

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: INEQUALITIES AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN MODERN SOCIETY

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SUMMARY

This paper aims to analyze the social transformations that have occurred in modern society, with an emphasis on social inequalities and the role of social movements in the context of globalization. Initially, the formation of modern society is addressed through the theories of Karl Marx, Max Weber and Émile Durkheim, understanding the historical processes that led to the constitution of complex societies. Then, the concept of social stratification and the different forms of inequality that permeate social organization are explored, based on Pierre Bourdieu's contributions on social and cultural capital. The research also investigates the emergence of social movements as a response to oppression and inequalities, analyzing their dynamics and impacts in light of the theories of Charles Tilly and Alain Touraine. Finally, the phenomenon of globalization and its effects on contemporary social relations are discussed, considering the ideas of Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck on global interconnectivity and its impacts on identities, cultures and economies. The methodology adopted is qualitative in nature, based on a critical bibliographic review, aiming to correlate theoretical concepts with current social phenomena. The results point to the need to understand the complexity of social dynamics in the global era and recognize the importance of social movements in promoting change and fighting persistent inequalities. It is concluded that sociology plays a fundamental role in the analysis and understanding of contemporary social phenomena, contributing to the construction of a more just and equitable society.

Keywords: Social transformations. Social inequalities. Globalization. Social movements. Modern society.

ABSTRACT

This work aims to analyze the social transformations occurring in modern society, with an emphasis on social inequalities and the role of social movements in the context of globalization. Initially, it addresses the formation of modern society through the theories of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim, understanding the historical processes that led to the constitution of complex societies. Next, it explores the concept of social stratification and the different forms of inequality that permeate social organization, grounded in Pierre Bourdieu's contributions on social and cultural capital. The research also investigates the emergence of social movements as a response to oppression and inequalities, analyzing their dynamics and impacts in light of the theories of Charles Tilly and Alain Touraine. Finally, it discusses the phenomenon of globalization and its effects on contemporary social relations, considering the ideas of Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck on global interconnectedness and its impacts on identities, cultures, and economies. The methodology adopted is qualitative in nature, based on a critical literature review, aiming to correlate theoretical concepts with current social phenomena. The results point to the need to understand the complexity of social dynamics in the global era and recognize the importance of social movements in promoting change and combating persistent inequalities. It is concluded that sociology plays a fundamental role in the analysis and understanding of contemporary social phenomena, contributing to the construction of a more just and equitable society. **Keywords:** Social Transformation. Globalization. Social Inequalities. Social Movements. Modern Society.

1. INTRODUCTION

The last few decades have been marked by profound transformations in social, economic and political structures on a global scale. The era of globalization has intensified the interconnectivity between nations, cultures and economies, redefining social relations and increasing the challenges related to social inequalities. In this context, understanding the dynamics that shape modern society becomes essential for contemporary sociological analysis.

Globalization, although it has promoted significant advances in several sectors, has also exacerbated social and economic disparities. Persistent inequalities manifest themselves not only in terms of income and wealth, but also in access to fundamental rights, such as education, health and justice. This scenario is further complicated by the emergence of new social movements that seek to confront and transform existing oppressive structures.

This work aims to analyze social transformations in the era of globalization, emphasizing inequalities and the role of social movements in modern society. The research seeks to understand how global processes influence local social structures and what are the emerging collective responses to social injustices.

The relevance of this study lies in the need to deepen our understanding of the dynamics of power and resistance that characterize today's society. By exploring the intersection between globalization, inequality, and social movements, we aim to contribute to the academic debate and assist in the formulation of more equitable public policies. In addition, the research highlights the importance of sociology as a critical tool for understanding and transforming social reality.

The methodology adopted in this study is qualitative in nature, based on a critical bibliographic review of the main sociological theories related to the topic. Works and academic articles by classical and contemporary authors such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, Pierre Bourdieu, Charles Tilly, Alain Touraine, Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck were analyzed. The research involved the interpretation and correlation of the concepts presented by these authors with current social phenomena, seeking to understand the dynamics of social transformation in the era of globalization.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To deepen our understanding of social transformations in the era of globalization, it is essential to examine the main sociological theories that address the formation of modern society, structural inequalities, the emergence of social movements, and the global impacts on social relations. This theoretical review will provide the necessary foundation for critically analyzing the phenomena in question, basing the research on the contributions of classical and contemporary thinkers.

