Sociology and demography of international relations

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School of World Economy and World Policy, HSE

Undergraduate study in International relations

This is an extract from a subject guide for an undergraduate course offered as part of the Joint program of Higher School of Economics (Russia) and London School of Economics (London). Materials for these programmes are developed by academics at HSE and partner universities

2016
1. Aims and objectives of the Course

The objective of the course is to provide a general but practical knowledge about sociology and demography of international relations.

Taking into consideration a holistic sociological approach, by the end of the course, students should be able to understand:
- What is sociology of international relations,
- What are aims of studying sociology, key sociological methods (qualitative, quantitative, mixed), their implications in international relations,
- How knowledge of the societies can help the future experts and practitioners of IR to be more competitive,
- What’s in common between sociology and demography from the international perspectives.

2. What skills you will learn from studying this course

By the end of the course you will have gained knowledge and learnt some important skills:
- to be critical of any data and theories that you read or hear about and, of course, to be critical of your own work
- be creative and able to link ideas from this course and the other disciplines you are studying to create new ways of thinking about social phenomena
- to be challenged. This is not an easy subject and it requires you to think deeply about the materials and be able to deal with more than one way of thinking about the social world
- Do the best that you can to be cooperative and share ideas and materials. It is a good idea to study with other students and friends, and to try to express your ideas with them. This is an important skill for the world of work where you are often required to work in teams.

2. Planned learning outcomes of the Course

At the end of the course, and having completed the essential reading and activities, you should be able to:
- describe the nature of the sociological perspective and the major theories of society
- apply the major sociological perspectives to at least two aspects of social life
• describe the nature of demographic processes in the world
• read the set texts critically and creatively, and select relevant material
• cited by the authors selectively in their examination answers
• explain and evaluate the scope of the research process and the approach of different methods of social inquiry and be able to criticize these
• explain the relationship between theory and method in sociology and demography

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency code</th>
<th>Competency contents</th>
<th>Planned learning outcomes of the Course (module)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To fill in this graphs I will need a HSE 3,5 educational standard in IR</td>
<td>Know:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manage:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Master:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. Structure of the course

Section 1: Social theory and research

We will study the questions relating to the nature of sociology; the methods which sociologists use; methodology and the major sociological perspectives. The key aspects in relation to individuals and society are examined through the concepts of role, socialization and identity. The chapters in Section A account for 50 per cent of the marks and are examined by a compulsory question, which is subdivided into questions requiring short answers and one longer question relating to a particular sociologist or perspective.
Topics within the 1-st Section:

1. **What is sociology** (2 academic hours)?
   a. What do sociologists study?
   b. How a sociologist’s understanding of some aspect of social life would be different from a ‘commonsense’ understanding?
   c. Relationship as a key phenomenon in sociology

2. **Social institutions** (2 academic hours)? Sociologists refer to these patterns of behavior as social institutions to structuralize social relations. Types of family life, education and religious practice are examples of social institutions, where behavior tends to be regular or patterned. What we loosely refer to as a ‘society’ is actually a complex of many social institutions. In contemporary industrial societies we find, for example, political, family, economic, educational, legal and religious institutions. Although these institutions seem to be separate and distinct they are also related to each other in various ways.

3. **Sociology as a science** (2 academic hours). Important difference between sociology and natural sciences, such as physics or chemistry. The subject of sociological research – social institutions – is cultural rather than natural. This means that social institutions are produced by the conscious activities of human beings, in contrast to things like gravity, the weather and chemical processes within the body, which are natural processes. The result of this is that sociologists are also interested in the subjective aspects of life; that is how people interpret and make sense of the situations in which they find themselves. Sociology, then, is not just about just about the wider ‘outside’ picture of patterns of social organisation and behaviour. It also explores the ‘inside story’ of people’s lives, how they make sense of social situations, their values, beliefs, prejudices and, if the research calls for it, even their darkest secrets. Whether the nation state is becoming less or more important? Erosion of Westfall system of international relations. Different social actors on world stage

**Essential reading**

- Fulcher, J. and J. Scott Sociology. *(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)*
Section 2: Demography of international relations

Demography is a study of populations, especially human beings. As a very general science, it can analyze any kind of dynamic living population, i.e., one that changes over time or space. Demography encompasses the study of the size, structure, and distribution of these populations, and spatial or temporal changes in them in response to birth, migration, ageing, and death. Based on the demographic research of the earth, earth's population up to the year 2050 and 2100 can be estimated by demographers. Demographics are quantifiable characteristics of a given population.

