

M. Kivinen

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO RUSSIAN MODERNISATION

M. Kivinen

МЕЖДИСЦИПЛИНАРНЫЙ ПОДХОД К РОССИЙСКОЙ МОДЕРНИЗАЦИИ

В статье предлагается междисциплинарный подход для анализа современной российской модернизации. Хотя сама по себе идея междисциплинарности не нова, внимание к этому подходу возрастает, как в философии науки, так и в научной политике. Следуя за аргументацией Уильяма Х. Ньюэлла, автор предполагает, что изучение российской модернизации является многогранным и когерентным процессом и, следовательно, должно быть междисциплинарным. На этой основе может быть разработана новая парадигма для изучения социального развития России. Предлагаются исходные точки для интеграции подходов, касающихся российской модернизации. Утверждается, что новый синтез не должен опираться ни на слишком сильную философию истории, ни на слишком сильную социальную онтологию. Тем не менее, телеологические и всеобъемлющие рассуждения нельзя просто заменить эмпирическими подробностями. Скорее, нам необходимо несколько слоев междисциплинарного концептуального и методологического синтеза.

Ключевые слова: модернизация, междисциплинарность, комплексность, Россия.

Introduction

Scientific work is traditionally organised in disciplines. A commitment to a discipline seems to ensure that theories, concepts and methods are used according to the rules of the game within a particular field of science. However, during the last twenty years this has been challenged and interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary have become objects of intensive enquiry for scholars, funding agencies and even governments. Interdisciplinarity is often linked with more general transformation in the relations between science and society. Immanuel Wallerstein's Gulbekian Commission's report in the U.S. (Wallerstein 1996), the German Science Council report 2000 and HM Treasury report (2006) all suggested that interdisciplinarity should lie at the heart of new accountability of science which could ensure more responsiveness to the needs of society.

Kivinen Markku — PhD (sociology), Professor, Director of the Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki, Finland

Кивинен Маркку — PhD, профессор социологии, директор Александровского института, Хельсинкский университет, Финляндия

Markku.Kivinen@helsinki.fi; <http://www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/english/news/staff.html#director>

An exemplary of a prominent scholarly problematization was a suggestion by Helga Nowotny and her colleagues (Nowotny, Scott & Gibbons 2001) that the concern with interdisciplinarity is part of a shift from what they call Mode-1 of science to Mode-2 knowledge production. The latter is said to include:

- transcending disciplinary boundaries;
- undermining disciplinary forms of evaluation and developing new forms of quality control;
- displacing of a ‘culture of autonomy of science’ by a ‘culture of accountability’;
- the growing importance of the ‘context of application’ as a site for research;
- diversity of sites at which science and knowledge is produced. (Nowotny 2003: 211–212 cf. Barry, Born & Weszkalnys 2008: 20–22.)

None of these aspects is self-evident and they all seem to need further discussion. In this respect the program for Mode-2 knowledge production seems to be a work in progress involving not only fields of substantive research and philosophy of science but those of sociology of science and science policy as well. In this article I will concentrate only to the most fundamental relation between the concepts of interdisciplinarity and complexity. I start with William H. Newell’s (2001) argument that the distinguishing characteristic of interdisciplinary studies – synthesis or integration—is at last explained in terms of the unique self-organising pattern of a complex system. On the basis of this I am arguing that the most relevant way to understand Russian modernisation is to see it as a complex system and thus a new paradigm for Russian studies must be interdisciplinary.

Let us start with Newell’s definitions:

The phenomena modelled by most complex systems are multi-faceted. Seen from one angle, they appear different that they do from another angle, because the viewers see facets (represented as sub-systems) where different components and relationship dominate. Like the phenomena modelled (i.e. represented typically as a set of equations or a diagram) by all systems, their overall pattern of behaviour is self-organising, thus different from the sum of its parts and not fully predictable from them. Because the various facets are connected by nonlinear relationships, the overall pattern of behaviour of the phenomenon (and thus the system) is not only self-organizing but also complex. As such the pattern is only quasi-stable, partly predictable, and dynamic. (Newell 2001: 2.)

If we want to analyse the patterns in this kind of a complex system, Newell argues, an effective method for modelling such a phenomenon must offer insight into its separate facets as well as into the self-organizing, complex pattern produced by their overall interaction. The individual facets can be studied within traditional disciplines whereas interdisciplinary study is a logical candidate for developing specific, whole, complex systems to study such phenomena. Consequently, interdisciplinary approach draws insights from relevant disciplines and integrates those views into a more comprehensive understanding.

