Art as a Method of Representation in Social Sciences

Sosyal Bilimlerde Bir Temsil Yöntemi Olarak Sanat

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is so the arts and social sciences may interact in understanding the human being and the social, political and economic structure that he creates. Positivist epistemology is based on the basic principles in which reason, truth, and validity are at the forefront. Researchers who adopt this epistemology restrict information as a form that only the five senses can perceive. Science and art basically share the same motivation and pursue the same story: what is human? In this study, it is assumed that the ability to represent society is not only inherent in scientific studies. Fiction works, dramas, films, paintings, photographs, music, and all artistic disciplines also say something about the society in which they emerge. The Social Sciences ' use of these fields will enable it to enrich itself. This study claims that the social sciences can benefit from the rich world of art in order to understand people and society.

Keywords: Social science, art, positivism, epistemology, fiction, objectivity.

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Introduction

The main starting point of this study is so the arts and social sciences may interact in understanding the human being and the social, political and economic structure that he creates. According to positivism which is the mainstream epistemological approach of social sciences, art and social sciences which are seen as separate areas can be evaluated as two sides of a coin in understanding humans. Positivist epistemology is based on the basic principles in which reason, truth, and validity are at the forefront. Researchers who adopt this epistemology restrict information as a form that only the five senses can perceive (Hatch and Cuncliffe, 2006, p. 13). When the mainstream approach draws the problem of method in this framework, the reasons for the negative views on the idea of benefitting from the artworks in scientific studies emerge.

Science and art basically share the same motivation and pursue the same story: what is human? Social structures and phenomena that are in a process of permanent construction and change (Berger and Luckmann, 1991) are explored through the way and the ability of social sciences to represent society (Becker, 2007). In this study, it is assumed that the ability to represent society is not only inherent in scientific studies. Fiction works, dramas, films, paintings, photographs, music, and all artistic disciplines also say something about the society in which they emerge. Therefore, they can be regarded as a method of representation. Another form of representation can fill gaps in the multiple and fragmented structure of reality that arise from the ontological problems of representation. Analyzes, tables, charts, numbers, interviews and field notes peculiar to a scientific study, like the traditional methods of a craft, reveal not only the truth itself, but a transformed aspect of it (Becker, 2007). Accepting this problem inherent to the representation itself is to accept that one representation leaves incomplete and another representation can fill this deficiency.

A significant number of scientists adopt the view that an objective scientific work based on experimentation and observation is a distant field, with an artwork that is created by imagination and constructed with human intuition (Watson, 2011). This approach, which is right for some of the scientists, is a step to be taken for social scientists who think that

social sciences need a new methodology. According to these researchers, it is difficult to understand social phenomena with a positivist logic, and social phenomena are ongoing construction processes rather than completed structures (Richardson, 1994). Art tries to explain life by imagining and representing it, while science tries to observe and model it. Identifying art with romanticism and defining science with pure rationality and putting both disciplines within certain patterns will prevent all aspects, and in-depth understanding of the facts that are subject to research in social sciences. At the heart of both disciplines is the human being, his desire to know, his curiosity, and the effort to make sense of life. From this point, there can be given many examples where art and science benefit from each other and inspire each other (Opper, 1973; Eskridge, 2003).

Fischer (2010) asks why people need art. Why do millions of people read books, go to movies and theater, listen to music or spend hours in front of a picture? The answer to this question, "Have fun, rest or distraction" isn't enough according to Fisher. Fisher also says this answer is nothing more than deepening the question. Is it possible to respond to the fact that one is buried in another's life, problems, and identifies himself with a piece of music, a painting, a novel, a movie, just to linger or have fun? If the purpose of art consumption is to escape to another life, then another question may be asked; Why do people not have enough of their own life? Why does one attribute more value to a fiction than its own reality? According to Fisher, the answer to all these difficult questions is that one wants to transcend his own reality. He wants to go into a deeper, more accurate, more full, more meaningful life. It is the desire of the individuality to socialize by integrating its limited self into art. One can do this only with the ability to share and understand the experiences and thoughts of the other, with images, metaphors, and creative games. Fisher's quest for meaning is one of the most basic human desires. The desire of many artists and philosophers for a more noble life can be regarded as reflections of this quest for meaning.

