

REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION

Title of Session: Rethinking the Legacy of the Second World in the Shifting Global Contexts

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Session description:

The Second world has vanished. Neither western nor eastern social scientists explained why the communist world collapsed, and have competing prescriptions for how to adjust to the new global context. However, sociology in the former Communist countries since long deals with the issues of social transformation and models of post-communist development within the new global framework.

Many questions remain open. Issues to discuss include collective memories and historical legacy, reshaping state borders and ensuing conflicts, diversities of “post-socialism” in different regions, role of sociology in post-communist states, and the role of the religious dimension in economic transformation processes.

From the theoretical lens, the main issue in the sociological agenda is whether Communist model of Modernity “from above” has a legacy to preserve and develop after all, and if yes - on which basis? What types of relationships between the different western and post-communist societies exist now (post-colonial?)? How are they reflected in contemporary sociology? How to reconsider past and present for the pursuit of explanation and policy formation within the new global conditions. History *vs* Theory is a perennial theme and theories tend to have a “best before date”.

The session will examine how the debates of theoretical issues of the former Second world can contribute to the understanding of the further development of different types of society and how sociologists from the different part of the world view them. We want to check whether the role of social sciences in post-communist states increased and to which extent they are important for scrutinizing the ways and means of further transformation? We expect papers from many countries.

Abstracts:*1) Eastern Lessons for the West: The Case of State Capture*

Mueller Klaus, Free University, Berlin

Twenty years ago, a sociological conference in Trento, Italy, tried to identity the challenges, which the unforeseen breakdown of the soviet type systems might pose to established social science theories. While the participants agreed that ‘normal science’ approaches would not suffice, a paradigm change failed to materialize. Instead, borrowed concepts from sociological modernization theory, comparative political science and neoclassical economy were transferred to a not well-known region. The results were not impressive: today we know little more about Russia (the Ukraine and Belarus) than before. Therefore, the social sciences, esp. sociology, should rethink their standard assumption about modernizing societies. A prime example is the dogma of a ‘functional differentiation’ between politics and the economy.

One of the lessons ‘from the East to the West’ seems to be especially relevant, namely the question of state integrity for which a special category has been introduced. “State capture” has been identified as

the central mechanism by which an unclear differentiation between the political system and private sector interests undermines the integrity of the state and erodes democratic procedures: interest groups with privileged access to privatization processes, to legislation, public offices and the media can change the rules of the game to their advantage.

While the concept of “state-capture” was successfully applied to Eastern Europe – e.g. to explain different reform outcomes in Central Europe vis-à-vis post-soviet Russia – it has hardly been used to analyse post-democratic developments in the West. Liberal democracy plus market economy was inflated to the benchmark of post-communist transformations, but not evaluated itself. This is no longer plausible. In the course of the global financial crisis it became evident, that also western political institutions and policies can be ‘captured’, namely by financial sector interests. Under these circumstances, ‘crisis programmes’ are designed to redistribute the costs of the crisis from financial industries to the public.

II) Rethinking Post-Soviet Legacy: From the Unified Soviet Model of Modernity to the Plurality of Post-Soviet Types of Development

Titarenko Larissa, Belarusian State University, Minsk

Almost twenty five years have passed after the collapse of the Second World and more than twenty after the Soviet collapse. As a result, as Timothy Snyder admitted, ‘Eastern Europe plays no significant independent role in world politics’ (2009). What is more, all the particularities of the history of Eastern Europe have been eroded by the mainstream of the history of the West, so that nobody is seriously interested in development of a particular country of this region. Meantime, during the post-communist period they have not reached the same level of economic and political development as this mainstream.

The paper will focus on post-Soviet states appeared after 1991 in the European part of the USSR, mainly, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. None of them is a stable democracy; none really followed the prescribed model of transition; none joined the group of the advanced countries or became a candidate for the EU. Regardless of many sociological research made in all of them and the level of openness (Moldova is totally open while Belarus is almost isolated) there is no deep knowledge about these countries. The only clear conclusion is that each of them follows its own way. Russia is desperately trying to return its important geopolitical role in Eurasian region. Ukraine turned west politically while became much weaker economically than it was 20 years ago. The same is with Moldova that additionally is struggling with the civic “cold war” in the society. Belarus substituted Albania as the “last dictatorship” in Europe. In the early 1990s Arnason argued that there was a Soviet model of modernity that failed (however, other Marxist models of modernity survived). Regardless of the common economic, political and social heritage of post-soviet states, their post-soviet trajectories differ: Russia developed so called wild capitalism, with semi-authoritarian power system; Ukraine developed a democratic political system but destroyed its economy. Moldova lost a significant part of its population as migrants whose remittances constitute

one third of its GDP. Belarus is totally dependent on Russian economic support still following the social welfare model under the authoritarian regime. The ruling elites in post-soviet societies differ greatly but the results of their rule have placed these countries to the similar situation of economic imbalance and political fragility. They became less predictable in their future development: after a successful color revolution there might be a step back supported by the public opinion majority, former dissidents can support the “strong state power”, while most of the population lost their trust to the authorities and became passive.

