Modern Theoretical Foundations of Studies in European Societies

The Course Description

St. Petersburg
2006
Time:
1.05 – 19.05.2006, Mo – Fr, 10h00 – 12h30

Lecturer:
Prof. Dmitry V. Ivanov

Aims of the Course:
The general aim of the course is to provide students with understanding of the multiparadigm, multiculturalist and multidisciplinary nature of the (post)modern social science(s) and to foster students research and analytical skills. By the end of the course students should:
- know basic principles and research approaches of the most influent social theories;
- be able to find and critically interpret basic theoretical ideas and approaches in texts on social issues;
- be able to use different theoretical approaches in analysis of social processes and structures of European societies.

Teaching Methods:
Students attend classes, read the recommended literature, and prepare assignments on the basis of the texts. Students may be asked to write short (2-3 pages) essays and make oral presentations on the current topics. In the class lecturer gives brief presentation of problem(s) to be considered, makes introduction and conclusion on text(s) and moderates the group discussion of it.

Examination Requirements:
The final written exam is based on all course issues and materials and includes evaluation of:
1) the student’s contribution into class discussions,
2) the knowledge of principles and concepts of different classical theories (test)
3) the course essay (10-12 pages) focused on the analysis of usefulness of different theoretical approaches to subject-matter of student’s master thesis.

List of Themes:
1. Introduction: Current Problems of Social Sciences
2. Macrosociological Paradigms
3. Microsociological Paradigms
4. Integrative Paradigms in Sociology
5. Paradigms in Economics, Management, Political Science
6. Discursive Formation of Social Theory
7. Methodological Multiculturalism in Social Sciences
8. Conceptualizations of Modernization and Postmodernization
9. Conceptualizations of Globalization
10. Conceptualizations of Virtualization
11. Multidimensional Social Transformation (Case of Eastern Europe)
12. Conclusion: European Societies in Perspective of (Post)modern Social Science(s)
Syllabus:

2.05, 3.05 - Theme 1. Introduction: Current Problems of Social Sciences

Traditional foundation of social sciences (sociology, economics, management, political science) was positivistic view of human behavior and social life. Recent (since the 1960s) developments are alternative positions and approaches:
- interpretative (meanings-centered) theories and approaches;
- sensitive to cultural differences approaches;
- focused on social and cultural changes approaches.

In framework of such conceptions social life is considered to be subjective, with heterogeneous logic, changeable and science of social life can not be comparable with natural sciences which elaborate laws – universal and rigorous explanatory models. Controversies of positivistic and alternative views of social sciences generate problems of scientific legitimacy of social studies.

According to Thomas Kuhn the ‘normal science’ is based on some paradigm – shared by the scientific community members pattern of research problems solving. Coexistence of different paradigms is symptom of crisis – ‘scientific revolution’. In today’s social sciences multiple paradigms (very different but stable alternative approaches) may be identified. The multiple paradigm condition undermines traditional scientific legitimacy. Developed by social researchers forms / versions of the multiparadigm condition problem solving are foundations of normalization of research activities and scientific community identity.

Rise in the 19th century of the social science was specifically western phenomenon, but theories and methods based on European and North-American materials were used as universal tools. New tendency is criticism of traditional foundations considered as not universal scientific principles but specific cultural norms. Cultural relativism undermines universalistic intentions of ‘Eurocentrist’ theories and gives support to ‘indigenous’ theories and approaches. Taking as frame of reference different cultural orientations, researchers generate heterogeneous logic of the social phenomena and incommensurable concepts and data. Recognition of multiple cultural orientations of research activities allows social sciences to develop more culturally sensitive but less objective knowledge. Solutions of the multiculturalism problem are foundations of communications and truth claims in domain of social sciences.

Conceptual framework of the social sciences was developed in specific historical period. Foundations given by A. Smith, A. Comte, K. Marx, J.S. Mill, H. Spenser, E. Durkheim, M. Weber are revisited in theories of recent sociocultural changes. By new concepts like ‘postmodern’,

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‘global’, ‘virtual’ researchers try to identify profound shifts in nature of social phenomena. According to Ulrich Beck under conditions of changes traditional theories and models (rational organization, nation-state, institutional order etc.) become ‘zombie-concepts’ and social studies thereby risk their scientific legitimacy. Solving the problem of change, researchers reconstruct foundations of the social sciences.