Social Science and Representation

The concept of social science and its content belongs to the modern world. It is difficult to make a general definition. One of the most impor-

tant reasons for this is the richness of the content of the field. The social sciences, which date back to the eighteenth century, are based on an effort to produce empirically verified systematic information about reality (Baker, 1969; Shapiro, 1984). The discussion of methods in Social Sciences is an indicator of their dilemma for some, but for others, the richness of the field. The determinist understanding of natural sciences leads to dilemmas in understanding social life. Since the subject of social sciences is human behaviors and human relations with society, the generalization approach which is one of the most natural methods of scientific study is problematic here. Because an attempt to generalize from a valid approach in one place fails in another. In other words, problems have arisen in explaining social phenomena by general laws (Di Meglio, 2004). This has led to controversy over the legitimacy of the social sciences as it creates difficulties in producing causal laws.

It is understandable that the social sciences emulated physics methods in the period when the first emergence and systematization efforts took place. Because the experimental and observation methods used by natural sciences provide a ready method for field. Secondly, social reality is considered the same as the reality of nature. The general laws of the outside world are thought to be the same as social phenomena and social laws. On the other hand, the methods of natural sciences, which proceed in a generalizing and legislative way, have created some dilemmas in the social sciences where individuality, culture, and originality are dominant. At this point, researchers in the field have argued that a formal definition of what "real science" is. When the scientific criterion became a purely positivist conception of knowledge and its methods, the problem worsened.

The Problem of Universality and Objectivity in Social Sciences

The concept of universality can be defined as a form of understanding that claims that there are general principles in scientific and social fields, and that these are absolutely valid for everyone. For example, universality in the ethical field stipulates principles that everyone should or should adopt (Badiou, 2002). The concept and idea of universality are first and foremost in the field of philosophy. Bauman (1993) says that

perception of time is hierarchical. The future is always considered good, the past is bad. This perception is also in line with the progressive approach of modernism. In a sense, the concept of universality meets the need for the "universal subject" theory which is stationary in this progressive approach. Believing in the existence of concepts and laws that apply everywhere and in time also provides a pragmatic beginning to reach that "great theory", that explains everything that starts with physics in particular.

From ancient Greek to monotheistic religions, from the philosophers of the Enlightenment to the present day, the vast majority of thinkers and ideologies have built their theoretical background on the concept of universality. This view is also based on classical science (Russell, 1945). However, the concept of universality has always been more problematic when it comes to social sciences. In the face of the prevailing universalist philosophy, the proponents of the singularist philosophy approached the problem differently. The general and particular concept in social sciences and the generalizations derived from it are always controversial in terms of the subject matter of the field. Since the subject of social sciences is human behavior and human relations with human beings, generalization in this field causes difficulties.

There is also criticism that the approach and acceptance of the "universal subject" has political content. Foucault (1980) is skeptical of the universal subject theory, claiming that a subject detached from its historical context, independent of time and space, will not be possible. According to him, the subject; is established by social institutions, structures and power. The subject cannot isolate self from the historical influence of power relations. To accept an absolute and universal subject is also to accept the yoke of power. The universalist attitude in the field of social sciences, as an extension of positivist logic, results in the ignorance of the local and the different.

Besides positivist social science's claim to universality, another problematic concept is the emphasis on objectivity. The concept of objectivity has both a practical and a theoretical dimension. With its practical use, "objectivity" refers not to our feelings about a topic or event, but to think and act in accordance with the general principles that are binding

to everyone. Theoretically, objectivity is a concept that is considered together with the term "truth". With its epistemological use, "truth" is a term that expresses its suitability to the object of our knowledge. Accordingly, the correct knowledge is the knowledge appropriate to the object (Özlem, 2013, p. 201). The possibility of objectivity with its practical use or its necessity is controversial. To act according to the general principles binding for all is to accept the existence of a universal subject. Definitions such as universal morality, universal governance, universal principles of law are the products of the objective approach.

It is generally accepted that the objectivity is opposed to subjectivity and subjectivity is defined as the researcher cannot get rid of his personal judgments when collecting and interpreting data. When Popper (1992) talks about objectivity, he does not expect scientists to be impartial, contrary to general acceptance. According to Popper, objectivity is not impartiality, and this is not possible. Objectivity is to accept that science begins with a problem. Personal beliefs will, of course, be directly related to the scientific problem being addressed. According to Popper, objectivity is not a personal but a methodological problem. Therefore, natural sciences are not more objective than social sciences. According to him, the objectivity of science comes from criticism.

