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The Logic of Chinese Behaviors

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Preface I

This is a collection of my first sociological research, most of which was written in the 1990s. An edition of it in traditional Chinese was published in Singapore in 2000 by the American company Global Publishing, and a simplified Chinese edition was published in 2000 by Social Sciences Academic Press. These years coincide with crossing the century, and the collection more or less expresses my wishes at the times for sociological research, that is, hoping that China's social sciences research would find its way in the new century.

Re-reading this book today, it does not seem to be out of date—because the road discussed in the book is still in its infancy, and has been beset by various disputes. The reason why there were disputes in the academic circles at that time was due to the context of the early Reform and Opening Up. At that time, learning from Western social sciences could not be overemphasized. I remember that almost all of the teaching materials we used in university courses were imported, and, even if not all, they relied heavily on imported sources. At that time, when doing research, the research materials that could be read were very limited (there was no Internet, and even photocopiers were very rare). If a scholar managed to get ahold of some English materials, or know something about Western theories and methods, it was a glorious thing—because it was considered a test of a scholar's knowledge. Although there was a discussion on the localization of disciplines in Chinese academic circles in the 1990s, it eventually evolved into the issue of academic standardization. Over the past decade or so, academic standardization is no longer a problem, and, in fact, this had nothing to do with that debate. Many Chinese students now publish English-language papers in the best academic journals in the world, but the problem of how to develop the social sciences in China remains. Scholars still hesitate over and debating-related issues. However, in the past decade or so, all of Chinese society and the market have been undergoing significant and profound changes in their own modes and trajectories, regardless of what scholars think.

At present, how do those scholars who are only used to seeing the color of things respond to this change? In fact, the above situation has fatally led to a large number of research that is merely "very rich in experience, theoretically very pale." While China's academic circles are unable to respond to or predict our society and our

market, the world has entered an era of electronic communication including the Internet, smart phones, Weibo and WeChat. At present, information is no longer a problem. With the return of a large number of students from abroad, it is no longer a problem of integrating talent within international academic circles, either. What remains problematic is how to develop the life of China's social sciences. I don't know when this will be faced squarely.

Obviously, due to the limitations of the academic environment over the last century, the theoretical explorations in this book are rough and insufficient, and many aspects need to be further followed up on—especially breakthroughs in methodology and research methods, as well as better theoretical inferences. What's more worrying is that this situation—of great changes, great transformations, big data and rapid social changes—looms over scholars. My own consistent stance is to see the unchanged within the changing, or at least the part that's hard to change, as this can also help us to identify whether such characteristics are Chinese or not—or whether globalization has made the "logic of Chinese behavior" something that is merely spoken of.

Now, with this new version—from Life Bookstore Publishing Co., Ltd., a subsidiary of SDX—I have removed the article "Social-Psychological Endurance and Social Value Choice" from the original book and added "Human Relationships and Systems: Balance or Check and Balance," written in 2014. I have also added another article about values, bringing the themes of this book closer together.

May 2015   Xuewei Zhai
                                                       Xianlin Cuigu, Baohua Mountain
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Preface II

The content of this book should be regarded as a summary of my academic thinking and research over recent years. This summary revolves around one problem, namely, for a long time, we have either become used to working within a Western framework for scholarship or have taken the diametrically opposite tack, in opposition to any Western conclusion. For example, many of our studies only know how to describe and analyze Chinese society with ready-made Western theories, concepts and methods—and never consider the relationship between them and their research objects, such as whether they are compatible, or whether different members of society have different presuppositions about their own society. With the development of localized research in Chinese academic circles, although the above problems have changed, the binary tendency of comparative culture has been exposed, and we have changed from mechanically copying Western achievements to presenting our own social and cultural characteristics as the opposite to much Western research—such as that the values of Westerners are individualistic, and what Chinese people value is collectivism; the behavior of Western scholars is universalist, whereas the behavior of the Chinese is particularistic; Western culture is guilt culture, and our Chinese culture (as well as Japanese culture) is a shame culture; China represents tradition, the West represents modernity and so on. It seems that this kind of research, compared to imitating Western theories and methods, and blindly verifying the conclusions of Western scholars, has made progress and jumped ahead—it not only has the color of "cultural" comparative study but also has the characteristics of localized study. But I still think that such an approach to research ultimately cultivates inertia of thought, anesthetizes our academic nerves and reduces our sensitivity to problems.

