The Continuous Model of Culture: Modernity Decline—a Eurocentric Bias? An Attempt to Introduce an Absolute value into a Model of Culture

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Abstract

This paper means to demonstrate the theoretical-and-methodological potential of a particular pattern of thought about culture. Employing an end-means and absolute value plus concept of reality approach, the continuous model of culture aims to embrace from one holistic standpoint various concepts and debates of the modern human, social, and political sciences. The paper revisits the debates of fact versus value, nature versus culture, culture versus structure, agency versus structure, and economics versus politics and offers the concepts of the rule of law, state capitalism, a dialectical model of progress, and interpretative qualitative research, as well as of cultural diffusion, autonomy, alienation, and individuality. This model distinguishes between the ideal-symbolical and the instrumental functions of culture, sees culture as being sewn from universal binaries, and provides a certain understanding of the cognitive function of a value judgment, with positivism so far vague about the topic. It, too, suggests an extra method for investigating culture(s): the comparative literature study of culture(s) enables social science to view literature as its potential in-depth interviewee— a case for arguing for a certain conception of interdisciplinarity as well. In addition, it predicts that cultural particularism or individuality remains an essential factor of human existence. Analyzing the issue of Eurocentrism in social science, the model finds modernity's concept of reality to be involved in "methodological" intellectualistic reductionism, characterizing it since the empiricism/rationalism origination. Systematically confusing the universal oppositions in a Eurocentric manner, intellectualism becomes a contributing factor in unfolding post-modernity.

Keywords: theory; an absolute value; culture, society (structure), and agency; Eurocentrism; interpretative qualitative research; interdisciplinarity

Introduction

This paper means to demonstrate the theoretical-and-methodological potential of a particular pattern of thought about culture. The pattern ascribes more fundamental and universal significance to culture than cultural studies (the sociology of culture [Alexander and Smith 2001]) does, in which case it comes close to a strong program in cultural sociology declaring cultural autonomy its most important quality (ibid.). Its authors exhaustively examined competing understandings of culture—the sociology of culture, structuralism, and poststructuralism/modernism— and found them to be "dominated by weak programs characterized by some combination of hermeneutic inadequacy, ambivalence over cultural autonomy, and poorly specified, abstract mechanisms for grounding culture in concrete social process" (ibid.). This paper is attentive to this critique and the strong program's some other characteristics.

It also aims at (re)viewing from *one* theoretical-and-methodological standpoint a variety of basic concepts and debates characteristic of the contemporary human, social, and political sciences. Among them are value-fact, nature-culture, culture-structure, agency-structure, ideal-instrumental, economics-politics, and quantitative research-interpretative qualitative research debates, as well as the concepts of social change, the rule of law, state capitalism, and cultural diffusion and alienation.

This required introducing a notion of an absolute value into human science. I connect it to the best of all possible worlds, a term coined by Leibniz as an argument for theodicy (Windelband 1902). Nonetheless, here the term has different context suggesting that humans should build the best of all possible worlds by themselves, and that culture is the routine process of the building.

The paper, too, almost identically uses notions of a concept of reality and narrative. Borrowing from literary studies (Wellek and Warren 1978), I tie a concept of reality chiefly to a particular culture. It is assumed to expresses the members' shared, specifically human viewpoint on being, comforting them as a sense-making context within which things seem to its holders to be arranged in their true, "natural" order. In other words, a particular culture's concept of reality implies a historically relevant image of the best of all possible worlds, also suggesting corresponding institutional practices building it. In that case, scientific and/or literary texts may belong to different concepts of reality. The comprehension of this should contribute to advancing debates between scientific conceptions from divergent historical-and-cultural traditions, such as teleology versus mechanical causality one. Accordingly, I consider restoring a concept of reality through comparative analysis of corresponding literary and/or scientific texts as a tool to investigate a particular culture. Namely, here literature, as a producer of the aesthetical imaginary, is understood to be among the principal institutions of creating the images and practices to which their makers refer as

the best of all possible (human) worlds; just this would produce literature's exact cultural meaning—function and practicality—for the creators, human beings. As part of the building, it conserves the records of it. Consequently, the comparative literature study of cultures serves as a reliable method of gaining extra data (the records) about specifically human—sociocultural—being.

In addition, the comparative study counsels that each particular culture's concept of reality is "sewn" structurally from individually articulated terms of universal binaries so that *cultural individuality* becomes essential drive in the mechanism of (inter)cultural processes. In this context, through the comparative literature analysis of the concepts of reality of modernity and American, Chinese, and Spanish-speaking Latin American cultures, the model offers a dialectical model of sociocultural development. Eventually, this should spell out what I mean by the positive content (concept of reality) of post-modernity.

I also analyze the issue of Eurocentrism in social science (Burke 2001). There is a well-established tradition critiquing the mainstream social theory as containing culturally biased Eurocentric teleological elements (ibid.). Globalization sociology is applying such critique as well (Beck 2001). Yet I argue that the critique can hardly succeed until one reads the specifically human need and meaning Eurocentrism satisfies and carries, respectively. For this purpose, I analyze modernity's concept of reality through comparing sociocultural evolution with "One Hundred Years of Solitude," an epic by Nobel Prize-winning Latin American author Gabriel Garcia Marquez. I chose a literary text because of the paper's interest in *interdisciplinarity* and chose the novel because it is a distinguished representative of the style of magic realism (Johnston 2000). The latter is peculiar to a cultural region, the reality concept of which, how the comparative analysis may demonstrate, is opposite to that of modernity; however, the comparative study, too, explores their formal identical trait, which helps to qualify not only Eurocentrism but also a cultural process itself.

Sociocultural Evolution as a Eurocentric "Epic," or the Far Side of the Moon

In the novel, brave, young Spanish-speaking Latin Americans leave their homes in seeking a better life and establish a village in an unpopulated place in Latin America. Following a voice heard in his dream, group leader José Arcadio Buendía names it Macondo. The novel depicts Macondo and the Buendias as an exceptional world to which magic is daily routine. At its founding stage, resembling an early Eden (ibid.), Macondo embraces primitive and harmonic social relationships. Although its world is secular, the Hispanic novel's magic realism represents the concept of a particular human world different from modern society's one.

Talking to his Gypsy friend, Macondo's founder expresses the desire for Macondo and the Buendias' eternal existence (Marques 1984; p.62), which introduces a secular metaphysical intention into the novel. However, the following story chronicles the opposite; the better-life project ends with its destruction. This process starts with the appearance of aliens. They "arrive bringing the latest in technology or bureaucracy" (Johnston 2000), which makes primitive Eden-Macondo slide into history as multicultural Latin American Spanish-speaking (Hispanic) society. The process turns irreversible since Macondo becomes a city. Telling the story, the epic applies a stage model of sociocultural evolutionism turned upside-down: The change from a primitive to a modern society and simple to complex social forms parallels the story about Macondo and the Buendias' downfall, not progress. At modern society's stage, natural disasters destroy both of them physically. The magic realism expresses modernization in terms of the Apocalypse and the Fall. Nonetheless, the outsiders' novelties seduce mainly the men, whereas the women are more loyal to Eden lifestyle. Interestingly, a female/male opposition characterizes a myth of the anti-colonial nationalism too (Kankava 2007). In addition, Macondo's end coincides with a Buendia extended family's conversion into modern society's nuclear family with one child. Expressing the latter as modernity's fatal "update," the Hispanic epic's narrative counts the former among its chief values.

