

The Russian Society of Sociologists

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**THE DYNAMICS OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION  
(A Report for the XVII World Congress of Sociology)**

**THE DICTIONARY OF SOCIOLOGICAL POSTMODERNISM:  
CONCEPTS, TERMINOLOGY, PERSONALITIES  
(glossary – for the publishers' interest)**

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## THE DYNAMICS OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION\*

The founder of the theory of the sociological imagination was C. Wright Mills (1916-1962). In the work *The Sociological Imagination*<sup>1</sup> he challenged the dominant theorist of his day, T. Parsons, as well as the dominant methodologist, P. Lazarsfeld. According to him they overorganized the sociological theory belittling the role of *innovative thinking*. *The Sociological Imagination* is also noted for the effort to keep *original methodology* of the founders of science alive in sociological theory especially a Marxian one. On the basis of his innovative thinking Mills put forward the ideas of *methodological integrity* of social nominalism and social realism, the *links of global and region/local* problems as well as the *relationship between the personal troubles and public issues*, the *innermost acts of the individual with the widest kinds of socio-historical phenomena*, the *ambivalent functions of science*, the *multicultural development of culture*, *cultural relativism*, the *dynamics of institutions and social meanings* etc. He especially praised the *original intellectual thinking* of Marx and the founders of Sociology, their ideas of *immanent critique* of intellectual, social, and political orthodoxies, the *liberty based on the reason* considering these values to be in danger. Since then these issues have been extraordinarily influential in Sociology<sup>2</sup>.

However, Mills didn't show concretely the sociological imagination of the founders of Sociology and the representatives of the next generation of scholars, neither did he analyze the factors of 'ageing' sociological theorizing and thinking its dynamics. Besides, Mills' work is more than a half century old.

### *The codependence of sociological theorizing, thinking, and imagination*

The character of theoretical and methodological instruments of Sociology is influenced by the social and cultural dynamics of a society, intellectual traditions of the country in which it developed, and, certainly, by the achievements of the science. New theoretical approaches are also based on the shoulders of the previous giants of the sociological thought. The consequences of these factors are both non-linear and linear in character. So we have a very contradictory process. As R.K. Merton writes: 'I adopted the non-linear, advancing-by-doubling-back Shandean Method of composition at the same time I was reflecting that this open form resembles the course taken by history in general, by the history of ideas in particular, and, in a way by the course taken in scientific inquiry as well'<sup>3</sup>. Thus, *Sociology attends to continuities as well as discontinuities, jumps*.

Commonly sociological theories are classified by two criteria: a historical-cultural and national-regional context. Accordingly, it is accepted to allocate the classical sociological theory<sup>4</sup>, modern sociological theory<sup>5</sup> and postmodern *social* theory<sup>6</sup> which loses many actually sociological characteristics of the predecessors, including thus in itself even "antisociology".

We offer *another criterion* of the classification of sociological theories that is *the capability of the theory to analyze the becoming complicated social and cultural dynamics of the society, accelerated development of human communities, including their discontinuities as well*

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<sup>1</sup> Mills, C.W. *The Sociological Imagination*. – New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.

<sup>2</sup> Merton, R.K. *Sociological Ambivalence*. - New York: Free Press, 1976.

<sup>3</sup> Merton, R.K. *On the Shoulders of Giants*. - Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993. – P. XIX; *The Sociology of Science*. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.

<sup>4</sup> Ritzer G. *Classical Sociological Theory*. – McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Ritzer G. *Modern Sociological Theory*. – McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Ritzer G. *Postmodern Social Theory*. – McGraw-Hill Companies, 1997.

*as continuities*. There is some basis for it. As the society passes a certain threshold of evolution – such as the ‘ageing’ of socium – it assumes new qualities on a large scale. As a result there appear new challenges to the sociological knowledge, thinking and imagination.

The well-known scholars discuss this problem expressing rather different views. Thus, H. Joas considers the development of Sociology with the action-theoretical perspective that can cover ‘many modernisation’<sup>7</sup>. S.A. Arjomand tries to overcome the challenges by metatheorising in Sociology. He does a metatheoretical analysis of Weber’s rationalisation theory on the basis of which he puts forward his theory of hyperrationality. For him this is an attempt to rationalise the whole world experiencing non-linear development, modernisation and globalisation<sup>8</sup>. R. Collins focuses on the relationship between Sociology and Philosophies. The unity of them may form a global theory of intellectual change<sup>9</sup>. Z. Bauman’s lifelong topic is postmodernity that is characterised not only by peculiar dynamic mechanism, high polarisation, specific postmodern ethics<sup>10</sup>, but by liquid modernity and liquid times as well<sup>11</sup>. A. Giddens introduces the notion of ‘runaway world’ to denote the process of manufacturing uncertainties and discontinuities in modern society. He claims that Sociology and his theory structuration should study the reflexivity and risks of the modern world<sup>12</sup>.

The range of views held within the discourse of challenges to the sociological knowledge, thinking, and imagination displays that Sociology has not been successful enough in handling the problems of discontinuities and continuities within its own development. So, according to the above mentioned criterion - the capability of the theory to analyze the becoming complicated social and cultural dynamics of the society - we propose the following **five generations of the sociological metatheorizing, thinking, and imagination**.

At the same time, we argue that peculiar sociological thinking and imagination are *located within Sociology, to be more exact - in its metaparadigm, but not outside*. That is why sociological metatheorizing, thinking, and imagination are *codependent*. Each metaparadigm has its limits in historical and intellectual terms, and the same can be said about the corresponding types of sociological thinking and imagination. They are all *determined by self-development of socium* that is becoming more and more complex.

**The first generation** - the theories considering social development as *evolutionary* and *linear*, recognizing that the development of a nature and a society can be interpreted by the same theoretical and methodological instruments. The first sociologies - O. Komte, H. Spencer, E. Durkheim, K. Marx - tried to prove the *objective historical laws* which, in essence, were applied to the interpretation of societies as well as the lifeless matter. So, there appeared the **positivistic metaparadigm** which is based on a postulate of *eurocentrism of scientific knowledge, convertibility of social development and linear development in general*. The supporters of this metaparadigm considered that studying the various social facts enabled scientists to learn the society, its structures and functions and thus to create the social order, progressing on the basis of the intellectual development and moral perfection. In essence, the universal determinism of reason and morals was established. At the same time they developed the **sociological**

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<sup>7</sup> Joas, H. The Changing Role of the Social Sciences. An Action-Theoretical Perspective // International Sociology. – 2004, № 3.