Complexity and systems thinking

Although it sounds intuitively correct to characterize social and cultural phenomena complex, modern notions of complexity have their roots in theories of chaos, complex systems, fractal geometry, nonlinear dynamics, neo-evolutionary biology, and

other fields (even quantum mechanics) which seem to be far from social sciences and humanities. And even if social scientists are used to concept of social system, in arts and humanities people are not comfortable with systems thinking. This seems to imply that these notions must be used with caution, avoiding too straightforward generalisations and specifying the relevance of the integration in relation to the discipline and the phenomenon we are dealing with. There are meaningful differences between natural sciences, social sciences and humanities and this affects how interdisciplinarity is practiced in each of the fields. However, Newell argues that even humanists should recognise how their work is connected to complex systems and this would improve their ability to work with social and natural sciences and consequently develop their interdisciplinary practice as well. He gives the cultural legacy of *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* as an example from interdisciplinary humanities:

Its legacy is bound up in American literature, history and culture – fields of study that have distinctive features at the same time that they are interconnected. Even though literary, historical and cultural perspectives on that legacy will clash to some extent (or the study will be pretty boring) the claim that the book *has* a cultural legacy is a claim that the insights from those diverse perspectives must somehow cohere. They must contribute to the understanding of some larger whole. Yet the connections among literature, history, and culture are better expressed by ‘influence and response’ than by ‘cause and effect’, they are anything but linear. By even a fairly literal interpretation, then, the cultural legacy can be fruitfully seen as behaviour of a complex system. When interdisciplinary humanists search for a theme that captures the cultural legacy, they seek an interpretation that reflects the overall pattern of the complex system. (Newell 2001: 5-6.)

It is exactly in the practice of contextualization that a study of the book turns into an interdisciplinary effort. This does not exclude unique aspects of cultural production since contextualization can refer not only to influences on the text or individual, but also to the ways the book or person gives unique expression to those influences and creates meaning out of them. Interdisciplinarity does not necessarily focus only on deterministic, predictable and lawful but can comprise free will and creativity as well.

Systems in general are made up of components that interact. This interaction can be direct through mutual causation or indirect through feedback loops. Those feedback loops can be positive (enhancing the behaviour) or negative (dampening or reducing the behaviour). Because of this overall pattern of behaviour those interaction effects, the system as a whole is more than the sum of its parts. Each subsystem and even a plane in a subsystem can have its own emergent properties.

Newell and Meek (Newell, Meek 2000; Newell 2001) distinguish three kinds of systems: simple, complicated, and complex. A simple system may have multiple levels of components and connections arranged in a hierarchy, but the relationships between those components are predominantly linear. A proper example would be a road map. A complicated system loosely links together simple systems using linear relationship. A telling example would be a road atlas that links together state maps into a national system. A complex system links together combinations of components, simple systems and even complicated systems using predominantly nonlinear connections. Newell gives an example:

Think of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) overlay of maps for the same urban area, including not only one of the streets and neighbourhoods taken from road atlas, but also maps of water and sewer districts, fire districts, school districts, police precincts, rapid transit, regional planning administration, political wards, ethnic enclaves, the county, watersheds, soil profiles, water quality indicators, and many others. The typical large American city has several hundred administrative units, each charged with the responsibility for one of those maps. Each map represents a sub-system which can be usefully studied in its own terms from a single perspective. But those sub-systems are connected by an intricate series of often-overlooked relationships that can be subtle, intermittent in their operation, and occasionally produce responses that are disproportionately large or small – in short by a network of nonlinear relationships. The decisions of the school board about the location of a new school can have unanticipated effects on the ethnic distribution of neighbourhoods and thus on voting patterns of wards or traffic patterns, which in turn affect highway maintenance; the resulting political shifts and changing decisions about new highway construction can have unanticipated consequences for watersheds and water quality; and so on (Newell 2001: 8-9).

The components of complex systems can be molecules, cells, organs, phenotypes, species, individual human beings, institutions, groups, nations, artistic movements, cultures. Crucially significant is that something flows through the system – energy, air, water, information, money, values, signs and symbols. According to Newell the flow through the nonlinear relationships among the components produces a pattern of behaviour. The pattern of behaviour of a complex system is self-organising but only quasi stable. That is the pattern is identifiable but evolving, intelligible, but not strictly predictable (Newell 2001: 9; Holland 1995: 23-27).

