

MARXIST SOCIOLOGY

Avoiding the Misleading Trap of Sociology Localization in China

..... Xie Yu 1

Abstract: A debate concerning sociology localization has been going on in China for a long time, but no consensus has been reached. This article examines three aspects of sociology localization—subject matter, application, and paradigm—and concludes that it is an unimportant issue that should best be ignored. In subject matter, Chinese sociology has already been fully localized, thus there is no need to emphasize local topics. In application, successful uses of Western theories and methods require both the mastery of Western sociology and the judicious application of these theories and methods in actual research settings in China. Researchers using Western theories and methods should understand the social contexts for their studies, maintain independence, and exercise creativity. Regarding the paradigm, all scholarly contributions and creativity should be evaluated by other scholars. Theories and methods developed by Chinese sociologists should be regarded as contributions to the mainstream discipline, adding knowledge to not only Chinese sociology but also the world’s sociology.

Marx’s Transition Theory and the Riddle of “Leaping over the Caudine Forks”

Feng Gang 14

Abstract: Marx’s statement of “leaping over the Caudine Forks” is considered “the Problem of the Century” by many scholars. This essay presents a thorough interpretation of this statement. Applying the analytical method of internal constitution to different modes of social production, this essay starts from Marx’s theory of social forms in relation to the statement, along with materials from *Capital*, *Marx’s Notes on the History of Ancient Societies* and other works. The essay aims to discuss the Marxist theoretical thought of the “transition from one mode of production to another mode of production”, in order to comprehend the statement of “leaping over the Caudine Forks” and gain insights for contemporary socialist practice.

Community and Morality: On How Marx's Moral Theory Transcends German
Historicism *Li Rongshan* 37

Abstract: Starting from the misunderstanding of Marx by Tönnies, this essay examines the moral meaning of communism from the perspective of community theories based on German historicism. The starting point of Marx's communist doctrine has a very strong affinity with the tradition of German community theories—to protect the integrity of personality—but it is quite different from the latter's approach. Marx's solution transcends the latter in terms of moral problems. German community theorists criticize the political and economic institutional design of the Enlightenment rationalism and try to rebuild the community spirit through cultural approaches. They want to sacrifice certain “equality” at the level of political economy to open up space for the “conscientious freedom” with a kind of moral “hierarchy”, in order to preserve the integrity of the personality. This culturally oriented humanitarianism does not give a proper place for the political and economic structure, thus fails to free itself from the cycle of “restoring the community in a society shaped by social forces.” Marx attempts to fundamentally overthrow the political and economic structure that has led to this cycle. The goal is to completely liberate one's personality. Marx and Engels hold that it is necessary to open up a new space for moral freedom on the basis of true political and economic equality in order to eliminate the hierarchical differences among human beings and to safeguard the integrity of personality of the human beings, thus transcend German community theories and elevate community to a new level.

MONOGRAPHIC STUDY

State Governance and Social Governance

Transcending the Fiscal Problem: Vertical Fiscal Imbalance in China from
the Perspective of State Governance *Lu Jiankun & Li Yongyou* 62

Abstract: From the perspective of state governance, we analyze the mechanisms of vertical fiscal imbalance (VFI) in China. We find that the VFI is endogenously determined by the central-local political arrangements as a vertical control mechanism to manage the local governments and coordinate regional development. The central government seeks for better governance by adjusting the vertical political control and vertical fiscal control. The flexible fiscal control complements the more stable political control in improving the state governance. However, there are also some latent problems that need to be considered with regard to the fiscal control mechanisms. Policymakers

should take serious considerations of the relationship between the fiscal institutions and political institutions when reforming the fiscal systems and modernizing the governance system in China.

Shaping the Role of the “Public Operator” and Its Dilemma: A Study of the Rural Grassroots Government’s Role in the Transition Period
..... *Chen Qi* 88

Abstract: Past research mainly simplifies the local government as performing the role of an enterprise, who pursues maximum benefit in the context of the market transition. It however ignores the local government’s role in promoting public welfare in economic activities. In fact, the rural local government plays the role of the public operator which is more complicated than an enterprise in an environment consisting of the government institution, society, and market. This paper finds out that the local government not only is engaged in business activities, but also uses the management of business as a strategy to deal with stress. It shows that the local government adopts different behavioral strategies in response to the complex environment. It has multiple goal orientations, rather than pursuing the single aim of maximizing profits. This paper also finds out that frequent social conflicts put the local government in a dilemma between pursuing economic interests and promoting public welfare. It is the result of the mismatch between the government’s power and responsibility.

