

PRESENTATION

Born on May 15, 1944 in Stolp, city of the region of Pomerania (Germany), today Stupsk (Poland), a few months before the end of World War II, Ulrich Beck grew up in the city of Hanover, West Germany, a city in which settled his family in 1945, border reset period. His father was a naval officer; his mother, a nurse. He was the youngest of five children of the couple. Beck died in Munich (Germany) on January 1, 2015, at 70 years old, victim of a heart attack in an Europe that he had classified, critically, of "German Europe".

He began his college life studying law in Freiburg. In 1966, Beck abandoned his legal studies to devote himself to study Sociology, Philosophy, Psychology and Political Science at the Ludwig Institute Maximilians of the University of Munich. In 1972, having completed his doctorate, he began teaching sociology in Munich. In 1979, with his "habilitation thesis" Beck was admitted as a university professor. He was also a professor at the universities of Münster (1979-1981) and Bamberg (1981-1992). Beck was also a visiting professor at the University of Wales, Cardiff (1995-97), the London School of Economics (Since 1997) and the House of Human Sciences Foundation, Paris (since 2011).

From 1992 until his death, he was professor of sociology and director of the Sociology Institute of the University of Munich. Beck received numerous international awards and honors, including election to the Council and the Board of Directors of the German Society of Sociology. From 1995 to 1997 he was a member of the State Commission for Issues Relating to the Future. From 1999 to 2009, Beck was the spokesman of the Collaborative Reflexive Modernization Research Centre 536, kind of interdisciplinary consortium of four universities in the Munich region, financed and supervised by the German Research Foundation (GRF).

On the one hand, Beck was enthusiastic about the relations between Germany and England on the other hand, he defended unpopular political views in his country. He was supporter of federalization of Europe. Opening the book *The German Europe: Machiavelli the "Merkievel"* - power strategies in the euro crisis (2013), Beck revealed his desire for an "European Germany" rather than a "German Europe".

His vast theoretical and intellectual production is here between two broad parentheses: the opening (1974), with Objectivity and normativity work. The theory-practice debate in modern German and American sociology, and closing, with the book *German Europe* (2013). In order to avoid any attempt - which would prove groundless and fruitless - to analyze here thought and Ulrich Beck's contribution in the broad field of social theory, the object of this presentation is here limited to references to some theories and concepts of the main work of the German sociologist - *Risk society - towards another modernity* (1986) - around the idea of "global risk". And the treatment to be given to this object will follow the lessons - though not expressly referred - the sociology of knowledge from Karl Manheim, critical theory of Max Horkheimer, the structure of scientific revolutions of

Thomas Kuhn, the scientific knowledge progress by Karl Popper, the contemporary changes in the labor area and the politic of Claus Offe.

Setting conditions for thinking the global stage of modernity - without abandoning the unique subjectivity of individuals - the global risk (environmental, nuclear, climate, industrial, economic) that transcends borders, sets for sociology, according to Beck, two needs, expression of a possible paradigmatic crisis: the displacement of society field to the field of globalization and the affirmation of methodological imperative of "cosmopolitanism", with the consequent denial of methodological imperative of "nationalism".

As a phenomenon and as a category, "global risk" authorizes Ulrich Beck here to be called "the sociologist of the risk society". This name is based in the recognition whereby Risk Society, not being the synthesis of the thought of its author, can be considered as the moment that defines clearly the common thread that runs through the theoretical and intellectual activity of Beck, even before and after that work. The context of its publication assured to Beck the epithet of "prophet." After all, Europe was under the terror and the impact of the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in the former Union of Soviet Republics, in April 1986. After all, the explosion and leakage of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant contaminated territories of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia inhabited by more than seven million people.

Beck's contributions to sociological thought will be discussed below through the relationship that links sociological studies and social structures. The first, concerns to the criticism of the first modernity and sociological tradition centered in the "work" to explain social life. It is based on the passage of a kind of society (industry, classes, crying "I'm hungry") for the society of another type (the risk, crying "I am afraid") and claims the abandonment of classic sociological categories. The second is referred to the second modernity and perception of overcoming the existing borders in the world, with advancing of mass production of various goods and the achievement of the various social rights. It underlies the formation of a new sociological theory, the contemporary theory.

Overall, the sociological theories - classical and contemporary - consists in thinking formulations that seek to analyze the principles of organization of social relations of bourgeois society through its organization and operation, its crises and changes, its advances and limits.

In this sense, the sociological traditions that represent the classical conceptions of Marx, Weber and Durkheim fulfilled this task to define modern society as "society of labor". On the one hand, they could be considered to have followed a phenomenological and Naturalized orientation of work and so - considering the work as a fundamental historical necessity of social life - trivialized as much work as a social fact as a sociological category. On the other hand, they presuppose the centrality of sociological category and empirical homogeneity relating to "work."

However, the world of work - with its rules and organization, activities and techniques, division and classes, conception and rationality - has particular application in the classic sociological thought. The differentiation and separation of labor in relation to other activities (leisure, for example) and spheres of social life (family, for example) and the prevalence of technical rationality (regarding the relationship between man and nature) on the economic rationality of capital (as to the purposes of economic agents) define two characteristics that can be highlighted to explain the role that work played as a fundamental category in classical sociological theory. However, work specificity would not break the unity that characterizes it.

