

## ABSTRACTS

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### **From Progress to Contingencies. On Changing Theories of Social and Cultural Evolution.**

In the last third of the 20th century, the researches of sociology, cultural anthropology, and other social sciences abandoned the theory of historical progress. As a result of this, the progressivity that embraced the concept of the socio-cultural evolution has changed radically. As a consequence, the concept of the social modernization and the historical view of the social sciences have faded. As a matter of fact, the character of this change is even more complicated, because scientifically researches, technical developments and economical growth can still be characterized by the concept of progress.

*Balázs Kovács–Károly Takács*

### **Simulation in Social Sciences**

Empirical studies in the social sciences often investigate the effects of specific factors and neglect the underlying explanatory mechanisms that lead from the factor to the effect. Considering the explanatory variables they rarely scrutinize individual action and its relation to macro-phenomena. On the other hand, a common flaw of the theoretical social sciences is that they have an oversimplified view about individual actors, they treat society as a homogenous group of individuals, and they overlook the embeddedness and complexity of (social) action. Computer simulation may be a useful tool to eliminate these shortcomings and to bridge the gap between empirical and theoretical social sciences. This study, on these grounds, stands for the usefulness of simulation-methodology in social sciences, by discussing its abilities and constraints.

*Beáta Nagy*

### **Inclusion or Exclusion: Gender and Generation Gap in Information Society**

The article seeks to understand the effect of two decisive factors, gender and generation, on the active use of the tools of information society. We assume that both women and older generations are less interested in using the information technology, that is they use them less often and besides their attitude to the new technology is more conservative. Two dataset have been analyzed in order to clarify the generational and gender effect; the TARKI survey has covered the whole Hungarian situation, while the

research activity carried out in the Kaposvár county have referred to regional level, but offered the opportunity to gain deeper explanations.

The diffusion has effected the generations differently, but it has not been valid for women. The latter group has used information technology in a more instrumental way. The most influential variable has been the educational level and the active attachment to the labour market. Thus we can add one more item to the latent functions of employment, elaborated by Marie Jahoda; employment (and educational institutions) offer people the chance to be included into information society. However, after analyzing the attitudes connected to the use of information society, we could observe a rather considerable gap between genders and generations.