Topics within the 2-nd Section:

4. What is demography (2 academic hours)?
   a. Measurement in demography
   b. Demography as a part of social science
   c. Demographical shifts

5. Main apparatus of demography (2 academic hours). Demographic analysis can cover whole societies, or groups defined by criteria such as education, nationality, religion, and ethnicity. The broader field of social demography or population studies analyses the relationships between economic, social, cultural, and biological processes influencing a population.

6. Direct and indirect methods of demography (2 academic hours).
   a. Direct data comes from vital statistics registries that track all births and deaths as well as certain changes in legal status such as marriage, divorce, and migration (registration of place of residence).
   b. A census is the other common direct method of collecting demographic data. A census is usually conducted by a national government and attempts to enumerate every person in a country. However, in contrast to vital statistics data, which are typically collected continuously and summarized on an annual basis, censuses typically occur only every 10 years or so, and thus are not usually the best source of data on births and deaths. Analyses are conducted after a census to estimate how much over or undercounting took place.
These compare the sex ratios from the census data to those estimated from natural values and mortality data.

c. Censuses do more than just count people. They typically collect information about families or households in addition to individual characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, literacy/education, employment status, and occupation, and geographical location. They may also collect data on migration (or place of birth or of previous residence), language, religion, nationality (or ethnicity or race), and citizenship. In countries in which the vital registration system may be incomplete, the censuses are also used as a direct source of information about fertility and mortality;

d. Indirect methods of collecting data are required in countries and periods where full data are not available, such as is the case in much of the developing world, and most of historical demography

e. There are a variety of demographic methods for modeling population processes. They include models of mortality (including the life table, Gompertz models, hazards models, Cox proportional hazards models, multiple decrement life tables, Brass relational logits), fertility (Hernes model, Coale-Trussell models, parity progression ratios), marriage (Singulate Mean at Marriage, Page model), disability (Sullivan's method, multistate life tables), population projections (Lee Carter, the Leslie Matrix), and population momentum (Keyfitz).

**Essential reading**

- Donald T. Rowland *Demographic Methods and Concepts* Ch. 11 ISBN 0-19-875263-6
- Andrew Hinde *Demographic Methods* Ch. 1 ISBN 0-340-71892-7
- S.C.Srivastava, Studies in Demography, p.39-41

**Section 3. Globalization and social change**

Having obtained some background on the nature of sociology and demography we want you to be able to apply what you know to one of the core sociological problems – social change. Before you start to study this section you should be aware of the major changes that have occurred in the last two centuries and how
the growth of sociology is connected with an attempt to explain these changes. Globalization is an important topic, not just because we are interested in knowing whether we are living in a new age but because there is so much disagreement about the topic. These disagreements have their basis in the fundamental assumptions about what the motors of social change are, and how do we ‘know’ if there has been such a change.

Topics:

7. The reactions to the social or global changes that are occurring – the behavior of the anti-globalists for example and the financial crises that started in 2008, different mass social deviations caused by social change (2 academic hours)
8. Inequality issues between and within nations, caused by globalization. Origins, measurement of inequality (2 academic hours)
9. Whether the nation state is becoming less or more important? Erosion of Westfall system of international relations. Different social actors on world stage (2 academic hours)

Essential reading


4. Course capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of learning session and self study</th>
<th>Course (module) capacity, hours</th>
<th>Chapter (HSE module)</th>
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<td>lectures (L)</td>
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<td>laboratory research (case study) (LR)</td>
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<td>practical training (workshop) (PT)</td>
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<td>controlled self study (CSS)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total workload (hours/ credits)</td>
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8. Material and technical and software support

Projector
Black board
Chalk
Eraser
White board
Black, Blue and Red Markers
Internet Access
Audio
Individual chairs (not attached to desk) – so they can by moved around
Desks