

The background of the slide features a light teal color with several thick, expressive black brushstrokes. These strokes are oriented diagonally, with some running from the top-left towards the bottom-right and others from the top-right towards the bottom-left, creating a dynamic, abstract pattern.

# SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

## MODERN & POSTMODERN THEORIES

WINTER TERM 2024



What is *postmodernism*?

Concepts of hyperrational modernity (Beck, Ritzer, Bauman) ?

What feminism brings into social theory?



# timeline

EARLY MODERNITY: from Renaissance to  
Industrial Revolution / French Revolution (late  
XVIIIth century)

MODERNITY: from Industrial Revolution / French  
Revolution till late 1960s

POST-MODERNITY: since late 1960s



# modernity x postmodernity

Weber's theory on disenchantment of the world:

1st disenchantment – the split of the sacrum and profanum, desacralisation of various spheres of collective life

2nd disenchantment – division of labour, independent moral discourse and civil law (Kant's ethics); modern administration and bureaucracy



# postmodernity

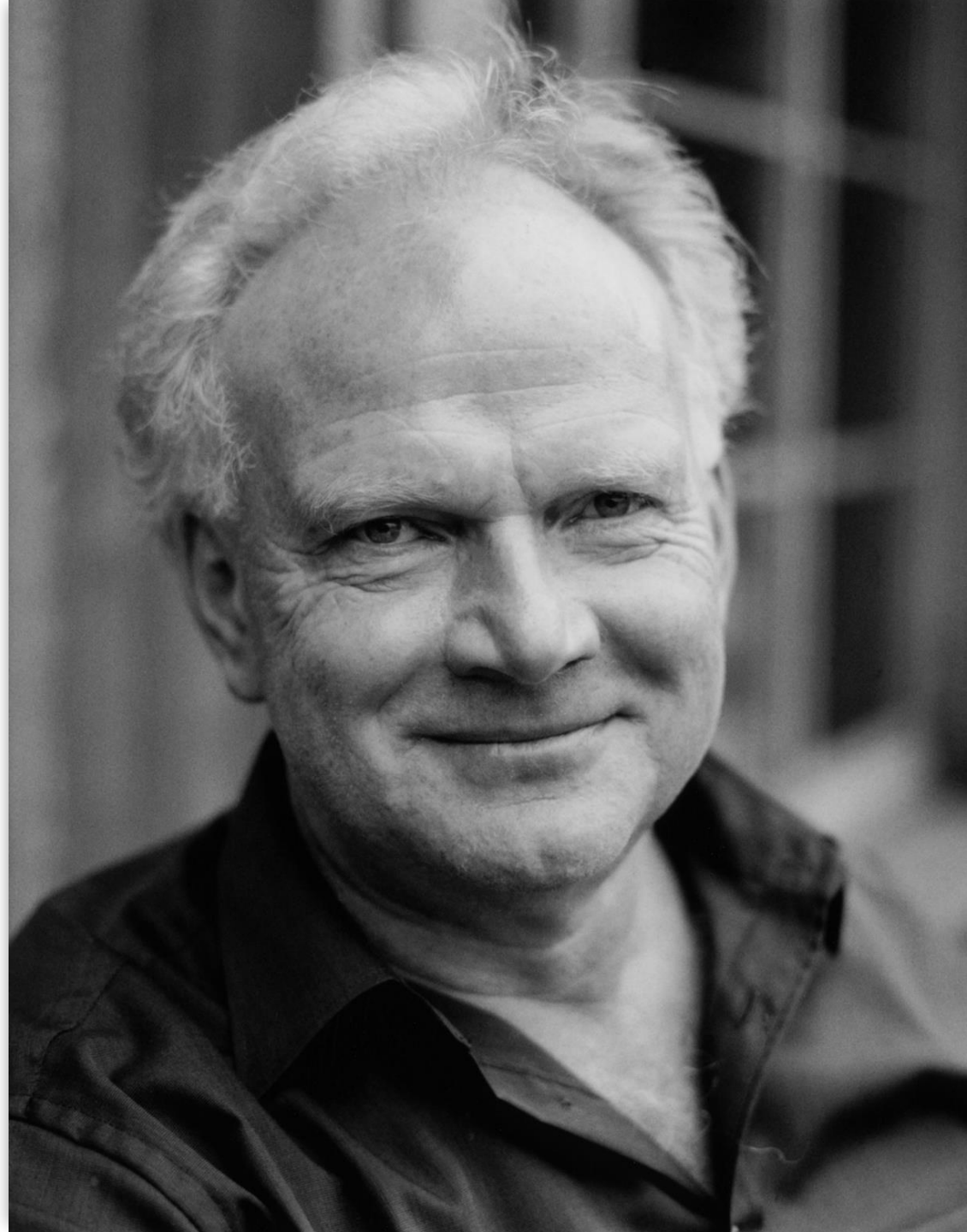
- Educational industry – the flywheel of postmodern economy
- Scientific knowledge – the main drive for development
- Mass media & the Internet
- Globalisation
- Unknown economic capital to be invested in different parts of the world
- Patterns of Western culture to be spread worldwide
- Post-fordism: constant change, requalification, labour mobility, degree-oriented
- Nomadic lifestyle
- No permanent job contracts & no social security
- „Risk society“ – various risks (IT, climate, economic crisis, terrorism, etc.)





