conclusion critiques to monadism, triadism and combinationism are articulated with the option for a heavily stressed dyadism at the level of sociality criteria, conditional statements and analysis units.[10]

This is a common starting point as it tolerates a myriad of conditional statements and the segmentations of analysis units, all equally dyadic, to the point that it is possible to consider functional *dyadic* equivalents. This systematic articulation avoids a trap of reciprocal relations, which consists in either accusing any program that uses the term "action" of actionalist, a fact

10 These results can be crossed-checked with those reached while collating Luhmann and Latour, in which we also find strong convergence on dyadism in sociologic bases. This way, the statements will reciprocally broaden and concur with the convergences around the "paradigm shift".

that for Luhmann would imply a concession to monadism, or any program that uses the term "system" of "holistic", a fact that for Habermas would imply a concession to triadism. Our systematic conclusion is utterly different: both programs reject in a convergent manner sociologic tradition and accept a radically dyadic definition of "the social"; which is congruent with our initial hypothesis.

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Annex

Table 1

Equivalences between definitions of "the social"

	Luhmann	Habermas
Sociality criterion	Mutualism	Intersubjective recognition
Conditional statement	Double contingency	Language's illocutionary force
Analysis unit	'Communication' Summary of three selections	Communicative action Illocutionary success

Source: own elaboration.

Table 2

Convergences and divergences between definitions of "the Social"

	Convergences	Divergences
Sociality criterion	International, situational and reciprocal base, centrality of alterity	Interactionist accents
Conditional statement	Dual use of the sociality criterion Inclusion of third conditional term	Modulation of the statement
Analysis unit	Single dyadic analysis unit	Segmentation of the dyadic analysis unit

Source: own elaboration.

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