<sup>8</sup> Arjomand, S.A. Theory and the Changing World. Mass Democracy, Development, Modernization and Globalisation // International Sociology. – 2004, № 3.

<sup>9</sup> Collins, R. Sociology and Philosophies. A Global Theory of Intellectual Change. – Cambridge, Mass.-L., 2000.

<sup>10</sup> Bauman, Z. Intimations of Postmodernity. London: Routledge, 1992; Postmodern Ethics. – Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993; Globalization. The Human Consequences. – Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1998; The Individualized Society. Cambridge: Polity, Oxford; Malden: Blackwell, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Bauman, Z. Liquid Modernity.- Cambridge: Polity, Oxford; Malden: Blackwell, 2000; Liquid Times. Living in an Age of Uncertainty. – Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Giddens, A. Runaway World. How Globalization is Reshaping our Lives. – London: Profile Books Ltd., 1999

*imagination* with a specific scientific ethos and innovative thinking in the form of '**organized scepticism**'. According to R. Merton it requires the scientist to doubt about the existing "truths" and then to check whether the doubt is well founded<sup>13</sup>.

**The second generation** - the theories that are based on actually *social* theoretical and methodological instruments which interpreted the causality as *probability* of the fulfillment of events. This led to the assumption that the human society is not something 'historically inevitable', but the result of many alternatives. The theories of this generation form the *interpretive metaparadigm*, asserting *pluralism of possibilities of development and subjectively designed worlds*. The methodology of this metaparadigm is based on the postulate that each socium has unique values and the circumstances are always subjective. That is why there can not be uniform, universal explanations of social realities. The research instruments used by them (M. Weber, G.H. Mead, C. Cooley, A. Schutz, S. Freud, etc.) are aimed at declaring the inevitability of pluralism of valuable systems and of alternativeness of social realities. All together they worked out the *antipositivistic sociological imagination* with a new model of thinking – the socium appears as a set of events which can not be determined as sociological facts. Its essence was firstly well expressed in W.I. Thomas' statement: 'If men define situation as real, they are real in their consequences'<sup>14</sup>. Later the principles of antipositivistic thinking – knowledge depends on language and social learning, the limits of different theories, critical analysis of timeless truths, direct involvement in social change etc.- were developed within critical theory by M. Horkheimer and T. Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*<sup>15</sup>.

**The third generation** - the theories interpreting the social and cultural dynamics as *uncertain fluctuations* (P.A. Sorokin), *choices of actors* (T. Parsons), and *ambivalences* (R.K. Merton). They elaborated the *integral metaparadigm*. It states that social and cultural changes are becoming *more and more dynamic*, in fact the development of socium consists of uncertain fluctuations. It includes the theories of non-equilibrium systems proving, that the complete systems based on the determinist processes, are exception. The methodology of integral metaparadigm postulates cultural pluralism, assumes integrated use of channels of knowledge. Such methodology was claimed by the increase of the dynamic complexity of social life. At this historic time Mills proposed the theory of *sociological imagination* the essence of which was *dynamic-integral thinking* that required a new sociological ethos and thinking in terms of increasing varieties and ambivalences. As Merton argues: 'In this situation of stress, all manner of adaptive behaviors are called into play, some of these being far beyond the mores of science'<sup>16</sup>.

**The fourth generation** - the theories analyzing a modern society, its main characteristics such as institutional and individual *reflexivity*. They form the *reflective metaparadigm of radicalized/reflexive modernity*. It is being crystallized under the influence of fragmentation, dispersion, and breaks of the social reality in which self-organized actors operate. The methodology of this metaparadigm defines the extreme dynamism of nowadays world, and the individuals become predisposed to change their self-identifications. The radicalized modernity has brought institutional, culturally cultivated risks in our life that is why the living becomes disorienting. For A. Giddens 'The reflexivity of modern social life consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constantly altering their character'<sup>17</sup>. To this it is necessary to add the tendencies of structural and functional 'ageing' of the societies of Europe that became the

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<sup>13</sup> Merton, R.K. On Social Structure and Science. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. – P. 267-276.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas, W.I., and Thomas, D.S. The Child in America: Behavior Problems and Programs. – N.Y.: Knopf. Thompson, Becky W., 1928. – P. 572.

<sup>15</sup> Horkheimer, M. and Adorno T. Dialectic of Enlightenment. – N.Y.: Continuum, 1987.

<sup>16</sup> Merton R.K. The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973. – P. 323.

<sup>17</sup> Giddens A. The Consequences of Modernity. – Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990. – P. 38.

subject of special sociological investigation<sup>18</sup>. As a result the demand for a new theory of the sociological imagination was realized by the world sociological community. Thus, there appeared the **reflexive type of sociological imagination**. P. Sztompka made a fruitful effort to work out a new theory of the sociological imagination that is aimed at interpreting reflexive social life in constant dynamics. According to him, the essence of this type of the sociological imagination is innovative, reflexive thinking about *social becoming*<sup>19</sup>.