Modern society as a system

In social theory Talcott Parson's great synthesis is grounded on the concept of system. He identifies the basic functions of all systems (adaptation, goal attainment, integration and latency). He also defines money and power as the generalized media flowing within the system. Making a distinction between social system, personality system and cultural system Parsons defines the role of values in their relationship. Values are internalised within the personality system and institutionalised in the social system. Based on his theory of voluntaristic human action he argues that realms of social life have gradually separated from each other according to social functions. Economy, politics, religion and arts all emerged as separate spheres of human action. This separation can be read as a history of progress although the era of modernity emerges from very incomplete beginnings in a series of historical breaks known as scientific, industrial and democratic revolutions. Parsons sees the differentiation of functions and their separate institutionalisation as both enhancing human freedom and as increasing the range of human action. In this sense Parsons theory provides a sociological version of the Enlightenment understanding of modernity combining freedom and reason, autonomy and mastery as well as subjectivity and rationality (Wagner 2008: 8-9). In Parsons' view modern society came to all fruition only in the USA of the post-Second World War era, although modernisation processes were moving towards that direction

for a long time. The Parsonsian modernisation theory suggested as well that these kinds of modernisation processes are continuously going on in other parts of the world.

I am now starting to make the argument that contemporary Russian modernisation should be studied from an interdisciplinary perspective. Parsons is a relevant point to refer but does not lead us very far. He sees modernisation as institutional differentiation and value generalization. Comparing Western and Soviet forms of modernisation he sees the problems of the latter in three points:

— In the Soviet system the function of goal attainment is emphasised too much which means that political institutions are playing too large and economic institutions too little role.

— This also implies that because of the lack of market economy power is playing too large role as a generalized media, and money is not significant enough.

— On this basis the Soviet modernisation can be characterised as infrastructural modernisation (urbanisation, industrialisation, growing literacy etc.) and not as institutional modernisation where the social institutions would have been properly differentiated. (Cf. Parsons 1967, 1970 and 1978.)

From the point of view of interdisciplinarity, as outlined above, there are several problems in Parsons' theory. Even if we would accept the idea that society is a complex system Parsons way of theorising lays open to a few fundamental critiques. When C. Wright Mills was criticising Parsons more than fifty years ago he called Parsons approach to "grand theory", showing how difficult it is to actualize Parsons concepts for any historical explanations. From the vocabulary of interdisciplinarity we could argue that Parsons synthesis does not require empirical mediations. Mills was as well one of the first to point out the self-congratulating aspect of the Western form of modernisation in Parsons' theory. Numerous times Parsons has been rightly accused of providing overly harmonious picture of Western society denying the existence of contradictions, oppression or exclusion linked with its institutions. In addition Parsons' theory pays little attention to institutionalisation of unintended results of action and sees the cultural sphere in a straightforward way as values neglecting all theories of cultural binarities and pays no attention to connections between discourses and power.

In order to approach modern society as a complex system we cannot neglect Parsons idea of institutional level of modernisation but we should as well take into account the grand critiques of modernity (from Marx to Weber and critical theory). But we should not forget the aspect of modernity as an ethos, as an attitude and experience either. From this point of view the structural institutional analysis of Russian modernity (or modernity in general) has to combine structural-institutional approach with cultural studies.

Soviet modernity

Sociologists have often reflected whether the Soviet Union was a modern society (See, for instance, Parsons 1951; Parsons 1967; Parsons & Shils 1951; Kotkin 1995; Lane 2006; Arnason 1993; Kirdina 2001; Srubar 1991; Nureev 2009; Pastukhov 2006). During the Soviet period among the Western scholars the leading paradigm was based on the concept of totalitarianism. On the other hand since the 1960 it was accompanied by the so called revisionist approach which focused on more modern aspects of Soviet

society. After all, the Soviet society was industrialised, urbanized, literate and even the occupational structure of society did not seem to deviate too much from that of developed Western societies.

I have (Kivinen 2002; Kivinen 2011) previously shown that the Durkheimian concepts of **sacred and profane** can be a key to understanding the specificity of the Soviet modernization project and its intended and unintended results. On this basis I have defined the **model variables** of the Soviet type of modernization. Parsons model variables developed by Talcott Parsons (e.g., 1951 and 1967) are the core concepts for his theory of modernity as well as for the modernization paradigm as it existed since the 1950's. I have argued that the basic variables of the Soviet modernisation were completely different. The Bolshevik project is also based on the idea of the inevitability of modernization, but unlike Parsons, the transition to a modern society is not perceived as a gradual development towards the expansion of market orientation and professionalism, functional differentiation and universal value patterns, but instead as a revolutionary interruption between the past and the future. On the basis of the Bolsheviks' great narrative, the essential dimensions can be perceived as follows:

Holy (Modern)	Secular (Traditional)
Science	Religion
Progress	Backwardness
Development of forces of production	Poverty
Urban	Countryside
Proletariat	Bourgeois
Party	Czar

I argue that Soviet modernity was not constituted through the same processes as in the West, and it was not outlined using the same cultural categories. In my theoretical interpretation, the Soviet modernization starts from these model variables and ends up in creating a form of modernity, in which all the traditional elements are supposed to disappear for good. This **eliminating form of modernization** has both **intended and unintended** results, and the latter constitute structures like Nomenklatura and NKVD implying demonization of reality, which become **taboos** (see, for instance, Kivinen 2000; Kivinen & Nikula 2006; Kivinen 2011). This interpretation of the Soviet modernisation can help us to analyze both intended and unintended results of Perestroika (Kivinen 2011, *ibid.*). However, the challenge now before us is to analyze the basic starting points of the new Russian modernization.

