

УЧЕБНЫЕ ПРОГРАММЫ

Р. Мровчински

Социальная структура и социальное неравенство

Факультет социологии Национального исследовательского университета
«Высшая школа экономики»



МРОВЧИНСКИ

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General Course Description

Theorizing and empirical research on social structures and sources of inequalities in human societies constitutes one of the cores of sociology. The main purpose of the course is to provide an introductory overview of this complex and diversified area of scientific inquiries. By integrating insights from other branches of social sciences (especially economics, political science, social philosophy), the program of the course also accounts for the fact that sociology is not the only academic discipline which investigates these problems. The discussed contents should stimulate participants' further reflection about course-related phenomena and provide a source of inspiration for those who plan to conduct their own research in this area of sociological studies.

The course is designed as a combination of alternating lectures and seminars. The purpose of lectures is to present a specific area or aspect of social-structure and social-inequality studies including its fundamental theorising. The content of every single lecture will be related to the publications listed as «required readings». These lectures will, of course, reflect the point of view and the interpretation of the lecturer. Consequently, these contents can and should become subject to critical discussion during following meetings. In seminar meetings, participants will present sub-topics using the literature listed as «additional readings». To be awarded a passing grade, every participant has to deliver at least one such presentation during the entire course. A comprehensive list of requirements for a successful participation in the course is available in a special section of this syllabus.

The working language of the course is English.

Goals of the Course

The course will introduce to its participants classic theories of and contemporary debates on social structure and inequality research. At the same time, students will learn to critically discuss sociological texts in English. They will also develop their skills in oral presentation and in writing according to international standards of academic communication.

Program Author / Course Instructor

Rafael Mrowczynski received Ph.D. (Dr. phil.) in sociology from the Leibniz University in Hannover, Germany. In his thesis, he analyzed implications of informal social relations for the theory of social stratification in state-socialist and post-socialist societies focusing on the USSR and post-soviet Russia. In his postdoctoral project, he investigates the development of legal professions in Germany, Poland and Russia. Professional biographies and processes of professional-habitus formation are the focus of this qualitative-methods research.

Course Schedule

1. Social Structures & Inequalities: An Introduction

The course starts with a clarification of the concepts of social structure(s) and social inequalities. The discussion should also consider how these fundamental concepts of sociology are related to social-philosophic debates about «social justice».

Required readings: [Davis, Moore 1945; Durkheim 2008; Fischer, Hout, Jankowski, Lucas, Swidler, Voss 2008; Grusky, Szelenyi 2007; Sorensen 2001; Tumin 1953].

2. Social Classes and Power Differentials: Basic Concepts of Social Structure Research and Recent Debates

This thematic unit focuses on basic conceptual frameworks used in the social stratification and inequality research. Concepts of class, stratum, estate, and power elite are in the center of the discussion. A particular attention is devoted to recent controversies around the concept of social class which has been pivotal in most of sociological debates on social structure and inequalities in Western European and Northern American countries for one and a half centuries. Is the notion of class becoming useless for analyzing social structures of post-industrial countries or does it rather require a reconceptualization as to regain its explanatory power under changing circumstances?

Required readings: [Grusky, Sorensen 2008; Marx 2008; Mills 2008; Pakulski, Waters 2001; Parkin 2008; Sorensen 2008; Weber 2008; Wright 2007].

Additional readings: [Breen, Rottman 1995; Clark, Lipset 1991; Goldthorpe, Marshall 1992; Goldthorpe 2000; Hout, Brooks, Manza 1993; Pahl 1993; Rueschemeyer, Mahoney 2000; Sorensen 2000; Wright 2000].

3. Income & Occupation as Factors of Social Differentiation

This thematic unit discusses the impact of incomes and occupational prestige assessments on positions that individuals take within social hierarchies. Most of the readings tend to conceptualize inequality as a rather gradational phenomenon which can be more adequately theorized by using the concept of «stratification» than by referring to the concept of «class».

It is also argued that stratification can be much more easily operationalized for purposes of empirical social research.

Required readings: [Blau, Duncan 2008a; Hauser, Warren 2008; Morris, Western 2008; Sen 1997; Smeeding 2008; Weeden 2008].

Additional readings: [Bradbury, Katz 2002; Gottschalk 1997; Piketty, Saez 2006; Sampson, Morenoff 2008; Wilson 2008].

