

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: JNHST-042

Title: The Constitution of Society: The West versus the Rest

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity		✓		
Significance	✓			

Reviewer's ID: JNJST-04

Detailed Reviewer's Report

Overall Evaluation

The manuscript titled “*The Constitution of Society: The West versus the Rest*” presents a theoretical discussion grounded in what the author terms *Mocombeian phenomenological structuralism*. The central argument of the paper is that societal constitution is shaped through five interconnected subsystems—mode of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse—which are organized within two competing ontological forms of social integration: the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, and the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism. Building upon this framework, the author argues that Western societies have been successful in institutionalizing and routinizing these subsystems through bureaucratic structures, whereas many non-Western societies remain vulnerable due to the persistence of charismatic authority and external intervention by Western powers.

The manuscript engages with an ambitious and highly expansive set of questions concerning the constitution of society, the structure-agency debate, the nature of social integration, the development of

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civilizations, and contemporary global power relations. The author demonstrates extensive familiarity with classical and contemporary sociological traditions, particularly the works of Weber, Marx, Durkheim, Giddens, Bourdieu, Habermas, and structuration theorists. The effort to develop an original theoretical framework and position it within broader sociological debates is noteworthy.

One of the strengths of the manuscript is its willingness to engage directly with foundational sociological questions that have occupied social theory for decades. The discussion of the structure-agency problem, the limitations of structural functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, and structuration theory reflects a clear attempt to intervene in longstanding theoretical debates. The paper also demonstrates intellectual ambition in seeking to construct a universal explanatory framework for understanding both societal organization and social action.

The manuscript further benefits from its interdisciplinary character. Concepts drawn from sociology, philosophy, political theory, anthropology, consciousness studies, and social theory are integrated into a single interpretive framework. This broad scope gives the paper a distinctive character and reflects considerable theoretical engagement on the part of the author.

However, despite its intellectual ambition, the manuscript faces several significant challenges related to theoretical clarity, evidentiary support, conceptual precision, scholarly balance, and academic presentation. Many of the central claims are asserted rather than systematically demonstrated, and the transition from abstract theory to empirical conclusions is often insufficiently developed. Furthermore, the discussion occasionally shifts from sociological analysis to highly normative and politically charged assertions that are not adequately substantiated within the framework of the paper. While the manuscript contains potentially valuable theoretical insights, substantial refinement is necessary to strengthen its academic rigor and persuasiveness.

Strengths of the Paper

A major strength of the manuscript is its engagement with fundamental sociological questions. The author revisits one of the most enduring issues in social theory—the relationship between social structure and human agency—and seeks to provide a comprehensive theoretical response through the framework of phenomenological structuralism. This ambition distinguishes the paper from more narrowly focused theoretical discussions.

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The manuscript also demonstrates extensive familiarity with classical sociological scholarship. The discussion draws upon a wide range of influential thinkers, including Weber, Marx, Durkheim, Bourdieu, Giddens, Habermas, Parsons, and Sahlins. The effort to situate the proposed framework within existing theoretical traditions contributes positively to the scholarly depth of the paper.

Another positive aspect is the originality of the theoretical model being proposed. The concepts of the five subsystems, duality and dualism, and the distinction between the Protestant Ethic and the Vodou Ethic provide a distinctive interpretive lens through which the author attempts to explain social organization and historical development. Regardless of whether readers fully accept the framework, the attempt to advance an original theoretical contribution is commendable.

The manuscript also offers an extensive critique of existing sociological approaches. The discussion highlights perceived limitations in structural functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, post-structuralism, and structuration theory, thereby demonstrating the author's awareness of broader theoretical debates and the need for conceptual innovation.

Another strength lies in the paper's effort to connect abstract theoretical concerns with contemporary global issues. The discussion attempts to apply sociological theory to questions of state formation, institutional development, globalization, geopolitical intervention, and societal stability. This effort to bridge theory and contemporary relevance enhances the potential significance of the work.