Russian Modernisation Revisited

Now my intention is to introduce the new Finnish Centre of Excellence aiming at creating a new paradigm in studying Russian modernisation. The 'Choices of Russian Modernisation' Centre of Excellence meets a number of urgent practical and theoretical needs in academic communities worldwide.

The *practical need* is to better understand and explain Russian modernisation. This is a crucial task with regard to contemporary Russia, its development needs and the

related global implications. Since the call by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in his recent state of the nation address for Russia to modernise (Medvedev 2009), the slogan of modernisation has become widespread. While the Russian Federation rebuilds its state identity and the associated political, social and economic systems, the country must also define itself as a nation, a state and a society, *vis-à-vis* global development on one hand and the Soviet and Imperial Russian legacy on the other. Since the early 2000s, in an effort to consolidate power, Russia's rulers have rallied behind a unifying conservative-liberal ideology that has partly replaced and partly built on Soviet and traditional models. President Medvedev's recent address, however, suggests another direction, which partly re-introduces democratic values and Western-style modernisation after their short-lived appearance in the early 1990s. Normative ideas concerning personal liberties, social-economic welfare, political freedoms and the rule of law are all key elements for any 21st century state as part of the evolving multi-level global order. These are further issues that Russia must deal with.

The *theoretical need* is to gain a better understanding and explanation of modernisation itself on a more abstract level. The concept of modernisation has been a fundamental element of social sciences ever since Talcott Parsons's theoretisations. Eastern Europe's transition has revitalised the need to further develop this conceptualisation (Alexander, Giesen & Mast 2006.). The Russian case is an ideal one with which to dig deeper into the evolving nature of modernisation, given that it captures aspects of westernising modernisation, Soviet modernisation, some anti-modern or traditional tendencies in the form of pan-Slavism and Eurasianism, and new variants of modernisation espoused by the so-called BRIC group (Brazil, Russia, India and China), which are emerging global powers that, at least partly, defy any previous models. A number of choices must be made with regard to Russian modernisation. Roughly speaking, the key choices are between (a) modernisation based on the Western democratic model, be it that of Europe or the United States or something else, (b) modernisation based on the Eastern model, whether that is Russia's own way, the Chinese way or something else (or authoritarian modernisation) and (c) a refusal to modernise and a preference to look for and retain old traditions.

Previous research has not sufficiently considered all these dimensions of Russian modernisation, their mutual interrelationships and more generic theoretical possibilities. Despite some interesting theorisations concerning the various paths and forms of modernity (Eisenstadt 2000; Schmidt 2006; Sachsenmaier, Riedel & Eisenstadt 2002), and a near-consensual understanding that modern development can no longer be encapsulated in the traditional 'West and the rest' formula (Therborn 1995), Russian modernity has remained an enigma that social scientists have approached from various perspectives with somewhat atomistic results. The Centre of Excellence discussed here maintains a continuous dialogue with the previous paradigms and approaches.

The most widespread approach in Russia – the so-called *tsivilizatsionnyj podkhod* – sees Russia as a unique civilisation (Nureev 2009; Pastukhov 2006). Proponents of this approach have returned to traditional discussions and have revitalised the idea of Russia as a Eurasian civilisation (Abdikerova 2009; Danilevskii 1869/2003; Dugin 1997; Dugin 1999). In our view, this approach is problematic. Eurasians argue that Russia is destined to follow the path defined by its history, which is based on the Asiatic

mode of production, authoritarian etacratism and collectivist cultural values. In Russia, this discourse has been imposed largely by the development of China and authoritarian 'Asian' capitalism in various developing countries. Defining Russian identity as unique (for example, in the discourse on Eurasianism) seems to raise several new issues. Difference is seen everywhere, in Russian values, forms of ownership, legal and political institutions and people's attitudes, just to name a few areas. Like civilisation theories in general, Eurasian theory is problematic because it tends to be abstract and totalising in an essentialist vein. Russian cultural theory has responded actively to the idea of 'multiple modernities' by suggesting an approach of New Cultural Anthropology for studying 'closed societies' (Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie 2009) that is close to our own approach. In Russian economic policy, the choice of modernisation is currently seen from a technology-centred perspective, in which new technological innovations open the path to modernisation. This approach seems to involve a strong Soviet-type legacy in terms of understanding economic modernisation.