**The fifth generation** – the theories studying *non-linear social and cultural dynamics*, processes of self-organizing socium, providing the appearance of a new type order developed from chaos and also the theories analyzing the desocialized socium, putting “*the end to the social*”. As J. Baudrillard writes: ‘The only “sociological” work I can claim is my effort to put an end to the social, to the concept of the social’<sup>20</sup>. G. Ritzer argues that the social world is ‘increasingly characterized by “nothing”. In this case “nothing” refers to a social form that is generally conceived, controlled, and comparatively devoid of distinctive substantive content’<sup>21</sup>. Nothing is expressed in non-places, non-things, non-people, and non-services<sup>22</sup>. However, the desocialized socium and nothing exist only in relation to the *social* and *something*. G. Ritzer states that ‘all phenomena exist somewhere between the extremes of nothing - something poles of the continuum’<sup>23</sup>. The theories of this generation manifest the ***non-linear metaparadigm of postmodernity*** that is caused by the transition of *some* socium a new threshold of dynamic complexity thus entering the stage characterized by non-linear self-development, globalization and glocalization as well as bifurcations. For non-linear social and cultural dynamics the breaks of socium are becoming natural. The rhizome development (*Rhizome* – the book by G. Deleuze and F. Guattari) has come into life that, in essence, promotes the end of the familiar world and creation of the new world with the new understanding of order and chaos. The complexity of the non-linear metaparadigm of postmodernity presupposes *the need for different types of sociological imagination, the pluralism of them*. In G. Ritzer’s view, ‘different imagers of the subject matter *are* the key paradigmatic splits in sociology’<sup>24</sup>. As a result, sociologists have to deal with the pluralism of models of sociological thinking and imagination.

One of the attempts to construct a new model was recently undertaken by British sociologist Steve Fuller in *The New Sociological Imagination*<sup>25</sup>. The author sums up his idea to write this work in the following way: ‘The original idea was for me to write a 21<sup>st</sup> century version of C. Wright Mills’ 1959 classic, *The Sociological Imagination*. This book shares Mills’ somewhat paranoid political sensibility, his broadly positivistic methodological sympathies, his allergy to trendy academic Newspeak (with structural-functionalism here replaced by postmodernism) and his conviction that social science is vital to confronting the (now very different) future that awaits us. A sense of just how much the world has changed since Mills’ day can be gleaned by glancing at the terms and definitions listed in this book’s Glossary, only about half of which he would recognize’<sup>26</sup>. The book critically examines the history of the social sciences to discover what the key contributions of sociology have been and how relevant they remain, demonstrates how biological and sociological themes have been intertwined. Fuller argues that in terms of reflexivity Giddens replaced ‘theory’ in the Marxist sense of a second-order epistemological critique with a less threatening Wittgensteinian first-order mapping of the

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<sup>18</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> Conference of the European Sociological Association. Ageing Societies, New Sociology. – Programme of Sessions. – Murcia (Spain), 23-26 September, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Sztompka P. Society in Action: A Theory of Social Becoming. – Cambridge, 1991.

<sup>20</sup> Baudrillard J. Symbolic Exchange and Death. – London: Sage, 1993. - P. 106.

<sup>21</sup> Ritzer G. The Globalization of Nothing. – Sage Publications, 2004. – P. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ritzer G. The Globalization of Nothing. - P. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Ritzer G. The Globalization of Nothing. - P. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Ritzer G. Explorations in Social Theory. From Metatheorizing to Rationalization. – London, Sage Publications, 2001. – P. 62.

<sup>25</sup> Fuller S. The New Sociological Imagination. – London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Fuller S. The New Sociological Imagination. – P. vii.

lived social ontology, or 'lifeworld'. Social theorizing in Giddensian mode constitutes spontaneity's reification. The above developments have subverted the social scientific imagination from opposing sides – that is, from *humanities* and the *natural sciences*<sup>27</sup>. This theory of sociological imagination also presupposes a new type of theoretical integrity of sociology with 'progressive' sciences of sociobiology, evolutionary psychology, and behavioral genetics<sup>28</sup>. At the same time, the author considers that we should revisit the aspects of biological research from which the classical sociological theorist originally drew intellectual sustenance. The histories of sociology and biology have been always intertwined<sup>29</sup>. The proposed methodological integrity certainly facilitates new opportunities to investigate the reflexive *socium*, especially it concerns our control over the consequences of human's activities<sup>30</sup>.

There appear one more theory of sociological imagination though quite a different one. U. Beck, the author of the theory of 'Risk Society' argues that 'we need a new sociological imagination, one that is sensitive to the concrete paradoxes and challenges of reflexive modernity and which at the same time, is thoughtful and strong enough to open up the walls of abstraction in which academic routines are captured'<sup>31</sup>. Through his sociological imagination Beck innovatively overthinks the history of humanity: 'The concept of risk reverses the relation of past, present and future. The past loses its power to determine the present. Its place as the cause of present-day experience and action is taken by the future, that is to say, something non-existent, constructed and fictitious. We are discussing and arguing about something which is *not* the case, but could happen if we were not to change course'<sup>32</sup>. Through the prism of his sociological imagination Beck also analyses unintended consequences of the logic of control, manufactured uncertainties, growing unawareness and non-knowledge in the wake of the modernization of knowledge, risk trap, self-critical societies, loss of clear distinction between nature and culture, risks as man-made hybrids, relations to definitions and others<sup>33</sup>.

These and other attempts to work out a new model of sociological imagination or to use its approaches<sup>34</sup> manifest the importance of this problem. All these attempts are scientifically fruitful. But in our opinion they all lack the *humanitarian basis* and *special ethics of humanism* that are very important in Russian sociological traditions. Under these conditions we have put forward our interpretation of ***non-linear and humanistic sociological imagination***. It states the increasing speed and complexity of social and cultural dynamics, the interdependence of humanity, takes into account paradoxes, dispersions of *socium*, its objective realities as well as socially constructed and virtual ones, but above all seeks to investigate men's life to find new form of humanism. The methodological instruments of this type of sociological imagination include in themselves both non-linear and humanistic aspects:

- *riskological turn* based on the thesis that the mainstream of the world sociological thought becomes the investigation of the non-linear, reflexive, self-organized *socium* the immanent essence of which are risks dominating people's life. Certainly, not all sociologists declare that they study risks. The problem is deeper – the modern type of the sociological imagination can't help studying the *inner reflexivity of socium, cultural traumas, points of bifurcations, uncertainties, and risks*. The development of human civilization becomes increasingly more and more complex depending mainly upon spontaneous activities, chances,

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<sup>27</sup> Fuller S. The New Sociological Imagination. – P. 19.

<sup>28</sup> Fuller, Steve. The New Sociological Imagination. – P. 29.

<sup>29</sup> Fuller, Steve. The New Sociological Imagination. – P. 80.