Reading and analyzing texts focused on scientific legitimacy of research approaches and theories one can reveal conceptual and methodological foundations as the basic problems solutions.

**Questions and tasks for discussion:**

- What are according to T. Kuhn main features of scientific paradigm?
- How does H. Joas define ‘social sciences’ and their theoretical foundations?
- What are the sociological problems which require according to N. Smelser such solutions as interdisciplinarity and internationalization?
- How could be characterized current place of ‘social sciences’ in relations among ‘sciences’ and ‘humanities’?

**Readings to class:**


**Further readings:**

Kuhn T. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (whole book)


3.05, 4.05 - Theme 2. ** Macrosociological Paradigms**
A research in macrosociological perspective should be focused on supraindividual structures and processes considered as ‘properly social’ phenomena in contrast with individual actions and single events. The macrosocial are society as a whole, its evolution and its parts, institutions like state, market, firm, church, school, or family, groupings like classes, strata, confessions, or ethnoses.

According to Talcott Parsons any social phenomenon is a social system or functional part of system’s structure. In Parsons’ conception of structural functionalism analytical model of necessary systemic units (AGIL) is a universal tool of description and explanation. Individual actions are determined by social structures. Human agency is reduced to performance of institutionalized roles identified as social statuses attributes. Structural functionalism tends to be pure scientific approach that provides objectivity compared with objectivity in natural sciences. But structural functionalism as a paradigm has difficulties in studies concerning social inequality, conflict and change.

According to Karl Marx social science should not only explain but also change the social world. This critical approach presupposes value judgment as a basis of any research activity: selection, description, explanation, and critical evaluation of social facts. In Marx’s conception of historical materialism scientific knowledge always is an ideological construction integrated in social consciousness determined by ‘material interests’ of dominant social class. Objectivism is a sort of conservative ideology, and criticism / activism is historic mission of a progressive social movement. Society is a system of structures and ideas produced and reproduced in a process of struggle between social classes. Human agency is reduced to a pursuit of ‘material interests’ identified as social class attributes.

Neo-Marxist critical theory of society has revisited the role of class struggle and material (economic) determinism. M. Horkheimer and H. Marcuse considered rationality as a cultural unconscious guiding civilization from old forms of exploitation and oppression to new (soft and manipulative) forms of social control (consumption, mass media, culture-industry).

The neo-marxist paradigm shares with traditional Marxism and with structural functionalism analytical predominance of structures over agency. The common problem for macrosociological paradigms is analytical transition from statements about general characteristics of some social structure – state, class, market, firm, family, school etc., to statements about empirically fixed characteristics of particular organizations, communities, market places, firms, families, schools.

Reading texts dedicated to analysis of possibilities and fallacies of macrosociological approaches and theories one can reveal their conceptual and methodological foundations as the solutions of the basic problems ‘structure or agency’ and ‘objectivism or criticism’.

Questions and tasks for discussion:
- Distinguish key features of functionalism and neofunctionalism.
- How can be characterized Parsons’ theoretical conservatism?
- What are the new ideas distinguishing classical Marxism and Neo-Marxism?
- Formulate arguments for a possibility of compromise between ‘objectivist’ and ‘critical’ paradigms.

**Readings to class:**

**Further readings:**

5.05 – Theme 3. **Microsociological Paradigms**

A research in microsociological perspective should be focused on individual actions and interactions conducted in everyday situations. The ‘properly social’ is human agency, macrosocial phenomena are considered as aggregations of particular (inter)actions.

According to G. Homans and J. Coleman human action is rational. Subjective estimations of the expected gains and loses motivate particular actions. The social exchange paradigm (Homans, Blau, Emerson) allows to describe and explain social structures as reproduced by individuals’ networks of reciprocal exchange. The rational choice paradigm (Coleman, Hechter) provides view of social structures as reproduced by individuals’ cooperative solutions of social dilemmas. Behaviorist view of individual agency as based on stimulation by expected gains / loses and on pure rational calculation gives the rigorous causal model of scientific explanation. Social facts can be investigated with mathematical apparatus of the games theory. But behaviorist approach generates
the problem of studies under conditions of social inequality, power relationship, or different cultural background of the interacting people.