The only ideal character of "*One Hundred Years of Solitude*" is Remedios the Beauty. Openhearted, unsophisticated, and simple-minded, she hardly observes the social conventionalities and enjoys peace of mind. Remedios leaves Macondo for heavens still alive, for she cannot find a primitive and simple feeling—love—in Macondo at the stage of capitalism (Marques 1984; p.247). Here the intuition (love) contradicts the intellect considered solely an instrument for achieving dominance and making goods and a profit—troubling humans eventually. A similar view on intellect characterizes Henry Bergson's metaphysics (Reale and Antiseri 1997) and Taoism (Karalashvili 1989); one may also ascribe Remedios' characteristics to a Taoist lifestyle (ibid.). In the Hispanic epic, there are motives common to European literary movements critiquing the modern civilization's naturalism and conception of progress, such as "*Doctor Faustus*" by Thomas Mann, "*Ulysses*" by James Joyce (Kakabadze 1988)*,* and "*The Steppe Wolf"* by Hermann Hesse.

It is typical of the novel's concept of reality that its position toward different cultural worlds varies noticeably. For example, the epic tags Sir Frances Drake, a historical figure who contributed significantly to the defeat of the Spanish Armada by the Protestant power, as Francis Drake the Pirate. Especially two aliens contributed to the Buendias and Macondo's downfall. One of them is Fernanda that personifies the hard legacy of the Spanish Empire, a representative of the barbarian stage/traditional society. Yet Fernanda becomes the Buendia family's member: Eventually, she shares such characteristic feelings of the Buendias as loneliness, nostalgia, and some others that

result from the fact that they love Macondo and their family most of all but cannot preserve either of them. The other alien is a gringo. Gringos are aliens who arrive in *Eden*-Macondo just for a while to profit and dominate. Usually gringos come from the Protestant cultural area and inhabit the separate space tagged "an electrified hen-house" (Marques 1984, pp. 238, 239, 250, 283), one of the epic's symbols. As a part of Macondo's modernization, Gringos export the scientific method (naturalism) to it. The epistemological and methodological critique qualifying metaphysical and teleological arguments as idols (illusions) originated the naturalistic methodological principle of the unity of scientific method; Francis Bacon, Francis Drake's contemporary, proposed this line (Windelband 1902). Eden-Macondo opposes Bensalem, a mythical island depicted in Bacon's utopia "*The New Atlantis*," regarded as the modern civilization's initial image. The epic connects gringos with the images of an insect, a herbarium (murdered nature), and ornithology, symbols of a transient world. In addition, they plan to realize capitalist enterprises, combined with scientific-technical novelties, just in Macondo's magic valley. Therefore, another identifying feature of gringos' concept of reality is the economic way of thinking (utilitarianism). Mainly the English Enlightenment (ibid.) and positivism (Reale and Antiseri 1997) conceptualized it. The economic way of thinking suggests that goods with an absolute value are mythical—insignificant in understanding and building social cooperation's mechanisms (Heyne 1991). Both naturalism and utilitarianism build modernity's concept of reality arguing that the metaphysical and teleological assertions are meaningless value judgments (Reale and Antiseri 1997; Windelband 1902).

In addition, the dominance of the modern nation-state political institutions, imported by gringos, becomes part of the Buendias and Macondo's downfall. There the exceptional (extended) family and/or person seems to be a basic legitimate unit to lead Eden-Macondo, a motive corresponding to the Latin American political culture and its relatively unstable nation-state experience (Polunin 1985). Different political cultures characterize the concepts of reality of modernity and Eden-Macondo too. Furthermore, they demonstrate different attitudes to material interests and world, as well as to work.

Comparing the Hispanic epic with evolution distinguishes two narratives that conduct their cultural dialog through such binaries as complex-simple, discursive-intuitive, empirical-metaphysical, factual-value, male-female, individualistic-collectivist, transient-eternal, utilitarian (of a relative value)-metaphysical (of an absolute value). Thus, although the binaries are universal they produce the dialog, not the monolog, between the two particular cultural human worlds, or particular cultural communities that manifest themselves through articulating the opposite terms of each binary pair. They demonstrate contradictory concepts of reality, as if they were life forms from different planets or even galaxies. In addition, they seem to argue not so much about facts but about the values of

facts: They strongly disagree about specifically human forms of life—what one considers good (for humans) is believed fatal by the other. Consider that an argument about what a human reality is can rise from value judgments' inconsistency, a significant observation for the human sciences' epistemology and methodology.

The contradictory characteristics of the sides' concepts of reality match with a severe cultural alienation managing their relationship: Either of the human worlds perceives the other as almost a natural phenomenon (a savage, a barbarian, and/or the underdeveloped versus an insect and an electrified henhouse).

The magic realism narrative seems to express the pre-modern stages' revolt against modern society on modernity's scale of human development. However, one may notice certain logic in the rebellion. Within modernity's positivistic concept of reality, the wish for Macondo and the Buendias' eternal existence would sound unserious. Therefore, the principal reason for opposing modernity's concept of reality would lie in its fundamental inability to legitimize the metaphysical intention of Macondo's founder. In that case, I assume that the stylistic devices of the magic realism construct a fictional human world that would allow legitimating the founder's secular metaphysical intention. This task would require the author to transform the founder's wish into the indivisible value measure of all events filling the Hispanic epic's fabula, or raw material extracted from the author's personal experience and range of reading (Wellek and Warren 1978). This would also entail it opposing modernity's concept of reality, which is evident in the epic throughout. Even the selection of ordinary metaphors serves the purpose of smashing an image of a human world constructed exclusively by the principle of mechanical causation borrowed from physics. By drawing its own image of a human living space, the magic realism "critiques" naturalistic scientific method, underling positivistic social physics (Cola 2000), which is what makes the reading of the novel "an extraordinarily uplifting experience" (Johnston 2000). Nonetheless, according to this thought pattern, this is not just an entertainment but also an evidence that the reconstruction pursues the expression of a specifically human value. In addition, in using an absolute value to create a fictional human world, the epic's narrative hits utilitarianism too. The Hispanic magic realism attacks both identifying features of modernity's reality concept and pictures its followers as a transient world's agents. Moreover, the novel's library contains the imaginative tales of *The Arabian Nights' Entertainment* (Marques 1984, pp. 195, 237, 322) as allies in challenging the dominance of modernity's concept of reality. Therefore, Eden-Macondo's multiculturalism shows itself to be selective or "biased." In other words, its members should build their own particular (human) living space separately from gringos' modern society constructed by the devices of modernity's concept of reality; otherwise, they would feel frustrated up to experiencing an existential crisis. The comparison results, too, suggest that humans treat culture as their own home.