<sup>30</sup> Fuller, Steve. The New Sociological Imagination. – P. 54.

<sup>31</sup> Beck, U. Risk Society Revisited: Theory, Politics and Research Programmes // The Risk Society and Beyond. B. Adam, U. Beck, J. van Loon (ed.). – L.: Sage Publication, 2007. – P. 212.

<sup>32</sup> Beck, U. Risk Society Revisited. – P. 214.

<sup>33</sup> Beck, U. Risk Society Revisited. – P. 215-224.

<sup>34</sup> See: Elwell, Frank W. Macrosociology. Four Modern Theorists. – L.: Paradigm Publishers, 2006; Ray, Larry. Globalization and Everyday Life. – L. and N.Y.: Routledge, 2007; Wainwright, David (Ed.). A Sociology of Health. – L.: Sage Publication, 2008, etc.

multiplicity, and access to alternatives. There appeared specific socium that can be studied only in terms of manufactured uncertainties and risks;

- the *influence of the unintended consequences* of human's activity increases on the existing technologies, environment, but mainly on *human-cultural relations producing new and new forms of alienations*, and they are caused by human activity. The outstanding sociologists are talking about different processes of *dehumanization*. Here are some vivid examples: G. Ritzer argues that there appear *nothings* – 'generally centrally conceived and controlled social forms that are comparatively devoid of distinctive substantive content' (non-places, non-things, non-people, non-services)<sup>35</sup>. Z. Bauman states that 'human identities are narrated, they are *ineffable*' as people *lose* their place on earth becoming new untouchables, unthinkableables, and unimaginables<sup>36</sup>. A. Giddens analyses the effect of threats to humanity calling it 'Giddens' paradox'. According to it, 'since the dangers posed by global warming aren't tangible, immediate or visible in the course of day-to-day life, however awesome they appear, many will sit on their hands and do nothing of a concrete nature about them... People find it hard to give the same level of reality to the future as they do to the present'<sup>37</sup>.

On our own turn we point to the ambivalent character of *the gamization of socium* that is a rather complicated process that needs to be analyzed through the prism of *non-linear and humanistic sociological imagination*.

### ***The gamization of socium: unintended consequences and ambivalences***

Under the gamization of socium we subsume the following:

1) introduction of game principles and heuristic elements into pragmatic life strategies. Such introduction enables individuals by means of self-reflection to adapt to new uncertainties and to perform efficiently their actual professional and social roles in a constantly changing society; 2) new paradigm of rationality, typical for modern conditions of indefiniteness and the expansion of institutional risks; 3) the factor of contracting and reproduction of virtual reality of imbalance type; 4) a new sociological paradigm with a set of theoretical and methodological instruments suitable to analyze the postmodern society.

We note that our approach to the gamization of society through the prism of our sociological imagination has been discussed by L.R. Mitrovic<sup>38</sup>.

First of all it is necessary to *compare the game-ization with the game*. There may be helpful the book *Homo Ludens* by J. Huizinga where the well known concept of game is presented. Like higher forms of the game itself (contrary to plays of animals), the game-ization is a way of experiencing reality that presupposes the interrelation of game activity and culture. Social games (spectacles, music, masquerades, competitions) are essential for humans only. The game-ization and game embody only free activity of a man. They cannot be fulfilled 'by force'. The game-ization as well as the game is based on a passion of the highest order or what J. Huizinga calls 'tension': tension is the evidence of uncertainty and at the same time – of a chance. Exactly the factor of tension imparts the game activity that itself underlies outside the sphere of worth or evil this or that ethic matter. The tension of the game puts the abilities of the player to the test: his physical strength, inventiveness, resourcefulness, courage and endurance as well as his spiritual strengths.

At the same time the game-ization and the game are different: the last is an activity without immediate purposefulness. All in it is done 'if only simply', 'as if in reality', 'just for fun'. 'That

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<sup>35</sup> Ritzer G. *The Globalization of Nothing*. – California: Sage Publication, 2004. – P. xi.

<sup>36</sup> Bauman Z. *Liquid Times. Living in an Age of Uncertainty*. – Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009. – P. 45.

<sup>37</sup> Giddens A. *The Politics of Climate Change*. – Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009. – P. 2.

<sup>38</sup> See: Mitrovic L.R. *Paradigms of games and playfulness through the prism of Sergey Kravchenko's sociological imagination* // L.R. Mitrovic. *Makers of New Paradigms in Sociology*. – Belgrade: Institute for Political Studies, 2009.

“if only simply” of any game, J. Huizinga writes, contains the realization of its inferiority. Not being the “actual life”, it stands outside the process of satisfying the needs. The game-ization is on the contrary pragmatic that manifests in following narrow practical interests, pursuing profits and benefits. The rules of the game are indisputable and obligatory, there is no doubt about them. Without being imparted with rigorous rules, the game-ization constantly modifies them and creates new models of activity. The game community tends to preserve its regular staff even when the game is over, only the elite can fully enjoy the game. The game-ization encompasses practically all strata of society. Evidently *the game-ization according to its matter and functions (manifest and latent) differs from the game.*

1. *The game-ization facilitates the introduction of game principles and heuristic elements into pragmatic life strategies.* It practically covers all social spheres. In politics it manifests itself in the diluted political goals. The very sources of power may be substituted with game-ized simulacra: there appear virtual parties and movements quite alien to the people’s interests, some of them do not carry out purposeful activities at all, they are not orientated to the *essence* of the matter, to the struggle for power, (according to M. Weber, these are the main characteristics of politics). We can see the production of the game-ized *simulation and simulacra* of struggle. The game-ization rejects the idea that there is some ultimate truth to be discovered or goal to be achieved.

Through culture the game-ization enters our daily lives and forms the *game-ized masses the members of which are not socially connected with one another.* They are alienated. Intimacy, sex and sexuality are also influenced by the game-ization. Sexuality is connected with the knowledge and cultural life that is with spontaneous charming chances. Sex discourse is being game-ized that increases and extends the forms of sexuality.