In the context of major Western theories, totalising approaches are also widespread. One influential such interpretation is the concept of the 'patrimonial model' (e.g., Pipes 1997; Rosefielde 2007). This perspective sees Russia as being determined to stay on its path of state-dependent authoritarianism. In contrast, the 'transition' discourse emphasises the future (e.g., Larjavaara 2007; Heusala 2005; Kivinen & Nikula 2006), albeit in a finalistic manner. The transition paradigm sees Russia proceeding on a linear developmental path that is defined by the systemic features of the market economy: democracy, liberal administration and the rule of law. Both discourses see developments in Russia as being determined by inevitable structural and cultural constraints. Empirical studies, however, have shown that development is more hybrid in nature, connecting global and local influences in both formal and informal rules of the game (e.g., Burawoy & Verdery 1999; Berdahl, Bunzl & Lampland 2000; Mandel & Humphrey 2002).

A consequence of this approach is that experts on Russia have reached little, if any consensus. Some experts see less and less difference between modern-day Russia and the Soviet Union, while others regard Russia as a more or less 'normal' European state, both internally and externally. This has led to diffuse policies with regard to Russia, both at the bilateral (Finnish) and European (EU) levels. One reason why scholars have struggled to understand Russia is the complicated and contradictory relationship between the reality and the rhetoric prevalent in Russian discourses. In the Soviet period, the lack of reliable information was used to explain this difficulty; only the official pronouncements of the Communist Party could be examined for clues about the actual state of affairs. This led to the science of Kremlinology, which relied largely on intuition and guesswork, supplemented by the limited non-official information that did manage to leak out of the country. Information is much more freely available in post-Soviet Russia, and it is clear that a more comprehensive analysis, which draws from Russian history and culture, must be placed alongside social science models in order to fully grasp the significance of official discourses and their reception in Russian society.

Interdisciplinarity: towards a synthetic view of a complex system

In order to grasp the internal Russian political and cultural constellations of modernisation and their position *vis-à-vis* the larger global community, this Centre of

Excellence proposes a multi-level, interdisciplinary approach, which enables close dialogue and interaction between studies on different themes and periods. The CoE aims to redefine the research agenda on Russian modernisation.

This new approach, known as the ‘Finnish School’, will eventually result in a new paradigm in Russian studies and will be an important agenda-setter in Russian studies. It will also provide policy implications at the most fundamental level of EU-Russia relations. In Russian studies, this ‘Finnish school’ represents an *interdisciplinary and multi-positional* research programme based on *shared research problems* regarding a *joint set of methodological and theoretical approaches*. It combines *in-depth empirical analysis of Russia with theoretical ambition* that extends beyond the Russian context.

The CoE advances a Finnish approach that emphasises *choice and agency, intended and unintended results* and the *social constitution of culture*. In this regard, Russia faces five major challenges: (1) *diversification of the economy*, (2) *development of the political system: model of democracy vs. authoritarian governance*, (3) *choice of the model for the welfare regime*, (4) *basic orientation in foreign policy: conflict or integration* and (5) *constructing a post-communist form of rationality and cultural identity*.

The results of the CoE are expected to challenge traditional and contemporary views on Russian modernisation. At the same time, the programmatic intention seeks to “bring Russia back to Russian studies” (Cohen 1999) and to the core of social theory as such. The CoE maintains that Russia should not be seen only as an empirical case; we view it as a challenge for our understanding of basic social processes of modernisation in general.

In order to grasp the emphasis on choice and agency and to account for both intended and unintended consequences, the CoE suggests the concept of the five ‘Russian challenges’ mentioned above as a heuristic way of defining the problem. Russia is not a coherent or omnipotent actor. While systemic constraints do matter, they do not directly define the direction that will be chosen in these issues (Aalto 2007). Each of the challenges involves a complex structuration process in which both agency and structure must be analysed. If, following Anthony Giddens (1984), structure is understood as comprising both the resources and rules of the game, Russia’s problems, on a general level, are less to do with resources and more to do with agency and the rules of the game (Ledeneva 2001). This approach is likely to lead to scientific breakthroughs, firstly at the level of the paradigm itself, based on a unique multi-disciplinary dialogue between five clusters, and secondly, in each specific field of research. New scientific openings are expected to be new conceptualisations as well as new paradigmatic examples for empirical research. The research programme will study:

Cluster 1. *Diversification of the economy*: Russia’s modernisation prospects will be based on its economy regardless of the approach adopted. Therein the key challenge is economic diversification. While Russia must reap full benefits from its energy resources to generate the necessary finances, it also must lessen its excessive energy dependency in the domestic economy and foreign trade. Our approach to diversification refers not only to diversification of the industry but also to the social and organizational forms of public and private units involved in economic activities. Over the last six years, a new

research program has been developed in Finland on the structuration of Russian energy policy, the policy frames guiding it and the role of energy in economic modernisation in general. In addition to energy expertise, the cluster has strong and internationally renowned expertise on the economic history of the Cold War. We have shown that even under socialism, economic development was not possible endogenously but presupposed interaction with the Western world and ‘neo-endogenous’ competition within the socialist bloc. Further constraints on Russian choices to be studied include the effects of path-dependency in the nature-dependent sectors of the Russian economy.

The CoE opens a more interdisciplinary perspective on these issues. Diversification is not only about technology or the production of goods; it also pertains to environmental sustainability, investments in education and healthcare and organisational and institutional innovations. The CoE is creating new interfaces of scientific disciplines in these issues, starting with the understanding that, because the economy is strongly embedded, both socially and politically, the level of diversification has a number of repercussions for other spheres of society and the Russian modernisation process as a whole. This is a precondition for moving towards becoming an informational society with modern technologies. The absence of such a process will jeopardise Russia’s position as an economic or political Great Power in the future.

Cluster 2. *Authoritarian market society as a challenge:* The development of Russian institutions remains at the core of the modernisation process. All the sub-projects in this cluster are connected to the question of what the Russian state is like today and what will determine its institutional development in the future. Although all sub-projects are organisationally independent, they are linked to each other through the connecting concepts of agency, rules of the game and cultural self-understanding. The cluster team produces a comprehensive picture of Russian institutional development and the study of agency development, therefore, includes political and legal systems, public administration, companies, social networks and the media. The study of the rules of the game includes the rule of law, public administration reform and legal pluralism in the private sector, as well as networks of civil society. Accordingly, the study of cultural self-understanding, while being a specific target in the project of identity and freedom of speech, is also an element in all of the team’s other sub-projects.

The team also looks at the different levels (micro-macro) of system development. An inter-national comparison of Russia’s political system is complemented by an analysis of the country’s internal political system. This analysis includes an assessment of the rule of law in the Russian state (criminal law) and developments of legal pluralism in the private sector (private law from the point of view of companies as appliers of different rules of the game). Studies of public administration and social networks form a picture of both official and unofficial practices and organisation of life. Freedom of speech and the media as agents of modernisation are closely linked to these areas. The team composition is expected to ensure a natural development of both disciplinary and multi-disciplinary new themes and research lines, also by members of individual sub-projects.

Cluster 3. Welfare regime: Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, socialist welfare structures have experienced rapid, large-scale changes and constant reformulation. Modernisation and institutional reforms have not necessarily proceeded as expected and Russian welfare institutions remain rather weak and of low quality. This cluster examines welfare on the one hand as structures and processes and on the other hand as cultural meanings and agency. At the national level in Russia, welfare will be assessed through federal policies and relevant indexes. At the meso and micro levels, we deal with different (state and non-state) welfare providers, agents within them and various vulnerable groups; class structures as well as professionalisation of work within welfare institutions. At the same time welfare is also approached through problems concerning bodily, sexual and gender issues. International and domestic migration and demographic development and their links with the development of welfare regimes are also taken into account. Thus, in addition to the macro-level foundations that provide the basic structure for the other levels, considerable emphasis is put on agency, including gendered tendencies. Empirically, the most critical task is to map out the choices and alternatives to current post-socialist welfare regime, which is usually conceptualised as a hybrid of liberalism and “new statism”. Micro-level studies will challenge macro-level analyses, reveal diversity and variation inside Russia and provide an opportunity to deal with the data deficiencies, theoretical biases and lack of international networking that produce images of Russia as “the other” in comparison to “Western” welfare regimes. Methodologically, related questions are approached through multiple datasets, from statistics to participatory research methods, emphasising multi-positionality and the importance of knowledge and insights from in-between and inside. The research projects involve Western European and American scholars, as well as several Russian and Eastern European researchers.

Cluster 4. Foreign policy: The intertwined nature of domestic politics and international relations means that the quest for modernisation also affects Russian foreign policy. Russian foreign policy has been based on the aspiration to establish and strengthen its position as a great power. However, there are several ways to define the term “great power”. If Russia wishes to modernise according to the Western model, it must be recognised as a fully-fledged liberal democratic country that is embedded in key international liberal organisations. If Russia chooses the Eastern style of modernisation, it will use its economic power, especially in energy politics, to control key areas close to its borders and make its voice heard as a great power. The greatness of a traditional great power would be based on military power and direct territorial control. The modernisation theme includes the three following levels of great power identity in Russian policy-making.

