

Erling Berge, November 2007

SOS3506 Sociological Theory II

Introduction

The overall goal of the class will be to look at the dynamic of development of large social systems, such as the current capitalist world economy. The point of departure will be Naomi Klein's observations presented in *The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. The first part of the class will be devoted to understanding what capitalism is and to look critically at the use of the concept by Klein. In this we shall use Elster and North. After this we take a step back to take a look at what appears to be a growing trend across several of the social sciences: thinking about large scale and long term dynamics in terms of non-linear aggregations of assemblages of simpler systems. In thinking about this we will consult Elias and Landa.

Required reading (pensum):

Elias, Norbert. 1991. *The Symbol Theory*. London: Sage.

Elster, Jon. 2007. *Explaining Social Behaviour: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Klein, Naomi. 2007. *The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. London: Penguin.

Landa, Manuel De. 2006. *A New Philosophy of Society*. New York: Continuum.

North, Douglass C. 2005. *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Start of class: First week of February

Participants are expected to write a book review, make an oral presentation and write a term paper:

1. Book review

Write a book review of Klein, Naomi. 2007. *The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. London: Penguin. The book review can be maximum 600 words.

The book review ought to be done no later than 29 February.

2. Oral presentation

Make an oral presentation in class (10-20 min) of one topic taken from Elster, Jon. 2007. *Explaining Social Behaviour: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The presentation ought to be done between 10 March – 12 April.

3. Term paper

Write a term paper either based on some topic from the class readings or discussions or a topic directly relevant to your MA thesis. It is expected to be some 5600-7500 words or 15-20 pages. In writing the term paper you can follow the standard given by http://www.svt.ntnu.no/iss/studentinfo/vitenskapelig_form_og_stil.pdf (in Norwegian).

An alternative (in English) might be

<http://www.sv.ntnu.no/thecommonsjournal/IJCAuthorguidelines.htm/>.