The social nexus concept as a credible and acceptable base for a common social sciences approach

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• A perilous, ambitious, but possible attempt: find some concepts to base a common social sciences approach
• An obstacle: the great difficulty in historicizing our categories of thought: in particular “economic”
• Examples: Marx, Polanyi, Bourdieu seem did not go until the end of their program of de-universalization
1. There is no vital necessities, but some social nexus transforming the components of life in conditions of life

- The capital-labor nexus governs more and more activities considered non-economic, until recently

- The founding myth of capitalist nexus: the first human act would have been “economic”

- In fact, the social nexus create vital necessities, and not the reverse
2. A social nexus involves inseparably and inextricably what are for us today the economic, political and sociological dimensions of social

- Practical impossibility to distinguish these dimensions, when we analyse a social nexus and its logic of reproduction
- We must find before the stake of each social nexus, to know what are its relevant and specific analytical dimensions
Four consequences

• Vital necessities don’t base the social nexus, but the social nexus create vital necessities

• A social relation becomes a social nexus structuring the society, when it able to transform at least a component of life in condition of life

• A social nexus can govern all the human activities, if the other social nexus are not able to resist to its expansion

• The redefined concept of social nexus was enough to overcome our current conceptual contradictions and to report some disturbing search results
3. A social nexus is a way of living together all or part of human activities, which provides access to that this nexus formed in conditions of physical and social life, in the place and during the time where it can be reproduced as a social nexus.
Some characteristics of social nexus

• Every social nexus has a logic, and its logic is the logic of its reproduction

• A social nexus is not eternal, it has a beginning and an end

• A dominant social nexus universalizes its reality (work, capital, God, family, state, etc.) and its understanding categories (human nature, body, mind, economic, political, ideological, etc.)

• Every social nexus involves a specific form of distribution of tasks to carry out activities under its control, in ways that ensure the reproduction of the link between the stakeholders of the nexus
Some new analytical perspectives

• Societies could be analyzed as conflictual combinations of social nexus, whose variety and proportion could characterize these societies during a given period.

• These conflictual combinations may help to better understand the diversity of so-called capitalist societies, of feudal societies, of slave societies, etc.

• Individuals live several social nexus in the same day. They change frequently their action logic. Their *habitus* is not coherent and homogeneous.

• The tension between contradictory imperatives could explain the ambiguities of affects, practices and thoughts.
### 4. Some social nexus and their reproduction logic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nexus</th>
<th>Number of Concerned Persons in France 2013</th>
<th>Reproduction Logic (In First Approximation)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>capitalist nexus</strong></td>
<td>160,000 entrepreneurs, 4,000,000 shareholders, 11,600,000 employees</td>
<td>Endless growth of capital by reinvestment of surplus value produced by 'free' workers</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>state nexus</strong></td>
<td>5,400,000 state officials, whose 4,000,000 holders, 44,600,000 voters, whose 600,000 elected officials</td>
<td>Reactivation of consent to pay tax by developing public goods at acceptable cost</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>gender nexus</strong></td>
<td>32,000,000 persons registered as man, 34,000,000 persons registered as woman</td>
<td>Periodic reinvention of the preeminence of a gender, by naturalizing, incorporating and institutionalizing its domination</td>
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<td><strong>domestic nexus</strong></td>
<td>18,500,000 heads of household, 9,600,000 singles, 35,400,000 household members, except heads 2,200,000 domestic workers</td>
<td>Adapting the rules defining the family and the descent, to allow the human reproduction, the expansion and transmission of heritage in all circumstances</td>
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<td><strong>market production nexus</strong></td>
<td>2,300,000 independent and professional producers, 3,700,000 employees</td>
<td>Construction of a professional reputation for having loyal customers and for sending property to a close or to a colleague at the best price</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>cooperative nexus</strong></td>
<td>8,000,000 members of cooperative, 310,000 employees</td>
<td>Perpetuation of the conditions for cooperators to run the business, so that wages and employment are at least preserved</td>
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<td><strong>associative nexus</strong></td>
<td>17,300,000 members of at least one association, 18 and older, 1,800,000 employees, 900,000 full-time equivalent volunteers</td>
<td>Implementation, updating or diversion of association goals, justifying the renewal of membership</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>mutualist nexus</strong></td>
<td>38,000,000 members of mutual, 131,000 employees</td>
<td>Maintain or increase the number of pooled persons to extend social protection at the best price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>religious nexus</strong></td>
<td>53,000 priests, pastors, monks, rabbis, imams, etc., 6,000,000 regular faithful, 30,000,000 persons declaring a religious affiliation</td>
<td>Strengthen the belief in a higher power that can offer a better world, subject to honor him and follow his teachings delivered by priests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>gift nexus</strong></td>
<td>5,350,000 donor households, 73,000 employees of Foundations, x? recipients</td>
<td>Maintain the propensity to donations by various gratuities and exhibition of cultural objects or persons at risk</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The capitalist nexus