As a result, the perspectives, theories, concepts, methods and the specific social phenomena of the Chinese people and Chinese society involved in this book are different from those above. My basic approach is simply to go back to the reality of Chinese society to see, listen, smell, observe, discover and experience—and then seek to find a means to express what they are. I don't think this work has anything to do with the argument over local compatibilism or binarism, because the common characteristics of compatabilism and binarism are concerned with how to locate the relationship between Western academia and Chinese society. A research concept,

method and framework derived from Chinese society does not look at Chinese society from this perspective. It does not care about how to use a set of Western theories, nor how to make its own research contrary to Western conclusions. Instead, it cares about what academic achievements we can have in this society, to reflect and explain this society. Of course, this may involve such a question as what kind of academic training a researcher should receive to enable him to do this? Because the disciplines that can be called sociology, psychology and cultural anthropology were all first established by Westerners. However, in my opinion, to receive disciplinary training is not to accept certain paradigms, theories, methods, etc., nor to prove the correctness of certain theories, but to acquire a kind of academic perspective, learn how to process data and have the ability to analyze and interpret. At the same time, reading Western academic classics does not mean that we are undergoing academic brainwashing, but rather that we feel how much tension there is when describing a kind of social and human phenomenon with insight. I think the research done from this standpoint will be different from the above arguments in understanding, and that the conclusion will be guided by the problem of consciousness in our own society. It does not originate from a particular Western theory, nor is it necessarily opposite Western society—and its research conclusions are different from local people's life experiences and local traditional thought, such as Confucianism.

In a word, my view is that so-called localization in research rethinks and analyzes our own society, culture, psychology, and behavior—instead of making use of Western ready-mades, and making binary comparisons opportunistically. In other words, localization should change our research perspective, that is, instead of finding phenomena and problems with the concepts, theories and methods of Western disciplines, we should start with local phenomena and problems, seek corresponding ways, methods and tools for solving those problems and establish local academic concepts, theories and analysis frameworks. In order to integrate my ideas and research together, I named this book *The Logic of Chinese Behavior*, and arranged and edited the papers I had written into these four sections: Perspectives and Methods; Conceptual Research; Empirical Research; and Theory and Framework—so as to comprehensively show my thoughts, discussions and research on the purpose, perspectives, methods, concepts and models and theories of localization during the period covered. It should be said that the words here not only express my understanding and explanation of the Chinese people and Chinese society but also reflect my thought process over recent years. There are confusions, anxieties, frustrations and joys that I have encountered; there are also some hesitations and revisions that I have made over and over again. I deeply feel that in the existing theoretical paradigm, researching step by step and in a stable way is the most worry-free and safe way. Once you decide to give this up, you will face crisis, challenge, traps, criticism and failure—I also believe that academic progress and originality are here.

Finally, I would like to thank the editors of *China Social Sciences*, *China Social Sciences Quarterly* (Hong Kong), *Sociological Research*, *21st Century* (Hong Kong), *Journal of Social Theory* (Hong Kong), *Orient*, *Indigenous Psychological Research-inChinese Societies* (Taiwan), *Jianghai Journal*, *Journal of Nanjing University* and other journals for their academic space, because many chapters in this book were

first tested in those journals. I would also like to thank Professor Hong Yinxing and Professor Zhang Yongtao of Nanjing University for their help in my academic development, and Professor Cai Shaoqing, my doctoral supervisor, for his academic recognition and support. Thanks in particular to the Department of Applied Social Sciences at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Encouraged by Dr. Ruan Xinbang of the department, and strongly supported by Professor Mai Pingshi, the head of the department, I not only had the idea of publishing but also had the opportunity to discuss the academic views in this book with the department faculty many times, and successfully completed revisions of the book in Hong Kong. Some colleagues who know me well think that the character of my research has much to do with my personality. I think, whether this is true or not, I will dedicate this book to my parents—who gave birth to me and raised me.