# Ulrich Beck – „the risk society“

- Theory developed by the German sociologist Ulrich Beck in the late 1980s
- *Risk Society: Toward a New Modernity*



# the risk society

- *Reflexive modernity* – people are more and more free and able to reflexively construct the societies they live in...
- from industrial society to the risk society

INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY – wealth distribution

RISK SOCIETY – risk avoidance and management



# the risk society

- *Boomerang effect*

Side effects of risks strike back at the center of their production.

The agents are hit back by the hazards they  
unleash  
and profit from.

EXAMPLES?



# George Ritzer - McDonaldization

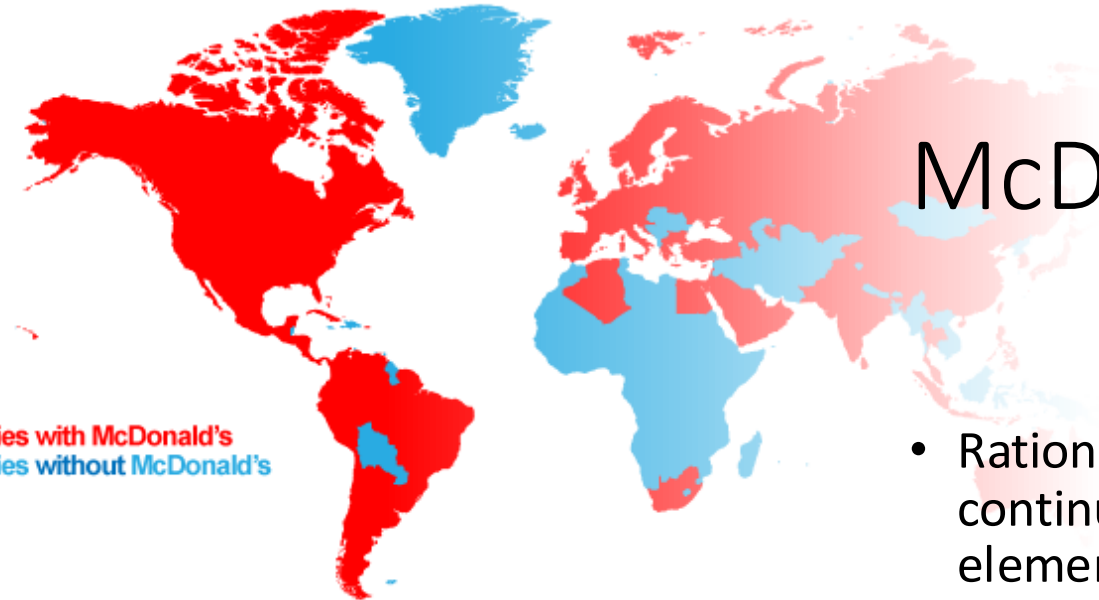
- *The McDonalidization of Society* (1993)
- based on Weber's work on rationality
- McDonald as a representation of a contmeporary paradigm of formal rationality





ACROSS THE WORLD

Countries with McDonald's  
Countries without McDonald's



# McDonaldization

- Rationality and modernity – continuation of modern elements in the (post)modern reality



Number of McDonald's outlets of selected countries

US  
13,381



Japan  
3,598



Canada  
1,400



Germany  
1,276



UK  
1,250



China  
660

Most expensive McDonald's burger - selected countries



Norway  
7.18



Denmark  
5.93



Iceland  
5.21



Eurozone  
4.96



USA  
3.29

## World's busiest McDonald's

Located on famous Pushkin Square in Moscow, the largest McDonalds in the world (more than 28,000 sq. ft.) and the busiest (more than 250 million customers to date) The restaurant seats 700 customers and has a 70 foot-long service counter with 27 cash registers.

# Zygmunt Bauman – modernity and Holocaust

- Zygmunt Bauman
- Holocaust understood as a  
paradigm of modern  
bureaucratic rationality
  - a product of modernity





*Late modernity* – Giddens

*Liquid modernity* – Bauman

*Reflexive modernity* – Beck



# feminist theory

feminist theory offers a basis for revision of standard sociological theories of social organisation





# feminist theory

remained margin till 1960s

*And what about the women?*

*Why is women's situation as it is?*

*What about the differences among women?*

# gender as sociological perspective

- introduced into sociology in 1970s
- a new „independent variable“
- analytical tool that reveals the whole new level of social structures, relations and meanings



# what feminist theory brings into social theory?

1. Sociology of knowledge: who and how produces knowledge in society?
2. Macro-social structures: who is in control and who is to subordinate?
3. Micro-interactional processes: who pays for housework, who invented mothering?
4. Line of fault – patriarchal ideology vs. reflected on women's experience
5. How about other disadvantaged / misrepresented groups in society?
6. The question of concept developed by men to describe the world controlled by them...

