

Summary

Contemporary societies are undergoing major transitions, which brings about a number of changes including a qualitative change in the shape of our institutions. The current civilizational constellations that are emerging in the midst of the fall of bi-polar world reflect the surge in the influence of new global actors (especially China, India, Russia and Brazil) engaged in a struggle with each other in the multi-polar global arena. This new configuration creates the need for new theoretical approaches and updated concepts – a need that this publication longs to answer, if not fulfil. We deliberately avoid the notion of modernity at this point, since it is precisely the concept of modernity that finds itself under significant pressure under these conditions. The new social reality (the contemporary history) forces upon us a revision of the sociological understanding of modernity and modernization. Rethinking the notion of modernization is the main topic of this book; it aids to introduce non-mainstream approaches towards modernity. One of the ways is the paradigm of *multiple modernities* developed, among other authors, by Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, Jóhann P. Árnason and Tu Weiming.

Our selection of texts aids to introduce contemporary theoretical thinking of modernity in both singular and plural from the western and European perspective and in contrast with Asian perspectives that propose a different interpretation of modernity and frames of thinking. We present selected contributions focused on current interpretation of the authors and regions connected to the *non-Western* perspective primarily from China, India and, via Turkey, parts of the Islamic world. Attempting to broaden the range of perspectives – although we can hardly encompass all the Euro-Asian

narratives of modernity – we also speak of Japan and Russia as specific Euro-Asian modernities. We suppose other modernities could be added in further processes of revision and rethinking.

The publication consists of three parts. It opens with the study by Jóhann P. Árnason, which works as a conceptual introduction to the sociology of modernities, but also attempts as a reconstruction of historical-sociological thinking on modernity. The following section deals with key moments of modernization in the proposed direction, it aims to undermine the universalistic crust of the Eurocentric notions of a single mode of modernity. The authors are Shmuel N. Eisenstadta, Jóhann P. Árnason, Göran Therborn and Gerard Delanty. The next section consists of several perspectives from Asia, with texts from Daniel A. Bell on the shift in the political discourse in China, Sudipta Kaviraj on the relationship between modernity and politics in India and a chapter of Ibrahim Kaya's book on the Turkish experience of modernisation.

Jóhann P. Árnason offers a concise account of modernities and modernity viewed as a civilization. He elaborates on Jan Patočka's notion of supercivilization while remaining loyal to the understanding of modernity that recognizes the paradoxical charge of the term: it operates with an image of multiple modernities (civilizations in plural) that can be distinguished in relation to individual civilizational areas, and also with the moment of modernity as a super-civilizational charge that connects and, in a way, precedes particular civilizational regions (civilization, singular). Such an interpretative framework is obviously beneficial: it gives us room to find connections between ostensibly different civilizations and cultures, and to seek shared social patterns and imagination. He also uncovers the origins of terminologies and theories of modernization that found

its footing in Eisenstadt's thinking and comparative research.

The first text in the first section is an article by Shmuel N. Eisenstadt. Written in 2000, it finds the author constructing a new, alternative understanding of modernization which is critical of the "classical" theories typical of the 1950s and 1960s. It uses the term multiplicity that would encompass different historical and socio-cultural influences that form modernity in the non-Western societies. His understanding is based on Max Weber's notion of power (authority). Individuals are empowered to challenge the *status quo* and to form a wider concept of society. Analysing various modes of modernity, Eisenstadt recalls differences between first modernizing societies in Europe and America, very different examples being Soviet Communism and German National Socialism. Following globalization, individual features of modernities begin to unravel. Some of its institutions and issues are adopted by non-Western contexts, other find themselves under fierce criticism as a threat for the existing collective identities. This creates a space for bringing new motives and formations, fostering the quality of multiplicity within modernities. Eisenstadt's position could therefore be summarized as follows: modernity is a reiterating process of appropriation and re-interpretation of the idea of modernity. With new strands constantly emerging, modernity finds itself constantly "tested".

Árnason's second text in the publication (and second in the section in question) deals with conflicting interpretations of civilizational divergences, disputing certain authors on the issue of the Western understanding of modernity and the conditions tied to the dominance of the West over the "rest" of the world. Eisenstadt's research project is based on historical sociology. The origin of modernity should be sought in the historical

trajectories of the large civilizations of the world. The large European civilizations evolved into a new civilizational formation with features of a new civilization. Modernity was formed in new, dynamic revolutionary processes connected to the contradictions and antinomies of the 19th and 20th Century and became a global phenomenon, but not an universalistic pattern for realizing different roads and trajectories of development. Árnason complicates the idea of homogenous and hegemonic character of modernity. He believes globalization encompasses different modernities, the common notion of modernity being only one of them.

