On Collaboration between the Humanities and the Social Sciences: Discussion of the Terms of Intra and Interdisciplinary Dialogue through the Lenses of Sociology

Introduction

Generally, a distinction is made between the social sciences and humanities. This distinction, as we know, is deeply rooted in the history of the social sciences. It is part of this enduring quest for social science legitimisation in general. Initiated in the ninteenth century, the social sciences struggled to maintain that distinction in order to gain institutional and social recognition. The social sciences thus worked at defining other territories or in a nutshell, a "third voice/pathway" alongside those already pervaded by the so-called hard sciences and the humanities, even once (rightly to some extent) considered to be the feeding grounds for other academic disciplines based on initial trilogy, that is Law, Medicine and Theology.

In the process, most sciences, following the French positivist tradition especially since the nineteenth century, have tried to model themselves closer enough on "hard sciences" while also departing from the humanities on the basis of principles such as objectification, neutrality, observation, etc. A telling example is that of sociology where the concern of the pioneers and founding fathers of this discipline (Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim among others) was roughly to impart both a *traditional* and *distinctive* character based at least on two requirements:

- sociology and social sciences in general tried to develop by being modelled on so-called hard sciences, and strove to attain the ideal efficiency and the already acquired social and institutional legitimacy of the latter; this effort represents a kind of entry test for new disciplines seeking recognition;

- likewise, efforts were also made by social sciences to introduce a distinction between them and humanities, especially philosophy, a would be perfect representation because the perception was that humanities were synonymous first

Abdoulaye Niang
Gaston Berger University
Saint-Louis, Senegal

and foremost with speculative approaches, a view shared by Kone (2010:67)[1].

This rather scientist and pragmatist will provided the social sciences with a solid development, epistemological, theoretical and methodological base; but it was also a source of essentialising science concept concomitantly reducing it to an increasingly narrowing vision.

This article reviews the outlines of these demarcations and their impacts on exchanges and partitioning of the social sciences and the humanities; it also analyses to some extent these differences in relation to the influence of so-called STEM[2].

It is a contribution to the debate on the origins of theoretical, methodological but also epistemological oppositions or differentiations; how these have been structured and developed and how one could make the most of them by redirecting them towards more openness, collaboration and complementarity. This standpoint understandably does not purport to eliminate all distinctions but instead admits that disciplines would more or less retain some of their specificities; however, if designed in a non-irreducible way, these differences can feed and enrich research.

I resorted mostly to sociology to structure my analysis around three main points.

First is an insight into the historical background to the foundation of sociology, underscoring the fact that generally, connecting logos and praxis, in other words, practice and theory has always been the central concern of sociologists though more so among the pioneers than the founding fathers. This clear articulation or subordination of theory to practice explains in many ways why this

new discipline looked up to so-called "hard sciences" with their gained recognition to effectively conquer its ability to produce social impact, to act on reality and change it for the better. All this is done in the name of science at the service of social reform. Equally important is the fact that sociology like other social sciences is heir and tributary, in terms of constitution and maturation, to the achievements made by the humanities which have been known to be the common base for human knowledge as developed from Antiquity to modern times through the Middle Ages.

Secondly, and from a different perspective, foundations differentiation not only in one discipline to others but also within a given discipline is discussed in addition to the cut-off between the social sciences and the humanities or between the social sciences and STEM. The advanced specialisation processes taking place internally with the branches but also different (quantitative/qualitative, etc.) theoretical and methodological options seem to highlight a clear desire for deeper, more refined and broader knowledge and were actually helpful in some way. But articulating such processes such that they do not maintain necessary exchanges and dialogue often results in disjunctions and research seal-off dynamics compromising the social sciences initial project, that of a purported deeper knowledge of humans and society.

Lastly, emphasis is laid on the fact that in the end, the differences introduced between disciplines in terms of theme focus, theoretical and methodological options etc. may be meaningful and even interesting on condition that they not be essentialised. Besides, processes are now in progress towards link restoration, setting the example of what collaboration and dialogue between disciplines and within a discipline at a broader scale and more systematically where possible and relevant could bring. To develop and illustrate the final part of my paper, I will briefly resort to the Arts and Culture study

field which remains one of the most emblematic fields of this disciplinary cut-off.

Social Sciences Foundation and Disciplinary Distinctions Logics: Case of Sociology

Just like many other social sciences, remember sociology was born with modernity with a clearly expressed desire to resolve the social issue scientifically thanks to more rigorous and better knowledge of the structuring and functioning of Western societies engaged in a decisive turning point of their histories. The discipline was strongly marked in its early stages by the desire to break away from religious cosmologies and develop objective analyses conducted on social reality. These successive analyses perhaps more or less contradict or complement each other at some point which shows the intrinsically "multi-paradigmatic" character (Simon 2008:5) of the discipline; but they were all pursuing the same basic project notwithstanding these differences.