The constitutive logic of Macondo's "magical" world reacts negatively to modernization, or a process of the disenchantment of the universe (Reale and Antiseri 1997). The concept of reality of Hispanic magic realism not merely reflects the Hispanic cultural position but also *develops* the latter by linking it not only with the Spanish-speaking world's cultural legacy and historical memory but also with the international intellectual and literary traditions helpful *in marginalizing modernity's concept of reality*. In the eyes of a community that would self-identify with the Hispanic culture, how the magic realism expresses it, the modern civilization would fail to be that of the best of all possible worlds. The magic realism identifies the current global crises with an existential crisis of modern human. Yet, it suggests too that the Hispanic New World project of Eden-Macondo, restoring the significance of (secular) metaphysical intention, is a worthwhile substitute for modernity, the Enlightenment and European powers' joint project, in the role of the best of all possible worlds. In addition, the magic realism equates American culture to a modern society and considers it the proximate successor of the European powers, so its adherents would equate modernization and Americanization and hold a strong anti-American sentiment.

I would stress that I do not judge now which of the two narratives is more correct objectively--relative to some higher theoretical instance; instead, I am just interested in distinguishing their subjective viewpoints.

In this connection, recall the critiques exposing sociocultural evolution as Eurocentric. Nonetheless, the tacit Eurocentric teleological elements are integral to its idea of progress; through it, modern society celebrates itself as the ultimate goal of history, or the best of all possible worlds. If so, Eurocentrism expresses modernity's latent desire to be endlessly. It, therefore, signifies modernity's latent secular metaphysical wish, or in other words, a priori bias to its own concept of reality. Formally, its narrative appears very similar to the Hispanic epic's one. Modernity seems to feel itself the secular Eden-community project finalizing sociocultural development (Fukuyama 2006); just this motif is likely to feed the idea of modernity's *absolute* universalism, then. Still, whereas the former articulates secular metaphysical intent, modernity expresses it only indirectly—metaphorically. This is not surprising, as its own scientific outlook, featuring naturalism and utilitarianism, would prohibit modernity from acknowledging its own secular metaphysical intention and teleological mindset. However, modernity's reality concept cannot not avoid using them implicitly itself when it comes to modeling an image of sociocultural life that opens up a horizon of a subjective indefinite future. This seems to indicate modernity's metaphysical infantilism.

Evolution seems contradictory, subjective, and fictional. Modernity's latent secular metaphysical intention appears to be the indivisible value measure of sociocultural facts synthesizing them into the narrative with epic scope that would underlie an evolutionary stage model of human development. Its teleological motives create modernity's secular myth assuring its users that history automatically (a priori) acknowledges a Eurocentric bias as its own law

and thus, promising that still underdeveloped countries will enjoy modernization eventually. However, there seems to be at least one secular particular human world, the Hispanic culture, *endlessly* refusing to act the way in which evolution has promised; this sounds like the word *never*, disclosing that the promise is "mythical." Historically, Eurocentrism seems to inherit pre-modern religious motives of Chosen People and End Time.

The comparison advises on the two human worlds' relationships as follows: They are committed to reproducing their (mutually incompatible) concepts of reality *continuously*. In other words, they are more dedicated to preserving their *cultural individualities* than making peace with each other. Consequently, I suppose that strategically, the two cultures cannot communicate except for playing a zero-sum game. If so, why should one expect that a community of people self-identifying with the Hispanic cultural standpoint would forsake it voluntarily for modernization theory's recipes for the best of all possible worlds?

This thought pattern states that the hidden value judgments of evolution are not just "scientific errors," but rather, represent its authors' diverse cultural and common civilizational (Eurocentric) existential preferences ("biases") they share with the members of their cultural communities. Therefore, one should make the value judgments part of analysis of human social being. In this context, I extract a certain understanding of culture from the results of the comparative analysis of the particular sociocultural worlds.

The Continuous Model of Culture or the Introduction of an Absolute Value in Social Theory

The comparison, too, shows that reality is more complex than it seems to the two particular human worlds. Besides the fact that continental Europe coined both terms an existential crisis (Kakabadze 1988) and magic realism (Johnston 2000), the secularism of magic realism reveals that it itself is affected by modernity's concept of reality. However, the tacit secular metaphysical motif is crucial to modernity's image of sociocultural life as well.

Rather, the comparison results suggest that although the two cultures differ in their sociocultural content (values) as much as cultures can, both of them share an identical characteristic: Each regards its own concept of reality as the best of all possible worlds. Therefore, despite a divergence in content, the two concepts of reality share the subjective formal image of the best of all possible worlds. I assume that particular cultures communicate with the image of the most valuable potential human condition through the factual content of their reality concepts: The latter would relate to the former as the sign relates to the referent, respectively. Although the referent is still empty of factual content, the maximum value has charged it already. In other words, the referent has already—a priory—defined the universal last human condition subjectively through the greatest/an absolute value characteristic. The apriority only implies

that the referent *continuously* and *automatically* affects us, humans, irrelatively of cultural content. Being a particular cultural community's indivisible value measure of all events, the referent would automatically understand and interpret the empirical and factual world (like the "raw material") in terms of a means of and/or an obstacle to achieving the ultimate human goal of building the best of all possible worlds. The sociocultural model introduced here—the continuous model of culture— assumes that a routine cultural process is the means to realize these universal human last goal, wish, and imperative. In carrying an absolute value, the referent, too, underlies the faculty of a value judgment.

Unlike the rationalist Enlightenment, considering the universe a kind, beautiful, harmonious, purposeful, and rational (Windelband 1902), continuous model argues that although being has not yet been kind, harmonious, or rational (from human beings' viewpoint), humans themselves must try putting it in such order of things through a cultural process. In other words, the sign, the factual cultural content of a concept of reality, would relate to the referent, its formal ideal-symbolical aspect, as *the means relates to the end*, respectively. Then, through the factual-instrumental part, one can observe the whole diversity of a human-made cultural and a "ready-made" natural world, whereas the formal-symbolical aspect provides the sense-making ultimate context of what is observed.

In addition, this model considers the potential universal human condition with the greatest value as the cultural ultimate state securing humankind's eternal being, which requires a sociocultural process to "edit" the universe in human(istic) terms. Otherwise, the price to pay would be the bad ending of humankind's story, as well as the default on achieving the *potential* but *real* human nature of the universe (re-) Maker. Yet one could not accept that possibility without failing to remain human, becoming like a being with injured "software"—inviting cynicism and an "existential crisis."