Contrasting paradigms developed by G.H. Mead, H. Blumer, A. Schutz, T. Luckmann are based on view of human action to be not always rational but always meaningful. Subjective interpretations of the actions meanings are orientations and motivations of activity. For the symbolic interactionism paradigm (Mead, Blumer, Goffman) social structures are created and reproduced by individuals in situations of interaction. Phenomenological paradigm (Schutz, Luckmann, Berger) allows to consider social structures as constructed and reproduced by individuals through habitual patterns of interaction. Interpretative view of individual agency as based upon human reflexivity and upon habits / rules of decoding of meanings provides the sensitive to the human specificity model of investigation. Social symbols and meanings can be investigated with rules of hermeneutics. But interpretative approach generates the problem of knowledge of factors, which are outside the individuals’ life-world or situations of their everyday interactions.

The common problem for behaviorist and interpretative paradigms is consideration of the social factors which are conditioning microsocial phenomena from outside (uncontrolled by interacting people distribution of resources at the national or global level, unintended by actors consequences of purposive actions that are conditioning further actions).

Reading texts dedicated to analysis of possibilities and fallacies of microsociological approaches and theories one can reveal their conceptual and methodological foundations as the solutions of the basic problems ‘structure or agency’ and ‘calculation or interpretation’.

Questions and tasks for discussion:

- What are the principles common for symbolic interactionism and phenomenological theory that confront them to theories of social exchange and rational choice?
- What is a structure of human consciousness according to symbolic interactionism and phenomenology?
- Formulate arguments for a possibility of compromise between ‘behaviorist’ and ‘interpretative’ paradigms.

Readings to class:
The contradictions between research communities supporting different paradigms became in the 1970s a general problem of theoretical gap between macro- and microsociological researches. The unity and scientific legitimacy of the sociology depends on the overcoming that gap. J. Habermas, A. Giddens, and P. Bourdieu tried to elaborate theories integrating one-sided approaches of the predecessors.

In Habermas’ theory of communicative action society includes two components: system reproduced by purposive rational action and life-world reproduced by communicative action. The system is an order of formal norms and roles. It coordinates human actions and therefore integrates society by economical (money) and political (power) means. The life-world is a sphere of shared values and symbols. It coordinates human actions and integrates society by ‘properly human’ (language) means. The age of the late capitalism is characterized by the system colonization of the life-world. Commercialization and bureaucratization of the life-world structures (culture, knowledge, local community, family etc.) undermine reproduction of values and symbols which provide mutual understanding and motivation of the purposive actions. Colonizing life-world the system loses its legitimacy. The protest movements (ecologists, localists, fundamentalists, human rights defenders, alternative lifestyle activists etc.) defend life-world and fight against de-legitimated economical (corporations) and political (state) structures of the system.

Habermas pretends to integrate structural functionalism, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and critical theory. But the problem ‘structure or agency’ has not satisfactory solution in the Habermas’ theory centered on structural and cultural conflicts and contradictions.
The Giddens’ theory combines agency and structure in the structuration considered as a double process: individual actions reproduce structures (resources and rules) and structures condition individual actions (reflection and practices). Giddens’ concept of structuration presupposes individual’s rationality and reflexivity that cannot be a universal model of agency.

The Bourdieu’s theory is focused on practices as spontaneous and habitual actions. Structures are conditioning individual actions through a habitus that is a set of mental and behavioral attitudes, which is formed by one’s previous experience of interactions. Objective positions determined by distribution of resources and subjective dispositions determined by habituses constitute social space as a field of agents struggle for power and domination. Bourdieu’s approach is very popular in current sociology way of solution of the ‘structure / agency’ problem but this approach is itself problematic because of presupposition of autonomous and power-centered actor (agent).

The common problem of the integrative paradigms is a restricted scope of analysis reduced to relationship ‘actor – structure’. Resolving the ‘macro / micro’ problem, Habermas, Giddens, and Bourdieu developed not really integrated or synthetic theories but alternative views of social phenomena. As a result, sociology remains to be the multiparadigm science.

The readings have to provide material for analysis of opportunities and limitations of the integrative paradigms.