The differences in the situation of work and workers in Germany before and after the Second World War and before and after the reunification of the country in 1990 did not allow Beck but to question the possibility of the use of the category "work" operating as a universal structure capable to explain the social structure of his country in the years of production of its social thought, especially considering the category "risk society". Indeed, as empirical reality, Beck struggled to approach the work independently of their internal differentiation. After all, not every German worker is found under the division of labor and enrolled in the relationship between capital and labor.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the sociological and political studies characterized the research and contemporary social theory by overcoming the division between economics and politics, between industry and state. The recognition of the industry's dependence on the politics meant that the working class had lost the status of independent variable and thus ceased to be a process able to explain realities such as social action and social awareness. In addition, sociological research has always favored activities (politics, for example) and spheres of social life (family, for example) as research fields in the margin of work field or outside of it. In addition, other sociological categories and social facts came delegitimizing the work as a central category and fact of classical social theory. These studies and research, these facts and categories can be considered to be contemporary and to have been rebuilt as an expression of opposition between industrial society and postindustrial society.

Beck's contribution consists to take the historical view in which social change is theoretically envisaged in accordance to the same dynamism that characterizes the changing reality. The role of his theories and conceptual categories attempts to address these changes. They are theories and sociological categories as theories and categories of global modernity or modernization of modernity and so are distinguished from the way modern societies were thought centered on free labor as formal labor, as wage labor, as industrial labor.

For Beck, the classic sociological category "work" as a category of the traditional theory of industrial society, lost the ability to explain social action, social consciousness and concrete social structures of modern society changing. For him, "the work" as a basic principle of classical sociology, as a principle of the theory of stratification of class society, no longer explain the social reality of inequality in Europe Germany in the 1980s. By

producing image of that society, to characterize its development and define its destination, the classical sociology does not take into account categories and facts covered by the social thought of the 1980s, such as ethnic identity, human rights.

For Beck, by breaking the model limits - Classic - stratification and differentiation of classes, the "pluralization of life forms" disqualifies the work as an analytical category able to explain the class society (a society structured according to the fundamental relationship between owners of the means of production and productive forces) and establishes for contemporary social theory and the tradition of historical materialism "other" cognitive matrix for sociological studies.

Representing contemporary social thought of the 1980s, theories and critic categories of Ulrich Beck are characterized by advance fulfilling task in relation to changing society before which the classical theories recede. If these show concern for the analysis of the structuring principles of the social relations of bourgeois society, those define their goals under the guidance of the ongoing changes in society.

If the real object - wage labor - of theoretical interest of classical sociology knows historic change in certain social settings, the need for explanation of changes ends by redefining which studies and social surveys in addition to the need to produce empirical ratings on the new reality. In addition to ratings and new perspectives, the social theories of Beck seek to explain social change through new theoretical and conceptual categories.

Out of the field of sociological theory and into the field of legal research, the contribution of the thought of Ulrich Beck can be interpreted according to interdisciplinary concern and according to the distinction between "knowledge production" and "use of knowledge." However, Beck's contribution by the reception of his thought and the integration of knowledge presupposes two conditions. First, his theories and thoughts of categories should be interpreted in its production field without losing sight of the historical conception that the idea of "passage" between the industrial society and risk society presupposes the co-existence of different time frames. Second, his theories and thoughts of categories should be interpreted in its use of field without losing sight of the first condition and so must operate as an analytical system that, based on the complex reality "social change", aims to ensure the interpretation of reality is its use of context. The realization of these two conditions avoids all sorts of reification in the field of production and in the field of use of theories and categories of Beck's thought.

The tone certainly eulogy of the presentation of this collection - in reason of the honor made to Ulrich Beck, who died prematurely in January 2015 - does not replace the critical analysis of the Risk Society author - towards another modernity. This is the meaning of the article "Risk Society: advances and limitations of Ulrich Beck's theory," by Ricardo Falbo and Rene Keller. In building their arguments as to the non-recognition or the end of class society nor the realization of the risk society through use of Marxist categories, the authors analyze critically the "novelty" in Beck's thought. This is the same line of reasoning that characterizes the article "Classes

and Politics on Risk Society or Ulrich Beck has reason?" by Selene Herculano. The author claims to be a misconception assigning to Beck the overcoming of classes, and recognizes that his thinking to suggest the construction of the integration of knowledge, so that environmental issues, in social reality, are not restricted to knowledge of the natural sciences. Articles "Company Environmental Responsibility in Risk Society" and "Disaster 'natural' on the banks of rivers and forest legislation in the risk society: a 2011 tragedy analysis in Teresopolis" by Flavia Limmer and Pedro Avzaradel respectively. The first author analyzes the relationship between the model of risk society and changes in the law and economy of Brazil; the second, the explanatory power of the concept "risk" for the occurrence of specific tragedy in city in the state of Rio de Janeiro. It is also in environmental law research field that it is possible to locate the article "The theory of the real risk to the theory of abstract risk in post-industrial society: a study of its application in the context of environmental law," by Silvana Colombo. In it, the author discusses the environmental issue in the light of the category "basic human right". In order to think about political subjectivity as an event, the article

"The theory of risk society as a tool for understanding the emergence of urban social movements in Brazil: a critical counterpoint," by Clovis da Silveira, seeks to understand the meaning of the political and legal significance of urban social movements in Brazil in June 2013. Finally, the article "Apuntes sobre las reflexiones teóricas de Ulrich Beck," Ruslan Velázquez, addresses critically the main themes of Beck's work, with emphasis the concept of "world risk society", considered by its author as an articulator category of all other themes developed by the German sociologist.

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