Areas for Improvement

The most significant challenge facing the manuscript concerns the need for greater theoretical clarity and precision. While the paper introduces several key concepts—including phenomenological structuralism, social class language games, duality, dualism, the Vodou Ethic, and the Protestant Ethic—the relationships among these concepts are not always clearly defined. Readers unfamiliar with the author's previous publications may struggle to understand the conceptual architecture of the framework. A more concise and systematic presentation of the core theoretical propositions would improve accessibility and coherence.

The manuscript would also benefit from stronger engagement with empirical evidence. Many of the paper's central conclusions regarding Western societies, non-Western societies, globalization, state failure, and geopolitical intervention are presented as broad assertions without sufficient empirical substantiation. For example, claims regarding the role of Western states in preventing alternative forms of

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social integration or the causes of societal decline in various regions require considerably more evidence and scholarly support.

Relatedly, the transition from theoretical argument to geopolitical conclusions is often abrupt. The paper spends considerable space discussing sociological theory and the structure-agency debate before moving directly to contemporary claims regarding Western intervention, state destabilization, and civilizational decline. The analytical pathway connecting these sections requires further development and clearer justification. Readers would benefit from a more systematic explanation of how the theoretical framework generates the specific conclusions advanced in the discussion section.

The manuscript would also benefit from a more balanced engagement with alternative perspectives. The discussion frequently presents a singular interpretation of global political developments without sufficiently considering competing explanations or counterarguments. Incorporating alternative viewpoints would strengthen the scholarly credibility of the analysis and demonstrate greater engagement with ongoing academic debates.

Another issue concerns the organization of the paper. A substantial portion of the manuscript is devoted to reviewing existing sociological theories before introducing the proposed framework. While this background is useful, the discussion occasionally becomes repetitive and could be streamlined. A more concise presentation of the critiques of existing theories would create greater space for elaborating the author's original contribution.

The methodology section also requires clarification. Although the paper is primarily theoretical, it is presented under a section labeled "Theory and Method." However, the manuscript does not clearly explain its methodological approach, analytical procedures, or criteria for evaluating competing theories. A more explicit statement regarding the nature of the inquiry would strengthen the academic presentation.

The reference list contains a substantial number of sources, but the integration of these sources within the argument is uneven. Some references are foundational and highly relevant, while others appear only tangentially connected to the central argument. Greater selectivity and more direct engagement with the cited literature would improve the coherence of the discussion.

From a stylistic perspective, the manuscript would benefit from significant editorial revision. Many sentences are excessively long and complex, making the argument difficult to follow. Certain sections rely on highly specialized terminology without sufficient explanation, while others contain repetitive

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formulations that reduce readability. Careful editing for clarity, conciseness, and accessibility would substantially improve the presentation of the paper.

Finally, the title itself suggests a comparative analysis between “the West” and “the Rest,” yet the manuscript remains largely theoretical and does not provide a systematic comparative examination of specific societies, states, or regions. A clearer alignment between the title, objectives, and analytical content would strengthen the overall coherence of the study.

Final Recommendation**Accept with Minor Revisions**

The manuscript presents an ambitious and original theoretical contribution that seeks to address enduring questions concerning the constitution of society, the structure-agency debate, and the relationship between social integration and institutional development. The author demonstrates substantial engagement with sociological theory and offers a distinctive conceptual framework that may stimulate further discussion within social theory and related disciplines.

At the same time, the manuscript would benefit from greater conceptual clarity, stronger empirical grounding, improved engagement with alternative perspectives, and a more systematic connection between theory and contemporary applications. Several structural and stylistic refinements would also enhance the accessibility and scholarly impact of the work.

With revisions aimed at strengthening theoretical precision, clarifying key concepts, improving evidentiary support, and refining the overall presentation, the manuscript would make a valuable contribution to contemporary sociological theory and debates concerning societal constitution and social change.