

Sociology of the Future: Humanization of Sociological Thought

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ABSTRACT

The study is founded on the author's comprehension of the methodological turn associated with the understanding of the future as social reality that is predetermined by social subjectness within the framework of creating the future in social practices of the creative class in Russian society. The authors of the study come to the conclusion that in order to investigate the future as social reality the frame of the structural analysis would be too narrow and would not reflect the focus on future in the life strategies of Russian citizens. The study develops theoretical and methodological construct which includes structure-activity and subject-activity aspects of the investigation of the future.

KEYWORDS

Sociology of the Future, Social Subjectness, Social Thought, Methodological Approaches, Methodological Turn

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Introduction

The sociology of the future is associated with the development of sociological thought, with the fact that if the classical sociology used to manifestly refuse considering the future and the past shifting the investigations of these temporal parameters into the area of philosophy and cultural studies, the non-classical and postnonclassical sociological thought defines the future within the framework of temporalization of sociology, of the search for the uninterrupted space-time continuums. Given the fact that sociology has drifted from the state of objective knowledge, shifted to understanding the social subjectness, proceeds on the assumption that the society is the creation of the people themselves and that the objective regularities that are kept within the limits of scientific determinism vary affected by different social cultural and historic contexts; the theory of sociology is set up to comprehend the modernity that is constrained by

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the boundaries and is equivalent to the present. In this sense the sociology of the future is understood either from the perspectives of uncertainty, of the application of synergetic approach, or from the perspectives of the evolutionism as the extrapolation of the present.

Review and Methodology

Thus, talking about the methodological turn as the consequence of the inclusion of the problems of the future, one has to be careful in judgments and conclusions. On the one hand, it has been noted that modern sociological thought proceeding on the phenomenon of the new social movements, new social realities, highlights their focus on the future and, consequently, the current importance of sociological interpretations of these phenomena. On the other hand, defining sociology as the logic of social establishment, there emerges the scheme that shows the limited effects produced by sociology on constructing the future. This is manifested through the fact that the theory that includes the problems of the future, and especially the problems of social trust, defining it as the analysis of the stakes the society puts on the future, uses structural-functional and institutional discourse. In this theoretical situation the stances of the investigations of the future seem to be of lower priority.

It is also possible to say that in his analysis of the continuum of the expressed human activities some certain specific language used by sociology to analyze the future is predetermined by the already established ideas of the future and is associated with the descriptions of the social structures and social activities. However, there is a reassuring fact that the sociology of the future will have its own logic; its categorical tools may be richer than the previous ones; it will possess some new feature, it will have one attribute more.

Results and Discussion

Reflecting on the evolution of the development of social thought, on its movement from organization, structure and mass activities toward social subjectness that is expressed through social movements, it is possible to maintain that determining the theoretical and methodological tools of the sociology of the future is of current importance. It will not be enough to talk about just a theoretical turn, about the shift from social evolutionism to social synergetics, to understanding such phenomena as the correlations between the chaos and order that individualize the circumstances. If this problem is to be put straightforward then the situation gets even more complicated, because in this case the sociology, adopting the established language of synergetic theory, will have to do nothing more but to adapt to the ideas and to the established language or to agree with the fact that the future is inaccessible for sociological knowledge, that there is a necessity to transit to the new special theories.

Therefore, to make sociology understand the theoretical aspect of this problem it is vital to determine to what degree are the dominating approaches actualized in sociological sense and what intentions of investigating the future they contain, which ideas and principles can be extracted from sociological heritage and what new paradigms are needed to investigate the future. Considering the established sociological approaches (structural-functional,

institutional, structure-activity, subject-activity) it becomes obvious that the appraisals of those approaches are often based on the scheme of gradual growth of knowledge and that the thesis about the necessity to move from social statics to social dynamics should not be understood simplistically. It ought to be concluded that the very analysis of theoretical and methodological potential of the existing approaches is characterized by the stance of “negation”, by the fact that the principle of succession of sociological knowledge is not adhered to, and that thus it becomes possible to apply the seemingly criticized approaches to studying the definite aspects of new social reality. Here, this is not only about paying its due to the past; it is also of actual importance that to develop the problems of the future the methodological turn should be predetermined by the possibilities to engage the potential of sociological thought. In particular, the institutional approach that is closely associated with the paradigm of organization in sociology does possess the real theoretical significance in that it is quite difficult, beyond the institutional dimension, to imagine how the constructive and creative practices are objectified in the process of including the future into the present.