Parkview Garden, Hong Kong   Xuewei Zhai
October 1999

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Part I
Another Perspective: Some Thoughts on Localization, Research Approaches, and Methodology

"Localization", to put it plainly, is the expectation that scholars can change perspective—that is, to a non-Western perspective—in their own research on society and culture. For too long, the research perspectives of the humanities, and the social and behavioral sciences, have been set by Westerners. Of course, this did not happen overnight, but, over hundreds of years of evolution and tempering it gradually established itself, spread, was disseminated and gained the dominant academic position. And over the past hundred years, Chinese scholars have experienced the transformation from traditional Chinese studies to Western studies. It has to be affirmed that this transformation injected new and modern characteristics into Chinese academia to a certain degree, because in the growth of Chinese academia, there were neither sociology, psychology, social psychology, cultural anthropology or other disciplines nor the classification of the fields of philosophy, ethics or literature—just thinking and exploring humanity and society through the four traditional classifications of Confucian classics, history, philosophy and literature. Therefore, if Chinese scholars have accepted Western studies in this collision of Eastern and Western cultures, they have accepted not only the Western classification of these disciplines but also the perspective of Western humanities, social and behavioral sciences, as well as the concepts, theories and methods established from that perspective. In other words, the research paradigm of the entirety of Western disciplines has become the guide for Chinese scholars since the advent of modern times. In this process of unilateral absorption, our research perspective was naturally regulated by Westerners, and our research philosophy and methods were trained into a kind of program by them—and skillful use of this program meant that we had obtained the qualifications to engage in research pertinent to these disciplines. But the following problem is that, in such formulaic research, Chinese society, culture, history, and its people's psychology and behavior as understood and explained by scholars, were not becoming clearer and more convincing, but more and more vague, and inconsistent with the facts. Society, after considerable research, has become a society without its own history and culture; people, in many surveys and experiments, have become people without social background or context. In this case, the localization of the humanities, and social and behavioral sciences, was proposed. Localization does not mean going back

to China's past academic classifications in order to understand society, but finding another perspective in the existing disciplines, a local perspective from which to study people and society. From this perspective, we can not only see how our historical evolution and notions of culture have shaped our society, but can also see how our social backgrounds and specific situations have shaped our psychology and behavior; similarly, from this perspective, we can also establish our own concepts, theories and methods. In this chapter, based on the above questions, I will discuss the direction of localization, research approaches and methods.

Chapter 1
The Degree and Limit of Localization Research: How Far Can We Go

Before the localization of the humanities, the social sciences and the behavioral sciences reached critical mass in the academic circles in mainland China, all sorts of questions and criticisms arose, such as whether there were national boundaries in the sciences, about the relationship between essence and application, regarding methodological problems, problems of traditionalism and modernization, problems of absorption and exclusion, problems of universality and particularity, problems of central areas and border areas, problems of localization and globalization—and on and on. Each of these issues could potentially become the focus of a dispute, so that even mentioning localization would become quite complex—before localization as a course of study could be carried out. It is impossible to discuss the above issues one by one in this essay. I simply want to discuss some of the most basic disputes.

1.1 The Crux of the Growth and Decline of Localization

A term similar to localization was used in China from 1920 to 1940s, "Sinicization." At that time, some psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists, including Pan Shu,[1] Wu Wenzao, and Fei Xiaotong, not only published articles to discuss this problem, but also carried out empirical studies, having particular impact on academic circles at home and abroad at the time.[2] However, because China was in a unique social, economic, cultural situation, not to mention the academic environment at that time, the effort was abandoned halfway. Forty years later, due to changes in society, economy, culture and academia, the term appeared again, first in Taiwan and Hong Kong, receiving the response of a considerable number of local scholars. At present, to study Chinese from the perspective of localization has risen to the level of consciousness, culminating in a sort of movement in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

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[1] For details, see Shu (1987), pp. 37–52.

[2] For details, see Xiaotong (1998), pp. 228–244.

They hold regular seminars and small-scale symposia, founded dedicated research journals, and publish considerable research results in the field.[3] In the mid-1980s, this trend of thought began to influence academic circles in mainland China, and it could be said to have been in accord with the ideas of some mainland scholars. Localization first aroused extensive and heated discussion in the fields of sociology and social psychology,[4] and then extended to other disciplines. However, with the deepening of the discussion, on the one hand it was drowned out by the call for academic standardization,[5] while on the other hand it was overshadowed by the slogan of globalization.[6] It can be assumed that the academic situation of mainland scholars, due to localization, is unlikely to appear in Taiwan and Hong Kong. They will neither discuss academic standardization (as a people who have not received the standard academic training cannot perform as scholars at all); it would also be impossible to raise the issue of globalization while carrying out localization (because globalization is an estimate of world development by scholars, and localization in academic research is not a concept on that level).