**Questions and tasks for discussion:**

- Distinguish components of different paradigms used in Habermas’ theory.
- Is the multiparadigm situation a decline, phase of crisis, phase of growth, or normal condition?
- What is a preferable way of the sociology development: elaboration of dominant paradigm, synthesis of competitive paradigms, or systematization of theoretical models’ field?

**Readings to class:**


10.05 – Theme 5. Paradigms in Economics, Management, Political Science

Economic analysis includes two alternative approaches – macroeconomic and microeconomic ones. Macroeconomics is constituted by theories taking economy as a whole and its big parts – economic structures and aggregates. Microeconomics contains studies of the functioning / behavior of the economic units – single markets, firms, households. In macroeconomics the main competitive approaches are Keynesian theory and neoclassical theories including monetarism and rational expectations theory. These paradigms are focused on two different subjects: economic equilibrium under condition of the full employment vs. economic stability under condition of the optimum quantity of money. Researches based on Keynesian and on neoclassical paradigms have different consequences for economic policies: state regulation of economy vs. free market regime. In microeconomics the competitive approaches are classical marginalism presupposing economic behavior to be utility maximization and new institutionalism based on the presupposition of the economic agents bounded rationality. Integrating contributions from different paradigms, current ‘mainstream’ economics becomes a kind of multiparadigm compromise.

In the 20th century management alternative paradigms were developed by ‘scientific management’ school (F. Taylor, H. Faiol) and ‘human relations’ / ‘behavioral’ school (E. Maio, D. McGregor). Contingency approach (exemplified by P. Hersey and K. Blanchard) tends to integrate confronted views of the organizational behavior management: functions performance and control of stuff vs. creativity and stuff participation. Recent management theories (as they are presented in G. Morgan’s concept of images of organization) legitimate multiparadigm condition.

In comparative politics researchers have to resolve the same problem ‘structure vs. agency’ choosing relevant approach among structuralist (geopolitics and system analysis) and behaviorist (public choice and political culture analysis) theories. Special issue for political science is a problem ‘realism vs. idealism’ that confronts the Neo-Machiavellist politics based on current balance of powers and the values-based politics (liberalism, Marxism, or feminism). For contemporary political science dominated by values-based approaches the ideologies (quasi-scientific arguments) are paradigms that constitute field of alternative analytical models and
policies: liberalism, socialism, nationalism (fundamentalism), or radicalism (in different forms – feminist, antiglobalist etc.).

The situations in economics, management, and comparative politics have obvious similarities: multiparadigm condition that leads to plural but ordered (systematic) foundations for research activity and scientific community. Because of those similarities the readings from management domain contain material for discussion of general situation in social sciences.

Questions and tasks for discussion:

- Which opportunities and limitations of different paradigms create a basis for multiparadigm condition?
- What is a meaning of flexible / contingency approach to the use of alternative theories?
- Classify paradigms in economics and political sciences using terms ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ or ‘structure’ and ‘agency’.

Readings to class:

Further readings:
Hersey P., Blanchard K. Management of Organizational Behavior (whole book)

11.05, 12.05 – Theme 6. Discursive Formation of Social Theory

Postmodernist thinkers (M. Foucault, J.-F. Lyotard, J. Baudrillard) argue the modern science is not objective search for truth but culturally privileged discourse of power. According to M. Foucault research activities contribute to growth of the domination and control technologies. Discursive practices – scientific investigations, ideologies, arts, political and juridical decisions (acts), moral thought and so on, - constitute a ‘power-knowledge’. Social sciences and humanities arose during the 18th – 19th centuries in close relation to new mode of power – disciplinary one. Disciplinary society is aimed in use and control individuals. This aim generates discourses and
techniques of observation and investigation of human beings. Object of social sciences and humanities is build through embodiment of ‘humanity’ (personality, set of propensities, strives, wishes etc.), which is prescribed as a natural property to the individuals. Counter-discourses developed in domain of social sciences and humanities don’t undermine established order because counter-discourses contribute to counter-power involved in the common / universal network of power relations. The modernist power-knowledge embraces conservative (affirmative) discourses as well as radical (critical) ones.

The critique of foundations of the modern social sciences is a common feature of the postmodernist thought.