Thus, the problem is to develop if not the paradigm then at the very least a theoretical construction of the sociology of the future, to determine how the elements of sociological succession can generate the productive theoretical construction with methodological innovations. Consequently, within the framework of developing the subject matter of this study it becomes important to estimate the potential of the existing sociological methods. Noting that structural-functional analysis has unconditionally fixed the positivist status of modern sociological science, it is also possible to say that within the understanding of the structure, within the shift from social behavior to the structures as to the objectified social facts there can be undoubtedly observed the conditions of the independence of sociology, of its transition to the quantifiable scientific knowledge.

In this sense the emphasis on the social structures, on the types of social interactions, on the configurations of social interactions does not contain any possibilities for considering the future. Sociological sphere now includes such ideas as needs, interests, social roles and status that are focused on obtaining the knowledge of the established system of social relations. Thereat, history and culture appear not to be in demand any longer because of the suspicions that the strict discipline of sociological knowledge may be violated. Thus, structural-functional analysis, given the necessity of equilibrium, of stability of social life, of the integration of the society, considers the future as the extrapolation of the results of the present based on the assumption that the future is the development and the fixed trends observed in different spheres of social life.

In this regard it is possible to say that for the purposes of structural-functional analysis which claims to describe the society in its space but not time dimension the future is interpreted in the same way as the past: the past is the determination of the conditions of modern times, of social modernity. The future is associated with potential challenges that may emerge in the course of implementing the project on social modernity. The theories of the late philosophical modernity, of the late present are in fact the efforts to preserve the structural-functional paradigm with some certain theoretical amendments. Such concept is necessary as a transitional one because the gap between the new and

the previous sociological thinking in its classical period shows that the new sociologies, notwithstanding the growing knowledge and their stepping forward as the tools directed against different forms of social and political conservatism, are related to the logic of the scientific work that possesses its intensity and its own rules. Development of theoretical and methodological tools is associated with three aspects: the first, as it has already been mentioned earlier, is predetermined by the relations to classical sociology, by the extraction of the productive elements that could facilitate sociological imagination; the second is related to the appraisal of the current theoretical and methodological potential of Russian sociology; the third is associated with the existing development of foreign projective sociology.

Considering the first aspect described above it should be said that the development of sociological thought has been predetermined by the complexity of modern society. In the context of analyzing the sociological heritage of E. Durkheim, G. Ritzer notes that conservatism of sociology did not allow for consecutive consideration of intangible social facts that among other things included the problems of the future (Ritzer, 2016). It is possible to maintain that Durkheim deeply affected the development of sociology; however, his greatest contribution was that his method was focused on the knowledge about the society and that he regarded the society as collective consciousness and sometimes even used to identify the society with the God; thereat, Durkheim never aimed at social revolution. This is very important, because Durkheim established the origins of structural-functional analysis which has predetermined the development of sociology for quite a long period. Durkheim denied dialectics as metaphysical heritage and criticized the ideas that used to be defined through unverifiable phenomena. For him the theory of social facts became the criterion for distinguishing scientific sociological knowledge from the unscientific one. In this sense Durkheim perceived the future, similar to God, as a super category, as a category that could not be introduced in actual sociological circulation. In other words, the sociology of Durkheim represented the frozen time sociology which, though it also studied the past, used to perceive the present as the object that really deserved to be trusted and investigated.

Durkheim's sociology does not give any principal answers to the problems of future in sociology. According to Durkheim, although the factor that ensures the transition of the society from mechanical solidarity, from the traditional society, to the society of limited solidarity, to the modern society, is represented by the dynamic density, i.e. the demographical factors come to the front line together with the fact that the modern society is determined in its normality, while the future could never become a subject of investigation in terms of whether the society is normal or is it in morbid condition. Thus, Durkheim reproduced the principle of analyzing the society in statics. Dynamic factors used to be considered irrespective of the things that could be called social moods and social knowledge that promote active creativity. It is also possible to say that Durkheim's tradition of social statics was further developed in the works belonging to H. Spencer; however, special attention should be paid to the social interpretation of the future suggested by M. Weber who, deeply respecting such sociological methods of obtaining knowledge as understanding through direct observation, explanatory understanding and reason-based explanation, regarded with skepticism the possibility of social apprehension.