Mainland scholars are keen to discuss "standardization," which at the end of the day is a discussion of whether our studies have real academic grounding, and if they meet the requirements of academic form and content. Scholars have devoted so much energy discussing this issue. On the one hand, it reflects the gap between the overall academic level of mainland scholars and that of Taiwan and Hong Kong. On the other hand, it seems that they are worried about promoting localization in such a situation. Localization may not make much progress, but on the contrary it may reduce Chinese academia's international profile. In any case, as far as the study of the Chinese people and Chinese society are concerned, or as far as localization is concerned, there is no necessary connection between localization and standardization—because when Taiwan and Hong Kong scholars raised the issue, they did not expect that there would be such a serious problem in academic norms as is the case in mainland China. Mainland scholars like to compare localization with globalization, but there is no justification for this. Globalization is thought of mainly in terms of the political, the market, and the communication and economic development trends of all countries in the world, while localization is thought of in terms of academic research perspectives and research strategies—which is not within the scope of the discussion at all. However, there is one view that seems to make sense: Since the politics, consumption, and communications and economies of all countries in the world are globalized, there is no need to localize academic research. Yet the complexity of this problem lies in the premise the above viewpoint is based on, which is the assumption that the development of human history will eventually move towards convergence and unilateralism. One of the potential related assumptions is that the result of globalization can only be that Western academics will always occupy the international

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[3] See Guoshu et al. (1985), Guoshu (1993).

[4] For details, please refer to Qingshan (1993).

[5] For details, see the discussion on localization and standardization, *China Book Review*, January 1995 (issue 3), and March 1995 (issue 4).

[6] See Zhongfang (1999).

academic stage—so it seems impossible for us not to follow. As a supporter of and participant in localization research, I doubt this premise. I am not going to elaborate my point of view here, because Western scholars have a much better answer to this question than I do. Their discussions of the "clash of civilizations," "one-dimensional man," and postmodernism and post-colonialism in recent years are enough to let us see that future social development is not so single or convergent. Even if my assertion is debatable, it is still possible to explore the possibility or rate of such convergence through the study of localization.

It is quite difficult to trace the reasons why scholars across the world advocate localization, as it is related to the reactions of some Western scholars due to confusion arising because of their research, and the reflections of some non-Western scholars in the process of following and relying on Western academia. Although there are essential differences between these two perspectives, localization has become an increasingly important issue. From the point of view of non-Western advocates of localization (mainly in third world countries and regions), there are two factors that are very important to the formation and promotion of localization as a movement. The first is emotion. Scholars who are deeply trained or influenced by Western academic research are more and more dissatisfied with the hegemony of that research, and more and more cannot tolerate a situation where they live in the wings and are not paid attention to in academia. Out of self-esteem they would like to influence, enrich and transform the world's existing academic system through the achievements of localization. Second, in terms of cognition, because these scholars realize that the more they copy and imitate Western theories and methods, or the deeper they get in Western academic circles, the more they don't know how to study local society or people. Based on that, they hope to achieve a kind of consciousness of academic research whereby they can establish their own symbols and systems of knowledge, by promoting localization as a movement. In a word, localization is essentially an academic movement launched by local scholars in order to establish their position on the world academic stage, and who are unwilling to copy and verify Western academic achievements.[7] But I think, as far as the current situation is concerned, the mentality of the promoters of localization have pushed themselves into a dilemma: on the one hand, they have learned from the West all their lives, and they take great pride in it; on the other hand, they need to let these things go, from emotion to cognition, and take an unprecedented road—which puts them at a loss. In actual research, due to the influence of their original mindset, they cannot say whether their research is localized or Westernized. Sometimes the research object is local, but the method is Western; sometimes the concept is local, but the whole set of ideas behind the concept has been clarified by Western theories; sometimes the scholar claims that his research and its results are localized, but the whole routine is Western. The above situation, taken together with some criticism of localization from the academic community, forces one to realize that there is a key problem that we must further explore, that is: Where are the starting point and fundamentals of localization? If this is not clarified, then those who praise localization will be directionless and muddled.

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[7] For details, please refer to Guoshu (1993).

They will write well-argued essays on "localization," but they won't know where to begin with local research. The opponents will also think that, on the one hand, this kind of research is far less brilliant than Western academic research, and on the other hand, since it is not better than that, it is not known what contribution it could make to the academia—except for satisfying one's self-esteem.