Theoretically, introducing an absolute value in social theory is incompatible with intellectualism, an identifying characteristic of modernity's psychological and ethical theories since the origin of empiricism and rationalism (Windelband 1902). It reduces the practical system of human consciousness—volition, intentions, wishes, and affects, with all of them featuring a value judgment—to the theoretical one; this ignores the practical system's relative autonomy and actual significance in both understanding and constructing sociocultural life. However, as the comparative analysis demonstrates, the value judgment also contributes to forming what one perceives as reality; therefore, the value and fact statements are more interconnected than mutually reducible or derivable.

To balance the metaphysical and empirical-and-factual implications, continuous model sees the ultimate human wish as ordering human beings to exist additionally with metaphysical perspective vis-à-vis changeable challenges of different type. This creates the main logic of a sociocultural process—an additional being with metaphysical

perspective needs joint action dealing with nature's changeful challenges. Furthermore, this model regards human's ethical, aesthetical, and discursive faculties as the related elementary practices to organize the relevant means of achieving the ultimate task of human beings' additional presence.

In this connection, the model also decodes the sociocultural meaning of the term nature. As the ultimate human wish of building the best of all possible worlds additionally is the indivisible value measure of things, all facts that conform to it only by chance represent contingent, causal, and mechanical or ready-made facts of nature.

Nonetheless, a particular culture seems to include another culture among natural events. This model explains that the failure to distinguish between the two aspects of culture leads to the following: Existential projects are identical *only* formally, whereas in content, they can fit one another *only by chance*, a characteristic of a natural phenomenon. This produces *a priori logic* of cultural alienation marked by a kind of dehumanization: "*Only* 'we' are self-made humans, cultural beings, and creators, whereas 'you' are still natural ones, creations, and hence subhuman others." Maybe the word barbarian is the most famous among terms expressing similar connotations. Then I assume that each particular culture tends to build the best of all possible worlds individually.

Cultural particularism seems essential in forming the sociocultural and political processes. Particular cultures seem still particular "humankinds" in dialogue about and competition for formulating and building the universal last state of culture. According to continuous model, culturally, humankind is still an eclectic system of particular cultures (the culture system), and one should still realize its *real* nature of the universe (re-)Maker. Therefore, a secular "metaphysical world" does not imply a ready-made "product," such as Eden; rather, it implies an opportunity for routinely building the best of all possible worlds by secular particular cultures (nations) within the culture system. A particular culture represents a *relative* (human) reality but already marked subjectively with metaphysical prospects.

However, intellectualistic naturalism weakens modernity's capacity for regularly separating cultural parameters from biological ones human beings share with the rest of species. In that case, modern society cannot avoid racism: It cannot discriminate between cultural politics and racism systematically, which also "legitimizes" a niche where far right radicalism smolders (Democracy Now 2007; Martelle 2010). In other words, to be American means being loyal to American cultural values rather than being "white."

By participating in reproducing a particular culture, persons, as its members or citizens, contribute to a being process with metaphysical outlook. Consequently, in supporting a particular culture's reproduction and/or development, they are getting their own unique piece of the universe Maker's attribute. Otherwise, they would lose a

metaphysical horizon, making them fail to enjoy their lives and experience such human feelings as courage, happiness, hope, and solidarity.

The suggested type of thinking of culture influences a social change concept too. Whereas modernity's mainstream social theory considers a novelty almost an end in itself (Burke 2002), the continuous model views it as a means to an end. In this connection, the "scientific-technical, political, and economic rationalization of the world" seems to be neither a mechanical process nor an end in itself but modernity's unique historical contribution to the cultural last aim.

In addition, I refer to the symbolical aspect of a concept of reality as the ideal-symbolical function of culture. It constitutes the cultural imperative demanding to build a sociocultural process that ideally, approaches the potential but true human world as its limit superior. Correspondingly, to its factual-instrumental part, I refer as the instrumental function of culture that embraces already established relevant means—certain cultural values, such as behavioral and thought patterns or norms, and artifacts—to gain the formal end additionally. Employing the phenomenological method, one study draws a distinction between the symbolical and instrumental functions of a national culture and finds the former as the representative of the nation's will to be perennially (Natadze 1988).

A (human) concept of reality expresses a human view of existence extracting what humans consider important in it. However, the core of the importance is likely to be linked with *their presence in the being process*. They would understand it as a *legitimate* thus *simple* fact in the sense of its *indivisibility* that does not need any farther explanation—it is just good. Yet the concept of the world delivered through empirical experience rather informs humans that it hardly meets the indivisibility readily (systematically). These ready-made empirical *no-tendencies* invite the understanding of the complicated universe, turning the only concept of reality legitimate in human eyes into the ideal one with an absolute value. The latter requires the elimination of no-tendencies until the universe admits humans' ideal reality concept. Therefore, the ultimate reality resides in the condition in which humans expect to be perennially. Correspondingly, the value judgment cognitive function, with positivism vague on the matter, is to inform humans about the ultimate reality as an *opportunity*. However, its gradual realization is possible only collectively, through human persons' association about their same main care as a *potentially indivisible* socio-cultural unit; still, this is always persons' individual choice eventually. Thus, the binaries simple-complex, value-factual, factual-potential, legitimate-illegitimate, and individualistic-collectivist, plus a creator-creation one, lie at the bottom of human existence.

"Understanding Chinese Society": An Example for the Politics of Culture

Therefore, humans communicate with culture because it consists of universal binary pairs making a lot of difference to the way in which humans fulfill their ultimate wish. Outwardly, it looks like that we have "one" culture. Yet according to the comparative analysis, through contradictorily emphasizing terms in the pairs, each particular culture gains and keeps to its cultural individuality. These attitudes provide a development model different from modernity's unilineal one. A cultural individuality principle states that a particular culture tends not simply to be but rather to be by exercising its individuality, or *potential indivisibility*. This provides an understanding of cultural diffusion. Rather than merely copying an innovation, the receiving culture imports it as a historically necessary instrument for its surviving additionally in the process; it does so by interpreting it through its individual concept of reality, by the fact of import. This model proposes that in keeping to their individuality, particular cultures create the flexible system testing institutions from the different viewpoints of their particular concepts of reality and associated practices in various space-time contexts. The testing process gradually abstracts from an institution traits occurred contingent to the ultimate task of achieving the universal ultimate goal additionally by cultures within the culture system. Therefore, a kind of *dialectical* cultural selection is essential to the culture system mechanism.

Look at China's present political and economic boom. Quite "mysteriously" to evolution, China fruitfully combines capitalism, an economic system expressing an economic individualism value, with a nation-state bearing traits of traditional authoritarianism. The success counsels careful consideration. According to a cultural individuality principle, in order to remain additionally in the competitive being process, the Chinese have *automatically* interpreted capitalism constructed within modernity's concept of reality, emphasizing the terms factual and individualistic, through the Chinese concept of reality, favoring the terms collectivist and value. What the above mentioned could imply from this model epistemological standpoint, though?

