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Systematic Process Legitimation: Deep Logic of the Modern Social Reality

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Sociology

by

Armond S. Hardwick

March 2022

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Systematic Process Legitimation: Deep Logic of the Modern Social Reality

by

Armond S. Hardwick

Master of Arts, Graduate Program in Sociology
University of California, Riverside, March 2022
Dr. Christopher Chase-Dunn Chairperson

This thesis argues that what distinguishes all major, categorical types of human societal organization is the underlying logic operant in the unstated, dynamic ruleset that determines whether social entities and social actions at any given scale of analysis are accounted for as legitimate, or illegitimate. These are here termed "logics of legitimation," and it is argued that all of the features said to distinguish *modern* society from the prior historical era by theorists such as Weber, Durkheim, Marx, and Foucault can be understood as expressions of a logic of legitimation centered on *systematicness*, which is the cumulative effect of the mutually-reinforcing, interacting operation of six quietly operating principles that every societal feature distinctive to the modern era exemplifies one or more of at a time. After a delineation of the areas of overlap and divergence between this central claim and core tenets of the neoinstitutionalist school, it is supported by using (a) the systems logic of legitimation, (b) it's complex of underlying principles, and (c) it's bright contrast with the preceding "sovereignty" logic of legitimation to analyze and make sense of historically recent macroinstitutional changes

in Western society that have occurred in three major domains: economics, politics, and culture.

Since the concept of "modernity" is both a theoretical abstraction and a historical time-marker, the task of this thesis is only completed with a final substantive section that attempts to mark the origins of the systems logic of legitimation's emergence in the historical chronology of Western societal evolution. The account is suggestive of potential mechanisms for the shift from one logic to another, which warrant future research. The concluding sections suggest research designs for verifying the theory here espoused, and potential applications in the studies of international geopolitics, gender, and race.

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What are the distinctive features of the most recent period of human sociocultural political economic technological evolutionary history that set it apart for the unique designation of "modern?" The following thesis takes up this longstanding question in the social sciences and utilizes observations and analyses from an array of theorists of modernity and of social systems in synthesis to arrive at an overarching construct argued to have comprehensive explanatory scope. The proposed construct is a paradigm-defining, implicit, background logic that maintains hegemonic sway over contemporary society through its requirement that the existence and actions of any type of actor be able to account for themselves as technical steps in some form of systematic process. It is thus here named "the systematic process paradigm" or "the systems paradigm" for short. Recourse to this normative meta-logic is obligatory to attain legitimacy for entities of all scales and spans all institutional fields; the unique dynamic it has created is the "modern" essence that permeates all areas of activity in contemporary society.

The thesis begins with a brief section that states and contextualizes the problem, followed by one that explains the proposed conceptual framework termed "logics of legitimation," which are used as an analytic lens for the remainder of the thesis. An understanding of the previously dominant kinship and sovereignty-based logics of legitimation, and speculations about the still-emerging successor paradigm is critical for interpretative purposes because they are the foil against which entities and actions interpreted to obey the implicit systems logic are judged valid by contrast. A provisional explanation of analytic categories for different modes of production used by historical

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comparative world-systems theorists is first provided, as the logics of legitimation posited to exist are lateral expansions upon these concepts, with significant parallelisms.

Following this is an explanation of the latent constructs identified by their operation to constitute the basis upon which the systematic process paradigm logic of legitimation arises as an emergent dynamic. These "*principles of systems logic"* serve as conceptual reference points that make a useful shorthand for interpreting whether and in what ways a given justification of an entity, action or recurring practice adheres to, or departs from, the systems logic of legitimation.

The neoinstitutionalist school within organization studies is the intellectual tradition that concerns itself with phenomena most closely related to those discussed here, and makes significant contributions to the conceptual foundations from which the claims made in this thesis are launched. The next section is therefore dedicated to disentangling the logics of legitimation theory of modernity's areas of overlap with, and points of departure from, the major tenets of neoinstitutional theory. It also highlights the conceptual gaps in these tenets that the theory proposed here purports to fill.

Following this is the main analytic portion of the thesis, in which the systematic process logic of legitimation and its latent principles are applied interpretively to the macroinstitutional domains of economics, politics, and culture in contemporary society, in order to advance the case that they (among other institutional domains) share the dynamic created by this (meta)logic in common as the distinctive trait that qualitatively differentiates their character from that of institutions in eras past. The broadness and fundamentalness of the institutional categories chosen are meant to strongly suggest the

breadth of phenomena made explicable by understanding the systems logic of legitimation to inhere dynamically in the operation of modern institutions.

The section titled "The World We Know," follows up this elaboration on the abstract character of systems logic institutions with a specification of the temporal boundaries and global geopolitical structure of hegemonic diffusion and reinforcement of this logic in the concrete, historical modernity we inhabit. It does this by tracing back and adding context to the multiple historical origins of systems logic gleaned from the works of sociological theorists such as Durkheim, Weber, Tocqueville, Foucault, and others. This discussion of origins naturally raises issues regarding the mechanisms that underlie the transitions from the hegemony of one logic of legitimation to another.

The final two sections of the thesis outline detailed suggestions for how the logic of legitimation theory of modernity might be tested empirically, and suggested future directions for the theory's interpretive application.

In the interest of clarity, it should be noted that the term "system" will be employed throughout this work as a generalized conceptual filter characterizing all units of analysis discussed, such as polities, organizations, and human individuals. This usage refers to "systems" of all types in the abstract systems-theoretic sense of a collection of "elements" and "relations" between these elements that are differentiated from the environment they inhabit by a boundary that filters their contact with it and thus allows intensified and regularized internal processes, as defined by Luhman (1995). The associated dynamics are understood to be features of all social systems of all eras, and in no way unique to the modern era. These concepts are part of an orienting interpretive

toolkit, alongside concepts like "habitus" (Bourdieu 1984), "division of labor" (Weber and Kalberg 2005), or "core-periphery hierarchy" (Inoue et. al 2015) and are entirely distinct from the systems logic of legitimation around which the core argument of the present work revolves and to which they are applied analytically.

The Question of Modernity

Over the course of the most recent several centuries, human civilizations have pressed through a myriad of unprecedented developments that have reconfigured and transformed the foundational underpinnings of our material existence. Quantum leaps in the speed, scale and prolificity of our capacities for communication, exchange, movement, accumulation, consumption, production, destruction, fertility, and resilience against weather and disease have both been occasioned and propelled forward by a dynamically co-determining complex of technological breakthroughs and social reorganizations. Social critics and commentators such as Tocqueville, Marx or even Taylor located near important junctures of historical transition like the harnessing of electric power and the second industrial revolution, have famously left to us prescient insights into the nature of our new normals from when they were still visibly taking shape. Others, from domains as diverse as Max Weber, Jean-Paul Sartre and Andy Warhol have, from the standpoint of more mature development, left accounts of ominous social ills and promising social capacities unique to the recent era of technological and sociocultural evolution. All attest to the notion that human civilizations have entered a new era, an era widely referred to as "modernity."

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The crises, promises and enigmas of the emerging modern world spurred and contextualized many of the observations, hypotheses and theoretical elaborations made by the foundational figures in the discipline of sociology, which has persisted for well over a century as the field of inquiry most consistently committed to the problematics of recent developments in human civilization. In the process, the term "modern" has diffused through society broadly as a now ubiquitous signifier in ordinary parlance, used loosely as a catchall for things new, recent, civil by contemporary norms, or technologically advanced. Yet for all this discursive motion, a clear picture of the encompassing phenomenon that, through a diverse multitude of contact points ceaselessly impels so many to iterate its name, has failed to emerge. Akin to the three blind men and the elephant, we thus proceed by hazily directed groping, without a comprehensive framework or coherent narrative within which to orient our piecemeal, incidental, case-based observations and link them to each other, thereby deriving profounder insight. A state of affairs in which we are aware of a substantive change and can intuit its importance but have failed to work out the details of its contents and boundaries, permissively allows for partisan appropriations and poorly historicized subjectivistic recastings with only scattered and half-connected analytic tools to challenge them. The U.S. government-sponsored subfield of "area studies," tasked with translating the sociopolitical economic conditions of non-western countries into knowledge useful for the administrative purposes of empire, is one such historical appropriation that has redirected and distorted the concept's connotation in an enduring way (Shih 2019). Its literatures on "modernization" and "development" center the contemporary United States

and Western Europe as archetypal models of "advanced" civilization, toward which countries behind in this race are to progress linearly by adopting a set of dubious policies like "marketization" (Shannon 1989). This would seem to have paved the way discursively for those that espouse an ethnocentric reconstruction of modernization as entirely synonymous with Westernization, or worse yet, *Americanization* in particular. Unmoored yet further from contextualizing history or social structure are reinterpretations of "modernity" as a state of mind or being, or a set of customs and lifestyle choices. At the same time, the lack of an agreed-upon package of criteria for evaluating and designating the modern or non-modern character and features of a society has stifled the ability to make meaningfully negatable statements or draw illuminating comparisons regarding the concept, and this underspecification has left its analytic and explanatory value in a dubious limbo.

The work of the modernization theorists was rooted conceptually in the structural functionalist interpretation of societal evolution spearheaded by Talcott Parsons, the most prominent historical attempt to formulate a comprehensive theory of the modern. The erroneous and problematically ethnocentric assumption that all societies lie somewhere along a linear path toward an inherently desirable universal model of advanced civilization embodied by contemporary Western civilization was thus built on functionalist teleological interpretations of societies as fundamentally stable and ordered entities that undergo gradual, adaptive change via piecemeal reshuffling of an interrelated web of purposive substructures (Shannon 1989). Dependency theory, and its close offspring, World-System theory, were consciously developed as categorical refutations of

this paradigm's core tenets, and have seriously challenged the notion that "modern" society even exists. This challenge is mainly based on a change in the scale of analysis. Dependency theory highlights unequal resource flows at the level of interstate relations, which World-System theory goes on to conceptualize as constituting a stratified division of labor among states at a global level of integration. This is interpreted to be a hierarchical global level of social system integration analogous to a Marxian proletariat/bourgeosie division of labor (Marx and Kamenka 1983). The notion of a structured interstate system patterning relations into a hierarchical core-periphery configuration challenges the modernization theory assumption that the West and its closest allies are simply the early comers to a "modern" evolution of self-contained national societies at varying stages of development. Dependency and world-systems theories contend that the so-called "backwardness" and "underdevelopment" of the non-dominant national societies has in fact been created, actively maintained, and existentially depended upon by the very group of dominant national societies that have defined themselves in contradistinction as "modern" and "developed." The "modern" world then – if the term is to retain any meaning – is none other than the modern world-system, a global network of nation-states integrated by capitalist relations that systematically reproduces hierarchicalizing differentials of "development. This thesis does not aim to rebut this theoretical perspective and reconstruct the untenable paradigm of prescriptive, universalized models of linear "progress," but rather to stand on the shoulders of these breakthroughs in analytic interpretation of our contemporary world by

increasing the fidelity of our images of current society at the world level, and by

discovering the ways it is qualitatively distinctive from that which came before it.

Rather than abandoning the effort to understand modernity, the task of this thesis

is to take a purposeful, substantive and definite step forward in the formulation of a

generalizable understanding of its distinctive nature." I intend to produce a

conceptualization of modernity that is explicitly and coherently cognizant of its

discontinuities and continuities with historical, ongoing and prefigurating legacies of

societal evolution and articulation. This is the first phase of a dynamic ongoing process of

synthetic elaboration and reflexive modification that follows the "speak and listen"

model of knowledge consolidation (Ling and Pinheiro 2017).[1] This will be pursued by

identifying the latent constructs that underlay the various, heretofore loosely-connected

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[1] The "speak and listen" model of knowledge consolidation is a methodological approach that has emerged from critiques of historical Western epistemology. The historical mode tends to theorize by formalizing a web of axioms derived heavily from abstract logic and rationalization, whereas much new information as possible is then rationalized to fit into the schemas thus produced, and that which cannot fit is dismissed or ignored as anomalous. Once the accumulation of anomalies is too great and their implications too unignorable, the axioms are falsified, the theory breaks down, and one is returned to a disoriented state of non-understanding, without reliable sense-making concepts, until a new collection of axioms that accommodates the current anomalies is created from the debris. This new theory itself draws distinctions and processes new information in a way that virtually guarantees a future collapse of the same type. Once the framework has been "spoken" into existence, the act of speaking comes to predominate over that of listening for the remainder of its duration. A "speak and listen" model would by contrast, start from piecemeal observations that may not seem connected at first, and which attempt to account for as much descriptive idiosyncrasy as possible in its interpretations, rather than attempting to tame the data top-down with categoric abstractions derived from universalized logical premises. Over a period of time, apparent patterns in and connections between observations take shape, and more tentative observations are made with an emphasis on continuing to "listen" even as one "speaks" based on an increasingly solid knowledge foundation. Rather than bracketing any information as simply anomalous (or as "error"), any apparent contradiction to current formulations, or nuance unrecognized in them, occasions a revision (of corresponding scale) of all current formulations to integrate and reflect the new information. Knowledge in this way can be said to grow steadily and unevenly, like an amoeba, rather than being built up by stacking together pieces of a solid – but collapsible – structure. It is a process of consolidating understanding that is thought to proceed more slowly than ordinary theory-building, but to produce paradigms much less vulnerable to being shattered by new information, a situation that may send former adherents back to the drawing board without a theory, and all previously accumulated knowledge now called into doubt. Though the information made use of in this thesis consists itself largely of theoretical interpretations of various phenomena made by others, the principles and constructs advanced here were derived from said material according to the "think and speak" method.

observations of several of the most elaborate partial theorists of modernity, and cross-pollinating these with broad-scaled theories of social systems, human history, and sociocultural evolution. The case is advanced that a new, umbrella framework derived from this process has far-reaching and deeply penetrating descriptive and explanatory power regarding the nature and boundaries of modernity as a pervasive social dynamic distinctive from those that have prevailed in any social systems prior, especially the feudal era of essentialistic thinking that preceded it in Western society. It is argued that what fundamentally sets qualitatively distinct regimes of human social organization apart is the diffuse meta-logic for legitimating or delegitimating social actions and existences at all scales of analysis and in all institutional realms. These meta-logics are termed "logics of legitimation," and the case of the contrast between the process-oriented "modern" logic of *systematicity,* and the patrimonial, essentialism-oriented logic of *sovereignty* is explored as a demonstrating case that illuminates the overarching, quintessential nature of the modern. The systems logic of legitimation is understood to be an ambient quality spanning the entire world-system rather than individual societies, and to underlie and characterize all contemporary institutions, rather than merely the economic system that serves to integrate them (Parsons 1998) at that level according to other theorists in the world-systems school (Shannon 1989). The analysis is applied to the reconstitution of polities at the macro-institutional level formulated as a set of the three general domains of (1) economics, (2) politics, and (3) culture in the interest of concreteness and clarity. This is done provisionally for the sake of illustration, and not in ignorance of justified

epistemological mistrust of schematic lists of three, or of the ultimate untenability of

discrete ontological boundaries between these heuristically determined categories.