Lyotard considers the modern sciences to be legitimated by metanarratives – shared discourses of wealth, emancipation, meaning etc. Under the Postmodern condition modernist metanarratives are distrusted and scientific activities tend to be ‘language games’ – discursive practices of ‘paralogy’ creation, which are indifferent to truth claims. Flexible networks of the language games are general forms of the atomization of the social aggregates – institutions, organizations, classes, collectives etc.

Baudrillard proclaims the end of the social. Sociality related to institutions, collectivities, organized actions and movements was a phenomenon of the Modern age (18th to mid-20th century). Growth of the indifferent and inert masses (consumers of goods and information) undermines that sociality. Disappearance of the social has to lead to the end of the social science(s). But sociology and other social sciences don’t disappear because they are the system’s discursive strategies of deterrence.

In the postmodernist view sociology and other social disciplines have lost their scientific contents and have become a pure discourses of power. But current social theory has adopted this negative view. According to G. Ritzer and B. Smart social theory is not a system or fixed set of statements but a discursive formation identified through key figures (authors), texts, concepts; constituted by contributions from different domains (sociology, psychology, economics, philosophy etc.); open to reinterpretations and based on scientific principles as well as on moral judgments and political positions.

Foucault’s genealogy of social sciences puts forward the questions about legitimacy and aims of modernist approaches and paradigms. The readings from Foucault’s “Discipline and Punish” contain factual and conceptual material for both negative (Baudrillard) and positive (Ritzer & Smart) solutions of the ‘power-knowledge’ problem.

Questions and tasks for discussion:
What are main propositions of Foucault theory of relationship between disciplinary power and scientific research?

How the postmodernist critique of Enlightenment and Progress influence contemporary view of social sciences?

What is a difference between Foucault’s post-modernist concept of ‘power-knowledge’ and classical pro-modernist F. Bacon’s statement ‘the knowledge is a power’?

Formulate arguments pro / contra possibility to combine the modernist and postmodernist approaches to social studies

What could be place of the postmodernist theory in the multiparadigm and multidisciplinary order (system) of social science(s)?

Readings to class:

Further readings:
Foucault M. Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (whole book)
Smart B. Postmodernity: Key Ideas. London: Routledge, 1993

15.05 – Theme 7. Methodological Multiculturalism in Social Sciences

The social sciences are traditionally based on the European and North-American experiences of research. During the last decades ‘Eurocentrism’ of social sciences becomes the target of critique. Methodological Eurocentrism can be defined as the taking the Western form of sociality as a reference point. The fundamental ideas of traditional social sciences are:

- the social life is society considered to be a coherent totality of institutions or interrelated groups;
the main social problems are balances of solidarity and individuality, order and freedom, progress and equilibrium;
- the social research separates facts and values, structure and culture.

These foundations were conditioned by the specific Western processes of 17th – 19th centuries (nation-state formation, rise of capitalism, secularization in the name of Enlightenment). Traditional foundations of social sciences are specific value-orientations rather than universal knowledge principles. Taking the Eurocentric view of sociality as universal, researchers can miss real forms of sociality and impose misleading concepts on local data. The doubt about universality of the Western view of sociality leads to development of ‘indigenous’ social sciences as studies of specific local forms of sociality. Taking as frame of reference different cultural orientations, researchers generate heterogeneous logic of the social phenomena and incommensurable concepts and data. As a result social sciences tend to be reduced to the number of ‘postcolonial anthropologies’. The general problem arising from the recognition of cultural specificities is communicability of social sciences.

An alternative to indigenous social studies and to global science is the idea of international social science based on the methodological multiculturalism but aimed in communicability and unity of social sciences. The multiculturalism in social sciences presupposes:
- ‘ethnological imagination’ as a sensitivity to cultural differences and specificities;
- selective and reflexive reception of theories, concepts, and methods from the Western sciences;
- intensive communications among national and local research communities;
- comparative studies as a way to convergence of different national and local traditions in an integrated social science.

The methodological decentering of the Western scientific tradition is followed by the ‘cultural turn’ in the European and North American social sciences. That turn can be defined as a shift of social studies from structural view of sociality to cultural view: society, functional structures, statuses are displaced for culture, inherited traditions, identities. The culturally sensitive approaches enable researchers to reveal multiple socialities and redefine conceptual foundations of social research at the national or local level.