The project is to propose an intelligence, that is an "understanding" and/or "explanation" of society with the aim of being accepted as the top scientific study of social activity or social facts. Under this concept of which Emile Durkheim is one of the leading advocates, "science of society" lays emphasis on "specific content" (Tschannen 2004), implying construct from a specific object and using an equally specific method to capture the said-object as well as the results and theories used as reading grids. Those are the conditions so valued by the first generations placed so close to proselytism or beyond[3].

So, as a *"late comer among sciences"* (Simon 2008 : 7), sociology certainly shares its area of study with other close disciplines trying however to appear as *"a special viewpoint"* (Tschannen 2004) on the foundations and characteristics of individuals' lives as a group no matter the scale (whether micro-sociologic, mesosociologic, macro-sociologic). This standpoint is constitutive of its status as an entirely autonomous discipline alongside economics, human geography or even as *"its almost twin sister"* anthropology according to cultural anthropologist Alfred Louis Kroeber (Simon 2008 : 7)[4].

Even before institutionalisation which took some time, social thinking existed in practice at least since Antiquity with those usually referred to as "social thinkers", and more or less paved the way.

Social philosophies factually seem to have been later decried especially by the scientist branch of the discipline, and indeed defined more generally by all sociologies as the perfect counter example of scientific approach; this notwithstanding, they helped traditional sociology acquire relatively operational concept tools. Similarly, sociography or in other words the social surveys or statistical handbooks of the XIX century provided nascent sociology with data collecting methods (questionnaire, monograph and observation) refined over time thus adding to its stock of investigating tools.

In short, the French School of Sociology under Durkheim's leadership in particular, made it an obligation to find for the science it wants to institute a specific object and method by asserting itself as an indefectible advocate of the explanatory method underpinned by "methodological naturalism" too often criticised (Simon 2008 : 347-348) and frankly too hastily too.

This school of thought, inter-alia, assigned as its main objectives to use sociological science as a means to endow social fact with moral foundation and remedy the anomie of Western societies; the German school of sociology on the other hand relied on individualistic orientation and comprehensive approach. Alongside Ferdinand Tönnies and Georg Simmel, Max Weber, a sociologist of modernity in its diverse expressions (bureaucracy, capitalism, religion, etc.) was less interventionist; – marking a departure from the messianism of the first generations and a transition to contemporary sociology whose ambitions are more moderate in general – he did not reject explanation but favoured comprehension instead. This school was indeed keen on demonstrating that sociology was entering a semantic field primarily based on acts, significance and sense references.

The importance of sense was also found with members of the Chicago School who valued a field study of social phenomena. With Albion Small, William Isaac Thomas, but also George H. Mead considered to be the founders and later Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, etc., field research[5], the counterpart to a pragmatic and purely American concept was developed through case studies[6], and policy sciences[7], clearly reflecting the applied dimension of research. In what will be later referred to as urban ecology encouraged by both public and private funding and support institutions concerned by problems generated by the rapid expansion of Chicago city which implied public policy problems calling for solutions, it should also be remembered, however, that quantitative approach also held its ground.

In this exercise, these two orientations (German "first generation", Chicago School) advocated for a position which to some extent re-humanises what remains, no matter the degree of supposed or declared scientificity, a human science. The "human" characterisation sounds like a tautology implying other areas of imperfections and conflicts around political, institutional and other stakes, which characterises anything of such nature. Science may boast of its near-perfection status, it cannot indeed evade all properties including incompleteness and non-perfection. Neither is it a disincarnated entity that can be considered outside the frameworks and contexts in which it is conceived and implemented.

Besides, the conflicting concepts mentioned earlier on are not just theoretical; there are consistent counterparts of them in adopted methodological approaches and epistemological standpoints. This explains why in contemporary social sciences, and still basing my analysis first on sociology, these competing provisions and positions, as Bourdieu put it, confront each other in fields of knowledge production.

Social Sciences Production Field and Theoretical and Methodological Points: Between Rich Pluralism and Essentialisation of Oppositions

Science can certainly not be the ideal universe of unanimous formulations. By the way, it is not even supposed to be one. But coupled concepts reflecting these dualities quickly reduced to dualisms are present at different levels: Explanation/Comprehension, Qualitative/Quantitative, Individual/Society, Ato-mism/Holism, Objectivity/Subjectivity, Micro/Macro, Agent/Structure, etc. Scientific disciplines produce cumulative knowledge by confronting ideas which in that way may lead to breakthroughs and discoveries based on Bachelard's dual dynamics viz. "polemic reason" and "architectonic reason" (Bachelard 2000).