Weber (2011) also refuses to accept the practices of the natural sciences without question. According to Weber, human actions need to be understood rather than explained, and understanding an action is to understand the meaning that the actor has directed to the action. The level of objectivity can be achieved by monitoring human actions and aiming at understanding these actions. In a sense, this point reveals the difference between social sciences and natural sciences. A discipline or a collection of disciplines whose research object is human, is not only to explain the phenomenon in a causal relationship axis, but also to capture the meaning of the reality, phenomenon studied. The answers to the question of how the actor formed by history and context, which is one of the central problems of social sciences in the 19th century, can make objective judgments are still being discussed. That objectivity has a different meaning in social sciences than in natural sciences, and that those working in the scientific field have beliefs, values, judgments, and that knowledge is inherent in

the context of social phenomena, is at the center of method discussions in social sciences.

Different Forms of Representation

The ultimate goal of theoretical studies in the social sciences is to make the object of the study more understandable and explainable. The theory to be used in this understanding effort is important. The question of whether theory will be macro-micro-centered is one of the most debated issues in social theory. The theories of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim are macro-centered. On the other hand, thinkers from other disciplines such as Freud, Mead, Husserl, and Watson were weak in the macro perspective (Wiley, 1988, p. 260). Berger and Luckmann (1991) stated that both approaches are unilateral and a more holistic theory is needed. According to them, social order is, above all, a human product and not a finished phenomenon. The social order is a continuous flow of human production.

The reality of daily life exists through the process of institutionalization. This process is based on a human-generated objectivity, which is open to individual influences as well as an individual-independent nature. Objectivity, in a sense, is the concrete form of human subjectivity. The relationship between the producing man and the social life is dialectical, and objectivitiy manifest themselves through indicators in daily life. Here, language is the most important indicator system. Language is the means and basis of the stock of knowledge. The meaning of the interaction and patterns in the society, the preservation of the experiences arising from this and the transfer of them to the future are thanks to language. (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

One of the important foundations of Berger and Luckmann's work is the work of Alfred Schutz. Schutz (1967) says that the object of sociology is man's meaning-producing actions. He rejected positivist methods in the study of social and cultural life. According to him, the everyday world is intersubjective and there are many actors interacting with each other. Society is a structure of "many realities" that unite around different interests and close relationships. According to Lefebvre (2012), the reality of everyday life has a distinct place among these multiple realities.

Similarly, phenomenological sociology approaches the social world from a relative perspective. Although objects in the physical world exist physically independent of people, this does not apply to phenomena in the social world. The concepts of the social world are inherent in human perceptions, interpretations, and explanations.

The subjectivist and objectivist camp described by Bourdieu (1987) as duality, can only offer a partial explanation of social reality. According to Bourdieu, the dilemma in understanding social reality stems from the inability to combine the objective structure of society with the role of the individual in this structure.

From this point of view, it can be said that society is a continuously constructed reality. Reality is not independent of individuals and socially constructed. The investigation of this reality can be done by different methods besides traditional methods. From this perspective, it can also be considered that the representation of phenomena in social life does not have to be only through universalist and objectivist scientific studies. At this point, Goffman's (1959) metaphorical interpretation makes sense: According to him, the world is a kind of scene. Many performances are performed in this stage called daily life. Everyone has different roles; roles are redistributed daily and edited by players. Individuals play the expected game on stage. For example, the doctor plays a doctor as he should. On the other hand, there is a backstage behind the scenes hidden from the audience. Only by looking backstage, it is possible to understand the secret action played by the players and the viewers accept as "real". The new methodological quests in the social sciences have the potential to provide opportunities that reveal the invisible on the stage.