Floating Control and Multi-level Embeddedness: Adjustment Mechanisms of the State-society Relationship in the Context of Contracting-out Social Services *Xu Yingyan & Li Xiyuan* 115

Abstract: Literatures on the state-society relationship in China mainly pay attention to the systems of differential controls, the dependent development of social organizations, the institutional constraints of social organizations, the project system and the embedded development under the contracting-out social service system. They focus on the one-way influence by the government and different developmental patterns of social organizations. The interactional relationships between multi-level governments and social organizations are not emphasized. Based on the practice of contracting-out social service in city G, this paper advances the concepts of the systems of differential controls and embedded development of social organizations. The government adopts systems of floating control according to different policy targets and different preferences of the bureaucrats. At the same time, the professional social organizations may have the capacity to counterclaim, and embed themselves into the different levels of the government. Floating control and

multi-level embeddedness are the main adjustment mechanisms of the state-society relationship in the contracting-out social service system in China.

PAPER

Social Origins and Educational Attainment: A Historical Analysis Based on 70 Birth Cohorts from CGSS Datasets

..... *Fang Changchun & Feng Xiaotian* 140

Abstract: The impact of social origins on educational attainment depends on the social context in which people live. How does the impact of social origins or ascribed factors on peoples' education change with the social change of China in recent decades? Analysis of CGSS data from 70 birth cohorts shows that some characteristics of the changing effect of ascribed factors on educational inequality can be described by the hypothesis of historical stages of big events and the hypothesis of transformation from the socialist egalitarian model to a liberal competitive model. However, these two hypotheses cannot sufficiently explain the historical process of educational inequality. The result of our study indicates that several structural factors that affect educational inequality have been overlooked by existing research. More research is needed to explore the impact of macro social change on the mechanism of educational inequality.

Story and Storytelling: A Path Towards Narrative Sociology and the Chinese Stories

..... *Liu Zixi* 164

Abstract: Narrative analysis has recently prevailed in sociological studies as an important method. Four dimensions of the concept of narrative, i. e. , ubiquitousness, concreteness of time, internal causality, and underlying resistance, are analyzed in details in this paper, based on which story and storytelling are proposed as two main research approaches that lay the infrastructure of narrative sociology. The first approach focuses on the constitutive elements, formal models and network representation of narratives, which applies network analysis to the content of stories. The second approach focuses on the effect of context and narrator, as well as the social consequences of narration, which evolves into reflective analysis of the behavior of storytelling. Given the respective advantages of these two approaches, the author provides a tentative integrative framework for the sociological study of stories and to describe the morphology of stories as a prospective path to narrative sociology in China.

The Role Played by *Renqing* in Bribery and Its “Moralizing”: An Ethnographic Study on School Choosing in China *Ruan Ji* 189

Abstract: It is not uncommon to encounter corruption and bribery implicated in the complicated *guanxi* practice in the Chinese society. Drawing upon data from two ethnographic studies on school place allocation in two southern Chinese cities from 2012 to 2014, this study finds that the ethics of *renqing* safeguards and facilitates bribery. *Renqing* builds trust and assurance for bribery, and provides ethical support for it. The interactive ritual used in bribery, that is, the “moralizing” of bribery, is mainly to cover the instrumental element of *renqing* rather than the illegal aspect of it. New concepts such as the “ritual capital” and “instrumental *li*” are better suited to describe the essence of this moral performance.

REVIEN

Institutionalization of the Life Course: Paradigm and Methods of the Continental Life Course Research *Cheng Tsuo-Yu & Hu Shan* 214

Abstract: Life course research is an important field in sociology. The paradigm of the Continental life course research, however, has largely been neglected in China. The purpose of this paper is to examine the connotation, advantages and disadvantages of the Continental paradigm. The Continental paradigm is based on Martin Kohli’s theory of institutionalization of the life course, and emphasizes that the individual life course is a structural unified whole shaped by social institutions. Under this paradigm, a new perspective for China’s life course research is possible for future research.