Logics of Legitimation

…technologies are institutionalized and become myths binding on organizations.
Technical procedures of production, accounting, personnel selection, or data processing
become taken-for-granted means to accomplish organizational ends. Quite apart from
their possible efficiency, such institutionalized techniques establish an organization as
appropriate, rational, and modern. Their use displays responsibility and avoids claims of
negligence. (Meyer 2009)

The set of analytic concepts advanced here as a contextualizing framework for all

identified latent constructs that compose the phenomenon of modernity owe a great debt

to the historical comparative evolutionary world-systems perspective, as articulated in a

large body of work on human settlements by Christopher Chase-Dunn (Chase-Dunn

1998; 2004; 2005; Chase-Dunn et al. 2015a; 2015b, Wolf 1982). These concepts in fact

derive originally from a process of logical induction meant to expand the range of

phenomena analyzable within that paradigm.

With a strong foundation in the work of Marx (1973; 2003), the comparative-

historical evolutionary branch of the world-systems school takes up the monumental task

of devising a comprehensible set of concepts that account for all varieties of political-

economic regime practiced by humans during and after pre-history. The details specify

subcategories and explore specific historical iterations with considerable nuance, but at a

general level, political-economic regimes are found to fall into one or another of a series

of four types delineated by their characteristic modes of economic production. Ordered

by the historical sequence of their emergence, these are the kin-based, tributary, capitalist, and socialist modes of production.

The kin-based mode of production is most strongly associated with nomadic, hunter-gather societies, and is defined by a designation of social and productive roles and resource distributions based on normatively consensual reciprocal responsibilities implied by a semi-fictive myth of blood-kinship (Chase-Dunn, Khutkyy 2015). The relatively small populations and subsistence level of food production connected with this system meant that most individuals were engaged in relatively equal productive activity, and there was little to no surplus to accumulate. This, and institutions that actively undermined inequality, curtailed the development of steep stratification.

The tributary mode of production by contrast, is associated with landed, agricultural societies such as predominated since the Bronze Age and in Europe during the feudal era, and is capable of producing enough surplus to allow a distinct division of labor among groupings within polities, and the accumulation of wealth by one or more specialized strata that do not participate in production. This type of regime accumulated resources by means of institutionalized coercion – states, the law, property, tithing, taxation and tribute.extracted from conquered peoples producing very hierarchical class societies and empires.

The next mode of production to emerge - that which has come to predominate the now singular, globally extended network of polities known as the modern world-system - is the capitalist mode. This mode of production is characterized by profit-taking organized as commercial trade and production of commodities for sale in price-setting

markets regulated by state-backed institutions of legal currency, binding contracts, and rights to private ownership and property. The capitalist mode has been both occasioned by, and served to amplify, another dramatic upsurge in the complexity of the division of labor and has facilitated concentrated surplus accumulations leading to unprecedentedly stark degrees of stratification by wealth.

The "socialist mode of production," finally, is a mostly speculative mode tied to longstanding and ongoing popular political struggles by what the late foundational world-system theorist Immanuel Wallerstein called "anti-systemic movements," in order to rectify the inegalitarian outcomes produced by capitalist systems with a more egalitarian and fairer successor system (2004). It has been posited in the world-systems framework to be characterized by a rationalized, democratically controlled production and distribution system (Chase-Dunn 2004).

While the scope of human activity this parsimonious sequence of concepts contextualizes and explains is staggering, in faithful keeping with dialectical-materialist commitments, it nonetheless restricts the areas of life it is concerned with to those that can be directly tied to relations of production and distribution. This economism leaves the picture of how successive phases of sociocultural evolution might also be identifiable in terms of systematic differences in political practice and cultural customs theoretically bare relative to the high-fidelity images produced for economic institutions. The fact that – as will be discussed below – other major institutional arenas in each society (e.g. the political state, or the cultural institutions of education and religion) also appear to undergo *comparable* changes during the same timeframe, raises the prospect that the

mechanics of a single social phenomenon may underly the variations found in *all* institutional arenas. In a departure from the materialist focus, it will be argued here that changes in the deeply implicit and subterranean meta-institutional complex of rules by which social action and social existence can be evaluated and responded to as legitimate or illegitimate, accounts for profound and far-reaching historical changes in the institutions of not only the realm of economics, but also of politics and of culture. These overarching complexes in the social imaginary do not belong properly to the realm of culture or of ideology, but rather precede and condition them both. They operate at the level of the *paradigm*, of the omni-relevant worldview, possibly as outgrowths of nearly cognitively inaccessible master assumptions about the nature of existence itself, and they apply to all recognized social ontologies, at every recognized scale of analysis. More so than a ruleset, they are a complex of dynamically interrelated principles, and serve as the generative logic behind scripts justifying social action in general, regardless of the actor or institutional domain concerned. They can thus be called *logics of legitimation*. The temporal era and conceptual category of human civilization referred to as "modern" differs from all others precisely on the basis of its prevailing logic of legitimation.

The modes of accumulation identified in the historical comparative evolutionary world-systems literature appear to correspond to system-wide qualitative shifts in logic of legitimation that serve as a matrix that generates changes of the same nature in the realms of political structure and relations, and of cultural socialization and practice. The logic of legitimation for polities operating the kin-based mode of production can likewise be called the *kinship paradigm*. The diffuse metalogic that constitutes this paradigm makes

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sense of social action in terms of reciprocal obligations between contrasting roles. It is no wonder then, that nomadic, hunter-gatherer societies will tend to delegate economic production based on sex and age-based role responsibilities, contextualized in relation to other individuals and the tribe at large (Sahlins 1965). Mythologized, fictive notions of kinship are even extended to political relations, to provide sensible accounts of interactions and affiliations (Wolf 1982). Reciprocity and "relationality" (Wilson 2008; Ling 2017) are indeed found to be long-standing, characteristic core values shared among various indigenous peoples of North America.

The logic of legitimation for polities operating under the tributary mode of production can be called the *sovereignty paradigm*, in reference to this type of regime's most representative figureheads. Social action under the reign of this logic is made legitimate not in terms of the obligations of reciprocal role-relations, but as a proper expression of one's intrinsic and inscrutable essence. It is thus that under feudal regimes, productive economic roles tend to be constructed in terms of reified social castes mandated by the natural order on the basis of inflexible, innate characteristics of distinct social groupings. The monarch and the aristocracy are said to rightly occupy their superordinate positions and exercise their supremacy by right of noble blood, or the hallowed status of a mortal agent of an uncontestable supernatural force (Wolf 1982). In the Western world, the Christian cosmology and moral universe can indeed be said to be built up of absolute distinctions between an omni-benevolent and all-knowing god, and an intrinsically sinful humanity condemned to perpetual folly, between a heaven of infinite joy and a hell of infinite torment, between the "rights" and "wrongs" of a black-

and-white morality fixed irrevocably into the inborn nature of the world. The logic of legitimation seminal to present concerns, however, is the one characteristic of civilizations wherein which the capitalist mode of production predominates, that of the modern world-system.

Social action and social existence (which are in the abstract ultimately different viewpoints on the same thing) are in "modern" polities legitimated by a logic that characteristically appeals to notions of "systematicness" or "systematicity." This logic of legitimation can thus be called the *"systems paradigm"* for short. Regardless of its substantive content, social action in our contemporary world is beholden to justifications based on the degree to which it unfolds by a codifiable procedural protocol that could be generalized as a process in the abstract to cases considered relevant by some given metric. Particularism, arbitrariness, *ad hoc* arrangements, superfluity, and caprice are among the descriptors applicable to everyday behaviors and socially reproduced ontologies from the *sovereign* world that preceded, which are anathematic causes of outrage, discredit, and delegitimation in the *modern* world. The logic of legitimation of action and existence in the contemporary world demands that units at all scales of aggregation be able to account for themselves in terms readable in their institutional domain as "appropriate, rational, and modern," and it is these qualities, rather than for instance loyalty to one's master, piety in religion, or harmony with one's intrinsic essence that now convey responsibility and socially inoculate behavior from potential "claims of negligence" (Meyer 2009). The latent principles of modernity derived cumulatively from

the selection of theoretical works and relevant commentaries on the subjects surveyed

and drawn upon here can be termed:

convergent specification,

sequence automation,

 instrumental simplification,

complex coordination,

utile codification, and

empirical reflexivity.

These features of modern institutions (defined below) are dynamically interrelated

with each other laterally and are connected at various points of convergence by a larger

number of subordinate constructs that they are vertically parent to. When they are taken

together, they can be said to catalyze the quality of "systematicity" as an emergent

property of the whole (Gleick 1997); it is after all, not contained in any of the individual

principles as lower-level elements - neither in part nor in microcosm - yet it is

recognizable as a distinct phenomenon when they are co-present. It is this constellation of

principles that in concert function as an implicit, generative meta-logic that give the

economic, political, and cultural institutions of our contemporary social reality its

qualitatively distinctive modern character.

Principles of the Systems Logic

 …just how formal and ethically blind is the bureaucratic pursuit of efficiency…the
availability of well-developed and firmly entrenched skills and habits of meticulous and
precise division of labour…maintaining a smooth flow of command and information…of

impersonal, well-synchronized co-ordination of autonomous yet complimentary actions… (Bauman 2000)

Before exploring the ways the systems logic of legitimation are encoded into the *modus operandi* of major institutions in civilizations deemed "modern," it is appropriate to specify and discuss the component principles operant in this logic:

Convergent specification refers to the movement toward smaller, and increasingly fine-grained ontological distinctions delineating what things can be regarded as discrete objects. This is not only an epistemological pattern of apprehending information on a cognitive level by individuals. Luhman (1995) argues that sentient consciousness is only a specific expression of the generalized capacity of systems at large to recognize "meaning" by making (patterned) distinctions between stimuli that derive from outside their boundaries. In accord with this understanding, convergent specification can be interpreted to occur at non-individual scales of analysis, such as that of interpersonal communication, the organization, or the polity, and the institution of language. The emphasis placed by both Meyer (2009) and Parsons (So 1990) on individualism as a distinctive and essential mark of modernity in the realm of culture is thus in error. The modern, systems paradigm characteristic in question lies not in the specific cultural meme of the cult of individuality popular in specifically the Western cultures of the modern world-system; the key point is rather specification, definition, probing and interaction with ever more granularly parsed scales of analysis in ever more minute detail. The systems logic of legitimation dictates that this tendency be paired with other principles outlined below such as utile codification and complex coordination, in order achieve processes with the legitimating characteristic of systematicity. Intensified

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practices of informational surveillance of, epistemic inspection of, social regulation of, and purposive interaction with individuals (without being contented with corporate units alone) is an inherent dynamic of this logic, while the cultural valorization and political privileging of individuals taken for granted in much of the modern West is only a single, path-dependent, culture and region-specific, localized iterative expression of this logic. The modernistic convergent specification that occasions cultural and political individualism can also emanate from the same centers to operate as an oppressive force, as Foucault's account of mortifying "panopticism" (1977) and Taylor's (1919) recommendations for totalistic mechanical micro-management of labor seem to suggest. Furthermore, convergent specification and the reach of the associated rationalized mythmaking (Meyer 1977) process of systematization also operate at infinitely receding scales below that of the human individual, such as those of thoughts in modern psychotherapy, chemicals in neurochemistry, and cells, tissues and organs in biology. The probing techniques of self-scrutiny institutionally trailblazed in Jesuit pedagogy (discussed later) are emblematic of precisely this fact. Reversing to the meso-scale of analysis, Parsons' observation of a shift from "functionally diffuse" to "functionally specific" relationships within economic organizations in recent centuries (So 1990) exemplifies a convergent specification of codified organizational role-designations. This is mirrored the realm of politics, where with the advent of constitutional governance takes on a discretely rule-based character concerned minutely with specific language.

Sequence automation is the process of a system (human or otherwise) constructing its internal elements and relating them to each other such that for a given

process or procedure, the initiating stimulus or condition will tend to trigger a tightly

coupled (Perrow 1984) domino effect with the minimum achievable friction. This is

brought about by a variety of means exemplified by subordinate concepts to be treated in

more detail below, such as the pruning of instrumentally superfluous or problematically

idiosyncratic features from the elements involved in order to make them more generically

comparable to each other. The curation of comparability can be thought of as a variation

of the intermediate concept of coordination of communication channels within and across

systems, a central concern animating the early emergence of modern "discipline" in

Foucault's account of the bubonic plague (1977), as well as Meyer's account of the

mechanisms of organizational isomorphism in a globalized modern society (2009). The

invention of assembly line technology and the implementation of its associated processes

exhibits a logic beholden to a sequence automating principle in the manufacturing sector.