According to Becker (2007), forms of representation say something about society. Becker argues that there are constant representations and narratives in social life. The most basic example he gave on this subject is maps. Everybody makes small maps while the house recipe is made and the place is told. These are representations of a section of society covered by a simple geographical perspective. In one aspect, this act is a different form of describing society or a cross-section thereof. From the map example, Becker says that there are other forms of representation, as well as representations made by social scientists. Visual artists, novelists,

playwrights, photographers and film directors also represent society with their art. According to him, the method of social scientists is not unique (Becker, 2007). Fiction works, dramas, films, paintings, photographs, music, all say something about the society from which they emerge. All these forms of representation help us to think, conceptualize, and classify our social reality.

On the other hand, each representation, excludes some aspects of what it represents consciously or unconsciously. Some components of reality are not included in the representation, there is a selection and sorting process. Selection and classification process, which is an important element of every scientific study, constitutes the ontological problem of representation in one aspect. From Becker's (2007) example, anthropologists convert their observations into field notes and produce standardized ethnographic descriptions from these notes; researchers convert their interviews into tables and charts; historians convert index cards into stories, character descriptions and analyzes; film directors edit raw footage and turn it into film. Thus, users are never confronted by reality itself, but rather confronted with transformed reality, which has been translated into the conventional language of a particular craft. To accept this problem inherent in the representation itself is to accept that one representation leaves incomplete and another representation fills it.

Fiction Works as a Form of Representation in Social Sciences

Contrary to popular belief, literary works based on fiction often functioned as a means of social analysis. For example, sociological criticism, which sees literary work as an important element in social life, is one of the important types of criticism. According to this approach, the artist who created the work is also a part of social life and constructs his work with parts from social life. Historically, the use and acceptance of fiction in interdisciplinary studies is a relatively new development. Despite this, more studies and articles have been published showing that literature, art and, artist are related to social sciences (Bahou, 1961, p. 163). Blotner (1955, p. 48) stated that the novel is a highly functional instrument for the analysis of individual and group behavior. In the same years, in the literature of sociology, the opportunities of literature in the field of

teaching sociology were focused on (Coser, 1963; Nisbet, 1976; Stein and Vidich, 1963), Russian sociologist Sorokin (1947) said that in some cases literature was more consistent than mathematical equations (Carlin, 2010, p. 215). In fact, the use of fiction as an educational tool and used in this way goes back to Ancient Greece (Wolff, 2014, p. 7).

The systematic use of fiction can be traced back to Marx's works. Marx used literary works extensively in establishing his theoretical background. In Capital, there are frequent references to Robinson Crusoe, Goethe's Faust, Cervantes. According to Marx, only great literary works can show beyond the dominant ideology (Prawer, 1976). Knorr (1994, p. 6) claims that fiction is the magic of the world. The magic world implies the colorful world of stories. But right after that, he states that fiction can create important opportunities for analyzing modern institutions. Fiction is based on the difference between discourse and counter-discourse, and a fiction work does not destroy the reality, it represents when it reproduces reality. Fictions are a kind of social simulation. According to Knorr, modern institutions constantly create fictions, find their way through fictions, survive through fictions, and reinforce their own foundations through fictions.

In the field of Social Sciences, fiction works were approached more pragmatically. Fiction works are seen as a learning method especially in the field of sociology and history (Jones, 1975; Hegtvedt, 1991; Macbeth, 1992; Watson, 2011). In an academic study, quoting a fiction work to increase attention and interest is an increasingly accepted method. This can be called seeing fiction as a means of creating ambience (Philips, 1995, p. 637).

The fiction works are regarded as a source of data in the social sciences with skepticism, mainly because of the concern that the research result will become a relative and subjective structure (Watson, 2000, p. 490). This concern, which at first seems right, contradicts the contemporary understanding of science, which is open to interdisciplinary interaction and requires new perspectives for development and progress. Fiction works increase the function of being an important resource used in different fields in social sciences with each passing day (Whiteman & Phillips, 2006, p. 11-12). Riley (1991) asks how much it is possible for a culture or

organization to be represented impartially and accurately by researchers. This question emphasizes not only the method but also the ethics of research. It is also the responsibility of the researcher to express the results as time- and situational values rather than seeing the results of a research as time- and context-independent facts (Rhodes and Brown, 2005, p. 478). As much as it is possible to talk about objectivity where context exists, it is only possible to ignore a fictional act when it comes to writing action, whatever the field. According to Richardson (1994, p. 518), writing in the field of social sciences is, as in other fields, an act of social construction. The act of writing itself is fictional.