More specifically in sociology, where there is more diversity and where reaching unanimity on several points seems to be totally excluded, this variability is more likely to be widely upheld.

Thus, contemporary sociology seems to be strongly marked by partitioning and division into multiple specialisations internally.

They occur in reference to already constituted disciplines (law with legal sociology, economics with economic sociology, etc.) or in relation to fields, delimited objects (Urban Sociology, Family Sociology, Organisational Sociology, Professional Sociology, Labour Sociology, etc.).

Similarly, distinctions build up between multitude theories (Action Sociology, Functionalism, Constructivism, etc.). Of course, this plurality of explanation does not mean non-scientificity and may instead constitute an asset provided there is agreement on approved sociological approaches in general.

Still, specialised sociologies may lead to new subdivisions further compartmentalising and breaking down the study field of this discipline leading to seriously doubting discipline unity (sociology in this case) and " scientificity" because so many different theories argue they are all valid.

Should those doubts prevail would imply adopting a limitative concept of the notion of science as normative epistemology[8] does. Whereas for the social sciences and the humanities, the disciplines of plural, contextual, elusive, complex and changing realities by excellence, adopting a rigid vision unable to adapt to the study objects of such nature, is out of the question.

So, do we have to sanctify for example the classics as untouchable icons with idealised theoretical formulations and by doing so don't we run the risk of seeing theoretical formulations turned "zombies" by the dynamics of social change and its corollaries, as pointed out by Beck (Arjomand 2004:299) ? Or, is it more advisable to adopt a more dynamic logic strongly correlated to social reality transformations and the local specificities alluded to, for example by Nga Ndongo, an advocate of "epistemological refounding" for African sociology (2003) in particular? The fact that science gaps are accepted and complementarities possible

might also encourage consideration, from a different perspective, of oppositions between the social sciences and the humanities. With a different perception, the range of possible alternatives might be broadened between the extremes of radical positivism and post-modernist positions while also creating "interdisciplinary mediation spaces" (Duchastel and Laberge 1999).

If one trend in the social sciences is to be less exact, more open and still remain a rigorous science, this is because it was not only trying at the same time to achieve more diversity and so doing enrich the discipline according to Edgar Morin; but it is also because sociology and science in general are expected to go hand in hand with "modesty" and "honesty "as well argued by Valentin Nga Ndongo (2010:33).

All these theoretical oppositions run parallel to methodological oppositions.

The methodology dispute (*methodenstreit*) already reported in the last quarter of the XIX century in Germany and later on in-between the two World Wars in the USA, between the Chicago ("School of Chicago") and Columbia University centres never ceased completely; it resumed intermittently but forcibly taking the front stage and resulted in the creation of a dual range of methods between *quantitativists* and *qualitativists.*[9]

In fact, qualitative approach is accepted in both sociology and clearly anthropology than in other social sciences such as history, human geography, political science because it admits more of our values and subjectivity subsequently disturbing the mythification of science. It brings back the idea that science cannot evade normalcy in that it is also subject to dominance mechanisms through the rule of certain temporal paradigms, traditions, vogue, hazards; in short, many dimensions pertaining to idealisation.

Qualitative approach was very fashionable in the initial stages of German sociology and at the Chicago School until the 1930s then vanished from front stage at one point especially due to the fact that sociology and more generally the social sciences were reasserting their scientist claims. Qualitative approach made a forceful return since the 1980s and now especially offers considerable prospects for research enrichment as can be seen in the systematisation and development of various tools adding to the methodo-

logical tools of the social sciences and beyond[10].

Actually, the counterparts of quantitative research's evaluation and characterisation factors can be found in qualitative research. Thus, by establishing a relationship between the principles of credibility to internal validity, transferability to external validity, consistency to faithfulness etc., as shown in the cross reference table traditionally used to this effect (Ferréol 2004:69)[11], this desire to esta-blish some parallelism appears quite clearly.

But beyond this indicative table, the differentiations mentioned earlier herein and the fact that qualitative approach admits subjectivity, object construct and complexity etc. and favours aspects such as meaning, processes, data depth than trending measures and statistical data; and contrary to a widespread idea, has never meant that figures are not used. Additionally, some researchers' works explicitly expose the specificities of qualitative method (Koro-Ljungberg 2008; Cho and Trent 2006; Holloway and Todres 2003); others gradually admitted instead the relevance of triangulation, combination or integration of both methods whether reservedly or not (Fielding 2009; Voils and al. 2008; Moran-Ellis and al. 2006; Bryman 2006; Péladeau et Mercier 1993; Green 2001).