Briefly, during the last 25 years, Eastern Europe did not overcome the post-soviet crisis that twice overlapped with the global financial crisis (in late 1990s and 2000s). These countries are no more parts of the Soviet modernity, and it is questionable whether they indeed want to follow any other known “models”. On the one hand, according to the ruling Russian and Belarusian elites, they still want to follow its own way; on the other, Ukrainian and Moldovan elites are eager to follow the EU norms but cannot reach the required economic, legal, and social threshold to be accepted. Soviet model of modernity failed giving birth to many different ways of development that are neither stronger nor more attractive. The paper will research common and different features of the above-mentioned countries in order to understand whether they follow within the framework of any existing type of modernity.

III) Geopolitics of Racialization: Contestation of identities in Post-Soviet Russia

Zakharov Nikolay, Södertörn University

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the identification of belonging in respect to Russia found itself hovering in both economic and political terms between the so-called First World and the Third World. It is noteworthy in this regard that the notion of “civilized country” was and remains in Russia a synonym for racial whiteness. The great power image and the ongoing process of nation-building under the conditions of globalization have been accompanied by the exploitation of racial universals. The paper develops a new theoretical framework that casts light on fields of study that have not yet received sufficient attention in Western European and American research concerning racial issues. It charts how racialization shapes subjectivities and identities and also examines the ongoing and pervasive policy of racialized exclusion. I argue that the concepts and practices of race, whiteness, and Russianness operate ambivalently insofar as they both hold the social fabric together, organizing the perception of the “Other”, but also undermine the unity of society. Racialization thus fosters, first, the sense that Russia belongs to the core of civilization as opposed to the Third World; second, the formulation of policies towards the internal peripheries that support social control informed by the notion of human material; and, finally, the promotion of exclusionary ethnic self-identifications that employ the discourse of hybridity. Against this background, the main thesis of my paper identifies the discourse of race as the point of reconciliation between the understanding that Russians participate in the achievements of the West and the necessity of clinging to

authenticity. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, race imagery has in fact been used as the reliable anchor keeping Russia firmly within the “family of civilized peoples.”

IV) Cultural Capital as a Background of Information Society: Opportunity of Societal Development for Ukraine

Krutkyy Dmytro, National-University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy"

According to V. Khmelko, in 1991 the occupational structure of Ukraine corresponded with the structure of industrial society and despite a realistic possibility to progress to industrial-information stage of development till 1999 our society underwent a societal involution to industrial-agrarian stage. Indeed, agreeably with O. Kutsenko, after collapse of USSR Ukraine lost around 60% of production output, mostly in manufacturing.

Still, our society has an underused resource with a potential for societal development – it is our cultural capital. From USSR we inherited a numerous category of teachers and educated workforce, who possess valuable knowledge and skills. Currently, their proportion is declining: the results of monitoring research of Institute of Sociology of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine demonstrates a dramatic decrease of qualified professionals (with secondary specialised or higher education) from 1992 to 2010: specialist technical workers – from 12.7% to 4.8%, specialists in science, education, culture, and health care – from 12.3% to 4.9%.

Nevertheless, there is an evident growth in proportion of students – from 3.5% in 1999 to 4.8% in 2010, accompanied by a notable increase in computer use – from 17.7% in 2002 to 44.7% in 2010, and an intense increase in Internet use – from 5.1% in 2002 to 35.6% in 2010, at the same time more and more people report they have sufficient knowledge, for instance, in economics – from 9.7% in 1996 to 23% in 2011. Our education system has also introduced elements of independent testing and creativity in secondary school, together with liberal arts approach and independent thinking in higher school.

Thereby, there is a growing population of educated Ukrainians (mostly young and middle-aged) with modern perspectives and skills. They can and they do use them in contemporary information and service sectors of economy. Ukraine represents the largest market of outsourcing programming in Eastern and Central Europe. The first sign of a prospective development of IT-industry in Ukraine is the multi-million worth purchase of Ukrainian Viewdle start-up by Google. Thus, with adequate investments in education, information technologies, and high-tech entrepreneurship Ukraine can generate an increase in information production and approach to a creation of information society. And this is the opportunity other Post-Soviet countries can benefit from.

V) Macro-sociological Models and Russian Sociopolitical Dynamics

Rozov Nikolai, Novosibirsk State University

The cyclical model of service class revolutions by R.Hellie and the R.Collins's concept of modernization as composed of four autonomous processes (bureaucratization, secularization,

capitalist industrialization and democratization) are heuristic for comprehension of the dramatic Russian history.

Several models of social and historical dynamics (by R.Dahl, and R.Collins) are applied to problems of long-term social and political changes, actual and expected politics in Russia. Theories of social revolution (B. Moore, Th.Skocpol, J.Goldstone) provide us a rich conceptual apparatus for understanding factors of further political crises, possible coalitions, forms of conflicts, and probable outputs. A development of the R.Dahl's matrix (competition level / openness of politics) allows to trace main forks (bifurcation points) in future Russian politics. The Collins's theoretical prediction of the Soviet collapse is taken as a basis for analysis of threats and possibilities of Russian foreign policy. The geopolitical theory of ethnicity is useful for a sketch of reasonable national policy, and the democratization theory helps to reveal main subjective and objective barriers on the Russian way to real democracy.