- It links the capital owners and entrepreneurs to "free" workers, forced to sell their ability to live, in order to convert the surplus value produced by them in additional capital, without end.

- A double uncertainty: market uncertainty as to the actual selling of the goods and services on offer; labour uncertainty as to the feasibility of producing such goods and services under the required conditions.

- The mean to reduce the labour uncertainty is finally always the intellectual division of labour.
The state nexus (1)

- What is the State? Who are the agents of State?

- State activities are countless and extremely varied, unrelated to any essence of the State or the public good. The state nexus can govern all the human activities.

- Officials prepare and suggest laws, decrees and circulars. Elected representatives of Nation delegate to them the authority to apply them and adapt them to specific and changing situations. Officials are the continuity of the State. They are the State.

- The Nation is continued by the voters and theirs representatives, that decide the amount of tax to pay the public goods.
The state nexus (2)

- The state nexus would be a social nexus in which officials have, by delegation, the authority to convert all or part of human activities in public goods, free of charge or at cost price, thanks to the removal of consent of people to pay tax.

- The reproduction logic of state nexus is to reactivate the consent to pay tax by developing public goods at acceptable cost.

- The state nexus does not include a mechanism to increase productivity of state agents.
5. The confrontation between capitalist and state nexus was exacerbated by the successive crises

- During the post war boom, capitalist and state nexus were complementary

- Since monetary and oil shocks and successive crises, the state nexus has become progressively an obstacle to the expansion of the capitalist nexus

- Two reasons:
  - The capitalist nexus reproduction requires to diffuse towards activities governed by others social nexus
  - The cost of public goods weigh progressively on corporate profitability and household purchasing power
Hourly productivity index in France (base 100: 1949)
Public expenditure and revenue, mandatory contributions

Figure V1.1 Effectifs, fonction publique, service public et emploi total au 31 décembre 2012 (Métropole + Dom)

Sources : SIASP, DADS, Recme, Insee. Traitement DGAFP, département des études et des statistiques.
Champ : France entière = Métropole + DOM (hors COM et étranger).
(1) Les enseignants et documentalistes des établissements privés sous contrat (139 900 en 2012), auparavant classés avec les organismes privés à financement public prédominant, sont désormais décomptés sur le champ des ministères.

Extrait de l’Annexe projet Loi de finance 2015, Rapport sur l’état de la fonction publique et les rémunérations
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6. The disarray of the left
One solution that deserves to think about it

- A social nexus can impose another by competing on an aspect of its dynamism. Example: capitalist nexus against market production nexus

- The intellectual division of labour was the strength of the capitalist nexus. It becomes its weakness

- The proofs of the superiority of peer cooperation: Uddevalla plant, free software movement, Wikipedia

- Cooperative nexus, associative nexus, and may be state nexus are compatible with a reverse of intellectual division of labor. They can compete the capitalist nexus
Conclusion
Social nexus concept contributes to make credible an institutional framework conducive to interdisciplinarity

• The redefined concept of social nexus allowed to reveal the presuppositions of the current social sciences

• So it can be a starting point to develop a common approach

• It makes credible an institutional framework conducive to interdisciplinarity: an open CNU and CNRS commissions to all researchers willing to take the risk of inventing, gradually but resolutely, the convergence of social sciences
Prélèvements obligatoires des administrations publiques, par origine (2005)