To answer such a crucial question, we must first be calm. As advocates of localization, we should proceed carefully: Can the academic thought, theory, concepts, methodology and achievements produced in Western society and culture help us to understand, explain and predict non-Western society, culture, psychology, behavior, and its process of modernization? If the answer is "yes," than no matter how strong the feelings and profound the understanding of those who want to localize, the outcome may be nothing but a gust of wind, an upsurge, a short-lived movement—and the best thing is to make Westerners appreciate you and win some applause—because, in essence, Western academia will still dominate the world. Under the above circumstances, the research results are simply mending holes in Western academia. In fact, even without localization, these achievements are possible. If the answer is "no," then localization takes on new significance. For non-Western scholars, they have the responsibility to seek a local theory and methodology, in order to better, more reasonably and more accurately, explain and predict local society, culture, psychology, behavior and changes. Of course, in the face of this problem, it is obvious that no one can easily answer "yes" or "no," but can only consider the extent and limits of answering either way. For example, few people would want to deny the existence of a discipline, a research field, or the logical reasoning of the philosophy of science in order to carry out localization. In a word, localization will not go on to overthrow the principles of the philosophy of science. Of course, it is not that there are no problems with the philosophy of science, which cannot be discussed. Western scholars themselves have a substantial divergence of opinions about this, but there are no Chinese scholars involved. As far as localization is concerned, the concepts, propositions and theories mentioned in the philosophy of science are always needed. At present, no one wants to give them up or replace them with the *Book of Changes*. As far as scientific research is concerned, there are hardly any scholars of localization who have investigated on that level. This means that the advocates of localization admit the premise of "scientificity" in research. The opponents of localization mistakenly think that if the advocates want to deny this premise, they will speak out against it. Another example is that people will worry about whether localization will break up an already-complete discipline system. It can be seen that the key to localization is to answer the question of degrees and limits. In the process of localization, if we don't recognize the importance of "degrees," the result is either that it doesn't work or that it goes too far beyond. As far as the present situation is concerned, the advocates of localization are in the former position. They are worried that localization will not achieve results, while the opponents are against the latter—they are worried that these people will go too far. It seems that a good ending still needs to yield authentic local research results under the premise of science, which is most convincing.

1.2 Clarification of Several Viewpoints

If we want to consider the limitations of Western academia and the possibility and feasibility of localization in terms of degree and limits of localization, we must first clarify the following six controversial issues.

First, to what extent do Western theories, models and concepts explain non-Western societies and peoples' behavior. In my opinion, due to the limitations of thought, language, culture and education, many theoretical models constructed by Western researchers are not universally applicable to people with different thoughts, languages, cultural backgrounds and social structures. On this point, cultural anthropologists have provided us with sufficient information and evidence.[8] Although Western cultural anthropologists will return to their modes of thinking in terms of theory, it is enough to open a window for people to understand a local society and its people, and it is also enough to see another perspective—so that we can understand how Western scholars talk amongst themselves, and how they stiffly use their theories and concepts to explain other cultures. From this point of view, Western theories and methodologies are at best local theories and methodologies, but historically they have been used repeatedly as general theories and methods. In this period of history, in which Western academia is equal to world academia, some achievements are only suitable for explaining Western society and Westerners, while others only partially explain non-Western societies and peoples, and some have reached a certain degree of universality and can be used to explain the whole of human society. But before we advocated localization, we accepted these theories and methods as universal principles uncritically. We did not see that some had no practical significance to us, some made us ignore other angles of observation and thinking, and some needed our own research for further verification.

Second, the theories and methodologies that the West already has are challenging to Western society itself. When non-Western scholars copy Western theories and methods as if they are treasures, we can see that Western academia itself has always been changing, and disciplines have continued updating themselves. For example, in Western sociology, Auguste Comte's great yet empty social statics and social dynamics developed into Herbert Spencer's all-inclusive theory of the social organism. From there, sociology walked two entirely different routes. One was Max Weber's sociology of interpretation, which put forward an ideal research method. The other was Emile Durkheim's positivist sociology, which put forward the importance of social facts. At the same time, Georg Simmel's formal sociology put forward the significance of interpersonal relationship structures. In modern times, various sociological theories took their own paths, such as Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism, George Mead's symbolic interactionism, George Homans and Peter Blau's social exchange theory, Ralf Dahrendorf and Lewis Coser's conflict theory, Levi-Strauss' structural anthropology, Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology—and some other, smaller theories, for example: reference group theory, dramaturgical theory, and role theory. No matter what kind of theory, it was an understanding of a certain