The controversies among claims of universalistic social science, indigenous social studies, global social science, and international (culturally sensitive) social science provide the basic ideas for solutions of the fundamental problems of adequacy and significance of social research. The readings provide material for analysis of limits of universalism in social sciences as well as limits of conceptual fragmentation.
Questions and tasks for discussion:

- Formulate key features of the multiculturalism situation in contemporary society and social sciences.
- What are main propositions of F. Kurasawa theory of ethnological imagination?
- What is the basis for expansion of the Western patterns of social research?
- Is it possible to identify different European conceptual traditions (paradigms, national scientific schools) as indigenous, focused on cultural specificities?
- Is it possible to develop global social science referring to new phenomena beyond the national and local structures / cultures and overcoming conceptual contradictions between national and local schools / traditions?
- Why the unity of international scientific community and possibility of communication are of the same importance as cultural sensitivity and adequacy of concepts and approaches?

Readings to class:
Kurasawa F. The Ethnological Counter-Current in Sociology, in International Sociology. 2000, N1, p. 11-31

Further readings:
Wallerstein I. The Heritage of Sociology, the Promise of Social Science, in Current Sociology, 1999, N 1
Akiwowo A. Indigenous Sociologies: Extending the Scope of the Argument, in International Sociology. 1999, N2

16.05 – Theme 8. Conceptualizations of Modernization and Postmodernization
The processes in advanced societies (including Europe) during the 20th century were considered in the modernization perspective. The concept of modernization refers to the set of tendencies and spheres, which were dominating the social life since the late 18th century: industrialization and mass production, liberalization and mass democracy, Enlightenment and mass culture. In the framework of modernization conception any social change corresponds to the pattern ‘structural differentiation + social mobilization’. At the end of 20th century new tendencies arose: postindustrial economy, postdemocratic policies and polities, postmodernist culture. Being recognized, those tendencies undermine the modernization model of contemporary social life.

According to the postmodernist social theory (Lyotard, Baudrillard) the social reality constituted by institutions and collectivities disappears. Social relationships and interactions are displaced by language games and simulations. Such view leads to conclusion about ‘the end’ of social sciences, which loose under postmodern conditions their subject.

Contrasting with postmodernist theory view is represented by sociology of postmodern(ism). Sociocultural change of the end of 20th century is conceptualized by means of modernization paradigm. J. Habermas, D. Harvey, and F. Jameson have considered postmodernism to be a ‘cultural logic of late capitalism’. U. Beck and A. Giddens interpret postmodernism as a symptom of the ‘old’ (or first) modernity crisis and of transition to the ‘next’ (or second) modernity, which is more individualist, flexible, and reflexive.

Besides the postmodernists and pro-modernists claims and debates the conceptual shift can be revealed in the current social studies: theoretical focus transfers in economy from production to consumption, in politics from the majority will to minority rights, in culture from science, education, and fine arts to popular life styles and mass media, and in social life in general from structures and (inter)actions to discourses and representations. Social sciences are adjusted to sociocultural change and the theory of postmodernization, which combines postmodernist and modernist approaches, can be identified as a form of that adjustment. S. Crook, J. Pakulski, and M. Waters generalize different tendencies in the change pattern ‘hyper(de)differentiation + hyper(des)organization’.

The readings provide material for discussion of presuppositions and limitations of the modernization paradigm.

Questions and tasks for discussion:

- What are key features of modernity according S. Eisenstadt?
- Try interpret tendencies and consequences of the late 20th century sociocultural change in terms of the modernization paradigm.
• Should the postmodernism be taken as new social life vision to be developed or crisis consciousness to be overcome?

• How can postmodernist insights be integrated into mainstream social sciences?

Readings to class:

Further readings:
Eisenstadt S. Tradition, Change, and Modernity (whole book)

17.05 – Theme 9. Conceptualizations of Globalization

The sociocultural change at the late 20th and early 21st century can be considered as the set of globalization processes. Expansion of transnational corporations, development of international organizations and movements, formation of multicultural communities and cultural ‘hybrids’ undermine traditional concept of sociality considered to be enclosed in the nation-state ‘container’.

Social sciences are adjusted to new tendencies with new theories and approaches. Three waves / lines of the globalization discourse can be identified: concepts of the world / global system (I. Wallerstein, L. Sklair, A. Giddens); concepts of the global sociality (R. Robertson, U. Beck); concepts of the de-spatialized sociality (A. Appadurai, M. Waters).