As Blau and Scott (2003) elucidate, a primary effect of the use of assembly lines is that

the flow of work in the given setting is inescapably regularized externally so that it

proceeds at a consistent, pre-planned pace largely free of the fluctuations and intermittent

stoppages that made outputs less calculable prior. Laborers and managers alike are forced

to adapt to this pace in spite of themselves, thus standardizing their own performance in

accordance with externally imposed, empirical criteria, therefore becoming more

deindividuated and interchangeable for the sake of automating sequences.

Instrumental simplification is when a system reshapes the way it constructs an

element on simpler terms "intentionally" blind to features deemed irrelevant on

instrumental terms, in order to fit that element in determined, rationalized relational

patterns with other elements. This can operate extrinsically to the element, as an "environment"-to-"system"(e.g. the given element) relation (Luhman 1995) of "construction" in terms of selecting which features of the given element to highlight as meaningful and which to ignore in order to actionably recognize it as a member of an established category. It can also operate as an internal, system-to-itself relation of "construction" in terms of actively constituting the element in a way that accords with some rationalized relational pattern. The sub-concept of "reductive abstraction" would be an example of the first case, while "standardization" would be an example of the second. There is a key difference between these two versions of instrumental simplification; the first is an extrinsic act of construction by discursive framing that shapes the regime of what will and will not be recognized regarding the unit of analysis of concern, be it a human individual, an organization, or a polity. The second is an active intervention in the constitution of that system itself, granted by a system's privileged access to its own internal mechanisms. The fact this process of simplification may be occurring complimentarily on both the "supply" and the "demand" ends can be considered a way of systematically coordinating communication channels, a type of "sequence automation."

Instrumental simplification works in concert with the at face-value seemingly contradictory convergent specification, informing the bases on which the process of making increasingly minute distinctions (and non-distinctions) so that the constructions converged on always happen to fit into rationalized processes. This principle is commensurate with Durkheim's notion that with the increase in varieties of individual interest and occupation in a complexifying society, comes concomitant *decreases* in the

elaborateness and specificity of the basis for shared identity and collective solidarity (Durkheim and Emirbayer 2003). It would also seem to be an example of Luhman's notion that systems produce increasingly improbable, high intensity dynamic reactions of elements within their boundaries precisely by virtue and to the degree of their simplification of the internal environment via its capacity to selectively include and exclude external influences (1995).

Complex coordination is the non-temporal compliment to the tight-coupling of sequence automation that occurs at a fixed time-point. The complexity of the coordination of elements can be thought of as a function of (1) dynamic reflexivity conditioned by coordinated channels of diffusion in automated sequences, (2) of the number of elements and relations multiplied by convergent specification, and (3) of their rationalized procedural correspondence achieved through instrumental simplification. This is the principle that characterizes the modern achievement of robust interdependencies of unprecedentedly diverse and numerous varieties of specialized elements and ways of relating them. It sums up what Durkheim perceived to be the inherent virtue of "organic solidarity" as a modern form of mass social organization (Durkheim and Emirbayer 2003).

Among the most prominent examples of this class of phenomena is money as a generalized medium of exchange. The dynamics by which money operates are coded in the artificial language of mathematics rather than any natural language, which allows it to parse differences in a minutely sensitive, *numerical* fashion, in accordance with how all social ontologies are reductively abstracted into quantifiable *value* for translation, record,

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and manipulation within this system. This simplification of the process of exchange

coordinates the economic interactions (monetary "communications") between exchange

partners to such a degree as to make most such *sequences* impersonal and virtually

automatic. This facilitates more precise and faster - and thus a greater volume of

interdependent coordination between exchange partners, thus multiplying the number of

exchanges that can occur, functionally conjuring larger numbers of exchange partners

into existence. Durkheim has argued that the modern era is characterized by a greater

degree of "dynamic density," which can be thought of as a measure of the frequency of

interactions, their intensivity, and the number of actors involved (Durkheim and

Emirbayer). His argument with regards to what increases it centers on population size and

proximal concentration, but I would argue that it is also increased by sociopolitical

technologies that bridge or erase geographic, temporal, and cultural barriers otherwise

erected by physical distance and low population concentration. This is evidenced in his

own notion in the same work of the significance of the contract for smoothing economic

relations; automating sequences, in my proposed parlance.

The greater volume of more intensive exchanges brought about by unified and

standardized currency can also be thought of in Luhmanian terms as an intensification of

(economic) system processes facilitated by a selective simplification of the elements and

relations at play (1995). This allows them to interact more fluidly, with less inhibiting

factors to contend with. In my proposed parlance, the system barrier that by controlling

the range of possible interactions with the environment thus restricts the aspects of the

internal elements that might be activated, is thus *abstracting* them *reductively* as a form

of *simplification* which is *instrumental* for the *complex coordination* of activities

operating at an increasing dynamic density.

Finally, corresponding to the third point (3) with regards to complex coordination

above, the degree to which money manages to achieve this is also a function of the extent

and depth of *commodification* of the social ontologies involved; this is the way of

instrumentally simplifying economic systemic elements and relations in the language of a

standardized currency. This capacity for highly complex coordination in the institutional

realm of economics allows for higher degrees of responsive interdependency and

specialization than ever before achieved, with a lesser need than ever for normative

consensus (Chase-Dunn 1998; Durkheim and Emirbayer 2003) LaTour (1993) argues a

characteristic trait of modern society is an ideologically constructed delinking of the

discursive and conceptual domains of nature and culture – an instance of convergent

specification codified for the utility of the specialized knowledge and interactions it

makes possible. This being the case, a single, state-standardized currency with an

empirically rooted and contractually recognized value serves - with its generic

interchangeability and lack of substantively individuating content – as a "cold symbolic

medium of exchange" (Abrutyn 2011) well-suited to bridge complex coordination across

the system boundaries (Luhman 2011) of such disparate institutional arenas.

Utile codification is the inscribing of elements and relations between them – of

social ontologies and social (inter)actions - as patterns with a degree of abstraction that

allows for them to be called upon again for re-use. It is a kind of formalist abstraction of

social action that extricates it from and elevates it above the *ad hoc* specificity of the case

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at hand, so that by whatever mechanism of *memory* (the linking of current elements with those coming into and passing out of existence in order to achieve distance from the immediate whims of present time [Luhman 1995]) the given actor has, the action can be drawn upon for future reference to determine the proper typifications to be made and processes to be followed in fresh cases. This converges with instrumental simplification on the sub-principles both of reductive abstraction, and of universalism, but is unique in its emphasis on the action being readable and extendable as a *general rule* to which recourse can be made as needed on a long-term or permanent basis. This is the principle to which Weber's notions of "calculability" and "predictability" in the ethos of modern bureaucracies correspond. Scott and Davis' (2016) account of the institutionalization of the corporation as a legal entity in modern law exemplifies this principle precisely; the novel questions with regards to the legal status, associated rights and procedures, and protocols of interaction with these entities were first posed by the nation-spanning largess of railroad companies in particular, and then were codified for pragmatic re-use in generic universally extended application to large-scale manufacturers, and then companies in general.

Empirical reflexivity can be identified in a system at any scale with dedicated channels to take in empirically detectable information comparing its own past actions with the state of its exogenous environment to make functional course-corrective updates to itself. The external environment may be detected to change on its own, or as result of system action, and either of these may carry implications for compatibility between the known situation and patterns of system action. Whether at the individual, organizational

or polity scale, systems are expected to remain constantly modifiable in their configuration and behavior based on awareness of specifically concretely verifiable conditions relevant to system prerogatives. This trait continually determinates the limits of codified protocols by codifying *further* reductive abstractions that are *also* generalized. These iteratively revised typifications are made using information received through coordinated channels of communication established as infrastructure of sequence automation, information transformed via convergent specification. The "honor" commitment of the prototypical bureaucrat to offer neutral, objective criticism of the bureau and of superiors within it is an example of this (Weber and Kalberg 2005), as is the duty of Meyer's "rationalized others" (2009) to intake a continuous stream of updated information from "world societal" institutions in order to maximize an organization's isomorphism with standard, rationalized contemporary models of behavior. This principle is detectable in the workings of technical systems and political technologies as well, such as the legitimating normative feature of computers to perform self-diagnostics and repairs, digital applications to continually update, and the expectation that markets make "corrections" based on feedback in the interplay of "supply" "demand," and "value." Disabused of the reified, absolutely essentialized categories of the sovereign world, it is no longer permissible for a system to be wired to invariantly repeat itself, insensible to new, empirical information.

This principle of the systems logic of legitimation contributes to the modern era's reputation for overturning of tradition in the name of efficacy, and revising belief in the name of incontrovertible fact, with an apparent lack of permanent loyalties or substantive

value-commitments. The increasingly minute sensitivity of detection mechanisms of

scientific instruments, attuned to phenomena parsed with ever more granular precision

via convergent specification, are representative of this principle. The legitimation granted

to social scientific arguments backed by rigorous statistical methods, to governance by

measures of effectiveness, popularity, and verdict of the voting public, to economic

activity by internal audits and economic forecasts, to education institutions by

standardized test scores and rates of graduation, and to cultural products by carefully

tracked measures of viewership rates and audience size on the internet, television and

radio, attest to the operation of this same principle. This is in stark contrast to a prior era

when the legitimacy of belief, of governance, economic undertaking, education, and taste

were all beholden to sources rooted in traditional belief, practice and authority structures,

which were held sacrosanct and assumed to be unchanging and beyond close

examination. It is the ostensibly "value-neutral," blindly single-minded sensitivity only to

concrete information in the maximum achievable detail inhering in this principle that

Bauman sees as the germ that makes modern societies uniquely capable of atrocities like

the holocaust (2000).

Indeed, as the quote at the start of this section demonstrates, Bauman's argument

that this tragedy was a quintessentially "modern" phenomenon hinges on it having

possessed a constellation of features that embody various of the aforementioned systems

logic principles. Reliance on a "well-developed" and "entrenched" regime of skills and

habits for instance (Bauman 2000), is a kind of standardization of the workforce, which

maximizes the automation of sequences they carry out with the complex coordination of

their specialized roles in an ever more convergently specified division of labor. Standardization of this sort is an intersection between utile codification and convergent specification – work roles, responsibilities, skills and conventional protocols are specified in maximal practically relevant (thus empirically reflexive) detail and codified for efficient reuse and transposable application. All of this is for the purposes of sequence automation, via the enhanced fluidity with which coordination can be achieved, facilitating in other words, "autonomous yet complimentary actions" (2000). The formalism, "ethical blindness" (2000) and impersonality results from a reductive abstraction of the tasks and functions at hand to focus squarely on the details thought to concretely, measurably, and calculably affect efficiency from a technical standpoint. Stated another way, this at times dangerous bureaucratic professional "disinterestedness" (Weber and Kalberg 2005) comes about by a convergently specified instrumental simplification of the organization's tasks and functions to achieve the sequence automating utility of codifying operations based on specifically empirical information.

This complex of dynamically interacting principles produces the paradigm-constituting logic of systematicity in gestalt. The systems paradigm is the logic of legitimation that pervades institutions of the economic, political and cultural realm to give them their distinctive, historically unprecedented "modern" character.

The Neoinstitutional Lens

The theoretical school that most concerns itself with subject matters and objects of study with a bearing on the central arguments advanced here is that of

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neoinstitutionalism. A brief discussion clarifying which aspects of the said paradigm do and do not have a bearing on the question at hand, and how the respective central theses are distinct is therefore in order.

Neoinstitutional theorizing focuses on the relationships between the structures and behaviors of organizations and contextualizing meta-organizational environments where codified expectations and conventions operate to shape them. The purview of each of these institutions is thought to span an area of activity oriented toward some common objective or object of attention – a common totem (Durkheim and Emirbayer 2003) and can include interactants of a wide variety of types and scales of aggregation. These are referred to as "institutional domains" (Abrutyn 2011) or "organizational fields" (Dimaggio and Powell 1983), and often roughly correspond to an industry and its regulators for economic activity, or Bourdieu's "social fields" (1984) for types of activity with a different emphasis, such as politics or education. Neoinstitutionalists attempt to conceptualize the patterned ways the structures and behaviors of organizations in one way or another reflect their embeddedness in these domains, which would seem to bear some relation to the present thesis's argument that the foundational logic by which social existences and behaviors are christened legitimate at all scales of analysis is the defining dynamic that differentiates historical eras. Meyer and Rowan's (1974) characterization of institutional domains as a kind of ritual order reproduced by ceremony and collectively held myths divorced from any strong correspondence with practical necessity or empirical conditions is in fact assumed as a given in the arguments advanced here, though the author of the present thesis understands these processes to be general to all

historical eras, and not in themselves uniquely characteristic of modern society. The activities of ostensibly "rational" modern organizations are recurring instances of Collins' age-old "ritual chains" (2014), in which situation-based adaptations made for context-sensitive practical purposes or logical reasons attain an inviolably sacrosanct, quasi-moral character in the generations succeeding that of the founders. It is by this social alchemy (Bourdieu 1984) that "rationalized myths" of alleged efficiency come to mystify the fundamental arbitrariness of a domain's specifically sanctioned conventional modes of operation, and economic organizations find themselves obligated to demonstrate their unassailably prudent allocation of resources by expending time and money on "ceremonially derived production functions" that do not add measurably to their outputs (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Organizations for which survival depends in large part upon concrete, technical performance thus find themselves forced to "decouple" their structures from their detailed, moment-to-moment operational practices (Meyer and Rowan 1977, Meyer 2010, Oliver 1991, Abrutyn 2011). The nature of modernity is not argued here to be a function of the existence of these timeless and well-known phenomena. The object of interest presently is the paradigmatic code of unspoken criteria for social legitimacy at large, which from its ingrained position in the collective unconscious of the dominant culture in the world system, dictates that the integrative myths of this period should be *rational* in character, that the production functions carried out ceremonially should be justified and deemed prudent by their purported *efficiency*. It is not *decoupling* that is of interest, but a historical shift in the regime of expectations that organizations are driven to decouple their activities *from*, from a logic of sovereign

essentialism, to one of process-systematicity. Taken-for-granted myths dubiously framing the necessity of conventionalized practices, ceremonial functions of questionable utility, and the practice of weakening the link between practical activity and outward-facing demonstrations of propriety have probably prevailed in all eras and modes of human society, except that before our time they were coded in the absolutist language of fidelity to God, king, blood, and caste, or before that the relational language of reciprocity to kin, ancestors, descendants, and the spirits of nature. New institutionalist concepts such as rationalized myths, ceremonially derived production functions, and decoupling immediate technical activities from bureaucratic structures are only organization-level instantiations of the single, overarching paradigmatic logic by which the existences and value-systems of the encompassing *institutional domains themselves* are fashioned, established, and perpetuated within modern society. Phenomena at this meso scale, and that of the contextualizing macro environment are the basis upon which principles of legitimation such as convergent specification were detected as latent constructs by deductive inference, and "systems logic" is the description of the emergent dynamic of their largely unexamined joint reign over fundamental social evaluations of entities and actions at large.