2. *The game-ization is new paradigm of rationality, typical for modern conditions of indefiniteness and the expansion of institutional risks in which order is born from chaos.* Firstly, in its rational character game-ization is much akin to that of McDonaldization. But if McDonaldization according to G. Ritzer has become ‘the religion of consumption’ then the game-ization we argue may be called *the religion of success and chance.* Both the religions are relatively independent. Nevertheless they have at least two bounding links in common. First, *entertainment and performance* should be mentioned. That is, social life is centered on the production of goods and service provision in which the entertainment and performance play a very important role. ‘Consumption has less and less to do with obtaining goods and services and more and more with entertainment. In fact, the means of consumption are increasingly learning from, and becoming part of, show business’<sup>39</sup>. The game-ized practices as well as goods and services have become so popular due to their *performative values.* I argue the *performative value* becomes a part of the use value. Many people do not buy goods and services if they have not performative values. Thus, skilful game-ization is being required at modern institutions and social practices become game-ized.

Secondly, similar to McDonaldization, the game-ization may be measured in accordance with the four dimensions of Max Weber’s formal rationality: efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. But certainly its forms are quite different due to a specific role of a *chance.* Both the game-ization and McDonaldization offer *efficiency,* or the optimal, fastest way for getting from one point to another. But if McDonaldized systems function on ‘following the steps in a predesigned process’, ‘organizational rules and regulations’<sup>40</sup>, the game-ization presupposes the way *counter* to common rules and traditions of conduct, it constantly modifies the rules and creates new models of activity. For example, some institutions offer mastering the language through playing different practices or getting knowledge while traveling, or even arranging scientific conferences in an attractive form. All these practices help managers and consumers function more efficiently.

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<sup>39</sup> Ritzer G. *Enchanting a Disenchanted World: Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption.* – California: Sage Publication, 1999. – P. 194-195.

<sup>40</sup> Ritzer G. *The McDonaldization of Society.* New Century Edition. – California: Sage Publication, 2000. – P. 12.

*Calculability* is accounting for the quantitative and qualitative cost of fulfilling specific pragmatic goals. In McDonaldized systems calculability concerns portion size, cost, time to get the product and thus is very precise. The wealth as well as the risks of game-ization can be also measured bearing in mind the new flexible patterns of security and risk<sup>41</sup>. All spheres of the game-ized activity are connected with the permanent counting of risks and their parameters can be calculated. Personal and institutional reflexivity also presupposes the calculation of uncertainty and unpredictable fluctuations in modern societies. All this gives a man only *a certain approximately calculated chance*.

*Predictability* is typical of but different in McDonaldization and the game-ization. 'Customers take great comfort in knowing that McDonald's offers no surprise... The workers in McDonaldized systems also behave in predictable ways. They follow corporate rules as well as the dictates of their managers. In many cases, what they do, and even what they say, is highly predictable'<sup>42</sup>. In case with the game-ization predictability means the following: the conscious acceptance of the absence of compulsory causality along with rigorous regulations of activity, and of indefiniteness, risks, and chance. Yet, the multiplication of accidents may be determined by *statistical causality* and *the shared resulting consequence* of both a given structure organizing itself and the specificity of interactions among social actors.

*Control* is direct and mainly done through nonhuman technology in McDonaldized organizations that are also characterized by a high degree of centralized planning. In the game-ized practices control is *reflexive* and planning take the form of a desired project. Control should also be applied to how other actors shape their course bearing in mind their game codes and discourses to which they are attached. As a result the reflexive monitoring gives the actor a chance to control his own activity, realizing his needs with the possibilities in the context of interaction with other people.

Thirdly, the game-ization is a very specific *hybrid type* of rationality. In accord with M. Weber's views on the typology consisting of four types of rationality – practical, theoretical, substantive and formal – it accepts from them only some parts. And at the same time the game-ization is related though also to some extent to Mannheim's *self-rationalization*. Really, the game-ized actors must exercise self-rationalization. But unlike all of the other types of rationality, the game-ization as a new hybrid type of rationality occurs only in postmodern societies or societies moving towards postmodernity. If formal rationality, in Weber's view, comes to overwhelm all the other types of rationality, the game-ization rather peacefully coexists with the other types of postmodern rationality in particular with McDonaldization and sneakerization (S. Goldman).

Fourthly, it stands to reason that the game-ization has required actors with the adequate *performative habitus*, such that they can play the roles of 'virtuosos of plurality' (P. Berger) who are able to use the chaos to their advantage; that is, to act swiftly and unpredictably for opponents. The game-ization implies one's ability to bend the rules of the game to one's advantage in the very process of playing. Naturally, game-ization is unthinkable if one cannot bluff, manipulate the minds of others, apply demagoguery and simulacra. The performative habitus may increase or decrease the feeling of uncertainty so typical of the postmodern culture and may also influence the quantity and quality of the consumed goods. It's no rear that when one speaks of an individual as a 'clever man' he means first of all a high level of the performative habitus that now becomes independent social and cultural value.

3. *The game-ization is a factor of contracting reflexive reality of imbalance type that includes social paradoxes*. Really, the game-ization is ambivalent. It has as liberating as enslaving components. It is not without positive implications for the socio-cultural development of modern society. The game-ization makes more services available to more people, millions of them. Actors of the game-ization can keep their hands on the switch regardless of place and time.

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<sup>41</sup> Beck U. Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity.– London: Sage, 1992.

<sup>42</sup> Ritzer G. The McDonaldization of Society. New Century Edition. – P. 13.

The game-ization makes for the gentle application of such defense mechanisms as repression, denial and sublimation. In particular it helps to get rid the mind of the idea of a risky chance as something unusual. Unpleasant real events may be denied with the help of substituting them with simulacra of happy chances.

At the same time, the game-ization enslaves men becoming a new form of alienation. The game-ized individual is not the master of his own actions. More over he enters the world of unfreedom: though the individual illusively thinks that he does what he wants in fact he is moved by passion, irrational forces that are detached from his conscious Ego. The individual may believe that he has a free will that presupposes making a rational choice. But this choice is false because practically it leaves little room for mastering the world with the help of mind.