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[8] For details, see Marcus and Fischer (1998), Geertz (1999).

aspect of society—mainly Western society—that had been reached by one or a group of sociologists according to their own observations, research, and thought on society. Within some theories, there are also considerable differences. In Western academic psychology circles, this kind of situation has been very prominent. From Wilhelm Wundt, who established structuralism to oppose associationism—since then, every school has been a rebellion against their predecessors. For example, William James used his functionalism to oppose structuralism, and JB Watson used his behaviorism to oppose any theory of consciousness. Max Wertheimer and Wolfgang Kohler, through their Gestalt school, opposed Watson's neglect of cognitive psychology. In addition, the most influential psychoanalytic theory rebels against the misleading of the entirety of psychology from another angle, and puts forward that people's real psychology lies in their subconsciousness. So far, there has been no conclusion as to who is right and who is wrong. Maybe some theories speak some truths of human social life, maybe some theories are only connected to a certain culture (such as a large number of sociological theories and psychoanalytic theories), and maybe some theories are just a reflection of a local culture. However, it is strange that whenever a new theory emerges in the West, many Chinese scholars would rather say that the theory has existed in China since ancient times, or that there are similar ideas, and then go through or imitate the ancients, but are not willing to use their brains to explore and study their own traditions and changes—while other scholars prefer to accept all Western theories rather than open their eyes to China and the world around them. What's more puzzling is that some scholars prefer to shadow Western scholars, or change with each shift in Western academia, rather than take the initiative to establish their own academic space out of local reality. Therefore, the crux of this problem is how Western scholars themselves can constantly go against themselves, have the courage to innovate, and deny the old theories, while we have to take what they have prepared for us instead of cultivating our own academic garden. On the contrary, Western scholars are very good at seeking inspiration from Eastern culture, while many phenomena, problems or classical ideas ignored by Chinese scholars will be regarded as good things only after they are referenced by Western scholars.

Third, the question of whether localization should be carried out separately. Many scholars mistakenly believe that localization means to close the door, and exclude Western scholarship. In fact, this is not only a misunderstanding, but also impossible. As I said earlier, localization requires that the theories and methods used by scholars should be rooted in the society they study as much as possible. If some theories and methodologies are similar to those of the West, we can clearly see what theories and methodologies of the West can then be directly used, and what theories and methodologies can be used with a little modification without the problem of being mechanically applied. If some theories and methods are different from those of Westerners, we should carefully compare their advantages and disadvantages to see if our own theories and methodologies can better explain our society and people, or vice-versa. If we produce theories and methods that do not exist in the West, or are not applied in Western society, it means that these are original things, and that they have value within a certain range—just like the original things of the West. If localization in this sense is possible, then the world of "academia" is no longer

a unidirectional process of non-Western scholars learning from Western scholars, but a two-way process of mutual learning between them. This is the best way of communication—not closing doors and isolating your research.

Fourth, there is also the misunderstanding that localization only studies what is unique to its own society and excludes what is common to the world. However, the reality is that localization does not and cannot only study its own unique products. If one actually wants to do so, in order to achieve it, localizers should first identify what is unique to their own society, or, before each object of research, they should first study whether this phenomenon is unique to their own country, so then they can begin. Of course, some local studies do involve things with strong local color, but these things are only a part of localization studies, not the whole. It is entirely possible that some local things may be shared by other societies. The question is whether these phenomena can only be explained correctly according to Western theories.

Fifth, there is another misunderstanding about whether localization only studies traditional things—as opposed to modern things. In fact, this misunderstanding mainly confuses the meaning of localization. Localization refers to the localization of academic research, not the traditionalization of research objects. The focus of localization is the change of research ideas, perspectives, theories, concepts, methodologies or strategies, rather than the change of research fields and objects.

Sixth, and finally, there is the view that localization will get further and further away from globalization in the end, which runs counter to the ideals of academia. In fact, in my opinion, academic localization has been proposed within the context of globalization. On the one hand, political democracy, economic development and convenient communications can make it possible for scholars in the "frontier" zones to express their opinions, obtain research funds and obtain multi-directional information; on the other hand, the process of globalization itself is more and more likely to urge local scholars to be interested in their own social structures, cultural customs, ideas, behavioral orientation, and so on. They are concerned with what changes easily, and what is difficult to change. Why do some things take one form in one society, but take another form in their own society? Why are traditions so easy to revive, while many modern things so easily fly away with the wind?