4. Modes of Status Attainment

This thematic unit aims at exploration of social mechanisms which bring individuals into or keep them in their social positions. Factors like family background, education and «cultural capital», «social capital» and access to social networks as well as structures of labor markets are considered. Additional readings offer an exemplary in-depth analysis of mechanisms by which labor market structures, especially the emergence of «dual labor markets», impacts social structure and gives rise to inequalities.

Required readings: [Blau, Duncan 2008b; Bourdieu 1986; Conley 2008; Kalleberg 2008; Lin 1999; Morgan 2008].

Additional readings: [Piore 1970; Sorensen, Kalleberg 2008; Weeden, Kim, Di Carlo, Grusky 2008].

5. Social Mobility: The Dynamics of Social Structures

This thematic unit explores the phenomenon of social mobility which is conceptualized as the dynamic aspect of the social structuration. Some of the writings on the reading list question the very concept of social structure as being too static and, hence, unable to reflect the dynamic, constantly changing nature of human societies.

Required readings: [Breen 2008; Erikson, Goldthorpe 2008; Gottschalk 2001; Lipset, Bendix, Zettelberg 2001; Sorokin 2001; Weeden, Kim, Di Carlo, Grusky 2008].

6. Ascriptive Differences and Social Inequalities: Gender, Ethnicity & Race

This thematic unit focuses on the interdependency between ascriptive differences among human beings on the one hand and their position within the social structure as well as their mobility chances during their life-course on the other hand. Ascriptive differences are understood as differences which by themselves do not constitute inequality. However, they can, as many research findings suggest, significantly correlate with phenomena of socio-economic and occupational differentiation. As a consequence, the question arises what is the role of possibly stereotyped characteristics attributed to members of such social groups in producing and re-producing their social status, socio-economic situation and mobility chances. The required and additional literature focuses on gender, racial and ethnic differences. A conceptual distinction between segregation and discrimination is also discussed.

Required readings: [Bielby 2008; Bonacich 1972; Feagin 1991; Grusky, Levanon 2008; Lorber 2007; Petersen 2008; Portes, Manning 2008; Wilson 2008].

Additional readings: [Belkin 2008; Bertrand, Mullainathan 2004; Blau, Kahn 2008; Boushey 2008; Correll, Benard, Paik 2008; England 2008; Goldin, Rouse 2008; Hochschild 2008; Massey, Denton 2008; Martini, Fan 1997; Oliver, Shapiro 2008; Pager 2008; Petersen, Morgan 1995; Portes, Zhou 1993].

7. Consequences of Social Inequalities

This thematic unit focuses on the reciprocal relationship between material stratification, educational attainments and occupational statuses on the one hand and lifestyles, social memberships and patterns of consumption on the other hand. The sphere of leisure activities, the use of computers and the Internet, and consumption patterns provide examples for a critical discussion of theoretical concepts.

Required readings: [Bourdieu 2008; Kohn 2008; Veblen 2008].

Additional readings: [Crompton 1996; Di Maggio, Hargittai, Celeste, Shafer 2007; Chan, Goldthorpe 2005].

8. Social Inequalities in Post-Socialist Contexts

Several authors, including the course instructor, have advanced the argument that major concepts of Western European and Northern American sociology are not fully adequate to grasp the specific structures and forms of social inequalities which emerged in Eastern European countries during the Soviet-type state socialism. Especially the concept of class has been controversially discussed as regarding its benefit for a critical analysis of socialist societies. Today, two decades after the collapse of the state-socialist regimes, there is still a controversial debate about the impact which the specific path of societal transformation in the past has on the present-day structure of social inequalities in this part of the world. The course unit intends to discuss this issue focusing on the emergence or absence of a «middle class» and on possible interdependencies between social structures and political behavior.

Required readings: [Kwasniewicz 2003; Lane 2005; Radaev, Shkaratan 1992; Slomczynski, Janicka 2008; Zaslavskaja 2002].

Additional readings: [Balzer 2001; Domanski 2000; Kunovich 2002; Mrowczynski 2008; Osborn, Slomczynski 2005; Slomczynski, Shabad 2000; Wilk, Shabad 2002].

9. Recent Trends in Social Inequalities

The last unit of the course aims at estimating and conceptualizing current reconfigurations in social structures of many countries. A particular emphasis is put on the phenomena of individualization, post-industrialization and transnationalism or «globalization». Especially the last two concepts can be regarded as alternative interpretations depending on a territorial framing of social structure research. Against this background, the still dominant focus of inequality theorizing and research on national-state units may be challenged by a theory of a transnational social structure which conceptualizes states and their multi-level regulatory regimes economic and welfare policies, border control regulations etc. as one of most crucial factors producing and reproducing social inequalities on a global scale.