Since the 17th century, the act of writing has been divided into two main categories: literary and scientific. In literary writing; fiction, rhetoric, and subjectivity were at the forefront. In the scientific field, facts, clear language and objectivity were expected. In the 19th century, these two disciplines began to form two separate areas. Literature has been a discipline consisting of aesthetic, ethical, linguistic pleasure, humanism, a combination of moral facts and metaphors, as well as a very meaningful language. However, science; it has created a style that is objective, precise, clear, universal and excludes metaphor (Clifford & Marcus, 1986, p. 5-6). With the 20th century, solid distinctions such as "real" and "fiction" and "truth" and "imaginary" in the relation to social sciences and literature began to blur (Richardson, 1994, p. 519). This blur and transitivity have opened the door to the world of fiction which is extremely rich to researchers in the field of social sciences. Although this world clashes with traditional methods and epistemological principles, it also has the potential to make the most contribution to the field. Merill (1955) states that Balzac had examined social life in its broadest form with more than two thousand characters created in his works. According to Merill, any social scientist who wants to understand French society should read Balzac. Like Merrill, Lass (1998, p. 195) states that for Stendhal's "The Red and The Black" novel, France's post-revolutionary political and social life was included in this work. When William Faulkner is talking of Yoknapatawpha County, Faulkner is also talking of the Southern County and of political and normative boundaries generally. A perusal of the writings of Faulkner shows his ideas and commentaries to be sociologically consis-

tent (Stuart, 1970, p. 119). Hoggart (1966, p. 226) argues that community researchers who do not make use of literature cannot make an integrated analysis, that something will be missing. According to him, literature has a documentary quality.

Conclusion

This study claims that the social sciences can benefit from the rich world of fiction in order to understand people and society. Although it is difficult to make an agreed definition of art, art can basically be interpreted as an effort to put man at the center and make sense of his existence. Myths, fairy tales, epics, or narratives as fictional or more concrete, and traditional forms are as old as human history. In a sense, from primitive communal communities, people needed narratives to stand together. The narratives are the cement of people's collective collaboration, as well as the simplest and most sophisticated means of communication of commune life. Events and experiences are shared in the group through narratives, and the following generations are becoming an eternal and literary part of that commune.

Modern fiction works are considered as more complex forms of these narratives. The fact that the determinist understanding of natural sciences cannot be used as an effective method in understanding social life, has led researchers to search for new methods. Since the subject of social sciences is human behaviors, the generalization approach which is one of the most natural methods of scientific study, has been problematic in social sciences. From the 1950s onwards, fiction works have been used in social sciences in different ways, as an educational tool, as a data source, as a supporting factor, and sometimes as a means of enriching the text.

The subject of both art and social sciences is human. They both represent the truth somehow. Art is a product of the culture it come from, so it gives a lot of information about that culture. For a researcher who knows how to benefit from this, the information is often invaluable. In social life where truth is relative, art represent many aspects of truth.

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Öz: Bu çalışmanın amacı, sanatın ve sosyal bilimlerin insanı ve onun yarattığı sosyal, politik ve ekonomik yapıyı anlamada etkileşime girebileceğidir. Pozitivist epistemoloji, akıl, hakikat ve geçerliliğin ön planda olduğu temel ilkelere dayanır. Bu epistemolojiyi benimseyen araştırmacılar, bilgiyi yalnızca beş duyunun algılayabileceği bir form olarak kısıtlar. Bilim ve sanat temelde aynı motivasyonu paylaşır ve aynı hikâyeyi sürdürür: insan nedir? Bu çalışmada, toplumu temsil etme yeteneğinin sadece bilimsel çalışmalarda içkin olmadığı varsayılmaktadır. Kurgu çalışmaları, dramalar, filmler, resimler, fotoğraflar, müzik ve tüm sanatsal disiplinler de ortaya çıktıkları toplum hakkında bir şeyler söyler. Sosyal Bilimlerin bu alanları kullanması, kendisini zenginleştirmesini sağlayacaktır. Bu çalışma, insanları ve toplumu anlamak için sosyal bilimlerin zengin sanat alanından yararlanabileceğini iddia etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal bilim, sanat, pozitivizm, epistemoloji, kurgu, nesnellik.