The first line of conceptualization leads to development of sociology of globalization. That is set of studies of new tendencies with traditional concepts. Global system is a totality of interlinked and interdependent units (national states, local structures or communities). The globalization is mostly colonization of localities by the Western civilization.

The second line contributes to the rise of global(ized) social sciences. Those are based on reflection of misleading role of ‘zombie-concepts’ and traditional boundaries (social as well as
conceptual). Globalization is structuring the World as a ‘single place’ – global, structurally homogeneous but culturally heterogeneous social space or field. The globalization is a ‘glocalization’ that dialectically combines unification and fragmentation of the World. The globalization is a challenge and social sciences have to provide studies of new phenomena with new research tools.

The third line leads to studies of post-globalization. The conceptualized are contingent, flexible and changeable symbolic flows and imagined spaces, which overcome boundaries and references of interactions to territory. Globalization is viewed to be not objective historical reality but culturally established discourses and visions constructing preconditions of social processes. Globality was not preceded by localities. Globalities and localities are correlates and both are produced in the same processes of contemporary identity politics.

Different and alternative approaches to globalization phenomena contribute to the general conceptual shift in social studies. The research focus transfers from boundaries and allocated communities to flows and networks; from national economies to global markets and transnational corporations; from national states to global (transnational) organizations and movements; from dominant culture and subcultures to multicultural condition and hybridization of cultures.

The readings provide material for discussion of presuppositions and limitations of different concepts of globalization.

Questions and tasks for discussion:
- What are common features and differences between theories of globalization developed by R. Robertson and A. Appadurai?
- What are globalization challenges to sociology according A. Martinelly?
- How can a new role of social sciences in the age of globalization or after globalization be characterized?

Readings to class:
Martinelli A. Markets, Governments, Communities and Global Governance, in International Sociology. 2003, N2, p. 291-323

Further readings:
18.05 – Theme 10. **Conceptualizations of Virtualization**

Expansion in the late 20\(^{th}\) and early 21\(^{st}\) century of mass media images and communications mediated by computers transforms vision of contemporary society. Some theorists try to interpret new tendencies in the framework of theory of information society. Concept of information society refers to central role of knowledge and to intellectualization of work and political power. The alternative view presented in theories of virtualization is based on ideas of simulation and communication of images.

The techno-centric theories of virtualization (A. Kroker, A. Bühl) argue new digital technologies constitute virtual mode of production that is base-structure of cyber-capitalism. Under conditions of cyber-capitalism the virtual class (owners of software capital) arises and exploits masses. In all institutional spheres of society computer networks constitute parallel virtual spaces of interactions. Techno-centric theories reduce virtualization of society to computerization and its social consequences.

The socio-centric theory of virtualization refers this process to the modern values (Liberty and Progress), which are not more real base for activities. Social institutions, which arose as forms of realization of modern values, are virtualized. In a virtual reality of any kind a person deals with images / simulations substituted for real things / actions. Such substitution can be revealed in key institutional spheres.

Images of consumer values, and not real things, circulate in the market. The very economic process – value production – leaves design bureaus and assembly lines and is transferred to marketing departments and advertising agencies. Simulation of a thing in an advertisement prevails economically over the thing itself. It is economical predominance of images that provokes an unprecedented expansion of consumerism and stock market speculations.

The very political process – struggle for power – is shifted from party and government apparatus to PR agencies and media studios. Simulation of an action in a media message prevails politically over the action itself. Parties that emerged as mass organizations representing particular interests now turned into brands, which used as they traditionally attract the electorate.
The construction of models referring to another models, rather than to real objects / processes, constitutes the science as a kind of language games putting back institutionalized search for objective truth. Simulation of an object in model prevails scientifically over the object itself. The activities of scholars are dedicated more and more to creation and presentation of competence images necessary to attain an academic status and to gain grants.

The speculative economy, media politics, hyper-text science exemplify current human activities aimed at images rather than at real things / actions. Such activities simulate institutional norms / roles performance but do not eliminate the institutional order which serves a kind of a virtual operation environment that is convenient for creating and communicating images and is easy to enter / exit. It is the expansion of the virtual reality logic that leads to expansion of digital technologies in all spheres of human life.