M. Weber was convinced, as is highlighted in his work “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism”, that the development of the spirit of capitalism was predetermined by the finality of the future. It means that the future, being constrained by the logic of rationalization, is interconnected with value-based rational behavior and therefore, abiding by the principle of determinism, a methodologist can only analyze the social activities and interpret the social life of its participants (Kravchenko, 2015). Weber’s sociology, although it pays attention to the behavior and implies the transition from structure to behavior, does not include the future in the principle subject matters of sociological knowledge. This is explained by the declared slogan of rationalization, by the domination of the purposeful rational behavior that excludes any social-utopian orientations, and also by the fact that the very spirit of capitalism as rational, bureaucratic organization is deprived of the soaring thoughts. In other words, a sociologist as a person who describes reality can act only on the basis of the interpretations of the facts that emanate from reality, and not on the basis of the expected projective actions.

According to A.V. Lubskiy, social perception today represents quite a contradictory situation: on the one hand, social reality challenges social science with difficulties and uncertainties, and in order to respond to these challenges social reality has to be studied as a complex system within the framework of the holistic system; on the other hand, strengthening multi-paradigmality of social perception, growing specialization of science and research activities and also disciplinary departmentalization of social sciences is accompanied by fragmentation of scientific knowledge (Lubskiy, 2015). Noting that classical sociology has never considered the future as something primitive, has not focused on studying the future as an object of sociology, as the complex social reality, it is possible to maintain that classical approach has nevertheless developed some constructive elements related to the fact that the society itself was perceived as a complex integrated system which, to that or another extent, was formulated in the works belonging to E. Durkheim, H. Spencer, M. Weber as the tasks for achieving the objective knowledge about the society and social regularities.

In this context such ideas as “society”, “social structures”, “ideal types” have been introduced into the research studies. The peculiar feature of M. Weber’s methodology is represented by the fact that trying to escape objectification he introduces the notion of “ideal type” as some working model that makes it possible to study the real processes and phenomena in their dynamics. Does the idea of the future fit this definition? The complexity was and still is represented by the fact that classical sociology is based on the objectification of the investigator and proceeds on the assumption that even if the future can become a subject of sociological investigation then it can only be studied as the models that are formed according to the same principle that is used for the present. In other words, present is here a dominating matrix for constructing the models of scientific knowledge.

In this sense the investigative attention is attracted by the stable, established and sustainable phenomena and processes and by the things that possess regularity, that occur regularly, *en masse*, that could be fixed as a sociological constant. Noting this circumstance it becomes possible to expostulate that within the framework of classical sociology the position of

objectivism is formulated and the adequacy of the problems of the future to the criteria of veracity seem not to be very convincing, insofar as a sociologist has to deal with the imagined, constructed reality, with the reality that is still in the process of its establishment. The reproaches implying that classic sociology does not possess a sufficient explanatory base for perceiving the future are not without reason. At the same time, it has to be noted that in classical sociology, which is preset for invariance, there is still a rational kernel associated with the inadmissibility of the relevance of sociological knowledge, with the blurred boundaries between sociology and social forethought. It is possible to maintain that classical sociology allows for regarding the future as extrapolation of the present, as the description of the elements of the present, that tend, in principle, to develop into more mature forms in future.

This approach could partially be vindicated within the context of the evolutionist model of social development, within the context where the processes were understood as gradual accumulation of quantitative changes that could transform into new social quality. This said, it also has to be noted that the new pictures of the investigations in classical sociology were associated with the expansion of sociological knowledge; the development of the systemic ideas about the society gave the assurance that social micro level should be investigated as well. Thus, it is possible to maintain that the breakthrough ideas and the discoveries of new areas that occur within the framework of classical sociology are basically predetermined by the logic of the transition from the general to the special and specific, and also by the fact that the ongoing continuous search for the paradigm that would integrate social macro and micro levels, according to G. Ritzer, is the consequence of the development of social thought and also its drawback (Ritzer, 2002). As it has already been noted above, this seems to be rather an ideal project of developing social knowledge that gives the incentives to search for the end-to-end subject matters, problems and categories at the level of the junction between the investigations of those levels and also at the level where sociological knowledge preserves its distinguishing characteristics differentiating it from other branches of social science and where the sociologic community does not experience the conflict of fragmentation.