Neoinstitutionalists also take an interest in the ways the environmental contexts created for organizations by normatively conventionalized practices serve as catalysts for meso-level and macro-level social integration. Dimaggio and Powell (1983) for instance define and analyze various different mechanisms by which isomorphism among organizations propagates, thus producing and reproducing the institutionalized structures

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and practices of their domain. These are separated into the broad categories of competitive and institutional isomorphism, the latter of which subdivides into coercive, mimetic, and normative varieties. Oliver (1991) classifies types of isomorphism by degree, on a spectrum that begins with blind acceptance through habituation and imitation and ends with a host of defiance tactics that to varying degrees reverse the dynamic by which organization-environmental relations are bridged. Meyer and Rowan (1977) find the homogenized formal structures and practices that ease interorganizational cross-boundary relations via a shared culture to be rooted in myths embedded in the environment, and in a mutually beneficial "logic of confidence and good faith." Meyer goes on to develop these ideas into a theory of the way organizational practices are diffused and homogenized globally via (world) "models" espoused by accredited "world-legitimated actors" that act as "rationalized others" (2009) who embody institutional values and mindsets, and exercise substantial knowledge-power in a Foucauldian-sense (1995) from positions both inside and outside meso-organizations and macro-level nation-states. Abrutyn (2011) argues that institutional domains are socially integrated by a multiplicity of different forms of segmentation, differentiation, and interdependency, as first conceptualized in the functionalist and systems theory traditions. In contrast to the above, the concept of the systems logic of legitimation and the principles used as unspoken referents to it by its omnipresent practitioners, makes no statement about the way society – modern or otherwise – integrates its various parts, or the degree to which this reflects the logic in factual practice. The argument made here is only that the modern era is distinguished *as* modern by the fact that the logic appealed to in order to construct

and justify virtually any action or ontological social existence is specifically one of process systematicity, whereas in prior eras, they would have been beholden to an absolutist logic of sovereignty or a relationalistic (Ling and Pinheiro 2017) logic of kinship instead. Afterall, the notion that social actions and existences in settled, agrarian societies of the "central system's" (Chase-Dunn 1998, Chase-Dunn, et. al 1994) feudal era were legitimated by a logic of sovereign essence in no way implies that these societies were *in actuality* held together by the inscrutably mystical powers of God, noble blood, and the inviolable laws of a caste-based natural order. The same goes for the ostensible rationality of systems paradigm thinking, which is functionally parallel and may be just as much of a unicorn. *All* of the aforementioned neoinstitutional constructs regarding how organizational domains are integrated are understood here to be generic social systems processes operant in all periods of history and are taken for granted as part of a background theoretical framework housed at a more remote level of generality and abstraction than anything asserted about logics of legitimation. These constructs and processes co-reside with the social systems theory concepts of Niklas Luhman, world-systems concepts like core-periphery hierarchy (Inoue et. al 2015), and Durkheimian concepts like "dynamic density" (Durkheim and Emirbayer 2003) at a level of foundational generality far-removed from the substance of the logic of legitimation argument. This constellation of interrelated social theoretical concepts becomes substantively operant only in the secondary arguments completing our journey to a spatially, temporally and conceptually bound comprehensive definition of modernity by proposing the *mechanisms* by which the transition to the systems logic may have

historically unfolded to bring about the particular, path-dependent incarnation of modernity to which we bear witness. Though more an account of a one-time event than of an meta-organizational mechanism of social integration, the process of field formation generated by dense and iterative social interaction between initially heterogenous, pioneering innovators in an anomic organizational space, described similarly by Dimaggio and Powell (1983), Caroll and Swaminathan (Caroll and Swaminathan 2000) and Abrutyn (2011) is also held here to be abstractly general to systems at large, rather than unique to the modern era, or specially relevant to the question of logics of legitimation.

It is worth highlighting that the difference in subject matter between the neoinstitutional concern with mechanisms that shape the *actual* structure and behavior of organizations, and the logics of legitimation concern with a posited mechanism that underlies the social dynamic entailed in how all scales of entity are obliged to *account* for their themselves and their behaviors creates a bright contrast in the two theories' relation to the classic question of agency. In the case of neoinstituionalism, the strength or weakness of one's construction of agency falls on a spectrum ending in determinism has a direct bearing on the explanatory weight and social relevance accorded to institutional processes and integrating mechanisms described. When it comes to logics of legitimation on the other hand, the question of agency operates as a complete tangent with no bearing on the substance of the theory's arguments regardless of whether agency is constructed as one extreme or the other. This is because the logic of legitimation argument does not in and of itself make claims about what entities actually *do* in any given era, but only insists

on the existence of a particular (meta-)logic that will dictate how whatever is done will be framed, interpreted and evaluated with regards to social legitimacy. The degree to which structures and behaviors accounted for in terms of the logic of legitimation substantively reflect its interpreted prescriptions in actuality, and the frequency with which covert or overt defiance is exercised could range from total conformity to widespread fraud and rebellion without affecting the fundamental point. Put simply, whether one's actions go with the grain or against it, and regardless of to what degree one has the capacity to make that choice, one's actions are nonetheless subject to evaluation in terms of the reigning logic of legitimation. The question of agency is therefore extrinsic to the question of the succession of paradigmatic meta-logics, while it is intrinsic to that of neoinstitutional patterning and integrating mechanisms.

Finally, it should be highlighted that the definition of the systematic process paradigm logic of legitimation, and the accompanying account of its path-dependent development and mechanical structure specific to the historical version of modernity we experience, provides an alternate telling of the development of modern institutions with more explanatory scope and logical simplicity than that of Abrutyn's neoinstitutional argument for natively generated symbolic media of exchange and interinstitutionally negotiated meta-ideologies. Abrutyn argues that institutional domains are formed from corporate units facing "population level problems of adaptation" (2011), a process that leads them to become more independent as they develop their own way of integrating relations between various units amongst themselves. This branching specialization eventually reaches the status of a more or less fixed ruleset that all actors are compelled

to comply with when entering that domain of activity, with interactions facilitated by a particular, indigenously generated symbolic medium of exchange. These media are however not all created equal, as they are differentiated by the property of "hotness" or "coolness" which impacts how widely and easily they circulate. The cool symbolic media - like money from the economic domain – come to circulate the most widely as a means of correspondence and coordination *across* different institutional domains, forming meta-ideologies that span the society at large. The meta-ideology of the contemporary times is according to Abrutyn, built-up from the symbolic media of "money, power and influence, coupled with elements from learning, knowledge and competitiveness" amalgamated from the most preeminent institutional domains (2011). The systems paradigm argument on the other hand, is a total reversal of this sequence. Rather than value-systems centered on money, power, and influence independently arising from disparate institutional domains and weaving together a meta-ideology, it is that during a phase of budding fundamental institutional formation, a single meta-logic formed by which the *raison d'etre* of all subsequently formed institutions would be measured, prior to the development of partitions distinguishing among them. This is of course the systematic process logic of legitimation, which emerged from disenchanted interactions with the natural and human-made world by an ascendantly empowered new class of individuals of means and learning who found themselves deputized either by contemporary sovereign institutional authority, or by opportune happenstance to confront the world as a series of technical problems, without the recourse to noble blood or divine anointment enjoyed by their betters. This energetic, innovating, and communicative new "middle class" thusly

came over generations beginning roughly with the rise of mercantilism in the 15th century to develop the secular, rationalistic approach to social organization that Tocqueville famously celebrated about the United States, as a new kind of nation. Money, power, influence, and so on existed all along, and did not come to being during this period, but their meanings and dynamics drastically transformed to reflect the paradigm-shifting new logic of legitimate social action and existence that newly constituted the institutions in which they are embedded from an undifferentiated soup of early bourgeois socio-political economic culture. It is not that the notions of ostensible neutrality, disinterestedness, functional equivalence, fungibility, and free exchange associated with the "cold" symbolic medium of money are native to it alone and came to dominate other institutional domains by diffusion; it is rather that these are actualizations of the principles of systematicity, and the dynamics and ideology of money as reconceptualized in the modern era is only a single instance of them. It was not the influence of money that changed kingdoms into constitutionalist republics, or opaque and inscrutable noble education into a standardized mass credentialing system, or inquiry into the nature of the universe from a function of providentially anointed authority to a meticulous process of widely replicated experimentation; it was a beholden-ness of all institutions in the new era to a single, specific logic that occasioned all of these. Indeed, if symbolic media of exchange were generated within the various institutional domains and then to some degree shared between them to ultimately generate meta-ideologies without recourse to any overarching metalogic, then we should expect to find an enormous diversity of symbolic media and meta-ideologies *across societies*. Yet, as recounted by Meyer (2009),

we find precisely the opposite; an improbable uniformity, a stunning isomorphic homogeneity of corporate units and institutions the world over, evaluated by a single system of "world standards" whose authority is acknowledged and upheld across nations and cultures. The one modern world-system shares a "geoculture" (Wallerstein 2004) in which the systematic process paradigm logic of legitimation is inscribed, and Meyer's "rationalized others" (2009) are its stewards. Its means of diffusion has not been a parallel-distributed, pluralistic, bottom-up process of iteratively negotiated, emergent meta-ideologies spreading their symbolic media of exchange, but the top-down hegemonic transfer of an internationally privileged habitus (Bourdieu 1984) via the exercise of knowledge-power (Foucault 1995) in starkly hierarchical, world-system spanning core-periphery relations (Inoue et. al 2015, Shannon 1989). It is against these standards that innovative departures from conventionalized practices in a given institutional domain are evaluated as legitimate, prudent, and emulable, or illegitimate, careless and irresponsible. This explanation not only hosts greater spatial and conceptual scope than Abrutyn's neoinstitutionalist one, but it also prevails in logical simplicity. Abrutyn's theory relies critically on the accuracy of the following disputable fundamental assumptions; that there exist substantially discrete, semi-autonomous institutional domains with discernable boundaries; that there exist symbolic media of exchange that are both generated from within and unique to each and every one of these domains; that every society is socially integrated by a meta-ideology reducible to the internal ideologies surrounding the symbolic media of its currently dominant institutional domains. The logic of legitimation hypothesis by contrast remains intact even if the independence and

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boundedness of any or all of the institutions it references are invalidated and is only

potentially confounded if a pattern can be detected in which activity in violation of the

proposed paradigm of systematicity is nonetheless by other criteria evaluated as socially

legitimate within established domains of social activity in modern societies.

Understanding the boundedness of the various societal institutions to be analytically

convenient discursive construct, and perhaps nothing more, the systems logic of

legitimation is nonetheless vindicated by its structurally reproduced instantiations in the

realms of economics, politics, and culture.

The Systematic Character of Modern Institutions

Systematic Economy

A logic of systematicity characterizes the paradigmatic lens through which social

actions and existences in the institutional realm of economics are legitimated in the

modern world. The capitalist mode of production institution of the "commodity"

exemplifies this with clarity. A commodity is after all distinguished from a product

produced or procured by social labor in pre-modern social systems by its deindividuated

quality. The uniqueness of any particular item is minimized on the production end by

standardized procedures for constituting it, and on the relational end by the way it is

connected to meaning systems by dint of reductive abstractions that systematically ignore

idiosyncrasies that do not register as relevant. This allows the item to be read abstractly

as a member of a generic category of functionally interchangeable objects to which an

exchange value can thus be attached uniformly (Chase-Dunn 1998; 33, 152; Shannon

1989). An object that is produced with idiosyncrasies that register as "relevant" by functionalistic criteria (which we might deem "eccentricities") fails to attain the status of "commodity," so standardized value cannot be attached to it, and it thus loses legitimacy as a social ontology. Irregular or "defective" products are summarily disposed of at the factory site, or otherwise sold at great discount in the market, ineligible for the systematized social or economic value appraisal associated with the class of commodities to which it was intended to belong. At the same time, wide variation in traits like color depth or shape, considered functionally irrelevant for products like fruits and vegetables in a supermarket are by convention categorically ignored in favor of the functionally relevant formalistic abstraction of density, as evaluated by weight and volume. Deindividuation broadly and its subvariant, standardization specifically, are preponderant expressions of the principle of sequence automation, and the way it makes channels of communication correspond to facilitate complex coordination. An economic market is ultimately a type of communication system that coordinates interdependence with a complexity determined by the degree of exacting "granular sensitivity" in its convergent specification patterns. These dynamics affect the degree of empirical reflexivity in the market at every level of aggregation.