In line with modernity's empiricist-and-nominalistic epistemology, the essential say of its individualism is that an empirical individual exists truly rather than society or a state. There the term *individual* carries the meaning of the human person's separateness, who actually, equally shows the characteristics of separateness from and connectedness to other persons in a community. Individualism seems to oversimplify the human personality by reducing connectedness to separateness, interdependence to independence, and sameness to difference so that in place of the human person we get the individual, a social atom. Therefore, the reductionism of the liberalism narrative implies that social atoms could *continuously* establish society, a contradictory statement itself. Such atoms pursuing their *only* individual interests perhaps could join into short-term associations where another individual is

always a means to an end, *only* other, but never other with a shared essential trait necessary to establish stable sociocultural "us." On a list of long-term social relations, that theory matches well with socioeconomic relations within and through which people pursue their peculiar interests that overlap only *accidentally*, such as socioeconomic ones. However, contrary to the above suggestion, LLCs demonstrate the extent of stability and continuity incomparable with that of human societies. This perhaps hints at the sameness among people that continuously unites them into society as its members or citizens. This reveals what a social atom argument cannot grasp; namely, that humans voluntary join into society to fulfill their whish or value that is not reducible to socioeconomic one. In other words, because of its epistemological standpoint, liberalism takes human society's being for granted. Similarly, utilitarian "analytical individualism" formulating that each individual in society pursues their own interests separately within the accepted there rules of game (Heyne 1991) takes the *rules* of game for granted. The rules—justice, politics—express the sameness, interdependence, and connectedness individualism misses inherently; in addition, without them, never could one realize socioeconomic opportunities. Therefore, politics and economics are not mutually reducible, because they correspond to different aspects of the human nature. One naturally tends to divide society into social atoms, whereas the other is the ultimate tool for re-uniting them into society. Then, it is important to comprehend that not does the argument that persons make their choices individually misleads but the reduction of the person to the individual does so. One's choices may be egoistic or public-spirited in content, but one always makes them individually. Thus, in accordance with its epistemology, individualism confuses or rather, reduces the content to the more formal aspect of *how one makes a choice*, and than ''concludes'' that actually, there are no general or shared things in the world, including human one too. But consider that if George Washington were *only* an individual, never could he build something common that Americans have so far shared through generations. This model states that when politics-economics relations correspond in terms of ends and means, respectively, this contributes to a political system's efficacy.

Recall now that a concept of reality emphasizing the terms collectivistic and value sees a cultural community as a potentially indivisible unit of human presence with metaphysical prospects. Thus, to its holders, a cultural community rather than an individual would represent the ultimate measure of human presence certainty. Then, this revision of liberalism-based capitalism project, "deifying" an individual, would aim to transform it in a way that could contribute to realizing the Chinese's ultimate interest (value) in Chinese society's additional presence. In that case, the Chinese nation-state would work for the realization as the ultimate means. Therefore, the interpretation would express economy-nation-state relations in terms of the significance of a community and a state rather than of an individual.

Consider too that what pushes Ulrich Beck (2001) into discriminating between the first and second modernity is, how the author demonstrates, the modern nation-state project's failure to preserve its founding trait of a separation between politics and economics, which perhaps becomes understandable within the continuous model framework. Furthermore, globalization sociology expands the failure into humankind's destiny in terms of overbearing "globalization" that mechanically, as if it were physicist's natural law, restricts a particular culture's authority to a subject's. However, according to this model, a particular culture automatically considers any existentially meaningful fact as a means or a challenge and, therefore, strives to restore threatened authority through relevant creative decision-making. Consequently, Chinese culture would interpret liberalism-based free market economy through its own concept of reality, in which case establishing (Chinese) state capitalism would mean not just restoring but also maintaining the politics-economy separation *seamlessly* in a changed secular world when the modern nation-state has failed to conserve it. This failure results because of, how this paper tries to demonstrate, modernity's inherent intellectualistic reductionisms—"methodological" metaphysical hypostatization of the universal binary terms in a naturalistic-and-utilitarian Eurocentric manner. Therefore, from the maintenance, the entire culture system could derive a benefit too.

Interestingly, recently reopened states versus free markets debates are likely to support this vision of things. According to a review of two-skeptical-to-a-Chinese-state-capitalism-future books, China's "communist" elite "only embraced capitalism in so far as it could be used as an instrument of state power" (the Economist 2010), in which case it unintentionally supports the idea that Chinese nation-state frames politics-economics relations in terms of ends and means, respectively. According to its other main idea, "China has been transformed from a standout into a global model…. From Latin America to the Middle East authoritarian governments are imitating China's model of 'state capitalism'" (ibid.). This conclusion echoes the comparative analysis general spirit and accidentally advocates an idea continuous model would defend intentionally. Societies that one can also identify as (secularized) "traditional societies" follow China's model because it seems to them so far the most successful in adjusting individual socioeconomic mobility interests to the political opportunities for gaining additional being with metaphysical perspective in a *post*-modern world. This, nonetheless, meets the citizens' *individual* interests in satisfying their secular metaphysical intention symbolically during their transient lives.

There was the presentation, "Understanding the Sustainability of Chinese Society," by Dayong Hong at the 17th ISA World Congress of Sociology. The speaker examined Chinese society's sustainability *dialectically*, vis-à-vis to the possibilities of its instability. According to the presentation, "At the same time, there are also many factors and a future of sustainability of Chinese society. The "scientific outlook on development," that is to say, a "better" and

"more reasonable" pattern of development, is now Chinese government's new strategy to pursue sustainability" (quoted from an abstract available in the presentation room). In addition, among keywords appeared on the video projector screen, one could read the word *immortality* thereby clarifying the ultimate sense of Chinese society's sustainability. Thus, the presentation narrative considers "scientific development" as a means, not an end in itself or a mechanical process, to achieve Chinese society's energy security, environmental protection, and social harmony (ibid.) in the context of additionally achieving its sustainability with metaphysical prospects vis-à-vis certain ready-made challenging facts. Interestingly, the presentation narrative is similar to that of Confucianism. Unlike Taoism, the latter prizes civic spirit and considers mind instrumental in pursuing the ultimate goal of the *endless* sustainability of Chinese society (Karalashvili 1989). This type of a concept of reality combines metaphysical intention with intellect and generally, with socio-cultural process in terms of the end-means plus an absolute value relations. Notice too that this approach represents *Chinese elites'* one.

Eventually, I conclude that encountered with and influenced by modernity's successful secularism and individualism, cultures that historically had shaped their concepts of reality through emphasizing the terms value (metaphysical) and collectivist have had to develop a new, secular meaning of the terms. For this, China too has had Confucianism anciently involved in secular-like metaphysical theorization of Chinese society and state, with Marxism as an anti-liberalism medium in this process. As a result, state capitalism has been invented.