Though met with mixed reactions going from widespread acceptance to categorical rejection through integrative logics according to the communities of social science researchers involved, this investigating tool diversification dynamics reflects but the dissimilarities still attached to the way of thinking (their objects) and self-thinking to social sciences, to the models or counter-models in relation to which they are defined and redefined.

May be interestingly this is not only another possible illustration of science relying primarily on human foundations as underscored earlier herein but also of renewed dispute over methods confirming the consistency of the very substance of disagreement around legitimacy; in other words around what might deserve or not being characterised as "scientific". The fact that scientificity could have been limited to a strong belief in the prominence of figures or discovery of "properties" also reflects classification by prestige, prominence and recognition ranked according to types of sciences, some of

which are catalogued as "hard" or "exact" and others supposed to be "soft" and of minor value with the humanities remaining on the sidelines in such a mechanism.

Finally indeed, these variations and prioritisations show how these oppositions between social science researchers, humanists and "hardliner scientists" are regularly polarised around the quite different ideas one can make of scientificity and also of types of knowledge and their classification.[12] They more or less show a determination (in reference) relatively to "hard sciences" which are often at odds with the humanities models. Of course, this prioritisation is not something unprecedented; there were thinkers who by contrast estimated in their era that the "science of humans" or sociology should be the "queen of sciences"[13]. Anyway, this is indeed a question of prioritisation built around an assumed qualitative difference between such and such discipline or group of disciplines or such and such approach and method.

Should we then conclude in the light of these conflicting or at least distinctive dynamics that we are in a deadlock? This may not necessarily be the case. Frontiers may appear more than ever to outnumber bridges but the latter do exist and might be developed.

The Social Sciences vs. the Humanities: on the Importance of integrating

Incompleteness, Pluralisms and Connections

In my view, two closely intermingled aspects deserve questioning here. First, the imperfection and incompleteness purportedly characterising the analyses of any discipline built around the quest for knowledge irrespective of the level of recognition and legitimacy whether in reference to "hard" sciences, "sciences of humans and society" or "humanities". Subsequently may be added the crucial question on the relevance of exchanges between these different disciplinary strongholds.

Secondly, it is worth adding another closely related challenge that of plural reading also regardless of the level considered (intra-discipline or in comparison to other disciplines).

No doubt disciplines produce differently discourses and knowledge that form sets of related explanatory propositions see-

king to report, in a consistent framework, some aspects or would-be totality of a given reality which they are thus trying to make intelligible. In Robert Blancché's understanding, whether it is an "engineer", a "scholar" or a "philosopher", he/she must meet two "requirements": intelligibility and positivity which are marked by tensions and variable articulations from one discipline to another (Blanché 1977 : 49-50).

In such a context, it would be illusory and not advisable at all, in my view, to believe in the possibility of unanimity which otherwise would mean a kind of one-track thinking with no room for plural perspective. Readings on human realities are as diverse as the facts they purport to elucidate. Additionally, they are incomplete by essence and subject to questioning. It would therefore seem inappropriate to see in this consubstantial disparity any manifestation of lack of rigour in the humanities or a sign of non-scientificity in the social sciences in general.

The study on the founders' contributions has already clearly shown that theoretical and methodological plurality has marked sociological discipline since birth. The same can be said of economics, geography or history. What we don't often hear is that we should keep in mind that an approach based on rapprochement and grouping principles, though rarely used, can be envisaged regardless of this proliferation of theories, methods and approaches.

Anyway, additions and criticisms have punctuated the history of knowledge disciplines, as these continue to regenerate in a series of practices with renewed contents, forms and scope being established as revitalizing sources. Knowledge productions are not rein-vented from scratch; they get transformed and readjusted in reaction to critical journals calling into question previous work models whether in literature, philosophy, social or cultural anthro-pology, physics or astronomy[14].

Based on the foregoing, plurality and diversity of scholarly productions should not be perceived as a limitation but instead as an ability to construct plural discourses in the face of an equally plural world.

In his famous metaphor contained in "tractatus logico-philosophicus" (Wittgenstein 1993)[15], Ludwig Wittgenstein

gave a brilliant description of the relevance and limitations of the theorisations put forth by different approved knowledge sources. According to him, the universe could be imagined to be a white surface covered in black stains with irregularly delineated contours. Theoretical production of disciplines could be imagined to be a net spread over this surface, offering it a given perspective according to net mesh (Let's imagine the shape to be triangular, square, trapezoidal, etc.). Apparently, this net is not an exact reflection of reality which already adds to its limitations; still, it offers a means of representation which is a consistent capture underlying, through this enlightening ability, the full importance[16] of intellectual construct.