The alienated man produces idols for himself in the form of a happy chance, easy money that could be done via tricks and bluff. One stops to be a conscious actor, becoming a slave of idols made by his own hands. Thus, there appear a social type of an adventurer motivated by the thirst for gambling games, success at any cost. For him freedom means to do what ever he likes, to bluff, to manipulate the minds of other people. At the same time some people begin to feel themselves puppets. The social type of a puppet does not have his own Ego, and the people who have in fact become puppets cannot possess self-awareness, they are predisposed to be deceived, quite easily enter this or that game-ized mass, their main motivation is that of envy, their self-assessment depends on how lucky they have been in gambling games. There is a danger that such social types of adventurers and puppets may increase in number as a direct result of the game-ization.

The game-ization as a new form of alienation is accompanied by regression – the transition to more simple, primitive actions that facilitate the destruction, increase drinking, using drugs and apply to risky and gambling actions. Some people believe that risky chances really help them to settle their problems, give them relaxation. At the same time the game-ization manifests itself in doubts, anxieties, social and cultural traumas. The reason for this is that a man practically loses the outside orientations determining his behavior. As a result neurotic solutions (K. Horney) have come into our life and destructiveness has become nearly a norm.

It stands to reason that the game-ization has required actors with the adequate *game habitus*, who are able to use the chaos to their advantage; that is, to act swiftly and unpredictably for opponents. The game-ization implies one's ability to bend the rules of social practices to one's advantage. Naturally, the game-ization is unthinkable if one cannot bluff, manipulate the minds of others, apply demagoguery and simulacra. Furthermore, one's position in the social field now depends on the *game habitus*, ability to exert influence of chances.

Certain ethic is typical of the game-ized consciousness oriented on reflexive reality, free play of structures and actors. It is characterized by unprecedented individualism, permissiveness and moral voracity. The moral universe common for all disappears. Accordingly the individuals stop to be nice or bad but become morally ambivalent. Essentially the game-ized consciousness presupposes the acceptance of cultural pluralism including the change of game codes. This consciousness develops in the direction of acceptance of difference, taking into account accidental and unintended circumstances as a normal factor in the construction of social reality. This kind of consciousness treats the loss or crisis not as P. Sztompka's 'social trauma', but as the beginning of a new cycle of spontaneous activity. The game-ized consciousness helps the individual to cope with the risks of postmodernity.

The peculiar ambivalent feature of the game-ized consciousness is on the one hand the increasing freedom of the people from the compulsion influence of social structures and on the other – the increase of risky chances and uncertainties provoked by the same structures. The game-ized consciousness gives the individuals the possibility to get over the power of the institutional structures.

4. And at last, but not least, the game-ization is *a new sociological paradigm with a set of theoretical and methodological instruments suitable to analyze the postmodern society*. In our view, today it is possible to speak not only about the game of structures (J. Derrida), the game of

truth (M.P. Foucault), but also about the game of sociological theories, their methodological instruments, that it is becoming common for non-linear metaparadigm, focused on uncertainties, rhizome processes, breaks of knowledge. Their methodology is becoming more and more plastic and open, attends to both discontinuities as well as continuities. Besides, when the social reality becomes more and more diffused the game-ized discourses appear to be *specific and relatively stable, rather long living social practices* that the scholars may rely upon while studying the reflexive reality.

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**THE DICTIONARY OF SOCIOLOGICAL POSTMODERNISM:  
CONCEPTS, TERMINOLOGY, PERSONALITIES  
(glossary – for the publishers' interest: it needs the English edition)**

**This Dictionary has been published in Russia: *The Sociological Postmodernism: Theoretical Context, Concepts, Glossary.* 2010. – Moscow: MGIMO-University. – P. 397.**

Originally compiled by Prof. Sergey A. Kravchenko as a universal reference book, which is designed to meet the needs of both professionals and students. The range of terms is more than 1000 entries, that are not only simple, several-line definitions, but alternative meanings are given as well as short entries, displaying the connection of the terms with the core concepts and theories of Sociological postmodernism.

The **DICTIONARY** is thought to be unique. Up to now the sociological community has been lacking such a tool – the fullest updated dictionary of encyclopedic type with new keywords and major concepts of sociological postmodernism.

There are six levels of entry, appropriate to the importance of the area:

- 1) major sociological terms, concepts that form the basis of the subject;
- 2) biographical short entries on major thinkers;
- 3) terminology and concepts taken from the works of postmodern theorists that have not yet been included into dictionaries;
- 4) terminology of modern Sociology that is influential for the contributions to postmodern theorizing;
- 5) useful cross-references that contribute to a body of common scientific knowledge, including the terms of social science, synergetic, philosophy, methodology;
- 6) references to the most influential books that help readers to understand different parts of the debate around postmodernism.

The author also welcomes the suggestions from the readers about terms, topics, individuals that should be considered for inclusion in the future edition of this Dictionary.

## **A**

**abnormal**

**abstract system**

**absurd**

**accidents, normal**

**acculturation**

**acentrism**

**actionalism**

**actionalist theory**

**actor, social**

**actor network theory**

**adventure**

**adventure industry**

**aesthetic reflexivity**

**against interpretation**

**agency**

**agent**

**alcoholism**

**Alexander, Jeffrey**

**alienation**

**alter-globalization**

**alternation**

**alternative medicine**

**ambiguity**

**ambivalence**

**Americanization**

**analysis, narrative**

**anamorphosis**

**androgyny**

**animal rights**

**anorexia nervosa**

**anthropology, philosophical**

**anti-globalization**

***Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (G. Deleuze, F. Guattari)**

**anxiety**

**anthropology, social**

**anthropology, symbolic**

**anti-intellectualism**

**anti-Oedipus**

**antipsychologism**

**antisocial theory**

**antisociology**

**anxiety**

**Apel, C.-O.**

**approach, polyparadigmatic**  
**archaeology**  
*Archaeology of Knowledge, The* (M. Foucault)  
**architectonics, sociological**  
**Archer, Margaret S.**  
**arche-writing**  
**archives**  
*Art of Life, The* (Z. Bauman)  
*Art of the Motor, The* (P. Virilio)  
**assessment, risk**  
**atheism**  
**attribution, risk of**  
**author**  
**authority / power**  
**autocommunication**  
**automation**  
**autonomy**  
**autopoiesis**  
**autopsy**