2.1 THE FORMATION OF MODERN SOCIETY

Understanding the formation of modern society is essential to analyzing the social transformations that have occurred over the centuries. The historical processes that led to the formation of complex and industrialized societies have been studied by several classical sociological theorists, including Karl Marx, Max Weber and Émile Durkheim.

Karl Marx analyzed the transition from feudalism to capitalism, emphasizing the relations of production and the class struggle as central elements in the structuring of society. For Marx, "the history of all hitherto existing societies has been the history of class struggles" (MARX; ENGELS, 2010, p. 25). He argues that the development of the productive forces led to the emergence of the bourgeoisie as the ruling class, resulting in the exploitation of the proletariat. Marx highlights that:

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The bourgeoisie has completely revolutionized the instruments of production, and with them the relations of production, and consequently all social relations. [...] The fixed and rusty relations, with their train of old and venerable ideas and conceptions, dissolve, and the new relations grow old before they have even taken hold. Everything that was solid and stable vanishes, everything that was sacred is profaned, and men are finally forced to face with serenity their conditions of existence and their reciprocal relations (MARX; ENGELS, 2010, p. 32).

This dynamic between social classes would be the driving force behind historical changes, culminating in possibility of a proletarian revolution that would establish a classless society.

On the other hand, Max Weber explored the process of rationalization that permeated modernity, highlighting the influence of the Protestant ethic on the development of Western capitalism. Weber notes that:

The idea that the duty of the individual consists in pursuing profit without respite, without rest, as an end in itself — so foreign to the sentiment of men in all ages — is the ethics of modern capitalism. [...] Capitalism is identical with the pursuit of profit, the pursuit permanent and rational profit, to ever-renewed profitability (WEBER, 2004, p. 17).

He argues that the Protestant ethic encouraged the accumulation of capital and discipline in work, contributing to the formation of modern economic structures. In other words, for Weber, capitalism is identified with the permanent and rational search for profit, where profitability is constantly renewed. This economic rationalization is closely linked to an ethic that legitimizes and encourages the accumulation of wealth not for ostentatious consumption, but as a moral duty and an end in itself. Instrumental rationality, therefore, begins to guide the actions of individuals, who organize their lives around work and economic efficiency.

The Protestant ethic provided the moral foundation for the development of capitalism by redefining work and profit as ethical virtues. This contributed to the formation of modern societies where the relentless pursuit of profit and the rationalization of production processes are central aspects. In discussing the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, Weber offers a unique perspective on the formation of modern society, emphasizing the importance of cultural values in structuring economic and social relations. His analysis complements the approaches of Marx and Durkheim, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the processes that led to modernity.

Émile Durkheim focused on the transition of societies from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity, a central concept for understanding social cohesion in complex societies. According to Durkheim:

As society develops, the division of labor becomes the main source of social solidarity. In primitive societies, where the division of labor is minimal, solidarity is based on similarity between individuals. However, in modern societies, characterized by high specialization, solidarity results from functional interdependence between members of society (DURKHEIM, 2007, p. 45).

Durkheim argues that in traditional societies, social cohesion is maintained by mechanical solidarity, where individuals share similar values, beliefs, and activities. With the advent of modernity and the transition to industrialized societies, a profound change occurs in the way solidarity is established. The division of labor becomes more complex and specialized, leading to organic solidarity. In this context, the specialization of social functions promotes interdependence between individuals, as each person depends on the skills and functions performed by others to satisfy their own needs. This interdependence strengthens social bonds, since cohesion is no longer based on similarity, but on the complementarity of the functions performed by each member of society. Durkheim believes that this new form of solidarity is essential for social cohesion in modern societies, since it encourages cooperation and the integration of individuals into a complex social system.

The contributions of Marx, Weber and Durkheim offer complementary perspectives on the processes that led to the formation of modern society. While Marx emphasizes economic conflicts and class struggle as the driving forces of history, Weber emphasizes rationalization and cultural values in the structuring of society.

social, and Durkheim focuses on social cohesion and the importance of institutions. These theories provide a solid basis for understanding the social transformations that characterize modernity.

2.2 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND INEQUALITIES

Social stratification is a central concept in sociology that refers to the hierarchical organization of society based on criteria such as social class, race, gender, and ethnicity. This structure determines individuals' access to resources, opportunities, and privileges, resulting in inequalities that affect various aspects

of social life.

Anthony Giddens (2005) defines social stratification as the existence of structured inequalities between groups in terms of access to material or symbolic rewards. These inequalities are systematic and persistent, profoundly influencing the lives of individuals and social groups.