The distributed, multitudinously pluralistic nature of a price-setting market gives it the empirically reflexive capacity to adjust in myriad ways simultaneously based on granular sensitivity to high resolution resource, product and exchange related details local and existentially relevant to the diffuse centers of activity. This process is however

performed based on formalistic, reductive abstractions devoid of considerations that characterize what Weber termed "substantive rationality." This is made starkly apparent by the way standardized currency, a generalized symbolic medium of exchange (Parsons 1998, Abrutyn 2011) serving as sequence automator par excellence, as function of its fungible (Zelizer 2007) quality, manages to place a seemingly unlimited array of material and social phenomena in a single generalized commodity system of abstract value equivalences in an entirely amoral fashion. The most dramatic instances of this are those cases when even projections about loss of human life find themselves recorded alongside mundane items on an economic balance sheet (Jennings 2016). This is precisely the type of dilemma that Weber famously forewarned of as an "iron cage" of bureaucratic rationality (Weber and Kalberg 2005), more properly and accurately translated as a "steel enclosure" (Turner; personal communication). It is emblematic of Vine Deloria Jr.'s critique of Western instrumental rationality as "warpath" thinking that constructs what should be reciprocal relations of a social flavor reductively as linear routes to resource acquisition (Deloria 1999). It is in other words, Karl Marx's "cash nexus," which operates between all varieties and scales of actor (or "system") under the capitalist mode of production (Marx and Kamenka 1989). Durkheim (Durkheim and Emirbayer 2003) diagnosed this rudderless quality of modern economics as a lack of concentrated integration of detailed economic information in the thinking apparatus of the political governance system, and much in the vain of Wallerstein (2004), proposed a rationally coordinated "socialist" successor system (Durkheim and Emirbayer; 195 – 202). It is worthy of note that alternatives to capitalism proposed during this era would be

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legitimated and appraised as superior based in part on enhanced capacity for rationalistic coordination. Proponents of a new economic system are driven to account for their positions on the basis of the same set of contemporary standards used to both uphold and to criticize the existing capitalist system.

The capitalist firm – and in particular its representative variant, the publicly traded corporation – is a quintessentially modern institution. It is an entity that exists as an abstraction but is recognized as real provided a standard application process has been followed accurately. Whatever it may be, its ontology is recognized at any given moment on the basis of reductive abstractions – disambiguated convergent specifications detailed with granular sensitivity – which are recorded – codified – physically or digitally by way of utilitarian combination of standardized communications systems such as commodities, mathematics, spreadsheets, and regional or global lingua franca. This is done to make its future course calculable and predictable for the sake of complex coordination by both elements – persons – inside its system boundaries, and persons, organizations and polities outside of them. Its structure of human relations is bureaucracy – in other words, a set of impersonal roles distinct from and independent of their occupants, with a highly disambiguated structure of interrelations. The occupants of these roles are deindividuated on the production end by socially alchemized (Bourdieu 1972) qualifications that make them abstractly equivalent and generically interchangeable in the economy, and on the relations end by systematic blindness to and non-engagement with idiosyncrasies nonrelevant to performance. They are socially transformed into commodities. The firm and its complexly coordinated internal network of component parts iterate their moment-

to-moment existence and action in ways that are deindividuated in space by isomorphism, and in time by routinization. Unusual stimuli are confronted on the basis of codified protocol and universalized to the given situation; utile codification, as demonstrated for instance by the memorized, branching dialogue trees used as a standard by employees of the widely influential and prototypically modern *Mcdonald's* corporation (Leidner 2015) . Investors, other firms and governments are communicated with using standardized currency as a generalized medium of exchange, a means by which it is held to account for the dynamism of its empirical reflexivity. The degree to which each of these is true is a gage of the legitimacy of the firm's existence and actions in contemporary society, and their untruth tends to be discreditable (Goffman 1963) precisely for the resemblance it creates with obsolete principles such as particularism, patrimonialism, and arbitrariness endemic to the sovereignty paradigm logic of prior era, to which the systems logic of legitimation is related as an antithesis.

These economic institutions are only possible however, in a calculable, forecastable (Weber and Kalberg 2005) political context of codified law, guaranteed by a political state that ensures the separation of personal responsibility and liabilities of individuals from the firm and disambiguates the delimitations of each, enforces contractual agreements, provides and recognizes a uniform and standard currency, and guarantees rights of ownership and property (Durkheim 2003; Chase-Dunn 1998; and Shannon 1989).

One of the seminal observations made by Tocqueville regarding the novel qualities of the United States as a young nation infused with unprecedented potentials, was the readiness with which individuals participated in "associations" (2000). In a similar line of thought, Durkheim observes modern society to be characterized by a civil society dominated by innumerable "secondary associations," known more commonly as "organizations" (Durkheim and Emirbayer 2003). Having rejected the supposed divine right or natural superiority of monarchs and aristocrats as obsolete sovereignty paradigm legitimation logic at its inception, and at the same time separated inscrutable, absolutist feudal theology from the authority of state, political organization has faced the so-called "first new nation" (Lipset 1967) and those following isomorphically in its wake as a technical problem of flexible human ingenuity. The extraneous, non-instrumental, arbitrary features associated with "expressive culture" (Meyer 2010), "substantive rationality" (Weber 1922) and non-empirical constructions of the world in the pre-modern state were in other words removed, sacrally inviolate tradition dethroned as a legitimating script for future action. Bureaucracy in Weber's account is the social organizational answer to technical problems in society (Durkheim and Emirbayer 2003), and its systems paradigm *modus operandi* is the sense-making script not only of secondary associations in modern civil society, but of the formal political state itself, its juridical apparatus, and its relations with other states.

Political governance systems in the modern world are considered proper and legitimate to the degree that they can be accounted for as existing and acting by

principles of systematicity. Constitutional government such as that currently possessed by the United States has by historical path-dependency become the standard-bearing model of this logic as expressed in statecraft. Both the structure of the polity as a social ontology and the range of actions it can and cannot perform are formally recorded, and thus made knowable, learnable, and retrievable for future reference – utile codification one again. This is in marked and deliberate contrast to the rule-by-fiat and rule-by-decree omnipresent as a legitimate mode of political operation in the by-gone sovereign world (Foucault 1978). The state inscribed in a constitution is an abstract structural arrangement of roles which are distinct from and independent of their occupants – they are depersonalized and made standard. State action is inscribed in the form of authority structures wrought in a level of disambiguating, convergent specificity unknown in the pre-modern world, and the scope of rights, duties, and jurisdictions of various organs and scales of actor is articulated explicitly in order to facilitate complex coordination with minimal non-functional sequence-disrupting friction. In the same spirit, the staffing process for most of the state organization is made near-automatic through a rationalized process of elections that empirically measures the public will by counting the votes of a populace constructed as "citizens." In other words, the population are reductively abstracted into generically equivalent and interchangeable units. This is a mechanism meant to avoid the arbitrariness of monarchic and aristocratic rule – now interpreted as illegitimate and unjust, and also to make the state empirically reflexive with regards to its performance, with a sensitivity more granular than achieved in systems where influence is distributed among a smaller proportion of units. The elimination of titles of nobility

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combats the dogmatic and favoritistic arbitrariness and pompous gratuitousness of feudal organization, and justice is reconstructed as a kind of regularity of operation in interaction with deindividuated units – a routine application of universal rules (Weber and Kalberg 2005). This doubles as an instrumental simplification of patterns of relations with the populace, at the same time as the number of persons involved in the political process and the number of roles to be played in the endless permutations of the voluminously articulated yet reflexively dynamic ruleset are multiplied, necessitating complex coordination.

Durkheim observed that as the diversity of specialized roles in a society increases, its tolerance for difference liberalizes; accordingly, normative regulation loosens as the basis for polity-wide solidarity in the collective moral order is made more and more abstract and universal, until in modern society it is pared down to merely the fact of being human (Durkheim and Emirbayer 2003). Violations of said broad-based equalitarianism via patrimonialism in the modern era are viewed as backward, sovereignty era-esque retrogressions of the modern "rule of law." This type of instrumentally reductive formalism creates a situation where judicial procedures are legitimate *regardless of outcome* so long as they follow "due process," and illegitimate regardless of outcome if they do not. Akin to problems of the modern economic realm, a "steel-enclosure"-esque bureaucratic social dilemma is thus created by the tendency of this "abstract liberalism" (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich 2011) to categorically ignore substantive differences in personal background between juridical subjects, in favor of reading them as formally equal based on the reductive criteria enshrined into the law. The "matter-of-fact" (Weber

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and Kalberg 2003) disposition with regards to outcomes extends to a limitlessly permissive neutrality regarding "ends," in favor of a single-minded concern with the orderly procedure of "means," as evidenced by Bauman's chilling description of the German Nazi government's modernistic mode of operation:

> Though engaged in mass murder on a gigantic scale, this bureaucratic apparatus showed concern for correct bureaucratic procedure, for the niceties of precise definition, for the minutiae of bureaucratic regulation, and the compliance with the law. (2000)

The systems paradigm also undergirds and provides the scripts for relations between polities in the interstate system. It has been remarked by Meyer that scripts detailing the rationalized processes for integration of and relations between nation-states in what he terms the global "world society" are so well-articulated that if we simply posit the notion of a new, unincorporated island nation, the sequence of processes to be carried out to phase it into the modern system of relations is clear, absent additional information (2009). This is a standardizing isomorphism between polities, which coordinate their channels of interstate communication by building corresponding political and legal structures like embassies, ambassadorships, and counterpart officials, and automate sequences of exchange by tying themselves to internationally standardized currencies and entering into utile-codified treaty agreements that are recorded, knowable and retrievable. The vexing task of complexly interdependent coordination between entire polities in a large aggregation is attempted by and formally delegated to the world-governance structure of the U.N. In a process of reductive abstraction, this organization recognizes all member states as equal units of the same type, while systematically blind to differences of magnitude with regards to population, territory size, and economic vitality (Hall et. al

1996). This universalistic instrumental simplification makes state identities knowable,

their ontologies comparable, their interests calculable, and attempts to sidestep the

arbitrary, particularistic, patrimonial international order of the "might makes right"

sovereign world of non-generalizable *ad hoc* arrangements between states with

ambiguous boundaries and jurisdictions, though its as-yet low degree of institutionalized

authority has thus-far severely hampered the efficacy of these efforts (Chase-Dunn 1998).

Indeed, Meyer even notes that there is a bureaucratic application process for national

recognition (2010).

The nation-state formation propagated and maintained by "world-models"

according to Meyer (2010) is described in Hall *et. al's* book, *Modernity* (1996) to have

four critical features that distinguish it from political formations of eras past. These are

"territoriality" – the quality of having fixed and definite borders; control of the means of

violence – an unprecedented monopoly of force that entails the pacification of all

competing "centers of power and authority"; impersonal structure of power – a formal

political order existing in the abstract in which is vested the highest authority, of which

individuals are only transient stewards; and "legitimacy" – loyalty won by states only to

the extent they are understood to represent their citizens. All of these key features

embody and iterate principles of the systems logic of legitimation. The definite and

minute determination of political boundaries is convergent specification in both law and

geography, which serves to instrumentally simply the political affairs of state to be more

amenable to empirically reflexive evaluation. The removal of competing sources and

centers of power and effective centralization of the means of violence is a simplification

of the domestic political terrain for the instrumental purposes of complex coordination and sequence automation in the pursuit of national policies and agendas, which can thus be implemented more universally and uniformly on the regularized political terrain. "Reductive abstraction" is a subprinciple at a contact point between convergent specification, instrumental simplification, and utile codification, and well-characterizes the de-personalization of structures of power such as those found in the workplace and in government, so they can operate continuously across generations according to knowable standards untouched by the arbitrary particularism of offices identified with the unique qualities and virtues of individuals and clans. It can also be seen as a form of deindividuation of the officeholders for the purposes of complex coordination. Finally, as already discussed, the pegging of political regimes' legitimacy to the degree to which it is responsive to its citizens and representative of their interests is a clear normative obligation to empirical reflexivity in the sphere of politics in governance, which fundamentally requires and thus makes an inherent virtue of complexly coordinated channels of communication for the expression of these interests to and through the state, through voting and reflexive changes in the political composition of governing bodies via legal processes, legislative processes, polling, and the like. It should be again emphasized that the present argument does not mean to say that modern nation-states in actuality reflect these principles and ideals, but that it is the characteristic of the modern era that they must be able to account for themselves as though they do in order to be read as legitimate in the mainstream of contemporary discourses.

<u>Systematic Culture</u>

Activities native to the realm of cultural institutions can be schematized as the processes and contents of socialization, creative contribution to the public discourse of symbols, aesthetics and beliefs, and informal social regulation. In everyday parlance these areas of concern and activity are often referred to respectively as personality, culture, and morality. Institutions in these areas have shifted dramatically to forms and practices legitimate by the criteria of a logic of systematicity.

At the level of inter-polity integration just discussed, cultural institutions have in subterfuge figured importantly in the reconstitution of the interstate order on systems paradigm terms. This has been done most prominently by the mechanism of internationally standardized education models, as discussed at length by Meyer (2010). Education institutions such as schools are agents of mass socialization, which inculcate not only practical knowledge but discursive frameworks and forms of normative social regulation. They therefore properly belong to the realm of culture. However, according to Meyer's account, this fact goes unacknowledged in interstate relations, where the definition of "culture" has been drastically denuded so as to only refer to superficial, "expressive" differences between polities and peoples (Meyer 2010; 166), such as those of food or dress. This reductive abstraction of "culture" allows it to be bracketed as a set of functionally irrelevant, apolitical idiosyncrasies, while substantive domains of culture like education or the ontology of the family are treated as culturally neutral universals, and subjected to strong pressures to isomorphize with bureaucratized world-standards. This is accomplished in large part by way of "world-legitimated actors" (2009) inserted

into domestic organizations; actors who have been themselves deindividuated by international educational training so they can serve as agents of the worldwide "geoculture" (Wallerstein 2004). In Luhmanian terms (1995), culture as an open system at the polity level is complexly coordinated with that of other polities by the interior insertion of external elements embedded in relations through which new cultural information flows from beyond system boundaries.