Developing this metaphor, each intellectual construct whatever the origin would thus appear as a net whose mesh shape is different from another net or in other words, another discipline, another school of thought, another approach, etc.; but we know that indeed in different ways and in a complementary one in this case, they all aim at reporting social reality – or fiction –. But they never succeed in doing so definitively or perfectly. Expecting any intellectual production to be the exact replica of reality is to assume the latter being pre-established in an already determined format which the said-construct would but confirm. Whereas the rationale behind this knowledge construct is precisely to develop knowledge that reorders to some extent reality which has thus become describable using cognitive principles and categories seeking to make sense but remaining incomplete, imperfect and dynamic.

This possibility of confrontation and conformity of intellectual constructs with reality is often rightly considered the requirement for their validity especially in the case of so called hard and human sciences. In Cabin's words speaking on sociology, the challenge would be "to describe as precisely as possible society and its operation" (Cabin and Dortier 2000:5), which leaves room for potential error even where research protocols are applied.

Indeed, far from rooting their credibility and relevance in intangibility, intellectual productions can improve through their ability to enrich themselves and integration of questions raised over their successive achievements internally and

externally while also trying to remain consistent with their respective projects and disciplinary objects.

Addressing one of the many other possible areas of illustration, in the study on arts and culture, a field I am very much[17] interested in, this "incompleteness" and relevance of interdisciplinary dialogue appear in day light. Also appearing in the study are this "hyper-complexity" (Morin 1994) and this frailty of human knowledge which call for more humility and openness especially toward the humanities, an attitude running contrary to the "face-saving pride" (Boudon 1984) that has prevailed in most recognised sociology and social sciences.

Vera Zolberg has most interestingly demonstrated in this perspective how the analytical orientations and epistemological foundations of *social scientists[18]* make them perceive arts as an ordinary activity like any other areas of social and cultural activity. This exercise has enabled them though to update the structuring mechanisms of the field thus making it easier to analyse while generally neglecting the work of art per se. The latter is allegedly better pervaded by *humanists* (arts critiques, arts philosophers; etc.) who would rather overlook the constructed side of artistic field by idealising it to the extreme. In short, this example simply illustrates the limitations of each of these approaches as crystallised between an internal vision said not to distance itself enough and an external one said to be too detached.

Historically, these kinds of disciplinary dissociations have been important for different sciences to gain recognition albeit resulting in installing an illusory and pauperising wall between the social sciences and the humanities. Much was done to point the finger at their differences overlooking an opportunity to bank on intra-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary connections first within the social sciences and secondly between them and the humanities and even beyond between the social sciences and STEM.

Conclusion

Our work purports to highlight three dimensions: first, take stock of the context leading to the foundation of the social sciences in relation to the humanities and STEM, secondly, update the structuring of knowledge fields dominated by dispersion logics and lastly the possible

contours of more openness between disciplines knowing they will retain their specificities.

The foundation of these disciplines appeared to have been marked by two requirements supposedly offering a royal avenue to matching the two elements inseparable from the pioneers' project: scientific project on founding new sciences strongly inspired by "hard sciences" and which made sense only in relation to the reformist project. The project was to be an agent for social change called for as a result of major crises and disruptions (political, economic and intellectual) in the XIX century.

In the same wake, this analysis tried to demonstrate that on the contrary, in the context of German tradition strongly marked by romanticism and methodological dispute, this disconnect assumed different contours, as it brings the social sciences or "sciences of the mind" closer to the humanities. Equally in the American tradition represented by the Chicago School, the promotion of qualitative method largely contributed to advantageously "humanising" the social sciences[19].

While these centripetal logics and "parish issues", so lucidly analysed by Misse (2010:77) are extremely present, a number of thinkers, theories and disciplines broke away through the action of a few researchers who engaged in efforts to transcend this partitioning, as they seek to reach beyond traditional oppositions which tend to lead to knowledge fragmentation. Such is the case of a set of studies which may be labelled *"constructivist challenge"* (Corcuff 1995:17-20) but also complex thinking, as indicated earlier, whose aim is to move beyond "knowledge fragmentation" and "hyper-specialisation". To remove those inhibitory features, fighting against a "policing epistemology" (Morin 1994 : 69) limitations and reinforcing science heuristic scope would require working at its unity by moving beyond traditional dissociations and reintegrating what Morin described as "the realities expunged by traditional science" and labelled "illumination", "creativity", "hazard", etc. (1994 : 68-76). To cut it short, these would be a set of characteristics more clearly assumed in the humanities obviously implying that exchanges with the humanities are more topical than ever.

