

The Dialectics of Part/Totality, Concrete/Abstract, and Appearance/Essence — Marx's Method and Methodology

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ABSTRACT

Marx's method and methodology is quite neglected in sociological theory so far, in contrast to Max Weber's and Emile Durkheim's method or methodology. There are two reasons for me to study Marx's method and methodology: on the one hand, I believe that we still may learn something from it; on the other, we can understand Marx's thought better through studying his method and methodology. The object of Marx's method is Capitalist Mode of Production (CMP) and its relations of production. His aim in *Das Capital* and related economic manuscripts is to reconstruct the totality of Capitalist Mode of Production. The totality is expressed in and through its parts. There are two levels of reality in the Capitalist totality: phenomenal forms and essential relations. As Marx said, "If there were no difference between reality and appearance, there would be no need for science." The process of presentation or exposition in *Das Capital* is from the abstract and the partial (commodity) to the concrete and the whole (the process of Capitalist production as a whole). So part/totality, concrete/ abstract, appearance/essence are three axes of Marx's method. And the procedure of movement from the parts to the totality, from the concrete to the abstract, from the appearance to the essence is retroduction or abduction, *i.e.*, to get an explanatory hypothesis from observed facts and to explain the observed facts by the hypothesis.