Interpreting global transformations and interactions between civilizations and cultures, we can build a basis for critical articulation of complex issues and problems. Göran Therborn proposes the notion of entangled modernities. He identifies modernity rather as a temporal orientation than a set of institutions with a provincial (usually Eurocentric or West-oriented) a priori judgement. This lends a special role to postmodernity as well. This notion contains several, often conflicting narratives that point to various social forces of modernity and a antimodernity and various cultural contextualization of the opposition of the past and the future. These variants are also *entangled* in many ways. Considering the influence of the various temporal and spatial curves on avant-garde, modernist art, we reach an analytical framework that allows us to understand and explain entangled modernities. Therborn views modernity as a culture, an epoch, rather global than universal; and society as an entity with a specific temporal orientation.

Gerard Delanty adds the notion of civilizational analysis. He identifies the main forms of current civilizational analysis: the discourse of civilizational rule, cultural hybridity, clash of civilizations and civilizational intersections. He proceeds to articulate a cosmopolitan

notion of civilizational contacts and its application on the self-understanding of Europe. Expanding mainly on Eisenstadt and Árnason, he stresses the hermeneutic implications of Árnason's civilizational analysis, understanding civilizations as inherently plural and located in a plurality of other civilizations, and based on interpretative systems that can be used for various purposes. Modernity turns out to be an example of internal interpretative conflict, absorbing characteristics of the civilizations it absorbed. He also turns to critical hermeneutics of Jürgen Habermas and his work on the universality of communicative reason. The following discussion of these inherently cosmopolitan notions expands beyond the notion of reason, which is by definition European, and considers cosmopolitanism (plural). Modernity finds translation to be the dominant cultural form, understanding it can never truly bridge the differences between languages. Delanty finds Europe to be a special case of civilizational constellation or continuous cultural intersection of the Western Judeo-Christian, the Russia-dominated Slavic and the Turkish-Islamic civilizational constellations. It can hardly be reduced to only one component.

Daniel Bell is first in the second part of the book, which seeks to apply the more general theoretical background of the preceding texts. Bell shows that the political future of China is more open than it seems. The ruling Communist party claims the current shape of the system is merely the first on a road to Socialism. Bell compares the current state of affairs – primarily of the economy – with Marxist theory, which is used by the party to legitimize its power and, paradoxically, to explain its capitalist traits as necessary and temporary. He also mentions the recollections of the Chinese New Left and, primarily, the revival and re-interpretation of Confucianism by the ruling class (as Marxism of sorts,

the notion of Confucianism without feudal and reactionary traits, or simply as the traditional system of values with a touch of governing ideology). The influence of Confucianism can, however, be ambiguous, working as a rationalization for both stability and progressive change. Closing the article, Bell focuses on the relationship between Confucianism and liberal democracy.

Sudipta Kaviraj shows that conventional theoretical models of the structure of modernity and its proliferation around the globe are insufficient. In many colonized states – in this case India –, a number of practices were adopted from the colonizing power, but the institutions resulting from them were hardly identical. In order to understand the specific nationalism in the colonies, we need to comprehend the experience of coercion, adaptation, appropriation and resistance to the colonial pressures and to overcome traditional theories of modernization and the original critique of Orientalism. Kaviraj seeks to analyse the role of the political in Indian modernity and the forming of the society under the influence of specific nationalism and democracy, forming a critical and pluralist notion of modernization in the process.

The relationship between modernity and Islam is the topic of Ibrahim Kaya, who focuses on Turkey and its specific modernization project, Kemalism, an interesting point in the debate on the possibility of reconciliation of modernity and Islam. Turkey, an important mediator between Europe and the Islamic world, is often seen as a good example and a role model of modernization for the Islamic world (Iran before the revolution, for instance); an example of modern, “secular” and Muslim society. This unique situation calls for a more open interpretation of modernity and Islam. Kaya believes such interpretations are still lacking and we often view as irreconcilable, or contrary utterly reconci-

lable with the “Western (westernized) modernity”. That is where we find a space for understanding Islam and modernity in a culturally specific context that could display varieties in Islam and modernities alike.

This publication, among other things, aims to contribute to mutual understanding and acknowledgement of different reconcilable macro-units that interact in the global arena, but also to the understanding of our own identity. The Western civilization is not exclusively, homogeneously European or Western in the democratic sense, as it had been for much of the 20th Century, and it became globalized. Europe belongs to the West, but recent developments show the great potential in building deeper relations between Europe and Asia and the possible follow-up on the historical traditions of these relations. We see such moments in the concept of Eurasia, which poses a challenge to ethnocentric notions of the world and a chance for further research. It follows on the research of the constellations of civilizational regions, convergence and divergence, civilizational unity and multiplicity of modernities regarding specific historical trajectories and cultural contexts.

This book has an interdisciplinary character and expands on the programmatic qualities of certain publications of the Filosofia publishing house. Such publications had an intercultural character and were mostly due to the fellows at the Centre for Global Studies. We should understand that European development is not determined exclusively by internal factors, but also by relations with global partners and actors on the world stage. The contemporary insecurity, apparent in the understanding of the role of Europe and European identity, is rather an important expression of the transformation brought about by the shift in civilizational constellation, than a sign of crisis in the reductive economist paradigms.