Studying the evolution of sociological thought, its transition from classical sociology to non-classical the gap of the knowledge should not be overestimated. The succession mechanisms in sociology imply that the question of binarity of sociological knowledge is raised strictly within the framework of sociological discourse. This correlation in the discussion of the future in such context is perceived as the sphere of the subjective, of something that is modeled and produced by the historical experience of the people. It can be said that the formula of the habitus and the field suggested by P. Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 2008) assumes that in order to know the future the process of structure incorporation should be considered as actuality in the actions of the people, and the actions of the people should be considered as orientations toward the future through the reproduction of the habit, of the current schemes of historical experience. In this sense sociology does not step over the limits of the extraordinary and does not construct the unforeseeable reality. The connection between the two states, that is, between the history objectified in things and in the forms of the institutions and the history that is externalized in the bodies and in the form of the system of social dispositions, predetermines the fact that beyond classical sociology the future is partially legitimized as an object of investigation, because the very

acknowledgement of the historical nature of the phenomena and the processes assumes that there is the unity of the space-time continuum of the society.

Noting this circumstance it may be said that thus the methodological principle is now represented by abandoning the model of searching for regularities and the principles of determinism and transiting to the formula of soft determinism, to studying the interrelations between the objectified and subjectified conditions. An important outcome is represented here by the perception of social dispositions, of the regulative and orientating mindsets that are fixed through historical experience into the commitments to the future. The future and the way of its estimation by the actors depend on the character of social dispositions.

Social studies of P. Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 2008) do not claim that social subjectness is a driver of social changes. French sociologist believes that in this respect the investigative theory is predetermined by actualism, by the fact that the present is the main subject matter of the investigation, inasmuch as both history and the future are related to the current social conditions. The history of the institutions represents the history of social determinism while the habitus shows the variations of human practices and human thinking. It may be assumed, and this will be consistent with the ideas of A.V. Lubskiy, that the notion of social reality as an integrated orderly system of emergent nature is of paramount significance for understanding the cognitive strategy (Lubskiy, 2015). If this thought is applied to the methodological problems of investigating the future, then two conclusions can be drawn: first, as structural-constructivist analysis of P. Bourdieu shows, the continued traditions of structuralism as sociological actualism do not limit the possibilities of analyzing the future, given the emergent nature of social-dispositional mindsets. This circumstance is also confirmed by the fact that within the framework of non-classical sociology where the role of the actor is accepted, there is a certain shift as regards the future as the reality faced by an individual when he implements one's life strategy. This is very important for understanding the fact that depending upon the objectives the individual sets for oneself and upon the time dimension he chooses for one's efforts it will be possible to talk about the differences in the strategies of the individual and of the society in general.

It is quite probable that structural constructivism of P. Bourdieu contains the understanding of the fact that sociology describes its discretionary social conditions. This was also perceived by M. Weber who had difficulties with the complex process of perception aided by the ideal types which was associated with his denial of the construction of the integrated sociological theory. The future causes some disquiet as it is an ideal construction while there are no such things that could be interpreted by the empiricists as real social relations. Therefore, the future does not belong to the category of social analysis, but becomes a subject of social prognostics of sociology that does not claim to describe the future as a standalone subject of the investigation.

This position confirms the fact that within the methodology of the investigations the future can hardly be correlated with a certain analogue that was earlier considered in the history of sociological thought as an ideal type; Weber himself was a thinker and a prophet who faced the past, who used to idealize the people and the posterity based on the fact that the logic of rationalization will make hollow the understanding of human culture and will

narrow down the human activities to the level of organized bureaucracy. This retreat is for a good reason, because to understand the future a social scientist has to experience the effects of the past continuously which, on the one hand, testifies of the necessity of the link of times and, on the other hand, it shows the difficulties faced by the investigator as he tries to verify the future, to connect, to reconcile or at the least just to make closer the theoretical and the empirical levels of the investigation.

The methodological tools that have been developed by classical methodology for studying the future are usually considered to be teleological. However, the notion of “telenomy” would seem to be more appropriate, as here we have the established definite laws, *nomos* related to the future and associated with definite objectives fulfilled by the individuals in their perception of the future through the system of social expectations, through putting the stakes on their future. Non-classical sociology is transitive in understanding the problems of the future as it transits from society to behavior, from society to interaction; it establishes the mindsets for the future in the life strategies of the people as something that could become the subject of sociological investigation. The same trend is also characteristic for neo-institutionalism that undertakes the efforts to determine the conceptual limits for interpreting the history of mankind and that claims that the task of social science is to explain the characteristics of the functions of the society in time (North et. al., 2011). Proceeding on the understanding of three social orders, namely, primitive order, order of the limited access and the order of unrestricted access, the theorists of neo-institutionalism maintain that the future can only be regarded as the privilege of the society of unrestricted access and that in order to understand the problems of the future it is necessary to be based on the assumption that in its movement toward the future the mankind will not need violence, conflicts and civil wars.