Required readings: [Beck, Lau 2008; Bell 2001; Firebaugh 2008; Stiglitz 2008; Wallerstein 2008].

Grading

The awarded grades will take into account:

1. Frequent and active participation in seminar discussions. This component will constitute 30 per cent of the final grade. All participants are obligated to read all texts listed as «required readings». The knowledge of these contents is the basic prerequisite for all further discussions, writings of essays and examinations during the rest of the term. A very important form of active participation is to ask questions. Non-presenting participants are strongly encouraged to acquaint themselves with «additional readings» for a given meeting. This knowledge will certainly increase the quality of their contribution to discussions of presented literature.

Frequent attendance is, of course, a necessary prerequisite of active participation. Missing of classes is acceptable only if announced in advance or justified afterwards by naming an important reason like illness etc. (In

cases of illness, a medical certificate should be submitted to the dean's office.) Please use e-mail (rmrowczynski@hse.ru), phone (+7 499 152 04 71) or personal contact (office 216) to the course instructor for discussing individual scheduling and attendance problems.

2. An essay (2,000 to 3,000 words excluding bibliography, table of contents, front page etc.). This component will constitute 25 per cent of the final grade. Essay topics may be picked from the list included below. Alternative topics within the general thematic framework of the course may be proposed by participants. Such original topic proposals are welcomed. However, an essay topic which is not listed below has to be approved by the course instructor in advance. Course participants are asked to apply for (or to propose) essay topics until the day before the second meeting of the course via e-mail (rmrowczynski@hse.ru).

Essays should be submitted to the course instructor as a Word (doc or rtf) file via e-mail and as a hardcopy. The electronic version of the essay should be sent in advance of the hardcopy submission. It should be identical as compared to the hardcopy in regard of content, pagination, text formats etc. The deadline for the hardcopy submission is the second-last regular session of the course. Essays submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration in the grading procedure.

All sources of information and inspiration have to be explicitly indicated and listed in the bibliography according to the standards of scientific publication. All literal quotations have to be marked exactly as such. Please use the quotation and reference style of the American Sociological Review (ASR) which is used in this syllabus for listing of readings. (For details regarding the style, please also see: URL: <http://www.asanet.org/journals/asr/index.cfm>.)

Please be informed that the HSE implements a strict anti-plagiarism policy (URL: http://www.hse.ru/org/hse/antiplagiat_info/plagiat) which foresees sanctions for any misconduct in this respect. All writings of course participants will be routinely scanned by anti-plagiarism software. Indicated cases of plagiarism will be immediately reported to the dean's office.

3. An oral presentation with a written hand-out. This component will constitute 25 per cent of the final grade. The main purpose of presentations is to concisely review the recommended literature on a sub-topic («additional readings») and to highlight the insights that extend our understanding of the problem as compared to its interpretations in the required readings.

Please see below a list of presentation topics which are integral parts of respective meeting themes. Hence, they cannot be fundamentally modified by presenting participants.

Depending on the number of course participants, additional presentation topics can be allocated after a consultation with the course instructor.

A single presentation should not exceed 15 minutes as to leave enough time for further discussion of the sub-topic. Usually a timeslot of approx. 30 minutes will be allocated to a single sub-topic discussion. A seminar meeting will usually end with approx. 20 minutes of general discussion of all contents presented. Presenting participants are asked to prepare a short type-written hand-out which summarises their oral contributions (max. 800 words). This hand-out is an integral part of the presentation and should be delivered to every participant of the meeting in printed form no later than at the beginning of the oral presentation. An earlier submission of hand-outs will certainly increase the quality of the feedback that presenting person can expect after his or her presentations. For this reason, the submission in advance is encouraged. In such a case, please send a PDF version of the hand-out via e-mail to the course no later than two hours before the meeting of the presentation starts. Nevertheless, please bring a few hardcopies of the hand-out for those who might have had no opportunity to check their mailbox before the meeting. It is recommended (but not mandatory) that participants write

their essays on topics which are related to their seminar presentations. In this case, essays should however substantially extend and deepen the discussion of the topic as compared to the oral presentation.