The above is not an appeal for authoritarianism. Rather, it is a notice that now, countries exercising capitalism according to the liberalism utilitarian-naturalistic project should learn from Chinese lessons of its application (repairing the separation) *through their own ought-to-be-advanced concepts of reality* as carefully as the Chinese had to learn from free market and modern nation-state lessons through their cultural individuality standpoint. Disregard for the learning would cost one the opportunity to remain sovereign in building one's existence with metaphysical prospects additionally. Yet just this would mean that existential structure has become *obsolete*, whereas the regard would produce additional opportunities for progress. In a post-modern world, perhaps the extended ability to combine separateness and connectedness indicates a sign of progress.

Consequently, we might experience a far more serious break than the two-skeptical-book authors would enjoy. Similarly, the second modernity project seems an appeal from "second" naturalistic-and-utilitarian Eurocentrism.

Max Weber (2003) provided a basis for theorizing economy-nation-state relations likewise, messaging that economics is a "maidservant" of the nation's political interests.

The Rule of Law

It is noticeable to compare the Chinese narrative with a statement by a senior official of the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington. According to this classic of economic globalization narrative, "If you are pro-economic growth, you must be pro-immigration and pro-Hispanic, because we don't have the workers" (Reyes 2008). This neoliberal formula reduces the value and function of the American cultural identity to those of socioeconomic phenomena—the profession of worker and economic growth. Nonetheless, such confusion between ends and means is typical of modernity's methodological intellectualism. Representing modern society's utilitarianism and individualism developed to its purity, neoliberalism is likely to contribute to social disintegration and alienation trends, a recipe for making a jungle (by the confused) rather than for maintaining the rule of law (Kozy 2010; Roberts 2010; Sachs 2010). It would naturally "sacrifice" what unites—the *rules,* enabling economic game—for what divides—individuals, not persons*,* in chase of only accidentally overlapping socioeconomic interests, exposing structure ''devoted'' to different crises. Another example of the modernity reductionism seems to be neo-conservatism. One-pole, political, and military, its rhetoric implies that modern society's political equipment is an end in itself, which identifies its coercive-and–mechanical narrative or *mentality* as that of unilineal sociocultural evolution. Meanwhile, some see the outcomes of the neoconservative war on terror as being badly wrong (Rogers 2009). A 2008 international opinion poll revealed that the United States was ahead of North Korea (44%), Russia (34%), China (32%), and Germany (18%) with 47% of the interviewees pointing out its negative influence on the world (BBC 2008). Still, that is a disaster to a culture featuring a concept of a city on a hill (Huntington 2004).

In expressing "the belief that humans have the ability and the duty to try to create a heaven on earth" (ibid.), the concept of a city on a hill seems closest among Christian narratives to a secular one considering human life inspired by an absolute value of creating the best of all possible worlds. In addition, Mayflower Compact, the governing document of Plymouth Colony, is a document to which one study traces an American political principle of a democratic state (Parrington 1962). There God, an absolute value and a transcendent "place," is a party to the agreement according to which the signers, religious dissenters in the country of their origin, unite themselves into a civil body politic. The latter is supposed to serve the two main goals of the Glory of God and the general good of the colony (Wikipedia 2005). It is typical of the document that it naturally joins secular with divine. Namely, there, such human characteristics as the law subjected to *revision for the general good of the colony "from time to time"* (ibid.) and a political process managed by it, plus the colony's well-being, thus also reasoning and morality faculties

underlying them serve the transcendent as its means. Therefore, the Mayflower Compact concept of reality is structurally opposite to modernity's naturalistic and utilitarian one that reduces the end to the means. Considering additionally that the latter is established chiefly by America's former metropolis, then, the understanding that American Revolution originated the ideal of the nation-state with the new "template of political legitimacy—self-rule in the name of a nation of equal citizens" (Wimmer and Feinstein 2010) perhaps suggests that the template follows the logic of the document's narrative. In that case, the entire nation, citizens, not just exceptional social groups or persons, has gone into the agreement to build the best of all possible worlds, or still a transcendent place with an absolute value. *American culture does not coincide with a modern society.* Extending the exceptional extended family to the nation, American culture's genuine narrative seems to discover the metaphysical implication of a democratic nation-state and its law. Consequently, the self-identification of the American nation in terms of civic religion, "one nation under god," would voice the symbolical function of American culture, whereas "one nation under constitution" would express its political culture (identity) of the rule-of-law democratic nation-state, part of its instrumental function. If so, the identities agree in terms of end-means relations, respectively.

The nation is likely not to be merely composed of the present generations, an "evident fact" to modernity's social theory; rather, it is an imagined community of the posterity, present generations, and ancestors, the interdependent potential fellow co-workers maintaining and developing a particular culture up to the potential best of all possible worlds. This conception of the nation differs from its traditional territorial/space definition (Smith 2008). Thus, being human is a process, a choice, and work, not a ready-made natural fact.

In this context, I comment the survey brief "Assimilation and Language" (Pew Hispanic Center and Kaiser Family Foundation 2004) that explores a correlation between Hispanics' assimilation in the United States and their acquisition of English. The article emphasizes too:

The 200[2] National Survey of Latinos [NSL] also showed that some distinctly Latino attitudes are evident across the Spanish dominant, English dominant and bilingual groups. For example, while some attitudes about family vary by primary language, Latinos of all language preferences still seemed to place more emphasis on family in some cases than non-Hispanic whites. For example, when asked whether they agree that elderly parents should live with their adult children, large majorities of Spanish-dominant (76%), bilingual (71%), and English-dominant (69%) Latinos agreed that they should, in comparison to fewer (53%) non-Hispanic white Americans. This suggests perhaps that assimilation is not necessarily an across-the-board phenomenon, and that perhaps some selective assimilation is taking place. (ibid.)

These results demonstrate that the extended family is among the "distinctly Latinos attitudes" and that a language correlates with a way of life. However, the comparative literature analysis indicates that Spanish and the extended family feature the Hispanic culture's concept of reality. The results may suggest that Hispanics adhere more or less stably to the concept of reality characteristic of their sending cultural region. Yet, Samuel Huntington (2004) recons English and the rule of law among the distinguishing values of American culture (creed). Furthermore, the relationship between extended family and nation-state modi of human existence needs investigating for their joint consistency on a political culture matter. The model can generally clarify that a particular culture's concept of reality defines what its followers can accept as a specifically human way of life, and that they, therefore, are sensitive to the values building it, so that the values mostly change slowly—across generations. In addition, according to the comparative analysis, different cultural values can produce even contradictory messages about what a human way of life is. Consequently, if the followers of particular cultures coexist as an eclectic multicultural unit, their rights (and duties) to be human would clash automatically. However, this presents the issue of legitimacy—normally, one cannot refuse to be human. The case told by a 25-year-old Hispanic female, a respondent of the 2009 NSL, typically exemplifies this: "I was at a T.J. Maxx with my Columbian friend, and we were talking in Spanish, and this white person said 'You're supposed to speak English in America.' And I said, 'Oh really? So you need to learn Spanish because this is a changing country. Get over it" (Pew Hispanic Center 2009; p.39). Yet, being influenced by modernity's intellectualism, one cannot see an issue of legitimacy here.