In the course of investigating the future the obstacle for explaining the future is represented by the fact that the future itself can be either remote or closely interacting with the present. For the societies of the closed type the future will always be remote, it will be perceived as the condition ideal relative to the present. For the open type society the future is understood as the situation of modeling, as the plausible obligation for the future (North et. al., 2011). Thus, the partisans of neo-institutionalism approach the problems of the future at the same transitive level as P. Bourdieu did. However, if P. Bourdieu identifies social dispositions as key to social engineering the adherents of neo-institutionalism consider that such key is represented by the unrestricted access order that maintains the parity of the interests, and, consequently, of the stakes on the future.

Non-classical sociology defines the future as an aggregate of potential opportunities that can or cannot become real depending on the obligations and expectations of the institutions and structures. It can be declared that within the framework of non-classical sociology the constructivist approach to the future is formed which is characterized by the fact that the future is represented as the created, constructed, invented reality, and the point of methodological analysis becomes a subjective parameter that includes mindsets for the future, schemes of perceiving the future, trust in the future, obligations for the future. Observing the investigative situation it can be said that postnonclassical

sociology is based on the necessity of the monitored future, it is characterized by adopting the synergetic paradigm, by the negation of the deterministic and, to some extent, over-deterministic understanding of the future. Meanwhile, declaring the principle of uncertainty, turbulence, means that sociology will have to rediscover its methodological tools, because, as A.V. Lubskiy justly notes, the interdisciplinary investigations are based on the principle of synergetics and, consequently, a sociologist has to limit the application of the already developed sociologic material and, to some extent, to acquiesce in switching over to the language of other sciences (Lubskiy, 2015).

This means that there will be certain methodological difficulties in defining the future. On the one hand, it is obvious that understanding the future will require developing new categorical parameters within the framework of the legitimized sociological discourse; on the other hand, it would be necessary to translate these ideas into the language of synergetics. The introduction of such ideas as “order”, “entropy”, “turbulence” in sociological circulation is not in itself the decisive precondition for setting the problems of the future methodologically. There are also the difficulties associated with the circumstance that the understanding of the future in sociology is overlapped by the principles of relevance, correlation, equality of the ideas in sociology, social prognostics and social forethought.

Naturally, to identify the specific features of sociological turn toward the comprehension of the problems of the future, the temporalization of sociology has to be recognized as including not only space but also time-related parameters. However, adopting the principles of synergetics as the basis of interdisciplinary interaction will somehow “blur” the perspectives of sociological vision. If sociology covers the tools of synergetics exclusively and abandons the idea of evolutionism then this will be quite a radical move in the succession of the development of social knowledge and also in the notion that, in fact, the empirics of the applied investigation built on both qualitative and quantitative methods that are based on the analysis and explanation cannot be combined with purely theoretical and synergetic construct.

Having this in mind it is possible to follow M. Weber who in his investigation of bureaucracy has abandoned the idea of the types of bureaucracy and founded his studies on the really functioning bureaucratic relations; he also agreed that the idea of types should be additionally adjusted at the level of accepting the empirical data. It is possible to maintain that the attention to the problems of the future in postnonclassical sociology, although, on the face of it, it opens the opportunity to apply the synergetic concept, also has definite limits in sense that the future as the condition of uncertainty, on the one hand, reveals opportunities for the activities of the people, as far as the choice between the alternatives under the conditions of the uncertainty depends upon the people; on the other hand, it makes it difficult to apply the theoretical and methodological tools.

Non-classical sociology, implementing the principle of synergetics and thus highlighting the commitment to interdisciplinary effect, simultaneously creates certain investigative problems associated with the future in the sense that besides the principle of the uncertainty and the imperative of the alternative choice there are also difficulties in selecting the basic methodological principles, in that which is classified by A.V. Lubskiy as the striving of the scientific and

research practices toward meta-paradigmatic synthesis (Lubskiy, 2015). This means that the use of the fragments of different approaches to the investigations of the future is not yet the expectations of any positive effect. It also has to be noted that within the framework of the implementation of the methodological approach it is very important that the idea of sociological turn toward the future should be explained. It is probable that in selecting the future as the subject field of sociology and in implementing the ideas of the integration of the sociology of the future into sociological science and also in the fact that sociology of the future makes certain contribution into the development of sociological thought these expectations will undoubtedly be founded on the search for the theoretical and methodological tools. Then the questions arise: What are these methodological instruments? What principles, mindsets, objectives and conditions are they associated with? Considering these issues it has to be noted that sociology of the future does not claim to overcome the limitations of the paradigmatic practices. It is all about the understanding of the future as a normal phenomenon preconditioned by different methodological preferences (Institutional practices and value policy in the sphere of interethnic relations, 2012). In other words, the most promising seems to be the subject-activity method founded on studying social subjectness, roles of the new social movements, of the movements for social change.