A subconstruct of convergent specification not yet expressly treated is the division of units. Per Luhman's (1995) insight that consciousness is only a special case of a general property of systems to make distinctions between stimuli and how it relates to them, likewise the process of convergent specification pertains not only to cognitive distinctions delineating how a human mind relates to things, but to distinctions made at all scales. The multiplication of scales of a social object that a system interacts with can in the obverse be thought of as division into smaller and more numerous relevant units, much the way the political state was described to multiply the sites of political interaction and empirical reflexivity with its disambiguated elaboration of rights, duties and jurisdictions above. Convergence with processes of reductive abstraction and instrumental simplification discards recognition of functionally irrelevant idiosyncratic features of the divided units, and they are levelled out to an expanded series of nested classes, like the divisions between states, counties, cities, administrative districts, and private individuals in the political realm. This is the more general and variable process to which concepts like "devolution" and "decentralization" belong. The same has occurred in cultural institutions, where the number of scales and of legitimate functionally

redundant parallel sites where the three aforementioned types of cultural activity occur has multiplied into a diffuse pluralism. The loci of socialization, cultural production and discourse, and moral regulation have been moved from an arbitrarily determined select clique of nobles and clergy and distributed among a multitude of largely autonomous actors themselves produced by systematized procedures.

Just as in the sovereign world, the nobles and clergy who represented and produced what was recognized as the societal culture were economically or politically advantaged products of arbitrary fortuity (of battle, of territory, of seniority) and patrimony, so it is that in the modern world the more numerous and distributed representatives and producers of societal culture are economically and politically advantaged products of the systematic processes of the capitalist economy and the constitutionalist state. Those of economic means, housed in and embodied by the bureaucratic apparatus of the firm, have pressed their advantage by characteristically confronting public culture as a technical problem. The uneven cultural terrace of historically path-dependent localisms in custom, values, and lifestyle left as legacy of the sovereign era were problematic for the coherence of the complex, integrated coordination and standardization processes of a modern polity not only with regards to the native "cultural" domains of symbolic communication and solidary social relations, but also to economic and political management. As detailed in Stuart Ewen's account of the rise of the American advertising industry, the bourgeoisie's solution to this has been to supplant the tapestry of obscure, inscrutable and inviolate "backward" local cultures with a *mass*, *popular* culture operating on characteristic modern principles (1976). As Ewen puts it,

"While line management tended to the process of goods production, social management (advertisers) hoped to make the *cultural* milieu of capitalism as efficient as line management had made producers…As Ford's assembly line utilized 'expensive single-purpose machinery' to produce automobiles inexpensively and at a rate that dwarfed traditional methods, the costly machinery of advertising…set out to produce consumers, likewise inexpensively and at a rate that dwarfed traditional methods" (33). An equivalent process is recounted by Hall et. Al (1996) to have taken place in the United Kingdom, starting as early as the 18th century. In this case, the desire among the political and economic elite to achieve a favorable polity-level balance of trade with the U.K.'s colonial territories drove them to spearhead unprecedented campaigns to remold public tastes and lifestyle preferences nationwide so that unceasing desire for foreign, luxury products would be diffuse, universal, and consistent. It is a levelling of the problematic unevennesses and irregularities of culture in the national public in order to standardize it into a knowable *popular culture* tailored to meet extant economic supply with corresponding volumes of demand. In both cases, to solve the historically unprecedented problem of "overproduction" as classically posed by Marx (Marx and Kamenka 1983), the autonomously pluralistic and redundantly parallel modern economic and political elite has converted the production of folk culture to an assembly line process that fabricates "consumers" of certain utile customs and propensities *en masse*. This can be read in a Bourdieuian sense as a case of firm-level actors converting contemporary, marketized and commodified economic capital into a counterpart manifestation of cultural capital (1984). This cultural *massification* (Ewen 1976) of the populace is a rationalizing

standardization process carried over from the factory in order to make demand and consumption processes predictable and calculable (Weber and Kalberg 2005) for the economic ledger. It is in this sense a parallel in cultural institutions to the codification of the law in political realm (Weber 2005; Shannon 1989).

A natural consequence of the cultural standardization of the consumer is a corresponding standardization of cultural products to be consumed, and a popular ethos of consumption that validates and encourages this patterning. Indeed, in our contemporary era we see film and music produced for diffuse popular audiences according to explicitly codified and technical formula pertaining to sequential structure, duration to the minute, and permissible range of sonic wavelength. The well-known bandwagoning dynamic of cultural trends and crazes among the public involves legitimating oneself on the basis of the sequence automating speed and instrumentally simplifying degree to which one conforms to recognized models of taste. Despite the seemingly subjective and immeasurable nature of their content, these models are always overturning themselves and evolving in a dynamic self-referentiality akin to the supply-side empirical reflexivity of the "scientifically managed" firm evangelized by early champions of 'best practices' diffusion, such as Taylor (1911). The individual identity of the modern pop cultural consumer therefore must function precisely like Meyer's (2010) organization-level "very open systems" to maintain legitimacy.

As alluded to previously, one of the most prominent and active agents of socialization and legitimating cultural recognition in the realm of modern cultural institutions is the education sector. In parallel to the extension of economic participation

to the modern consumer, constructed and managed by a largely autonomous redundant plurality of firms, and the extension of political participation to the modern citizen, constructed and managed by a pluralistic web of dynamically interacting political authorities, so it is that education has been extended to the masses by a plurality of largely independently moving educational organizations that construct and manage the modern student. In stark contrast to the logic by which cultural capital was legitimately acquired and accounted for in the age of the sovereignty paradigm, modern schools are formal organizations (Blau 2003) that function as accredited processing centers that guarantee their output of graduates have undergone a rationalized and codified series of procedures that deindividuate them to fit standardized instrumental specifications. As described by Bourdieu, the education system is "the sole agency empowered to transmit the hierarchical body of aptitudes and knowledge which constitutes legitimate culture, and to consecrate arrival at a given level of initiation, by means of examinations and certifications" (1984; 329). "Symbolic capital" in his terms, such as certificates, licenses and degrees are:

…academic qualification(s) *formally* guaranteeing a specific competence (like an engineering diploma) that…*really* guarantees possession of a 'general culture' whose breadth is proportional to the prestige of the qualification…[emphasis in the original] (17).

A qualification from an accredited institution thus stamps its graduates like a certification of quality or regulatory approval for consumption from a trade-association or agency does for commodities in the realm of economic exchange. These are communicative signs that "learning by institutionalized stages in accordance with

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standardized levels and syllabuses" (328) has occurred. They ensure that the graduate has been pruned of extraneous, counterproductive, or dysfunctional eccentric features, and by inculcation of standardized knowledge, been recast as deindividuated commodity that is interchangeable with other units of the same type, and functionally specialized for an ever more granularly specified role in the complex division of labor (Durkheim and Emirbayer 2003). This is precisely the process by which the neutral, "matter-of-fact," non-charismatic bureaucratic habitus described by Weber (Weber and Kalberg 2005) is cultivated, most characteristically that held by Meyer's "rationalized others" (2010), the possessors of the most valued and influential cultural capital in the modern world-system. The educational content itself is indeed rationalized and schematized so that its breadth and specifics are knowable, teachable, and learnable in an efficient, repeatable process, not unlike the case of the mass produced cultural products mentioned above (Bourdieu 1984; 61) Utile codification, convergent specification, reductive abstraction, and instrumental simplification could all be said to describe this paring, disambiguating and reformatting of cultural knowledge for bureaucratic machinery of formal pedagogy. Indeed, in parallel to the "due process" of juridical apparatus in the realm of political institutions, Bourdieu observes that legitimation of the school and of its graduates requires only that the proper formal prototypical model of "education" be followed in due sequence, irrespective of the quality of instruction or skills attained by students. The "rationalized myth" (Meyer 2010) of the automatic efficacy of such processes operates in strong accord with the systems logic, and thus is almost inconceivable to question.

This shift has sacrificed the capriciousness of the formless and ludic "sovereign taste" of "aristocrats" who monopolized the most valued cultural capital in feudal polities of the preceding era (Bourdieu 1984; 59). Systems paradigm evaluation of cultural prestige and academic merit on the basis of specific qualifications acquired through formally organized pedagogy delegitimates traditional aristocratic status-claims rooted in the arbitrary standards of seniority of familial household, and the obscure social alchemy of precocious childhood socialization therein. Operating on the same principles, modern mass education has liquidated old-world titles of nobility in tandem with the capitalist mode of production and the constitutionalist political state.

The World We Know

To apprehend the nature of the modern condition, it is not enough to understand that ontologies and activities in major institutions are informed and evaluated for legitimacy based on a paradigmatic meta-logic of systematicness It is certain that the logic of systematic processes could be expressed in economics in a form other than the capitalist mode of production, in the political state in a form other than constitutionalist rule of law, in culture in a form other than the trifecta of homogenizing mechanisms of interstate isomorphism, consumerist popular culture, and industrialized pedagogy. Indeed, there may be other forms to come. The condition of world civilization that we know as "modern" is the product of specific path-dependent historical contingencies. A deeper intuition of the identifiable facets, boundaries and curvatures of its unique shape calls for a contextualizing engagement with social theory and history.

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A foundational condition necessary as a baseline for the development of social institutions operating on a dynamic logic of systematic processes is confrontation with the natural and social environment as technical problems, modifiable by human ingenuity. This speaks precisely to Tocqueville's insight that Americans perceive institutions and organizations not as timeless and inviolate sacral tradition, mandated by supernatural forces, but as purposive, human-made technologies that can be formed, abolished, and altered at will (2000). The "artificiality" of the conditions under which information recognized to hold the legitimate status of "fact" is produced in the scientific laboratory setting, and those under which policies recognized to hold the legitimate status of reflexively representing the public will by appropriate processes (LaTour 1993), can be thought to derive from this disenchantedly (Weber and Kalberg 2003) instrumental disposition toward the natural and social worlds. This is a shift away from the sovereignty paradigmatic lens and seems to have sprouted from the soil of old-world civilization through multiple access-points.

Foucault for instance, highlights the 17th century outbreak of the bubonic plague as a time when an existential crisis of public health in Western civilization prompted officials in Europe to reconstitute their exercise of knowledge-power as a political technology of systematic, detailed and regimented population management (1977). The explicit bureaucratic hierarchy of authority, sequence automating vertical channels of communication for complexly coordinated management, and granular division and separation of discrete domains and categories of subject to be administered was in stark contrast to the inelaborate herd-corralling of the underarticulated, irreducibly

essentialized categories of the "pure" and the "impure" known prior (1977). Durkheim by contrast, highlights the social problem for early university and Jesuit educational organizations of intensified heterogeneity of pupils produced by the renaissance-era humanist valorization of the individual as an impetus that drove the evolution of a rationalized, reflexive and circumspect discourse of technique for inculcating personal "discipline" (Durkheim 2003).

In both cases we see a practical problem imposed on individuals of devolved authority who don't have special recourse to the prophetic intercession of noble essence or divine wisdom commanded by aristocrats and clergy, and this seems to spur a recursive process of rationalization of the organization to correspond with the material or social reality faced, and reconfiguration of that reality to correspond with the administrative apparatus. Convergent specificatory division of units features prominently in each of these cases, where individuals occupying status positions of knowledge-producing authority make unprecedently fine-grained distinctions among their subjects for the bureaucratizing purposes of practical management, and the process is repeated inside the individual through the self-dividing reflexive process of modern disciplinary circumspection.

The exercises of knowledge-power and practices of discipline described by Blau and Scott (2003) to inhere in the use of performance records as a mechanism of managerial control in modern formal organizations are uncannily concordant with the above. The criteria and categories of data evaluated in these records of worker performance are decided by management in a typically Foucauldian knowledge-power asymmetry with the lower-ranked employees, analogous to the Jesuit teachers and pupils

referenced in the Durkheim account (2003). The information in these records is, according to Blau and Scott, publicly available to all in the setting, which instills a self-motivation in workers to strive for improvement of their own accord, the standards of evaluation and their attendant normative pressures internalized by the rank-and-file such that the power to intervene and regulate them need scarcely be exercised (2003). The individuals in these organizations are instilled with a self-surveilling discipline that induces them to through their actions and words in the organizational context "speak" in the language prescribed to them by superordinate authorities (Foucault 1977). Managers in modern formal organizations are of course emblematic of secular individuals deputized as technicians to solve human problems of organization with no recourse for legitimacy outside of technical effectiveness in their performance.

Durkheim's (2003) description of the codification of the operating norms of the corporation as an emerging institution to which the locus of economic activity shifted from the family sphere, provides one plausible account of the pristine development of instrumental rationality and formal organizations. Prior to the penetration of systematic and interdependent trade-relations in Europe, the individual families of farmers that made up the majority of the population tended to be self-sufficient; the production and consumption that sustained the family all occurred within its own bounds. However, with the ascendancy of merchants and the interdependent relations cultivated by trade, regular, systematic contacts with outsiders (customers, competitors, partners and the like) became central to economic life, moving much of professional activity into *towns*. Towns are vibrant places with great "dynamic density" (2003) in terms of concentration and rate of

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interaction of the population, which is composed largely of itinerants and residents away from their places of birth. The corporation in Durkheim's telling is a type of secondary group formed to take on the professional functions of this new reality, patterning new norms and ethics of economic relations beyond the regulatory reach of domestic morality. With the sphere of profession relocated outside of the family, individual consumers (customers), partners, and employees are no longer bonded to the management by indissoluble lifelong ties of sentimentality, shared identity, and honor; they are drawn from an essentially infinite pool of abstractly equivalent potential functionaries on a terminable basis (Morgan 1997). They are thus from the point of view of management *replaceable*, and perhaps to a considerable degree *interchangeable* amongst each other, which sidelines their individuating traits and identities as irrelevant and places primacy on the *abstract roles* they play relative to the organization. The feudalist, sovereignty-logic customs of personalistic patrimonialism, favoritism, and inscrutable charismatic authority thus fall by the wayside as a guiding ethos for economic relations.