Gerhard Lenski (1966) argues that stratification arises from the unequal distribution of valuable resources in society, such as wealth, power, and prestige. Competition for these resources inevitably leads to the formation of social hierarchies, where some individuals enjoy privileged access to them at the expense of others.

Social classes are a central form of stratification. Karl Marx identified the division between the bourgeoisie, which owns the means of production, and the proletariat, which sells its labor power, as fundamental to understanding inequalities in capitalism. He emphasized that economic exploitation is the driving force behind social inequalities and that class struggle is inevitable within the capitalist system.

Max Weber expanded Marx's analysis by introducing the concepts of status and party as additional elements in social stratification. For Weber, in addition to economic class, social prestige (status) and political power (party) also determine the social position of individuals. He argues that social inequalities are multidimensional, involving different spheres of social life.

Stratification also occurs on the basis of race and ethnicity. Stuart Hall (2003) discusses how racial identities are social constructs used to justify practices of domination and exclusion. He explores how racial representations establish symbolic boundaries between groups, legitimizing inequalities and social hierarchies.

In the Brazilian context, Florestan Fernandes analyzes the myth of racial democracy and how it masks the profound racial inequalities that exist. Fernandes argues that Brazilian society is marked by structural racism that perpetuates the marginalization of black people, since the abolition of slavery was not accompanied by measures to integrate black people into society.

Gender is another crucial axis of stratification. Simone de Beauvoir (1980) states that the female condition is socially constructed, and women are systematically placed in a position of subordination in relation to men, limiting their possibilities for personal and professional fulfillment. Judith Butler (2003) deepens this analysis by discussing gender performativity, suggesting that gender is a social construction reproduced through everyday practices that contribute to the maintenance of inequalities between men and women.

Pierre Bourdieu contributed significantly to the understanding of stratification by introducing the concepts of economic, social and cultural capital. Bourdieu (2007) defines cultural capital as the set of knowledge, skills and competencies that individuals acquire, allowing them access to certain cultural assets and privileged social positions. Social capital refers to the networks of relationships and connections that individuals have, which can be mobilized to obtain advantages and resources. These different types of capital interact to maintain and reproduce the position of individuals in the social structure, contributing to the perpetuation of inequalities.

Kimberlé Crenshaw (2002) introduced the concept of intersectionality to highlight how different forms of oppression, such as race, gender, and class, overlap and interact. She explains that Black women's experiences are shaped by intersections of race and gender, which amplify inequalities. Understanding inequalities requires considering multiple axes of identity and power, as oppressions do not operate in isolation.

Social stratification has profound implications for the organization of society, influencing access to resources and opportunities. Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2010) note that societies with higher levels of inequality have worse indicators of health, education, violence and social cohesion. They argue that inequality erodes trust between people, increases anxiety and reduces well-being.

collective being.

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These structural inequalities pose significant challenges to social justice and democracy, requiring multidimensional approaches to address them. Understanding the mechanisms of stratification is essential for developing public policies aimed at reducing inequalities and promoting a more equitable society.

2.3 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Social movements play a fundamental role in promoting social change and

in challenging inequalities and oppressions present in society. They emerge as collective responses to situations of injustice, mobilizing individuals and groups around common goals. The theory of social movements offers analytical tools to understand their dynamics, motivations and impacts, and is enriched by the contributions of authors such as Charles Tilly and Alain Touraine.

Charles Tilly (1978) contributed significantly to the study of social movements by emphasizing the importance of collective action in the formation of political identities and the mobilization of resources. Tilly introduces the concept of “repertoire of collective action,” referring to the set of means available to social groups to express their demands and exert pressure on power structures. He argues that social movements are products of specific historical processes and that their forms of action evolve in line with changes in the relations between the state and civil society.

Alain Touraine (1984), in turn, proposes that social movements are central actors in the transformation of society, not only reacting to material conditions, but also seeking to redefine cultural values and orientations. Touraine develops the idea of “historical subject”, suggesting that modern social movements have as their fundamental objective the construction of a new collective identity that challenges established norms. He highlights that “social movements are processes by which social actors, mobilizing cultural and symbolic resources, contest the control that institutions exercise over social life” (TOURAINÉ, 1984).

The internal dynamics of social movements are marked by the interplay between structure and agency. While structural conditions provide the context in which movements emerge, the agency of the actors involved is crucial in determining their strategies, organization, and mobilization capacity. Tilly (1978) emphasizes that the effectiveness of social movements depends on “the ability to mobilize resources and seize political opportunities, as well as to build strategic alliances.”