Considering the subject-activity approach as the key to the understanding of the future it can be said that within the framework of achieving the objectives of this study it is important to determine the nature of the future, to identify historical and analytical aspects of the theoretical turn. It is important that the future should be considered in the context of social changes and social development and that the concept of traumatizing changes should be taken into account, and that time should be regarded as the measure of social life, according to P. Sztompka (Sztompka, 2005). The future should be treated within the frames of consistency and continuity, irreversibility. Considering the implementation of the subject-activity approach it is necessary to highlight the principles of differentiation, of the emphasis on the past, the present and the future because it is all about the temporal orientation of the society; also it is essential to consider such basic temporal investigative parameters as the potential of the future of definite social groups and strata, associated with the possibilities of social capitalization, subjective temporal orientations, social expectations and the opportunities for implementing changes. The subjective parameters should be represented by the level of activity motivation, value preferences, interest in future relative to the interests of the society in general. It is possible to maintain that the micro scales of the modern life should be combined with the macro scales of social changes.

Thus, the future is comprehended in terms of the present, predetermined by everyday changes, often inconspicuous from the perspectives of the macro processes, and also by the social shifts that predetermine the attitudes of the society toward the future. Within the framework of the adopted principles it is very important that the future should no longer present problems but become something given; that there should emerge a necessity to answer the questions: where the pictures of the future come from, how they are formed, and how the action of the people turn the present into the future. To understand the problems of the future it is necessary to identify which structural contexts facilitate or hamper the future in the society. It is also important to talk about

the conditions associated with the aggregate of the convictions that are directed toward the future and that become the drivers for activities. It is for a good reason that in Russian society three groups are distinguished that are focused on the past, the present and the future. Thus, one of the prerequisites for the methodology is, first, to determine the objective connections with the structural context; second, to identify the concurrence and commonality of the orientations for the future, subjective mindsets and creeds. Third, to find the behavioral connections predetermined by the participation in the movements oriented toward the future where Russian creative class belongs (Volkov, 2011).

Noting that the methodological turn is only possible as a systemic investigation of the conditions, convictions, activities, aspirations for the future, as a model for mobilizing the efforts and tools that initiate, anticipate and implement the future, it is possible to state that within the framework of selecting the principal approach based on the subject-activity paradigm the future acquires not only socially projective but also socially analytical sense. It is not purely logical and social analysis that is most important; the major aspect of the analysis of the future is represented by multi-paradigmality as the method of interdisciplinary interaction and as the transparency of paradigmatic prospective (Osipov, 2010). Having said that classical sociological thought considers the aspects of interaction within the framework of the stability of the system, of the maintenance of the functions of social system, and also that neo-institutionalism approach characterizes the organizational aspect of social life, it is possible to say that the methodology of investigating the future represents the determination of the regularities, the investigation of objective, subjective and behavioral interrelations.

Modern sociological thought: the theory of structuring of A. Giddens, integration of the theory of actions and the theory of systems of J. Habermas, integration of social action and social order of J. Alexander, integration of rational choice and macro sociological problems, the integrated approach to social actions and systemic behavioral patterns of J. Coleman (Osipov, 2010) is primarily aimed at discovering the phenomenon of coherence in micro and macro theories and, second, it stimulates the attitude toward the future as the determination of the form of social totality harmonized in time and space.

Conclusions

Advocating the systemic-theoretical approach to understanding the future and the levels of its interpretation it is possible to maintain that the attention is now focused on the social subject. The theory of the new social movements confirms this specific feature. The second specific feature is represented by the humanistic turn, by the focus on the interests of man, inasmuch as the comprehension of the future is the understanding of the implementation of the future by a person as the ideal, as the embodiment of one's own dreams, interests and objectives. This methodological step makes it necessary to resolve the problems of integration of actions and structure, and also of determining the categorical network, of developing the ideas that would characterize different elements of the future as sociological theory.

Based on the above, in this case it is possible to talk about the detailed investigations of the future not only at the macro level, but also in everyday

practices. Therefore, sociology of the future as an independent line of sociological research is defined by the specific and independent aggregate of the interrelated problems that become the subject of theoretical comprehension and also by the way the future is described, analyzed and explained within the framework of sociological discourse.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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