1.3   The Levels and Stages of Localization

According to the above views, I think the process and direction of localization can be divided into the following stages:

(1)   Fully understand the existing theoretical methods, cultural background and research limitations of Western academia, and gain experience and lessons.
(2)   Use the awareness of problems to guide localization research, that is, not to determine the framework, but to find the problem first, study the problem, and then determine the research angle, position, concepts and methods.

(3) On the basis of specific empirical research, establish one's own concepts, models and theories, trying to explain the local society and people more appropriately than with Western theories.

(4) Construct an academic cognitive system that is both local and scientific, including a set of local symbols which can be used to describe, analyze, standardize, and predict local social culture and its changes.

(5) Become part of world academia. This part may only apply to a local society, or to a local society of the same kind, or to human society.

The above stages of development reflect the possible "transformation" after fully considering the degree and limit of localization as a movement. Our promotion of localization means that there is already Western research that is ahead of us. However, if we do not talk about localization but only local studies, then we will stray from the existing academic track and establish up a completely different system, resulting in a failure of dialogue between two academic systems.

When we start to realize localization, it may not be as ideal as mentioned above. There are several possibilities: First, the achievements made by the efforts of local scholars only become a school. As a matter of fact, there are already signs of this in some academic works written by Western scholars, such as *The Psychology of Chinese People*, edited by M. H. Bond,[9] and *Individualism and Collectivism*, edited by Uichol Kim and Harry C. Triandis[10]; this may also pose a challenge to Western academic circles. When a kind of scholarship which is different from or superior to Western scholarship appears, it affects or shakes the orthodox status of Western scholarship to some extent, and achieves equal dialogue among scholars in various regions, diversifying academic research. At present, scholars from Taiwan and Hong Kong are making this effort. Another possibility is that the protracted localization movement does not bring substantial results, but brings strong stimulation to non-Western scholars. They either oppose localization or do not engage in localization, but they no longer imitate and copy Western theories and methodologies—directly establishing important non-local and general theories and methods. In a word, my stance is that there is no value in not recognizing the limits of Western scholarship, or localizing it only out of self-esteem, and there is no future for scholarship that imitates but does digest foreign products.

At present, scholars are increasingly aware that academics should not only inherit, develop, explore, and extend—but also develop, innovate and be more imaginative. Western academics have made great contributions to the former. I hope the localization movement can make efforts in realizing the latter. In the following localization research, I will try to achieve these expectations. In order to seek a localized perspective and methodology, I first discuss what kind of structure Chinese society has in a more general and stable sense (that is to say, the following study is not a dynastic historic), and what essential differences it has from the "universal" society Western scholars are concerned with.

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[9] Bond (1986).

[10] Kim et al. (1994).

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Chapter 2
Confucian Social Construction: Perspective and Methodology of Social Research in China

The perspective of localization can first be discussed through the composition and construction of society. Social composition refers to the combination and characteristics of people in a society. Objectively speaking, the way in which a society is this combination has much to do with its region, the interaction between its people and environment, and its own historical development. However, we cannot deny that this kind of development is not a simple, natural process. When the members of a society, especially professionals (such as intellectuals or rulers) look back and reflect on their own social structure with theory, this kind of reflection and thinking itself will affect, limit and regulate that society—which is social construction. It can be seen that the transformation from social formation to social construction involves the transformation of an original and spontaneous social composition by social members through specific ideas. Even in Hayek's view, the main object of social theory is spontaneous order in society.[1] But I think that once the establishment of a social theory is accepted by social members, it will lead to the reconstruction of a society. The most obvious example is Marx's theory of class struggle (or social conflict). When it is accepted by some as a theory of social construction, it not only leads to class division and an explanation of the demographic characteristics of society, but also leads to revolutionary action and a new social system based on this division. From this point of view, we can say that any seemingly objective social composition has also been constructed many times throughout history, and the civilized society we live in today is the result of reconstruction by a theory or viewpoint. Of course, in the process of reconstruction, there will be some amount of spontaneous order, and that's why social theory keeps changing.

This essay does not intend to discuss the relationship between social theory and social composition in the wider range of the social sciences, but puts forward a theoretical assumption about social construction. Any intellectual will have a presupposition, an understanding of society whereby they conceive of or construct that society, and this presupposition and understanding are not the same in different

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[1] See Zhenglai (1997), pp. 1–65.