

Summary of the Ph.D. Thesis

Name of the author of the thesis: Mateusz Bieńkowski

Academic title of the doctoral supervisor of the thesis: dr hab., prof. APS Grzegorz Pyszczyk

Name of the auxiliary promoter:

The title of the thesis: Howe and Strauss generation cycle theory. Source – content – consequences

Key words phrases: generation, cyclical social change, generational cycle theory, cyclicity, generational types

Abstract:

Dissertation considers the theory of the generational cycle by Neil Howe and William Strauss. The theory describes social change as a cyclical course. Social sciences theorists try to find the regularity of events and processes, which would become the basis for discovery cycles governing social phenomena of various types. Reconstructing and describing the cycle gives a chance to predict the future. For a long time, such attempts were not made in sociology in relation to the category of generations.

William Strauss and Neil Howe proposed concepts of repeating generational cycles that are evident in the American, and more broadly, Anglo-American history. According to this concept in the 15th century Anglo-American society has entered an era which is characterized by the occurrence of phases called “turnings”, which last about twenty years. Four turnings create a cycle that roughly corresponds to the length of human life. The theory of the generational cycle by Howe and Strauss defines four main generational types that repeat sequentially. The order of generations is determined by the rhythm of “turnings”.

Dissertation is not restricted to reconstruction of Howe and Strauss theory but also tries to find limits of applicability of this concept, as regards to predicting the shape of

intergenerational relations in the future. The purpose of the dissertation is to outline the answer to what extent this Howe and Strauss concept is applicable in Polish conditions.

Should be noted that William Strauss and Neil Howe were pioneers when it comes to examination of cyclical regularities in relation to generations. Range of the Strauss-Howe theory's impact in United States is very wide. In this context, the fact is surprising that on the basis of European science, the generational theory is not widely analyzed. So far on the Polish publishing market did not appear translations Strauss-Howe books. There is also little science articles referring to generation theory.

Dissertation is divided into four main sections. First part focuses on generation category. Presented generational analyzes: William Dilthey, Karl Mannheim, Helmut Schelsky, José Ortega y Gasset, Jan Garewicz, Maria Ossowska, Margaret Mead Samuel Eisenstadt, Florian Znaniecki, Piotr Szukalski and Wiesław Wątroba.

In the second part of the dissertation, it is presented cyclical concepts from antiquity to modern times. Presented analyzes: Platon, Polybius, Ibn Chaldun, Vico, Spengler, Sorokin, Pareto, Toynbee. In the further part of the work, selected cyclical concepts in other social sciences are analyzed: Modelski, Kondratiew, Malthus.

The third part of the work focuses on the concept analysis of the Howe-Strauss generation cycle concept.

The fourth part assesses the concept of the generation cycle and the possibility of its application in Polish conditions. The review of Polish research on generations is presented and the thesis about the existence of the Polish generation cycle has been verified.