At the domestic level, the weakest links of Russian Great Powerness are its economics/wealth distribution and good governance. The current discourse of modernisation is one way of addressing this weakness. *The regional level* examines Russia’s relationships with its neighbours, particularly through the paradigm of Great Powerness versus imperialism versus the national interest. Russia’s success at modernisation will have a major bearing on whether the country can maintain its status as a regional hegemon. A country that is attractive to others can hold soft power as a hegemony. *At*

the global level, comparisons are made with the great power identity of the United States. The historical context of Russia as a great power is an important background element that will be examined. Historically, Russia has sought its place in the concert of global powers in Europe. Since World War II, however, the context has become more global. Modernisation is an internationally comparative term, and in this respect is a vital question that relates naturally to levels I and II.

Cluster 5. *Rationality and culture*: The projects within the “Rationality and Culture” team place Russia’s modernisation in a historical framework, which is investigated through its major cultural entanglements. These include the discourse on rationality, imperial legacies, language and identity, mechanisms of self-understanding and the collision between Orthodox Christianity and Islam. All of these subject areas are critical to Russia’s future and expertise on them is crucial for an analysis of the alternatives for Russia’s modernisation. Cultural practices and institutions are a vital part of the modernisation process. The historical process of Russia’s modernisation is rooted in Enlightenment period and intense empire building and it draws attention to questions of secularisation and religion, nation and empire. In the 18th century, a modern Russian language emerged, along with literature, major cultural and academic institutions and an enlightened intellectual elite. This established a model for the emergence of Russian intelligentsia and its quest for a Russian national culture in the 19th century. The legitimacy of creative intelligentsia as a moral authority and political opinion former was reinforced during the Soviet period, especially in the post-Stalin era, and it has remained largely unchallenged. Meanwhile, the Orthodox Church has reasserted its authority in the processes of national identity formation.

Integration and synthesis

Let us now turn to the analysis of interdisciplinary process. Klein (1990) and Klein & Newell (1997) have abstracted steps in the interdisciplinary process from messy issues of teamwork. As a starting position an interdisciplinary team must aim at understanding the ethos of the other disciplines. This implies a research culture which folds interpersonal issues of interdisciplinary teams into conceptual issues of interdisciplinary epistemology. On the basis of team practice Newell (2001: 15) has distinguished two phases. I will comment each of the phases concerning our effort to create the new paradigm in Russian studies.

A. Drawing on existing disciplinary perspectives:

- (1) Defining the problem;
- (2) Determining relevant disciplines (interdisciplines, schools of thought, paradigms)
- (3) Developing working command of relevant concepts, theories, methods of each discipline;
- (4) Gathering all current disciplinary knowledge and searching for new information
- (5) Studying the problem from the perspective of each discipline;
- (6) Generating disciplinary insights of the problem.

B. Integrating their insights through construction of a more comprehensive perspective:

(1) Identifying conflicts in insights by using disciplines to illuminate each other's assumptions, or by looking for different terms with common meanings, or terms with different meanings;

(2) Evaluating assumptions and terminology in the context of the specific problem;

(3) Resolving conflicts by working towards a common vocabulary and set of assumptions;

(4) Creating common ground;

(5) Constructing a new understanding of the problem;

(6) Producing a model (metaphor, theme) that captures the new understanding;

(7) Testing the understanding by attempting to solve the problem.

(8) First of all, his intention is not to create a multidisciplinary program but rather to make the demarcation between the disciplines. Especially significant for him is the role of economics.

Before characterising the specificities of our own synthesis let us first return to Parsons. When he develops his theory of voluntary theory of social action his main intention is to draw the demarcation line between economic action and other forms of voluntaristic social action (Joutsenoja 2011). While doing this he defines the particular topic of sociology in a new way. In this sense Parsons effort is contradicting the economics imperialism (cf. M ki 2009) which could be characterised as a pathological form of interdisciplinary approach. The interdisciplinary approach should neither allow methodological reductionism nor totalising forms of synthesis.

In order to make a proper new interdisciplinary integration we have to approach Russian society on the basis of four broad theoretical and methodological frameworks. The first level is the **phenomenological description of the basic institutional matrix** of Russian society and state (see, for instance, Kivinen 2000; Kivinen & Nikula 2006). The intention is to provide a multi-disciplinary overview of the formation of Russia and its state institutions. In addition to conventional political institutions, studies will also analyse social structure, gender, technological development and the spatial formation of Russian development. Providing a background to the individual institutions are investigations into the distinctive ethos of Russian society.

