

Abstract

Digitalization and Second Modernity

Carmen Schmidt, University of Osnabrueck

The lecture tries to embed digitization into modernization theory. We use the concept of the second modernity to systematically uncover the questions and fields of research associated with digitization. Modernity was characterized by the processes of industrial and national revolution; the second modernity is characterized by cultural and economic globalization. Digitalization hereby has the same significance as industrialization for the first modernity. Cultural globalization raises questions of democracy and AI, changing political participation or electoral manipulation. Increasing interconnectedness poses the question of post-national identities and citizenship. With regard to regulation of AI, it is a major question who can regulate this process. Associated are questions about risk assessment and public opinion as well as digital cooperation. Economic globalization and the promotion of industry 4.0 raise questions about the future of work and civic work, the urban-rural divide, the role of governments in promoting AI and democratic access to digital infrastructure. The associated social change concerns the development of the knowledge society and the role of education and poses the question of the digital divide and educational inequalities – in contrast to modernity, where the class question played the most important role. In addition, value change and pluralization raise questions about personal identity or collective consciousness of AI. Finally, continuous medical progress raises questions about care for the elderly or the distribution of life and work time, as well as AI's role in coping with the problems of an ageing population.