The mixed discussions on attempts to initiate disciplinary rapprochement between sociology and anthropology with a view to phasing out frontiers between both should be placed to some extent in the same perspective. A few researchers perceive these frontiers to be increasingly artificial (Engono 2010), "obsolete" in regard to both their objects and methods. Hence, the challenge now would be working at the promotion of socio-anthropology or anthropo-sociology (Simon 2008 : 589-603; Bouvier 2011), in the context of modernity – post-modernity according to some – raising quite a number of interrogations and stakes both theoretical, methodological and practical because it brings so much into play an endless movement, uncertainty of knowledge object and that of cognitive constructs.

Of course at a higher level, the challenge is much more about opening up to broader exchanges and connections between the social sciences and the humanities, an increasing need felt by the research field with a few researchers now calling for "thinking arts and culture alongside social sciences". They therefore push for strong synergy between these two platforms and see literature and sciences with "similar intent" (Pinto 2002)[20].

New possibilities and stakes have thus emerged with one and not the least being the design of interconnected intelligibility tools to be revisited. And in this regard, Africa, could more timely than customary own this new heuristic and practical prospect offered by inter-disciplinarity or even trans-disciplinarity dynamics to produce better and more knowledge on its multi-facetted societies which the readings blurred by the blinders of both Western-centrism and Afro-pessimism do not serve.

African and Western researchers both are actually trying to break new grounds that would make it possible to go beyond radical disciplinary separations and conservative epistemological approaches (Nga Ndongo and Kamdem 2010) and also pave the way for new ownership of the social sciences in the African context.

Beyond this last aspect and addressing a more general challenge, the fact of speaking of exchanges between the social sciences and the humanities is also, in the final analysis, envisioning the possibilities of a new departure for knowledge building in the current African context and beyond.

Notes

1. The problem is actually more complex. For example, there has been a resistance front against Positivism with Conventionalism advocated by thinkers like Henri Poincaré, who already integrated the arbitrariness which may be contained in scientific productions (definitions subject to variations, hypotheses, etc.) as recalled by Grawitz (1993 : 45-46).

2. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) are more or less perceived as science models by excellence.

3. Refer Saint-Simon's "catechism", and Auguste Comte's "great religion of mankind", etc.

4. This insistence noted among many authors notably those of the first and second generations, on the specificity of sociology in relation to its approach, its object and method, can be largely explained by the desire to promote recognition for an emerging science yet to be accepted and institutionalised.

5. Field research

6. Case study

7. The term *policy sciences* refer to the fact these forms of research (*sciences*) are conducted to assist decision-making (*policy*).

8. *Normative epistemology* is often compared to *descriptive epistemology* which is more easily open to other characteristics of scientificity. Another way of referring to the problem is *Monism vs. Pluralism.*

9. An example are the epistemological and methodological tensions that erupted in the wake the publication of the "Polish Farmer" by Thomas and Znaniecki and the convening of an "expert tribunal" (Grawitz 1993 : 305) to rule on the litigations over the techniques and types of materials used (particularly private documents such as epistolary correspondences, photographies) for data collection. The 49 and 53 issues of *Social Science Research Council*, in 1951 and 1954 respectively reviewed the details of this heated debate.

10. There are many examples: the contributions of indirect interviews first used in psychotherapy and later readjusted in sociology, anthropologies in form of semi-direct interviews; content analyses, focus groups developed first into group dynamics within the framework of social psychology and also used today in different social sciences, life narratives, etc. These are as many tools serving today in different disciplines including *hard sciences* surveys such as medical sciences.

11. This cross reference is constant in general for the first two elements; it may later vary for the last two elements according to researchers and schools of thought (Laperrière and Sévigny 2008).

12. Feyerabend's very provocative position goes well beyond this observation by frontally attacking omnipotent reason and the risk of standardised visions, analytical categories, ways of life etc. (Feyerabend 1989, 1979).

13. Referring to Saint-Simon's Memoir on the science of humans which he published in 1813 as an important work in his trajectory and to his disciple from 1817 to 1824, Auguste Comte, who conferred on sociology a predominant role as the synthesis of sciences in order to stem knowledge dispersion (Comte 1985 : 85).