Secondly, the contemporary transition is **hermeneutically** placed in the context of Russian tradition and intellectual self-reflection (Kivinen 2009). Our approach to Russian intellectual history should be interactive, in a dialogical sense. Russia's history of ideas and traditions of social science will be taken into account, while state-of-the-art Western humanities and social sciences contribute to the dialogue.

The third level is the theory of **social structuration**. The processes of the construction and erosion of the Russian state and nation are analysed as the institutionalisation of intended and unintended results of particular hegemonic projects. The relationship between political ideologies and actual social processes in Russian studies has been over-simplified, as if the social institutions were a mere implementation of ideas. Serious examination of unintended results in social and historical analysis opens up new perspectives for understanding both Soviet history and contemporary Russian transformations. (Giddens 1984; Kivinen 2006; Kivinen 2009; Kivinen, Aalto, Dussault & Kennedy 2013.)

Finally, the project will seek a range of **critical approaches** to Russian society (Kivinen 2009). Russia has always been a source of various forms of social critique and

even utopia. In the contemporary situation, we should look for the actual alternatives of social development and the forms of critical social discourse that might be relevant for Russia's future. However, we should make this conceptual development open to a new form of critical analysis. Peter Wagner has shown the fundamental problems in traditional critical approaches of capitalist form of modernity. First of all it tends to deploy its concepts in such a way that they are stretched to cover a too large variety of societal institutions, practically all the history of the northwestern quarter of the world since the Enlightenment. Wagner argues that we have to take the justifications for certain historico-institutional arrangements seriously. We should open the critical analysis of the experiences of changes in the ways of dealing with the various *problématiques* of modernity. These *problématiques* – the political, epistemic and economic ones – exist in all societies, but we should need a historico-institutional analysis of the modern solutions to them. These are based on the modern idea of autonomy but the particular justifications of particular institutional settings cannot be conceptually concluded from this. Wagner's argument is methodologically significant because it shows that we have to have empirically available justifications for changing configurations of modernity.

In sum, I have tried to argue that the standard critique of capitalism does not itself live up to the requirements of modernity. Rather than fully accepting the commitment to autonomy and, as a consequence, the plurality of outcomes in the exercise of autonomy, it reasons the issue away by establishing a conceptual hierarchy between the *problématiques* of modernity as well as between the realms in which those *problématiques* are dealt with. This move amounts ultimately to nothing but a rejection of these *problématiques* – which are seen problematic only under capitalist conditions, but finding self-evident solutions once capitalism is overcome (Wagner 2008: 109).

In such a view, capitalism is neither naturalised nor conflated with modernity. One of the key methodological challenges for our analysis of Russian modernisation is to specify the critical approach that would be based on concrete analysis of contemporary institutional conditions. Instead of foundations provided by a strong philosophy of history, or committing ourselves to a very strong social ontology we seem to need concepts which can show empirical strength in a given situation.

For the creation of a new synthesis on Russian modernisation we can at this point suggest four basic hypotheses:

(1) All modernizing societies have to face the **antinomies of modernisation** that the Bolsheviks wanted to solve by eliminating the traditional elements of society. The Western modernisation is based on the coexistence of modern and traditional, but modernisation as such is not linear and not without contradictions and antinomies.

(2) The contemporary Russian modernisation is based on coexistence and plurality in the Western sense, but is lacking clear functional differentiation of the society's institutional spheres. In order to analyze the interaction between economy and politics, welfare and the political system, culture and foreign policy, we need **historical ideal types and new explanatory models**. These cannot be found in the Western modernisation paradigm that presupposes functional differentiation. This vein of research has not been explored so far, and the horizontal cooperation between the clusters in the CoE opens new research perspectives in this respect.

(3) Modernisation in Russia is not a one way street, but the past strikes back in two ways. First, as a **restoration** of the old pre-revolutionary Russia. This can be seen in the growing role of the Orthodox religion and imperial traditions, sometimes even monarchism. Secondly, as a **continuity in the unintended results** of the Bolshevik project of demonization and, at times, taboos in politics, e.g. the role of the secret police, nomenclatura privatization, sustainability of premodern forms of networks in ordinary life.

(4) **Hybrid structures** are created both on the macro and micro levels of society. This does not concern solely the political system but law, administration and welfare structures as well.

These hypotheses underline the need of exploring the interaction between the micro and macro levels of society. On the other hand, we have to be able to define the role of causality and intentionality. In order to grasp the internal Russian political and cultural constellations of modernisation and their position *vis-à-vis* the larger global community, this Centre of Excellence proposes a multi-level, interdisciplinary approach, which enables close dialogue and interaction between studies on different themes and periods. By doing this we aim at redefining the research agenda on Russian modernisation.

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