Since roles in the corporation can be occupied by different individuals over time, many of whom have not been socialized into the domestic or local normative customs and conventional practices, continuity of smooth corporate operations calls for the elaboration of rules specifying the conduct and delimitation of the given roles, and these rules are made knowable and learnable if they are recorded in writing in rationalized form. In place of implicit norms that rely on a shared cultural habitus (Bourdieu 1984) and worldview, we thus arrive at a system of *formal rules*, which have to be specific, exhaustive, and detailed enough to be understandable and practicable by a diverse array

of potential occupants across all anticipated scenarios, yet broad and general enough to avoid imposing an obstructive excess of arbitrary, non-universal cultural idiosyncracies that originate from the domestic sphere. This is the logic of *liberalism*, for which capitalist markets and modern civilizations are known; the need to coordinate a differentiated and specialized population in a complex division of labor calls for a more permissive, loosened regime of normative regulation and an increased tolerance of diversity (Durkheim 2003; Wolf 1989). Since not all role-occupants within the corporation can be expected to share a common sociocultural background, the moralistic demands of substantive rationality retreat in favor of a procedural ruleset focused narrowly on practices with an explicit bearing on corporate goals of productivity, efficiency, and profit. Instrumental rationality in the Weberian sense thus becomes the operating logic of economic institutions in public life, whether within corporations, between them, or as the reference point for guarantees and adjudication provided to them by the integrative apparatus of the state (2003). Since the corporations concerned become an ontological category of entities that persist across generations by way of their formal structure and codified rules despite the replacement of any and all individual members, they thus emerge as *formal organizations*.

World-systems scholars like Wallerstein, Chase-Dunn, Hall and Inoue trace the infancy of modern institutions temporally to the 1500s; a time when the Protestant and then to a lesser degree Catholic reformation deputized individuals in Christendom to interface with the world in this pragmatic manner, given their new status as direct agents of God, rather than immutably pre-ordained subjects of anointed interceding earthly

superiors. The vicious cyclical dynamic of voracious acquisition and the elaboration of instrumental rationality famously described in Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930) seems a logical outgrowth of such conditions, along with its attendant institutional practices like the double-entry account ledger (1978). This development, paired with the geopolitical-economic *circumscription* (Inoue et. al 2015) of Europe drove the colonialist expansionism of the era, in step with Marx's observation of the direct link between capitalism and imperialism, and the rooting of mature industry in the colonialist history of primitive accumulation (Marx and Kamenka 1983). Foucault (1977) observes the development of a dynamic of the discursive transfer of management techniques from technical systems to human systems, and from human systems to technical systems, a mechanism of epistemology and social transformation that becomes explicit by the advent of the "scientific management" school of organization (Taylor 1911) in the early 20th century. This process of recursive transfer occurred in widely diffuse and piecemeal fashion among the unceremonialized but vigorous and newly efficacious class of secularly grounded technical innovators of physical and social technologies of organization and exchange. As put pointedly by Hall et. al, "The heroes of this steady, inexorable march of commercial capitalism are largely anonymous: rank-and-file distributors, hauliers, shippers, transporters, and thousands of humble wagoners, packmen, tinkers, carters, and hucksters" (1996). As mercantile capitalism, an intensively logistical operation delegated to a redundant plurality of unordained "empowered actors" (Meyer 2010) gave way to production capitalism, which in turn gave way to industrial capitalism (Inoue et. al 2015), this self-propelling engine of social organizational and

technological evolution gave the expanding "central [world] system" the arsenal of advantages that allowed it to unify human civilization as a whole into a single world-system by force of economic, political/military, and ideological conquest (Shannon 1989; Chase-Dunn et. all 1994).

Earlier phases of this expansion and primitive accumulation had been tied to institutions of the fading sovereign world – such as that of the anointed monarch or the omnipotent god of the one true religion – and were legitimated according to that logic. Vivid examples of this include the "doctrine of discovery," a proclamation by monarchies in Europe of the right of conquest to the first Christians to happen upon a land (indigenous inhabitants being savage and unworthy), as well as the 1513 Spanish "Requirement" that colonists read aloud in Latin to newly met indigenous people a royal assertion of their divine right to rule and subjugate on behalf of the Church. The United States, often simultaneously an innovator near the forefront of world political and economic trends and a latecomer to world sociocultural trends (e.g. romanticism and secularism) provides a relatively recent example of this with its doctrine of "manifest destiny." While this ideology of divine mandate to conquest of lands and peoples retained currency until the country's internal frontier was closed in the 1890s, political justification for territorial annexation and international intervention on such grounds subsequently became increasingly unthinkable, as evidenced by the more liberal and legalistic rationales adopted for future imperialistic declarations such as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, and the Open Door Policy. That U.S. Chief Justice John Marshall in the early 19th century found it prudent to formally integrate the

centuries-old "doctrine of discovery" into the rationalized, constitutionalist system of juridical precedent may be instructive with regards to the above transition (Lobo 2016).

Durkheim describes a process by which the rationalizing combination of institutions of similar function in an "organic solidary" modern polity unfolds; peripheral nodes of activity lose their intensity and vitality as the ground is shifted beneath them by more central ones, until they have no choice but to either be incorporated or driven into purposively integrated micro-niche space (Durkheim 2003). This would seem to describe well the way old-world political and economic jurisdictions, statuses, rights and practices from feudal, tributary regimes in Europe lost ground to the young and vital, capitalist and constitutionalist ones propagating from expanding centers of increasing scientific rationalism tied to instrumental social and technological innovations. Those pushed into a niche-space rather than being swallowed into extinction might be thought of as hollowed contemporary survivals of previous modes of production, as theorized by Frederick Jameson (1989). As the systems paradigm diffuses as the normative meta-logic of social ontology and activity, the scripts and schemas in which sovereign world institutions are rooted lose legitimacy, and with no way to account for their existences or activities, they are pushed hopelessly onto the defensive, just as kinship paradigm tribal nomads were when recast as "savages" and "barbarians" in the feudal era. This dynamic of absorption and peripheralization would also seem to describe the way indigenous economic, cultural and political institutions have been liquidated the world over by colonial regimes and underlies the precarious and desiccated state in which a few survive here or there as vestiges. As an increasingly systematic-minded power-class of merchants, producers,

natural philosophers, and heterodox creatives gained power and influence over the course

of centuries, a break with fettering monarchic and ecclesiastical authority became more

and more realizable, and desirable. The achievement of America's "independence," the

formation of a republic without a god or king, was a radical victory of this class, which

was echoed by the revolutionary overturnings and transitions of Europe's manifold

variants of "the ancien regime" (Wallerstein 2004, 2017).

This sets us precisely in the historical position recounted contemporaneously by

Tocqueville, with a secular nation of individually empowered, volunteeristic and

participatory problem-solvers who view social practice with a demystified, flexibly

pragmatic gaze. It can be argued however, that the bourgeoise and their overlapping

counterparts in political and cultural institutions overturned the venerated order of

medieval Christendom only to repopulate it themselves. Meyer observes that, "…the

church as a symbol system provided the fundamental ontological structure of the West,"

and went on to serve schematically as:

…the overarching cathedral within which the modern cultural system developed: a
common, highly legitimated, boundaryless polity where ultimate authority is housed at
the peak of a vaulted dome (God) and devolved to human entities (popes and priests,
kings and nobles) as subordinate beings, with much to say about social ontology, actors,
and the relations among action, nature, and the ultimate. (2010)

The most legitimate interpreters of the nature and boundaries of reality change

from the ordained translators of the word God to the professionally trained translators of

"testimony" experimentally derived from inanimate objects (Latour 1993) – a shift from

inscrutable timeless truths to empirically reflexive theorization, from a legitimating

paradigm of sovereign essentialism to systematic processes. In a world where the

religious metaphysical cosmology of "the ultimate" has been replaced by scientific knowledge as the most authoritative source and model of truth about nature and humanity, sacrosanct ritual has been correspondingly replaced with bureaucratic systematized protocols, and the roles and positions involved in carrying it out articulated clearly in an unambiguous hierarchical structure staffed by individuals stamped for quality control by deindividuating diplomas, certifications and licenses. These are the modern possessors of power-knowledge in the Foucauldian sense (1977); those with the disproportionate ability to influence the construction of social reality and conditions of individuals by their authorization to categorize, taxonomize, center, decenter, emphasize, evaluate, and prescribe. They have the wherewithal to occupy these positions because the cultural capital they obtain and refine in the processes of education and training are of the type most valued according to the principles of the systems paradigm logic of the modern era. Naturally, this cultural capital is far from equally distributed either within or between polities.

The process by which freshly produced and updated knowledge about pedagogy, statecraft, economic management, and the multitude of other professional disciplines flows into organizations and national polities through "world-legitimated actors" plugged into isomorphically corresponding communication channels described by Meyer (2010), can be interpreted in world-systems terms as an unequal exchange of cultural capital between core and periphery. Luhman emphasizes that because the logic of any system is self-referential, it can detect and interact with other systems and the environment only by making necessarily inaccurately translated replicas of them for reference within its own

confines (1995). This endemically limited capacity for internal transliteration of boundary-crossing knowledge populates the modern world social landscape with organizations and even national polities with structural features isomorphically standardized (Dimaggio et. al 1983; Oliver 1991; Meyer 2010) in order to secure outside resources and recognition through systems paradigm legitimacy, yet with internal elements "decoupled" (Meyer 2010) from the structure and from each other for the sake of more *ad hoc* or idiosyncratically stylized practical operation. These informal, de facto modes of operation that propagate in the numerous unpoliced corners and crevices of liberal society, can as a trait of modern social organization be thought of as "the counterlaw;" a disconnected regime of informal practices at the micro-level of organizational relations that inevitably ensure that the thoroughgoing private implementation of modern principles behind the gaze of legitimating agents is "always suspended, but never annulled" (Foucault 1977). The eccentric deviations from world-models diffused through the geocultural (Wallerstein 2004) imaginary found in the ground-operations of organizations, industries, and sectors especially in peripheral and semi-peripheral polities of the modern world-system are counterlegal variant products of constraints on adoption imposed by resource limitations, vested interests, and historically path-dependent cultural idiosyncracies, much as described by Meyer with regards to nation-states and education systems that lack the resources to live up in practice to normative global models. (2009). He labels the knowledge-producing world-modelers "rationalized others" to emphasize their seeming independence from institutions at the nation-state level. In this sense, they are "interstitial actors" in the world-system,

coordinating functions between states in a system that has not yet arrived at tightly

coupled worldwide integration. Durkheim makes a persuasive case that government is not

an organization that *acts*, but rather an integrative mechanism that takes and synthesizes

information from throughout the polity and *thinks*, and then puts forth long-view global

prescriptions for others to carry out; a "social brain," in other words (1984). The modern

world-system as it stands might thus be thought of as partially integrated at the interstate

level by the dispersed elements of a global thinking organ, a world social brain of

rationalized others whose cache of anomalous features may portend the logic of a

paradigm-to-come in a successor era. This notion that the rationalized others operating in

the interstices between the nation-states of the modern world-system might be in the long

process of prefiguring the next logic of legitimation is echoed by Chase-Dunn's

observation that while on the one hand the norm-based control systems of the United

Nations are not the major integrative mechanisms of our contemporary world-system but

is not to say they never will be (1998).

The potential for global integration latent in the historically unprecedented

material and social conditions of technological development and social organization, is at

this point however, still mired in the conflictual legacy of our era's emergence.

Wallerstein traces the characteristic left-right political divide that contextualizes the

continuous competitions for power in modern polities to the emergence of "centrist

liberalism" and "conservatism" in revolutionary France (2004). The centrist-liberals were

composed of the bourgeois class, who favored the maintenance of a vertical status-order

with power and wealth concentrated in the hands of administering elites, but one open to

cautious, liberalizing reforms and upendings of tradition arrived at by scrupulously reasoned processes, followed by orderly implementation. Conservatives on the other hand, were composed of the holdover class from the aristocratic old-guard and took the hardline stance that power and authority should remain in the hands of the trusted conventional stewards of tradition, who endeavor to illiberally preserve it in perpetuity. "Radicals" finally, composed of socialists and anarchists positioned at a distance from loci of power, advocate dramatic egalitarian refashionings of the social order, and are reviled and excluded by liberals and conservatives alike. It is just such a conflict that Bourdieu describes to still be raging in the realm of cultural aesthetics and symbols between the fanciful masters of the opaque and inscrutable old-world "sovereign taste" of aristocrats, and the more liberal, trained specialists of explicit, mechanically produced, rationalized erudition of the bourgeoise model as late as the 1980s (1984). Autodidacts dismissed by both parties might be seen as not-yet-legitimate "radicals" of the cultural realm in the same way that systems paradigm boundary-pushing innovations like "flexible specialization" and "just-in-time orders" (Bonacich 2008, 36), might be seen as dubious radical developments in the economic realm, or like "restorative justice" (Marshall 1999) and outcomes-based policy tailoring in the political.