In the contemporary scenario, there is a diversification of social movements, which now encompass a variety of causes, such as civil rights, feminism, environmentalism, among others. Globalization and the advancement of information and communication technologies have expanded the reach and visibility of these movements, allowing the formation of transnational solidarity networks and the coordination of actions on a global scale.

Understanding social movements is essential to analyzing processes of social transformation, as they act as catalysts for change, influencing public policies and promoting debates on fundamental issues. Touraine (1984) emphasizes that “the action of social movements is essential for democracy, as they represent the voice of those who seek to transform society towards greater justice and equality.”

2.4 GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPACTS ON SOCIAL RELATIONS

Globalization is a complex phenomenon that has significantly transformed social, cultural and economic relations in the contemporary world. Characterized by the intensification of interactions and interdependencies on a global scale, globalization directly influences the way individuals construct their identities, participate in culture and integrate into the global economy.

Anthony Giddens (1991) defines globalization as the intensification of social relations on a worldwide scale, connecting distant localities in such a way that local events are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa. He argues that globalization is not a unidirectional process but a series of interconnected transformations that affect many aspects of social life, including politics, economics, and culture.

Giddens highlights that globalization has a profound impact on the construction of personal and collective identity. Exposure to different cultures and values through the media and the internet leads to individuals to question traditions and reconfigure their identities in a reflective process continuous. This phenomenon can generate opportunities for self-development, but also feelings of insecurity in the face of constant changes.

Ulrich Beck (1999) introduces the concept of “risk society” to describe how globalization produces new types of risks and uncertainties that transcend national borders. He emphasizes that problems such as climate change, financial crises, and pandemics are inherently global and require solutions that go beyond the individual capabilities of nation states. Beck argues that globalization challenges traditional governance structures, requiring the creation of new forms of international cooperation.

Beck also discusses the idea of “cosmopolitanism,” suggesting that globalization promotes a

global consciousness in which people recognize their interdependence and shared responsibility for global challenges. However, it recognizes that globalization can exacerbate inequalities and create new forms of social exclusion, as not all individuals and communities benefit equally from global processes.

Global interconnectivity has significant effects on the economy, fostering the integration of financial and trade markets. This facilitates the flow of capital, goods and services, but it can also lead to vulnerabilities, especially in developing countries that face fierce competition and dependence on external markets. Economic globalization can deepen disparities between rich and poor, both between and within nations.

Culturally, globalization facilitates the exchange of ideas, values, and practices, promoting cultural diversity. However, it can also lead to cultural homogenization, where dominant cultures influence or supplant local traditions. This process raises concerns about the preservation of cultural identity and resistance to cultural hegemony.

In short, globalization is a multifaceted phenomenon that reconfigures social relations, affecting identities, cultures and economies. Understanding its impacts is essential to address contemporary challenges and promote a globalization that is inclusive and equitable, respecting cultural diversity and seeking to reduce economic and social inequalities.

3 CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze social transformations in the era of globalization, emphasizing social inequalities and the role of social movements in modern society. Through a theoretical review based on classical and contemporary authors, we sought to understand how global processes influence local social structures and what are the emerging collective responses to social injustices.

The research carried out has shown that globalization, although it has brought about significant advances in terms of technology, communication and interconnectivity, has also intensified social and economic inequalities. It has been identified that these inequalities manifest themselves in a multidimensional way, affecting different social groups based on class, race, gender and other markers of difference.

Social movements have emerged as key players in challenging these inequalities and promoting social change. Tilly and Touraine's theories have contributed to understanding how collective mobilization and strategic action by social movements can challenge oppressive structures and influence changes in public policies. It has been observed that, in the era of globalization, these movements have gained new dynamics and possibilities for action, enhanced by information and communication technologies, but they also face challenges imposed by the complexity of global phenomena.

It is concluded that by articulating sociological theories with contemporary phenomena, it was possible to deepen the understanding of social transformations in the era of globalization and the role of social movements in this context. However, it is recognized that the complexity of the phenomena studied opens up space for future research. It is suggested that empirical studies be carried out to investigate specific cases of social movements and their strategies for confronting inequalities in different cultural and political contexts. In addition, exploring the implications of new forms of digital mobilization and their effectiveness in promoting structural changes can contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this area. Sociology, therefore, continues to be essential for critically analyzing society and contributing to the construction of a more just and equitable world.

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