## **B**

**Bakhtin, Mikhail M.**  
    **balance of trust**

**banalization**  
**Barthes, Roland**  
**Baudrillard, Jean**  
**Bauman, Zygmunt**  
**Beck, Ulrich**  
**behaviour, consumer**  
**Bell, Daniel**  
**Bellah, Robert**  
**Benhabib, Seyla**  
**Berger, Peter**  
**Bertens, Hans**  
**Best, Steven**  
**bifurcation point**  
**binarism**  
**binary**  
**biodiversity**  
**bioethics**  
**bioliberalism**  
**biopiracy**  
**blame**  
**Blau, Peter**

**bodism**  
**body**  
**body image**  
**body language**  
**body politics**  
**boomerang effect**  
**Boudon, R.**  
**boundary, text**  
**Bourdieu, Pierre**  
**brokenness**  
**Brown, Richard**

## **C**

**capital, social**  
**capital, symbolic**  
**carceral society**  
**caricature / cartoon**  
**carnaval**  
**Castells, Manuel**  
**catastrophism**  
**catastrophic society**  
**change, social**  
**chaos**  
**chaos point**  
**chaos theory**  
**city**  
**civil society**  
**civilizing process**  
**clash of civilization thesis**  
**class, dangerous**  
**class mobility**  
**class taste**  
**coca-colonisation**  
**code**  
**coding, cultural**  
**Coleman, James**  
**collage**  
**college, invisible**  
**colonization**  
**commoditization**  
**commodity chain**  
**commodity fetishism**  
**communication**  
**communication fetishism**  
**complex, Oedipus**

**complexity**

complexity theory

**computerization**

**concerned consumers**

conduit, cognitive

**conflict**

**conflict theory**

**conscience, mass**

**conscience, mythical**

**conscience, split**

**consciousness, discursive**

**consciousness, practical**

**consequence, adverse**

**consequences of modernity, the**

**consequences, unanticipated**

**conspicuous waste**

**constructivism**

**consumer activism**

*Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (M. Featherstone)

**consumerist syndrome**

*Consuming Life* (Z. Bauman)

**consuming body**

**consumption**

**consumption, ethical**

**context**

**contingency**

**contradictions**

**convergence, cultural**

**convergent validity**

**cosmopolitan localism**

*Cosmopolitan Vision* (U. Beck)

**cosmopolitan critical theory**

**cosmopolitanism**

**counterculture**

**creative destruction**

**creolization of language**

**crisis**

**critical realism**

**cultural approach**

**cultural autonomy**

**cultural coding**

**cultural determinism**

**cultural disorder**  
**cultural diversity**  
**cultural globalization**  
**cultural hegemony**  
**cultural hybridity**  
**cultural imperialism**  
**cultural turn**  
**culture**  
**culture bound syndromes**  
**culture of civil society**  
**culture of fear**  
**culture, punk**  
**culture, risk**  
**cyborg**

## **D**

**Dadaism**  
**Dahrendorf, Ralf**  
**danger**  
**dangerous classes, new**  
**death**  
**death of Actor**  
**death of the local**  
**Debord, Guy**  
**deconstruction**  
**deconstructionism**  
**dedistantiation**  
**defeminization**  
**Deleuze, Gilles**  
**deligitimization**  
**delocalization**  
**deMcDonaldization**  
**demedicalization**  
**democracy**  
**democracy, cosmopolitan**  
**democratic repression demonology**  
**denationalization**  
**depersonalization**  
**depression**  
**Derrida, Jacques**  
**desire for control**  
**desiring machines**  
**desiring risks**  
**destratification**  
**detritorialization**

**detraditionalization**  
**dialogical democracy**  
**dialogue**  
**diasporic community**  
**difference**  
**diffuseness**  
**disciplinary power**  
**disciplinary society**  
**discipline**  
**discipline, labor**  
**discourse**  
**discourse of risk**  
**discourse, binary**  
**discourse, practice**  
**disempowerment**  
**disenchantment**  
**disorder**  
**dispersion**  
**disposition**  
**distance**  
**distantiation**  
**distrust**  
**docile body**  
**Docker, John**  
**domination**  
**double downshifting**  
**dramatization of risk**  
**dromology**  
**duality of the structure**

## **E**

**Eco, Umberto**  
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**eco-fascism**  
**eco-feminism**  
**Ecomarxism**  
**ecolabelling**  
**economy, political**  
**ecophilosophy**  
**ecotecture**  
**ecstasy**  
**edgework**  
**efficiency**  
**Elias, Norbert**  
**Emancipation**

**embodiment**  
**emergence**  
**emergentism**  
**Emerson, Richard M. empowerment**  
**enclaves, new**  
***The End of History* (F. Fukuyama)**  
**end to the social**

**endocolonization**

**entropy**  
**environment**  
**environmentalism**  
**ethics**  
**ethnocentrism**  
**ethnographic turn**  
**euhemerism**  
**eurocentrism**  
**evil, the**  
**exchange**  
**exchange, negotiating**  
**exchange, network**  
**exchange, symbolic**

**exclusion**

**expert systems**

**F**  
**Fukuyama, Francis**  
**fashion**  
**fast-food restaurants**  
**fate**  
**fear culture**  
**fears**  
**feedback loops**  
**feminism**  
**feminization**  
**fetishism**  
**field, social**  
**flexibility**  
**flexible habitus**  
**floating signifiers**

**flow**  
**fluctuation**  
**fluid 'postmodern tribes'**  
**fluidity**  
**forecasting, global**  
**Foucault, Michel P.**  
**fragmentation**  
**frame analysis**  
**freedom vs security**  
**Fuller, Steve**  
**functionalism, societal**  
**fundamentalism**  
**future, unknowable**  
**futurism**