The nature of this tripartite divide and the dynamics by which it plays out in modern institutions are a function of our historical succession of paradigms, and the reigning logic of legitimation. Polities exist in diverse states of accumulated "modernizing" cultural capital, likely mirroring their position in the commodity chain, and its implications for the diffusion of institutional models over the course of the

worldwide production cycle. However, we should expect to find in virtually every case the vestiges of a fallen power-class that clings to life by heavy-handedly commanding slowly or rapidly dwindling material and structural advantages left to it from its days of sovereign hegemony yet is unable to honestly account for its existence and motives in terms commensurate with contemporary (systematic process) values. Hence the tendency (described by Bourdieu) of conservative politicians to rely on vague cultural symbolism and personality-based guarantees to gain popularity without spelling out specific policies, something their historical relationship to culture puts them in a unique position to do (1984, 426). On the other hand, stands a contemporary bourgeoise power-class in some state of material and structural ascendancy, which can easily account for itself in terms that accord with contemporary values, but without natural access to the venerated symbols of honor, prestige, and morality conferred by the sovereign order. The pattern of late adoption of evolutionary sociocultural trends such as secularism in the United States may be tied in that case to the practice by conservative elites of aligning themselves with and reifying traditionalistic folk ideologies like Christian fundamentalism to compensate for the absence of a royal past to harken to for symbols of prestige and moral virtue. The liberal bourgeois elite in that case commit to the opposite pole of these "culture war" struggles, on the side of modernistic principles justifiable by the reigning logic of legitimation, such as "equality," "due process" and "democracy," as opposed to dogmas rooted in sovereign absolutist moralism of the old world.

Conservatives in other words, tend to have retained a shrinking capacity to maintain power in the new order by brute-force tactics, but are by the systems paradigm

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cut off from any scripts that could properly justify their existence and actions. Liberal-centrists can account for themselves in elaborate, systematic detail of which they are the champions, but behaving according to taken-for-granted normative conventions can never entitle one to the prestige of exalted moral excellence, for morality and excellence are attributed specifically to that which transcends above and beyond the normal. To valorize the implicit logic of the contemporary system one administers as a mark of distinctive worth would reveal that system to be arbitrary. To pioneer a new set of values in resonantly sublative dialectical relation to familiar cultural forms would be to go the way of the radicals and destabilize the existing bases of power. So it is, that the historically bestowed substructure of material relations, political power and cultural legacy in modern polities produces the dual reign of an illegitimate conservative aristocratic or theocratic survival in need of resources, and a legitimated bourgeois dominant class in need of symbolic canonization, which tend for these deficiencies to converge on each other (Bourdieu 1984). The modern individual lives under the broad "law" of the systems logic in interaction with institutions, and the small-scale tyranny of the counterlaw in personal and organizational interactions, in a polity penetrated differentially according to network position by the ever-evolving, self-propulsive technico-scientific discourse of interstitial (Chase-Dunn 2005), world-legitimated actors (Meyer 2010, 165) in a partially integrated worldwide civilization system contested on innumerable parallel battlefields by factions of a sovereign order, a systematic order, and a radical future.

Study Designs for Empirical Verification:

Having arrived at an encompassing interpretation of the specifically distinctive

nature of modernity rooted strongly in sociological theory, the natural next step is to devise and employ measures to test the veracity of the claims here made empirically. Following are several suggested study designs that would in different ways test the central argument that modern societies are distinguished from others on the basis of the meta-logic obligatorily referred to for the legitimation of any socially constructed entity or socially instantiated action, and this logic is specifically of systematic process character, as described principle by principle above.

Since the systems logic of legitimation is here understood to be embedded in a kind of habitus initially developed among members of a particular social class in societies of "the central system" (Chase-Dunn et. al 1994, 2003), the expected unequal penetration of this logic into the sociocultural political economic systems between states of the core, periphery, and semi-periphery can be leveraged for illuminating state-level comparison. In the proposed study, data recording the instances of several fixed categories of international state-actions taken and foreign policy positions enacted would be tallied for an equal number of nation-states understood to be "core," "periphery" and "semi-periphery" in a world-systems and network-theoretic sense. These categories may include for instance the imposition of tariffs, the imposition of international sanctions, the commencement of joint military exercises, the fortification of land-borders, the deployment of weapons systems, and limited or extensive overt military interventions. If it is so that the international order is under the hegemonic domination of a paradigm that requires all social action to be justified according to an implicit, systematic process metalogic, with "rationalized others" mediating between organizations and polities on a

global scale on their basis, then the expectation is that the framing and rationales various regimes provide for their international actions and stances should tend strongly toward characterization in terms of the principles of systematicity articulated here. Further, differentiation on the basis of core, periphery and semi-periphery historical legacy and network position are expected; core states, as the founts from which the most valued habitus in the world-system has diffused, should frame and rationalize in these terms the most frequently and most comprehensively. States designated as "periphery" should deviate the most frequently and deeply, as they should most strongly remain under the sway of the logic of legitimation dominant within-polity prior to the onset of integration into the globalized, one world-system. The deviations, furthermore, should be systematically patterned within and between polities, showing characteristics specific to other forms of society described here; ones dominated by meta-logics of relational reciprocity (kinship paradigm) or absolutist essentialism (sovereignty). The rates of these deviations versus compliances in framing and rationale are expected to place the states designated as semi-peripheral in a position statistically between that of the states designated as core and as peripheral. Secondarily, for cases when substantial discrepancies are detected between the way that a state frames and rationalizes its actions and positions domestically as opposed to internationally, it is expected that in peripheral and semi-peripheral states, the domestic version should deviate in the direction of sovereignty or kinship paradigm metalogics, which may still hold unignorable legitimating power in the collective consciousness of considerable segments of the domestic public. This rhetorical duplicity would mirror in the activity of legitimation-

affirming framing Meyer's (2010) observation that path-dependent historical contingencies with extant ideological and socio-political ramifications force many nation-states to practice *decoupling* of structure from activity to conceal their inability to adhere closely and comprehensively to the prescriptions of world-models.

A change in the underlying dynamic for rationalizing and evaluating social entities and practices as legitimate implies with it the social invalidation of entities at any scale with identities produced by other means. The rights and privileges once associated with nobility status, produced under the reign of a sovereignty logic, through opaque and unquantifiable, precocious in-home social education misrecognized as inscrutable natural essence (Bourdieu 1984), arbitrary martial conquest interpreted to demonstrate divine favor or irreducible natural superiority, or favoritist, particularistic appointment by a god or heaven-anointed monarch, and their withdrawal of their recognition by constitutionalist republics is a dramatic example of this. It however seems unrealistic to expect all social categories and identities constituted according to the previously dominant logic of legitimation to be simultaneously expunged at some moment of history, even in the case of revolution. Therefore, in regimes understood to have undergone or be undergoing processes of "modernization," such as the polities of the world-systemic core like the United States, or marcher-states of the semi-periphery (Chase-Dunn 1992; 1998) such as the People's Republic of China, it is expected that there has been an ongoing process of definitively withdrawing recognition of social identities illegitimate according to the processes of a systematic process meta-logic, while at the same time granting and extending recognition to those identities produced by this

logic. The proposed study would thus examine officially issued legal opinions tracing the ongoing codification of the categories of social identity deemed appropriate and not appropriate for recognition by the state and by non-state entities like corporations and education institutions. Phasing out of the recognized legitimacy of an identity is not the same as actively eliminating the holders of those identities or any material basis they may have relied upon to make their claims; to expunge them from valid recognition in shared meaning systems is sufficient. The study would expect to find a pattern of legal opinions progressively withdrawing recognition of identities such as "race" (an inborn, essentialist caste-status), familial pedigree, birthplace, relationship to the divine, and ethno-religious identity as legitimate bases of social differentiation in treatment by either public or private entities. It would also expect to find in inverse the increasingly extensive and multi-faceted recognition of more and more statuses whose production is framed by rationalized myths (Meyer 1977) consistent with the systems logic, such as acquired citizenship and a spectrum of designated statuses approaching it, as well as identities acquired by standardized educational and training processes in which degrees, licenses and certifications are awarded, and identities derived through the application of fixed criteria for determining special status, such as disabled status, unemployed status, or tax bracket designation. The degree to which the latter of these expected findings may sound almost self-evident to modern ears is taken by the author to be encouraging testament to the strength of the here-proposed characterization of modernity, rather than a sign of banality in the premise of the proposed study.

If it so that a normative social logic that legitimates entities and actions according to a rationalistic paradigm of systematic proceduralism exists as a social fact distinguishing the modern world-system from those of prior ages, then this fact should be detectable in organizational behavior patterns that evidence an uneven dominance of this logic between the system's more and less deeply integrated polities. Cases in which organizations and the individuals who operate in them deviate in some way from societal expectations give indications about the nature of the informal dynamics operant below the surface of accepted institutional norms in the setting. A study tallying and comparing documented cases of organizational deviance across polities varying in degree of world-system network integration might thus be expected to reveal deviance patterns that reflect corresponding variance in the hegemonic influence of the systems paradigm vis-à-vis other logics of legitimation. While deviations characteristic of all extant logics of legitimation can be expected to appear here or there in every polity, the *rates* at which these different categories of deviation occur should be expected to differ systematically based on the degree to which "modernization" processes have taken hold in each given polity. The latter could be determined provisionally by the application to each polity of a fixed checklist of concrete indicators of development along the lines of modernistic world-models, such as the existence of a trained, professional military; a system of compulsory public education; far-reaching and functional electrical, sewage, water, and motorized transport infrastructure; codification of specific rights of citizenship and residency into law; an orderly and rule-based system for legal dispute and adjudication; and professionally staffed bureaucratic government agencies. These criteria for level of

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modern development could be triangulated with measures of world-system network centrality, and time since contact with "the central system" (Chase-Dunn et. al 1994, 2003) to affirmatively classify all polities in the sample to be "core," "peripheral," or "semi-peripheral." Reported cases of considerable organizational deviance that fall into a consistent set of categories with regards to the institutional sphere of society in which they occurred (such as within political parties, government agencies, private sector corporations, public education, etc.) over a predetermined span of years would be researched for each polity, and these cases would be coded for whether their deviance seemed to operate according to a relational reciprocity (kinship), essentialist absolutism (sovereignty), systematic process (systems), or other logic. According to the theory proposed here, the expectation follows that there should be a significant negative correlation between having a high degree of modern institutional and infrastructural development, and organizational deviance according to a sovereignty paradigm or kinship paradigm logic of social legitimation. The polities with the concrete marks of "modernity" should by contrast exhibit the highest rates of deviance according to oversystemetization – cases where the social dynamic created by the systems logic of legitimation creates a vicious circle transgressing institutional safeguards and produces undesirable results and disasters. This is Max Weber's steel enclosure in other words, as exemplified in cases such as Vaughan's study of NASA's *Challenger* space shuttle launch (1996), or Perrow's study of the phenomenon of "normal accidents" (2011). Polities with lower degrees of concrete modern institutional and infrastructural development would be expected to correlate with higher rates of organizational deviance

on the basis of sovereignty paradigm or kinship paradigm logics which the given regime has begun emergence from the dominance of more recently, typically with a less mature state of success. As sovereign society's logic of legitimation seems to have a dialectical relationship with the system's logic, the patterns of deviation would be expected to be in large part directly antithetical to systems paradigm principles; not universalism, but particularism; not empirical reflexivity but conviction-based absolute commitments; not convergent specification, but amorphous and inscrutable essentialism, and the like. Cases of misidentification of an office or title with its occupant as personal property for private use, of negation of meritocratic standards in favor of "race" or religion-based criteria, and of the subversion of formal bureaucratic definitions of authority and power by the assertion of tradition-based hierarchies such as age seniority would be emblematic of sovereignty paradigm deviations. To find the expected pattern of correlations would affirm that what fundamentally differentiates a society with institutional and infrastructural marks of modernity from others is the hegemony of the systems paradigm meta-logic of legitimate social action, which premises and makes these possible. The level of modernistic development would be shown to covary with the degree of domestic predominance of this paradigm, as the two are inextricably linked.

To the degree that their corresponding hypotheses are born out, the above-proposed studies hold the potential to contribute considerably to an empirical case for the systematic process paradigm logic of legitimation theory of modernity.

Future Directions:

A case has been advanced here that the world we refer to as "modern" consists of a social reality in contemporary civilizations that is systematically different from those prior based on the operation of a distinctive dynamic logic that underlies the constitution and activities of major institutions. A narrative was then posited that offers a broad-strokes account of the contingent manner in which we have arrived at our historical version of this variable abstract potentiality, and an interpretive endeavor to draw its substantive boundaries with the aid of social theory. This is only the first step in what it is hoped will be an ongoing process of agglomerative modification and refinement in pursuit of an ever-deepening *verstehen* (Weber and Kalberg 2005) of the moving position we occupy in human time and human space.

If the veracity of the logic of legitimation theory of the nature of modernity finds empirical support in the results of studies like those suggested above, a logical next step would be to apply the theory to a set of relevant historical cases in thoroughgoing detail, in order to further refine and develop upon its foundations by testing its assumptions, modifying its formulations, and increase the granular fidelity of its insights. Polities that underwent trailblazing or historically distinctive processes of rapid transformation, such as Meiji Japan and the postbellum United States make intriguing candidates. It also seems pertinent to parse closely what changes in politics and mass culture may have occurred with the transition from industrial to financial capitalism in core-polities and look for systematic similarities and explanatory mechanisms that evidence a joint movement by the dictates of a single overarching logic.

This theory may hold the potential for a variety of practical and theoretical applications. For instance, The kinship paradigm of sanctified reciprocal role-relations, and the sovereignty paradigm of immutably inscribed essence sound uncannily parallel to the modern problems of sexist and racist ideology. It would be worthwhile to examine these parallelisms more closely and see if the notion of outmoded and peripheralized but subterraneanly operant logics of legitimation carries explanatory power, and with it, implied solutions. The theory may also prove illuminating in analyzing the constitutive dynamics and ontological status of fascist reactionary movements, as well as those of prefigurative progressive movements, and what they might tell us of things to come. Finally, the complex of features that constitute the systems paradigm, and the institutional analyses they enable could be applied to assess the achievements and innovations and diagnose the problems of "modernizing" peripheral and semi-peripheral polities and suggest future policy directions.

To understand modernity is, for we moderns, to understand more thoroughly our own condition, putting in their due places things old and repeated, and things new and without precedent. It is a project of sense-making and meaning-making, of attaining a grasp of our present through windows to the past, to reshape the future.

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