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Title of Session: European values meeting the new economic, political, and social challenges: trivialities and paradoxes in the mirror of sociology

Name of Session Convener(s): Larissa Titarenko

University/Organization incl. City: Belarus State University, Minsk

Chair: Larissa Titarenko

University/Organization incl. City: Belarus State University, Minsk

I) Title of Selected Paper: ‘High-brow’ culture as status: the devaluation of cultural capital in Europe?

Name/s of Author/s: Jukka Gronow

University/Organization incl. City: Uppsala University, Sweden

Abstract: Recent studies on the cultural practices and taste preferences of the well-educated Europeans and North Americans pointed out that traditional ‘high-brow’ culture is losing its self-evident role as a status marker. Both the contours of legitimate or good taste have become blurred and the self-consciousness of its representatives weakened. It is difficult to upkeep cultural canons and problematic to defend their value in the face of commercial culture and the challenges of the scientific-technical civilization. Humanities seem to be in an identity crisis in many institutions of higher learning. In Pierre Bourdieu’s terms, cultural capital has lost its value, is being deflated. I shall analyse the traditional high-brow culture in the cultural practices and repertoire of the cultural elite and the highly educated in three European countries, Finland, Denmark and the United Kingdom, based on extensive, new empirical data – both quantitative and qualitative - collected in three collaborative research projects. As our findings show, traditional high brow culture has become feminised, younger generations clearly differ from the older ones, instead of being exclusive taste patterns mix ‘high brow’ with ‘low brow’ culture as well as ‘pure’ art with entertainment, and finally, the new and educated middle class sets, in many ways, the new standards of common taste. Many of these features are evident in several countries but intriguing differences between them prevail. Each country has also a profile of its own

II) Title of Selected Paper: Gender norms meeting “European values”: highly qualified women migrants in Germany

Name/s of Author/s: Ingrid Jungwirth

University/Organization incl. City: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Abstract: This paper focuses on the change of normative requirements women migrants experience in the process of migration, particularly in their professional career. The idea is put forward that normative gender orders contribute vitally to societal values and ideals, therefore the analysis of their transformations in the process of Europeanization is an important dimension in the analysis of social change. Two presuppositions of modernization theories are being challenged against the background of the experience of migrating women. First, it is a hypothesis that with increasing differentiation in modern societies, inequalities based on ascriptive processes, i. e. the ascription of sex, ethnicity or race, lose ground. Second, it is often assumed that particularly migration from East to West, from South to North, entails liberation from rather restrictive gender orders, insofar as the “West” is identified with modernity and modern values, while “the Rest” represents traditionality. In this perspective it could be expected that women migrants from East to West in the EU experience a transformation in normative gender orders in the course of migration which should have liberating effects.

But particularly for women migrants with qualifications in science and technology migrating between post-socialist East European and West European post-industrial societies, this assumption has to be questioned. For them migration means moving from a society with higher rates of women professionals in science and technology to a society with a smaller percentage of women in this sector. Connected to this societal division of labour are normative gender orders which structure the public and private sphere according to gender difference.

III) Title of Selected Paper: Values and identities of post-soviet youth in transition: gender aspect

Name/s of Author/s: Larissa Titarenko

University/Organization incl. City: Belarus State University, Minsk

Abstract: When analyzing the post-soviet younger generation, scholars have to take into account the political differences between the former soviet, now EU and non-EU countries. This division determines the values, career plans and life expectations of the youth. Youth in the post-soviet countries experience some stress and restriction if it tries to achieve the same results as youth in the EU countries. It is especially applicable to travel, study and employment abroad. In order to fulfill their desires to visit other countries and have a job there they need special permissions including visas. If they stay at home, they often experience unemployment (like in Moldova, Ukraine) or earn not enough (everywhere) and therefore feel deprived and stressful. Current crisis brought additional troubles for youth in this part of Europe.

Having this potential problem of "lost generation", some national governments in post-soviet region pay a special attention how to attract youth by forming and financially supporting youth political organizations and keeping youth activities under the state control. State goals in youth policy include patriotic education, growth of solidarity and trust to the state among youth. Youth case studies in Russia, Belarus, Moldova and some other countries demonstrate this tendency.

Gender dimension of youth values and identities clearly show the difference: young men are more oriented to earning money, other financial issues, friends and leisure activities. Young women are still much more interested in family, religion, out-of-work activities. However,

both genders expect to receive good education for practical purposes or at least find a proper employment.

IV) Title of Selected Paper: Political vs. Ecological Values in European parts of Post-Soviet states (case study)

Name/s of Author/s: Sossunova Irina

University/Organization incl. City: International Independent University of Environmental and Political Sciences, Moscow

Abstract: During the soviet period, all data concerning ecological problems were closed and not available for the public. By the beginning of the 1990s' the ecological situation in post-soviet area has reached a high level of sharpness and become an important factor to define the social-political situation in the country. From this time the so-called mass movement on the basis of the ecological problems has been based: it has been a reflection of the environment crisis in post-soviet society.

However, ecological focus was still not very popular in post-soviet states because of the priority attributed to the economic situation and especially to power issues. The ruling political elites struggles with ecological movements and made them isolated from Big Politics. Thus the reviewing of different aspects of ecological problems removes all frameworks of traditional approach to study social associations.

In post-soviet political space openness of ecological information is a first step to a democratic country. Currently, the social tension of the state environmental security is particularly influenced by the group political interests in post-soviet states. Nowadays it is necessary to analyze economical, political, social - psychological, cultural, ethical and other factors all together in order to present the objective situation in a country and assess the interests of different social groups.

V) Title of Selected Paper: Values of Russian youth with limited capacities

Name/s of Author/s: Mamonova Olga

University/Organization incl. City: Moscow Institute of Socio-Cultural Programs, Russia

Abstract: The present study examined the phenomenon of system of values and social interests of such fluid and active social group as youth in contemporary Russia on its way from totalitarian society to democracy. The specifics of this research are the attempt to present the social attitudes and system of values of people with limited physical capacities.

The main hypothesis of research is that contemporary Russia is situated in the axiological vacuum, when in one hands, there is no prohibits and on the other hands, it is not clear, where the borders have to be. In this way, the system of values is fractured and vague, especially if the subject of the study is the youth which is in the constant development and change. This situation is rather painful for the young people with limited capacities who just try to find their place in the society, mostly without serious help from the state. As soon as this year in Moscow was declared "The year of equal opportunities" the sociological survey devoted to the issue of limited capacities was conducted. The findings of the survey show that in spite of the serious health problems, most of the respondents are not ready to sacrifice to their mental and economic welfare and try to live the "whole life" as people without limited capacities issues.