14. For example, one can think of the discussions in cosmology around the "big crunch" which refers to a possible contraction of the universe and the "big bang" theory which argues that our universe was born from a huge explosion. Besides, even if the universe expansion theory was renewed towards the end of the 1990s with the prevailing assumption that this expansion is accelerating; more recently, the assumption that a "black matter", a "black energy" exists (and would form over 70% of our universe), etc. revived the debate over our degree of knowledge and especially ignorance of the universe. These competitions and oppositions, these challenges, progress in theories are frequent in knowledge disciplines and fuel the dynamism of their production. And of course such examples abound.

15. This work was published in German language in 1921.

16. Related to this idea and, as John Rogers Searle put it, in his work on the *rediscovery of spirit*, "one of the most challenging – and most important – work of philosophy is to clarify the distinction between these world characteristics which are *intrinsic* in the sense that they exist independently from any observer on the one hand and those relating to the *observer* in the sense that they only exist in relation to an external observer or user" (1995 : 15), on the other. The latter assume therefore a constructed character which makes work of knowledge possible. But even this construct does evade a number of possible contingencies and conditioning.

17. I would like to rely here on a few examples which I experience in my daily life within the framework of our university department devoted to arts and crafts and culture trades. In dispensing many of our teachings, we immediately realised there was some relevance – in not blurring "disciplinary frontiers" but instead at least to put teachers of different profile in the same class and even sometimes in simultaneous pair teachings or the like. I could cite endless examples going against conflict logic which usually characterises this field torn between humanists and social sciences specialists (Bourdieu 1980 : 219-221 ; Zolberg 1990 : 1-20).

18. These are social sciences specialists. Reference is made here to sociologists for example.

19. This is notably socio-anthropology underpinned by history of social psychology preached by the said- "first generation" represented by Albion Small, William Isaac Thomas, George Herbert Mead, from end of XIX century.

20. This work which was led by Eveline Pinto and is an homage paid to à Pierre Bourdieu, is based on the works presented within the framework of a Sorbonne seminar placed under the umbrella of a research centre on the philosophy of contemporary artistic activities (Centre de Recherche sur la Philosophie des Activités Artistiques Contemporaines). It is uncertain whether Bourdieu himself would recognise ways in which the rapprochement was done though he may presumably find it interesting to have a plural view of a transversal study field.

References

Arjomand, S. A., 2004, "Symposium of social theory. Preface", International Sociology, *vol. 19, N° 3, p. 299-300.*

Bachelard, G., 2000, *La formation de l'esprit scientifique. Contribution à une psychanalyse de la connaissance objective,* Paris, Vrin.

Blanché, R., 1977, *L'épistémologie,* Paris, PUF.

Boudon, R., 1984, « Le péché d'orgueil de la sociologie », *L'Express,* p. 18-20.

Bourdieu, P., 1980, *Questions de sociologie,* Paris, Minuit.

Bouvier, P., 2011, *De la socioanthropologie,* Paris, Galilée.

Bryman, A., 2006, "Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Research: How is it Done?", *Qualitative Research,* vol. 6, N° 1, p. 97-113.

Cabin, P. et Dortier, J-F., 2000, eds., *La sociologie. Histoire et idées,* Paris, Sciences Humaines.

Cho, J. and Trent, A., 2006, "Validity in Qualitative Research Revisited", *Qualitative Research*, vol. 6, N° 3, p. 319-340.

Comte, A., 1985, *Discours sur l'esprit positif*, Paris, Fayard.

Corcuff, P., 1995, *Les nouvelles sociologies*, Paris, Nathan.

Duchastel, G. et Laberge, D., 1999, « La recherche comme espace de médiation interdisciplinaire », *Sociologie et sociétés*, vol. XXXI, N° 1, p. 63-76.

Ferréol, G., ed., 2004, *Sociologie. Cours, méthodes, applications*, Paris, Bréal.

Feyerabend, P., 1989, *Adieu la raison*, Paris, Seuil.

Feyerabend, P., 1979, *Contre la méthode. Esquisse d'une théorie anarchiste de la connaissance*, Paris, Seuil.

Fielding, N. G., 2009, "Going out on a Limb: Postmodernism and Multiple Method Research", *Current Sociology*, vol. 57, N° 3, p. 427-447.

Grawitz, M., 1993, *Méthodes des sciences sociales*, Paris, Dalloz.

Green, E. C., 2001, "Can Qualitative Research Produce Reliable Quantitative Findings?", *Field Methods*, vol. 13, N°1, p. 3-19.

Holloway, I. and Todres, L., 2003, "The Status of Method: Flexibility, Consistency and Coherence", *Qualitative Research*, vol. 3, N° 3, p. 345-357.