Accordingly, it would be timely to questions globalization sociology's optimistic account of dual cultural identity as relatively new, inclusive transnational cultural experience (Beck 2001). Rather, the model expresses it as a mechanical combination of two competing, sometimes contradictory, concepts of reality. The "dual identity" seems bipolar and transitional rather than inclusive and stable and presents a nontrivial event of cultural proselytism. In this case, the disregard for the cultural politics can damage the future of American Dream (Huntington 2004). The mechanical principle of the eclectic "salad bowl" can only convert American society into a site where historically already established cultures, as well as races, play a zero-sum game—expanding the jungle.

Remember then that the state is the only legal authority eligible for solving issues of legitimacy. Thus, because each person has the right to be human, the American nation-state would need clear and fair cultural politics explaining to its own citizens, plus immigrants what means being American within the larger culture system. This would help them to make their free choices how to live their lives farther. The cultural politics that *constitutes* a particular culture additionally in a given historical-cultural context would have to be the main law of a nation-state. Then, cultural politics would be nothing else than a *constitution,* the nation-state's main (human-made) law by

definition. In case of America, the main "product" of application of constitutional norms, including human rights, by the citizens should be an additional (self-) reproduction of American nation/culture, through which the citizens would additionally realize their metaphysical intention symbolically. Just this would be the ultimate motive for the routine "selfless" allegiance to the rule of law, a case especially important for rule-of-law cultures.

The analysis offers the following general characteristics of the cultural narratives: Whereas modernity's concept of reality reduces the end to the means, Hispanic culture reduces the means to the end. The American and Chinese concepts of reality manifest themselves through articulating in peculiar to them ways end-means (ideal-instrumental) relations that connect secular metaphysical intention with the human means of its implementation (the law, morality, a nation-state, art, science, and the like), respectively. Continuous model acknowledges this approach to human being as a positive post-modern concept of reality involved in overcoming modernity's self-defeating intellectualism. However, modernity's concept of reality seems to be still influencing American creed, especially elites' one. Yet how one could maintain the New World project of American Dream (Franzen 2010)—the American project of the best of all possible worlds—via using the Old World's value measure, Eurocentrism? Thus, the ideological Revolutionary War is still to be completed.

However, until naturalistic (quantitatively minded [Wimmer and Feinstein 2010]) Eurocentric thought is dominating the social and political sciences, such views on social being are lost, with one of the various negative consequences that the far right ideologies and movements would "legitimate" their presence, which would encounter disagreement from the left, radicalizing (modern) society further.

Cultural Values in Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Considering "metaphysical world" the subjective driver of a sociocultural process, the model states that one can measure its records quantitatively (statistically), as usual. Accepting that in human science, quantitative data and analysis are necessary in forming and testing hypotheses, it recommends that interpretative qualitative research is specific to human science. The main argument is that the *interpretation of empirical content through meaning appears an inherent part of making culture*. This paper is likely to show that interpretative qualitative comparative literature study of cultural narratives, as part of the larger holistic approach, can contribute to the more integrated and in-depth understanding of the sociocultural event of interest quantitative research has found statistically valid. For example, continuous model allows reading the conclusion of the brief survey that assimilation may be a selective process as follows: It could reflect the inconsistency between sending and receiving countries' essential cultural (existential) values. The model, too, comments another conclusion that perhaps assimilation is not an across-the-

board phenomenon. Hispanics assimilation and socialization in the United States implies their participation in the reproduction and development of American culture; they can naturally contribute to the latter by taking their part in overcoming modernity's concept of reality. Therefore, acculturation (cultural diffusion) broadens a host culture's options to survive additionally.

It also believes that without applying an interpretative holistic approach to particular cultural phenomena, researchers are likely to miss the complete picture of what is/was actually going on, threatening to bring into study fragmented views with the weakened capacity for prediction. However, power to predict is an identifying feature of science. Modernity's proud formula *knowledge is power* still applies, yet in borrowing methodology from the natural sciences and economics, its human sciences reduce their true object to that of those. Although economics is a part of human science, the model thinks that only a sort of cultural values, such as the moral and aesthetical ones, that inherently hold a horizon with metaphysical perspective merit the adjective *cultural* as such. Since economic values are relative ones, economics can neither produce nor maintain a cultural process by itself; it carries the broader, instrumental (human-made) meaning of culture.

Interdisciplinarity

According to continuous model, not only the statement of fact but also the moral and aesthetical value judgments are necessary to reproduce a sociocultural process additionally, in which case an interpretative comparative analysis of aesthetical facts would be worth considering as part of the research. In this connection, the contextual-functional commonality among the moral, aesthetical, and discursive practices, ensuring that their individual outputs are mutually comparable and transferable, would serve as the general principle for interdisciplinarity. In case of literature, through analyzing the concepts of reality of literary texts, comparative literature could contribute to restoring a more salient and subtle from-within view of a particular culture of a given period. Perhaps human science should regard literature as a potential in-depth interview respondent and the comparative literature study of culture(s) as a guide for conducting the interview. However, unlike comparative literature, the comparative literature study of culture suggests understanding the term literature broadly, as any text distinctly expressing this or that concept of reality.

Culture as a Process of Making

The proposed pattern of thought argues for cultural autonomy too. As the symbolical function interprets the ready-made facts in terms of a potential means or challenge, the meaning of things, not things themselves, gets humans to

react respectively through their joint action. Considering the empirical content of things would be necessary for joint action to be capable of serving human agency's ultimate goal of additional presence. Cultural autonomy implies that the ideal-symbolical function of culture is the subjective driver of a human society's additional existence.

In addition, the model seems to clarify the structure versus agency debate, characterizing traditional theory (Burke 2002). It sees sociocultural structure as an existential teleological mechanism that limits choices available to human agency to ones that *stably* fulfill human agency's ultimate wish for additional presence vis-à-vis to recurrent ready-made facts harmonizing with it only *occasionally*. Therefore, the deeper sense of the social construction of reality (ibid.) would sound like this: Humans are engaged in reconstructing relative reality constantly built by presence projects still non-aligned stably with humans' one, until it coincides with the best of all possible worlds, the ultimate reality.

It seems that continuous model can combine the hermeneutic and causal approaches to social processes and provide the concepts of cultural autonomy and hermeneutic reconstruction of social texts; consequently, it avoids the general flows of the weak programs. It also agrees with the strong program's two basic ideas: "[E]very action … is embedded to some extent in a horizon of affect and meaning…. [and] institutions … have an ideal foundation that fundamentally shapes their organization and goals and provides the structured context for debates over their legitimation" (Alexander and Smith 2001).