## **G**

**game**  
**game of structure**  
**game of truth**  
**game theory**  
**game-ization**  
**gap**  
**Garfinkel, Harold**  
**gated communities**  
**gaze, the**  
**Geertz, Clifford**  
**gender**  
**genealogy**  
**geopolitics**  
**gesture**  
**Giddens, Anthony**  
**Giddens's paradox**  
**global**  
**global assembly lines**  
**global cities**  
**global civil society**  
**global culture**  
**global elite**  
**Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture (R. Robertson)**  
***Globalization and Everyday Life* (L. Ray)**  
***Globalization of Nothing, The* (G. Ritzer)**  
**globalism**  
**globalistics**  
**globality**

**globalization**  
**globalization, negative**  
**glocal, the**  
**glocality**  
**glocalization**  
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**Goffman, Erving**  
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    **governmentality**

**grammatology**  
**grand narratives / theory**  
**grid typology**  
**grobalization**  
**group, reference**  
**groups, risk**  
**Guattari, Felix**

## **H**

**Habermas, Jurgen**  
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**happiness**  
**hazard**  
**Harvey, David**  
**health**  
**hegemony**  
**hermeneutic**  
**hermeneutic, the new**  
**heroes**  
**heterogeneity**  
**high-risk**  
**history, general**  
**history, global**  
**Hollinger, Robert**  
**holism**  
**holism, methodological**  
**Holocaust, the**  
**homo academicus**  
**homo economicus**  
**homo faber**  
**homo ludens**  
**homo otiosus**  
**home paradoxical**  
**homo sociologicus**  
**homogenization**

**humanism**  
**Huizinga, Johan**  
**Huntington, Samuel**  
**hybrid, man-made**  
**hybridization**  
**hyperglobalist**  
**hypermobility**  
**hypermodernity**  
***Hypermodern Times* (G. Lipovetsky)**  
**hyper-rational gaming**  
**hyperreality**  
**hypersexuality**  
**hyperspace**  
**hypertext**

## **I**

**identity**  
**identity, crisis of**  
**identity, negative**  
**identity, positive**  
**identity risks**  
**indeterminacy**  
**image**  
**imagination**  
    **imagination, sociological**  
  
**imaginative travel**  
  
**imaginary, the**  
  
**immobilities**

**imperialism, postmodern**  
**impotence, new**  
**inadequacy complex**  
**indeterminacy**  
**indetermination**  
**individualism**  
**individualism, methodological innovation**  
**individualism**  
**individuality**  
**individualization**  
**information society**  
**insane, the**

**insanity**  
**institutional individualism**  
**institutionalism, new**  
**institutionalization**  
**integrated sociological paradigm**  
**intellectual**  
**intentionality**  
**internalization**  
**interpretation**  
**intertextuality**  
**intuition**  
**invisibility of women**  
**invisible college**  
**irony**  
    **irrationalism**

**irresponsibility, organized**

## **J**

**Jameson, Fredric**  
**judgment, determinate**  
**judgment, reflexive**  
**justice, environmental**

## **K**

**Kellner, Douglas**  
**knowing**  
**knowing others**  
**knowledge**  
**knowledge of lay-people**  
**Kondratieff cycle**  
**Kravchenko, Sergey A. (1949)**  
**Kristeva, Julia**  
**Kumar, Krishan**

## **L**

**labelling**  
**labelling theory**  
**labour**  
**Lacan, Jacques**  
**language**  
**language of youth**  
**language, body**  
**Lash, S.**

late modernity  
latency  
lay knowledge  
Lévi-Strauss, Claude  
life-world  
limit experience  
linguistic turn  
Lipovetsky, Gilles  
*Liquid Love* (Z. Bauman)  
*Liquid Life* (Z. Bauman)  
*Liquid Modernity* (Z. Bauman)  
liquid religion  
*Liquid Society* (Z. Bauman)  
*Liquid Times* (Z. Bauman)  
local  
local narratives  
localism  
localization  
logocentrism  
logomahy  
logophilia  
logophobia  
love  
loss of historicity  
Luckmann, Thomas  
Luhmann, Niklas  
Lyotard, Jean-Francois

## **M**

macrostructuralism  
*Makers of New Paradigms in Sociology* (L. Mitrovic)  
man, marginal  
    man-made hybrids

marginality  
Marxian theory  
mass customization  
Matthew effect, the  
*McDonaldization of Society, The* (G. Ritzer)  
McDonaldized means of symbolic production  
McWorld  
*Meaning of Social Life, The. A Cultural Sociology* (J. Alexander)  
medicalization  
memories

**menticide**

**Merton, Robert K.**

**metalanguage**

**metalinguistics**

**metaparadigm of postmodern metaparadigm, unleaner**

**metaparadigm, integral**

**metaparadigm, interpretative**

**metaparadigm, positivist**

**metaphor**

**migration**

**Mills, C. Wright**

**Mitrovic, Ljubisa R.**

**mixophilia**

**mixophobia**

**mob, flash**

***Mobilities* (J. Urry)**

**mobile life**

**modern, industrial**

**modern, radicalized / reflexive**

**modernism**

**modernities**

***Modernity and Ambivalence* (Z. Bauman)**

**modernity, liquid**

***Modernity versus Postmodernity* (J. Habermas)**

**modernization**

**modernization, ecological**

**modernization, reflexive**

**modernization theory**

**morality**

**motivation, unconscious multiculturalism**

**movement, social**

**moving world**

**multiculturalism**

**myth**

**N**

**narcissism**

**narrative**

**narrative theory**

**narratology**

**nationalism**

**natural risks**

**negationism / negativism nihilism**

**neodeterminism**  
**neo-functionalism**  
**Neo-Malthusianism**  
**Neo-Marxism**  
**network**  
**new intellectuals**  
**new petite bourgeoisie**  
*The New Sociological Imagination* (S. Fuller)  
**no-growth society**  
**nomadology**  
    **noncivil sphere**

**non-knowledge**

**non-people**

**non-places**

**nonselection**  
**non-services**  
**non-things**  
**nothing**  
**nothingology**

**O**

**objectification**  
**Occidentalism**  
*Of Grammatology* (J. Derrida)  
*On Governmentality* (M. Foucault)  
**openness**  
**openness of the open society**  
**opposition, binary**  
**oppositions**  
**order, discourse**  
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#### ***Books in social theory:***

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