Kone, C., 2010, « Repenser l'action des sciences sociales », in V. Nga Ndongo et E. Kamdem, eds., *La sociologie aujourd'hui : une perspective africaine*, Paris, L'Harmattan.

Koro-Ljungberg, M., 2008, "Positivity in Qualitative Research: Examples from the Organized Field of Postmodernism/Post-structuralism", *Qualitative Research*, vol. 8, N° 2, p. 217-236.

Laperrière, A. et Sévigny, O., 2008, « Les critères de scientificité des méthodes qualitatives » in Y., Assogba, *Méthodologie de recherche qualitative*, Gatineau, Presses de l'Université du Québec en Outaouais.

Misse, M., 2010, « Expliquer les changements sociétaux aujourd'hui : regards sur la diversité des méthodes », in V. Nga Ndongo et E. Kamdem, eds., *La sociologie aujourd'hui : une perspective africaine*, Paris, L'Harmattan.

Moran-Ellis and al., 2006, "Triangulation and Integration: Processes, Claims and Implications", *Qualitative Research*, vol. 6, N° 1, p. 45-59.

Morin, E., 1994, *Introduction à la pensée complexe*, Paris, ESF.

Nga Ndongo, V., 2003, « Sociologie africaine : nécessité et urgence d'une refondation épistémologique », *Revue Sénégalaise de Sociologie*, n° 06, p. 47-77.

Nga Ndongo, V., 2010, « Introduction générale », in V. Nga Ndongo et E. Kamdem, *La sociologie aujourd'hui : une perspective africaine*, Paris, L'Harmattan.

Nzhie Engono, J., 2010, « Sociologie et anthropologie : disciplines connexes ou convergentes ? Les fausses querelles africaines d'une préservation identitaire », in V. Nga Ndongo et E. Kamdem, *La sociologie aujourd'hui : une perspective africaine*, Paris, L'Harmattan.

Péladeau, N. et Mercier, C., 1993, « Approches qualitative et quantitative en évaluation de programmes », *Sociologie et Sociétés*, vol. 25, N° 2, p. 111-124.

Pinto, E., ed., 2002, *Penser l'art et la culture avec les sciences sociales. En l'honneur de Pierre Bourdieu*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne.

Searle, J. R., 1995, *La redécouverte de l'esprit*, Paris, Gallimard.

Simon, P-J., 2008, *Histoire de la sociologie,* Paris, PUF.

Tschannen, O., 2004, « Histoire de la sociologie et théorie sociologique. Support de cours » in *Site de L'Université du Québec*, [en ligne]. http://www.uqac.uquebec.ca/zone30/ Classiques_des_sciences_sociales/html/ ressources/sociologie/tschannen/ tschannen_histoire_socio.PDF (page consultée le 14/01/2004).

Voils, C. I. and al., 2008, "Making Sense of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings in Mixed Research Synthesis Studies", *Field Methods*, vol. 20, N°1, p. 3-25.

Wittgenstein, L., 1993, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, Paris, Gallimard.

Zolberg, V., 1990, *Constructing a Sociology of the Arts*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

The National Council for Higher Education and the Growth of the University Sub-sector in Uganda, 2002–2012

A.B.K. Kasozi
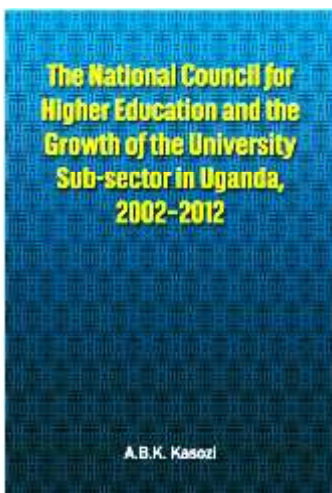
The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and the Growth of the University Sub-sector in Uganda, 2002-2012, narrates the experience of the Ugandan NCHE in the establishment, development and regulation of higher education institutions in Uganda from 2002 to 2012. In this period, student numbers in higher education institutions increased from about 65,000 to some 200,000 and university institutions from about ten to more than triple the number. The book discusses the role of a regulatory agency in the delivery of higher education, the relations of universities and colleges with such an agency, its impact on developing university capacities, and leadership in creating and refining higher education ideas. The experience of Uganda's regulatory agency, the NCHE, in those ten years should help both the Ugandan and other African countries' higher education stakeholders in sharing lessons learned from this one case study. The author sees the roles of regulatory agencies as vital in the initial stages of building a higher education sub-sector and in periods of system transitions such as the current journey from elite to mass systems but is of the view that the university remains the home of knowledge creation, dissemination, and its application in society.