A Meeting with the Sphinx

The strong program recommends establishing cultural autonomy by a sharp analytical uncoupling of culture from social structure in that the traditional, institutionally oriented social science reduces culture to the "hard" variables of social structure and confines its significance chiefly to reproduction of social relations (ibid.). Actually, the strong program's culture-social structure opposition echoes the division of culture into its ideal-symbolical and instrumental aspects; moreover, the opposition the ideal versus "more material and instrumental forces" (ibid.) generally structures its narrative. Consequently, although the strong program's critique of mainstream social theory seems the most consequent, the strong program is likely to replace the weak programs' weak points with the sphinx of the ideal-material and/or instrumental opposition without commenting how to deal with it. Moreover, the sphinx is inherent part of modernity's concept of reality since Descartes' rationalism. Yet, the end-means chain approach where the ultimate end carries an absolute value does uncouple the ideal-symbolical function (corresponding to the strong program's *culture*) from the instrumental one (*social structure* in the strong program) in terms of end-means relations, respectively.

Consider then the true-to-continuous-model statement: Society is (the instrumental function of) culture, and society is not (the ideal-symbolical function of) culture. Now read the two clauses by skipping the bracketed phrases: society is culture, and society is not culture. Yet they echo cultural sociology and the sociology of culture's contradictory standpoints on society (structure)-culture relations: The former often claims that "[N]early everything is cultural" (Gans 2012), whereas the latter, a representative of "structural sociology," likewise treats social structure (ibid.). Thus, while conceptualizing human social being, both approaches skip the cultural ideal-instrumental distinction in characteristic of them contradictory ways: When the sociology of culture tends to reduce the ideal (the end) to the instrumental (the means), cultural sociology does the opposite, which exhibits the sphinx's power to confuse—a unilineal way of thinking. However, continuous model reconciles the contradictory standpoints within one dialectical say. Then, conjoin both *society/structure* and *culture* within *one* research in terms of culture's instrumental and ideal-symbolical functions, respectively, considering the latter as the subjective ultimate motive for producing, reproducing, and/or transforming the former additionally. In avoiding intellectualism, continuous model seems to skip a meeting with the sphinx.

Moreover, the contradictory standpoints represent a fascinating example of the power of cultural individuality. Namely, "soft" American cultural sociology (ibid.) conceptualizes human social being by restoring the significance of the ideal in social science, which reproduces the Mayflower Compact reality concept's general spirit, whereas "hard" British sociology of culture parallels that of the naturalistic-and-utilitarian concept of reality by the English Enlightenment and positivism. In that case, the two sociological narratives seem to be bound to their (contradictory) cultural ones, or are culturally "biased"; therefore, not considering the message would contribute to burdening sociology with the culture versus structure debate "endlessly."

In addition, using historical materialism, the reverse of the sphinx, methodologically (Miller 2001), the sociology of culture deifies again, a socioeconomic value, plus class struggle, means to an end for this model. The model moderates the sociology of culture's terms. Generally, the instrumental part of culture, including social relations, fulfills the ultimate wish of the entire cultural community in a given period. This idealization helps to grasp that subordinated social groups are likely to give their consent to the elite's rule because they cannot fulfill their own ultimate wish by themselves—without the political elite's exercising its core competency to build a political process. According to continuous model, in its strict sense, humans' group merits the adjective *social* or *sociocultural* only if their association's aim and product is distinguishable in terms of core competency somehow connected to reproducing a particular culture additionally. The core competency of the elite, therefore, is to organize social groups at hand into historically effective existential (sociocultural) structure as a whole. Being the ultimate means of

reproducing the structure additionally, a political process, following Weber, exclusively exerts legitimate force in the cases of violation of the norms/rules that ensure the fulfillment of the members' universal goal historically.

This model considers ordinary social groups with different professions and ways of life as holders of various concepts of reality (mentalities) that can substitute for the elite's one when it becomes historically irrelevant. This is likely to clarify the significance of resistance. Theoretically, the possibility of conflict and the necessity of change come up when social structure become corrupted—fundamentally missing the opportunities of reproducing or advancing a historically established practice of building the best of all possible worlds. Yet this leaves the opportunities of the members' achieving and/or developing their human nature of the universe maker unrealized. Speaking generally, the political leadership suits until it suits the core function of a political process; the latter serves the community, including the elite, not the elite itself.

Max Weber's "Nation-state and Economic Policy" (2003) makes a path for such a pattern of thought. Quantitative and hermeneutic, the work extracts the "ultimate value measure of events" from the analysis of socioeconomic-cum-demographic processes. It presents the subjective image of the special remote posterity marked with "that variety of humankind we find in our own self." Unlike positivists, Weber finds this image of an imagined community important enough to revise socio-economically grounded social theory through it. Freeing the latter from its illusionary optimism, he warns colleagues about the special methodological illusion as if it were possible to avoid value judgments in human science.

Summary

Employing the end-means and absolute value plus concept of reality approach, the continuous model of culture suggests that culture both motivates and enables humans to build the best of all possible worlds, the ultimate human condition with an absolute value. In other words, culture is the specifically human tool for human beings to remain additionally in the being process with metaphysical perspective, participating in which only humanizes. Although culture "programs" human beings as humans, they can not only rewrite the program but also choose among them. Eventually, to be human is a choice—a moral-and-informed act rather than just a ready-made biological fact. Continuous model states that culture is sewn from universal binaries and provides concepts of the rule of law, state capitalism, a dialectical model of progress, interpretative qualitative research, interdisciplinarity, and a value judgment cognitive function, as well as of cultural autonomy, alienation, diffusion, and individuality. The model, a kind of a post-modern functionalism, is likely to generate a more fruitful theoretical-and-methodological basis for joining within a holistic framework such fundamental opposites as conflict-equilibrium, nature-culture, culture-

structure, person-society, agency-structure, politics-economics, society-culture, endogeny-exogeny, reproduction-transformation, and creativity-routine, as well as fact-value, sign-referent, essence-presence, the ideal-the instrumental, causality-teleology, particularism-universalism, than modernity's theory does.

Continuous model predicts that cultural particularism remains an essential characteristic of human life. Engaged in overcoming modernity's intellectualism sphinx, the post-modernity positive narrative is aware that turning down *particular* brings in missing *universal* and vice versa. Cultural particularism nature appears dialectical—(actually) particular and (potentially) universal, in which case the post-modernity's cultural particularism could better adjust its particular goal to the universal one, embedded in the culture system, than modernity's *nationalism* can. In addition, the awareness of the universal goal becomes the opportunity for easing the effect of cultural alienation. A particular culture remains the only existential pattern where satisfying personal secular metaphysical intention conforms to serving humankind's existential opportunities: secular persons normally feel confident as the full members of their cultural-in-groups—their nation-state's citizens. Consequently, not only disadvantages but also advantages characterize cultural particularism. Still, systematically confusing the universal oppositions in the Eurocentric manner, modernity's intellectualism seems to radicalize chiefly disadvantages, or the negative externalities generated by modernity's reality concept and relevant practices; therefore, the case for *post*-modernity is likely to lie in Eurocentrism too.

A future study promises to revisit the conceptions of democracy and human rights and to elaborate epistemologically such oppositions as notion/affect, value-fact, science-metaphysics/theology, culture-evolution, and the ideal-the material and/or instrumental.

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