The readings have to provide material for analysis of opportunities and limitations of the theories of information society and theories of virtualizations.

Questions and tasks for discussion:

- How does N. Graham argue ideological content of the theory of information society?
- What is a dominant content of current social communications – information (objective knowledge, rational denotation) or simulation (images, affective connotations)?
- Should we consider recent changes as displacement of sociality by a postsocial relations or as a shift to some virtualized sociality?

Readings to class:
Diani M. Social Movements Networks: Virtual and Real, in Information, Communication & Society. 2000, N2, p. 386-401

Further readings:


19.05 – Theme 11. **Multidimensional Social Transformation (Case of Eastern Europe)**

The paradigms of (post)modernization, globalization, and virtualization supply alternative views of radical social change in Europe since 1989. The transformations in the post-socialist countries of the Eastern Europe are interpreted in three perspectives. In the late 1980s the dominant approach was theory of modernization focused on liberalization of economic and political institutions. Since the middle 1990s the theory of globalization is introduced in analysis of advantages and negative effects of economic, political, and cultural transformations. By the millennium the virtualization approach is used in analysis of financial structures, electoral campaigns, identities formation through consumption and mass media.

The first conception of post-socialist transformations was based on idea of transition. The transition has to be short-term process including:

- replacement of centralized planned economy by free market;
- destruction of authoritarian regime and formation of competitive democracy based on developed civil society;
- replacement of ideologically governed monoculturalism by cultural pluralism and openness.

The arising from social changes problems and contradictions became obvious in the 1990s: production decline and massive unemployment; corruption of bureaucracy; crisis of identity and ethnonationalism. New conceptions of transformations are reactions to shock of change. Negative consequences can be interpreted in the frameworks of modernization, globalization, and virtualization theories differently:

- too late modernization has to be rapid that provokes cultural trauma, anomie, and des-adaptation of people;
- globalization displaces the ‘second world’ and imposes a hard competition for inclusion into new social structures and processes;
- virtualization enlarges gap between images intensively produced and social reality which does not functions effectively.
Alternative approaches do not exclude one another. The empirically fixed change can be successfully explained as multidimensional and three paradigms reviewed above can be integrated into a three-dimensional model of change.

The readings from N. Genov’s “Managing Transformations in Eastern Europe” contain factual and conceptual material for solutions of arising from sociocultural change problems. In the N. Genov’s view the dimensions of transformation are: informatization (in domain of technologies), marketization (economy), democratization (politics), universalization (culture). The complexity of the transformations of societies in Eastern Europe requires some multidimensional solution combining different strategies of the transformation management: development of civil society, integration in EU, identity politics.

**Questions and tasks for discussion:**

- How can four dimensions of transformation identified by N. Genov be refereed to three paradigms of sociocultural change (modernization, globalization, virtualization)?
- Is it possible to describe processes in the Eastern Europe as postmodernization?
- What is the impact of globalization on the post-communist countries?

**Readings to class:**


**Further readings:**


Sztompka P. Sociology of Social Change. 1993

19.05 – Theme 12. **Conclusion: European Societies in Perspective of (Post)modern Social Science(s)**

The final session is dedicated to presentation and discussion of the students’ papers. The papers (10-12 pages) must reflect the theoretical and methodological foundations of students’ master thesis research. Students should to consider their theses topics in perspectives of:

- multiparadigm condition (contrasting and combining relevant structure and agency approaches, positive and normative ones);
- multidisciplinarity (combining economic, political, cultural, social issues and aspects of the research subject);
- multiculturalism;
- multidimensional social change.
Literature:


Diani M. *Social Movements Networks: Virtual and Real*, in *Information, Communication & Society*. 2000, N2, p. 386-401


Kurasawa F. The Ethnological Counter-Current in Sociology, in International Sociology. 2000, N1, p. 11-31


Martinelli A. Markets, Governments, Communities and Global Governance, in International Sociology. 2003, N2, p. 291-323


Smart B. Postmodernity: Key Ideas. London: Routledge, 1993


Sztompka P. Sociology of Social Change. 1993

Wallerstein I. The Heritage of Sociology, the Promise of Social Science, in Current Sociology, 1999, N 1