The application for a presentation topic should be combined with the application for an essay topic. The deadline is the day before the second session of the course. Every student is asked to submit a list of at least three presentation topics in order of her or his preference and an essay topic proposal. The course instructor will provide for a balanced distribution of seminar presentations after receiving all applications.

4. A final written test at the end of the entire term. The evaluation will constitute 20 per cent of the final grade.

Participants who fail to make their contribution in any single of the areas listed above will not be awarded a satisfactory grade. In other words: every participant who intends to finish this course successfully is obligated to write an essay, to give a presentation in at least one seminar meeting, to write the test (achieving a passing grade, of course) and to frequently participate in discussions.

Possible essay topics:

1. Is some degree of social inequality inevitable in human societies? If your general answer is yes, is it enough for a sociologist to point to this fact? If your general answer is no, please explain how comes that almost all societies in human history display some forms of inequality?
2. Is social inequality organised into a small number of social macro-groups («classes», «estates» etc.) or is it rather gradational? Please discuss 'pros' and 'cons' of each interpretation.
3. Is «middle class» a class at all? Please discuss this question referring to classic and recent theories of social class.
4. What are the reasons for recent increases of income inequalities in many Western European and Northern American countries?
5. What are decisive factors for occupational outcomes and status attainment?
6. Is the U.S. a particularly mobile society as compared to other «Western» countries? Please estimate factors which are particularly relevant for your answer.
7. What are the explanations of the gender pay gap?
8. Please explain the difference between segregation and discrimination referring either to the case of gender or to that of ethnicity/race. Can these two phenomena (segregation and discrimination) be strictly separated from each other or is there a significant feedback effect between them?
9. According to course instructor's own observations, the majority of German horse-back riders are female. At the same time, the majority of mountain-bikers are apparently male. Please assume, this observation has been confirmed by a systematic sociological survey: Is it a case of gender inequality? Please explain your answer.
10. What accounts for differences in hiring, promotion, and pay between different racial or ethnic groups?

11. Please discuss the impact of one's position within the social structure on his or her cultural practices.
12. Are cultural practices which characterise different social groups a mere result of social inequalities or is there a reciprocal relationship (feed-back effects) between these complex factors?
13. Is there a link between one's position in the social structure and his or her political preferences?
14. Is illness the «great leveler» in otherwise stratified societies? Are all human beings equal in suffering from illnesses and in dying?
15. Are social structures of former state-socialist countries characterised by continuity or rather by change as compared to the period before 1989 / 1991?
16. Why did the question of «middle class» formation receive so much attention from Eastern European social scientists during the transformation period?
17. Is it adequate at all to analyse social structure and stratification of individual countries like the USA, Austria or Poland? Please discuss «pros» and «cons» of such an approach. What would be the alternative?

These essay topics, most of them put in form of questions, can also be used as «control question» for testing course participants' knowledge.

Presentation topics:

1. «Class & Rent» (theme «Social Classes & Power Differentials»)
2. «"Death" of Class?» (theme «Social Classes & Power Differentials»)
3. «Income Stratification» (theme «Income & Occupation as Factors of Social Differentiation»)
4. «Labor Market Structure» (theme «Modes of Status Attainment»)
5. «Gender Discrimination» (theme «Ascriptive Differences and Social Inequalities»)
6. «Gender Segregation» (theme «Ascriptive Differences and Social Inequalities»)
7. «Race & Ethnicity» (theme «Ascriptive Differences and Social Inequalities»)
8. «Unequal Life Styles» (theme «Consequences of Social Inequalities»)
9. «Post-Socialist Middle Class» (theme «Social Inequalities in Post-Socialist Contexts»)
10. «Social Inequalities & Political Process» (theme «Social Inequalities in Post-Socialist Contexts»)

A detailed allocation of additional readings to particular presentations in cases when more than one presentation will be provided in the first course meeting in form of a course schedule including a reading list.

Bibliography

Most of the texts listed below are included in:

Grusky D. B (ed.). 2008. *Social Stratification. Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

All participants are encouraged to conduct, in addition, their own bibliographic research when preparing their presentations or writing essays.

Balzer H. D. 2001. The Self-Denying Middle Class in the Global Age. In: Segbers K. (ed.). *Explaining Post-Soviet Patchworks*. Vol. 1: Actors and sectors in Russia between accommodation and resistance to globalization. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company; 366–384.

Beck U., Lau Ch. 2008. Theoretical and Empirical Explorations in the «Meta-Change» of Modern Society. In: Grusky D. B. (ed.). *Social Stratification. Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1030–1035.

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