

Modernization, Philosophy and Authority in Russian Empire/Soviet Union/Post-Soviet Countries

Projektbericht

Modernity is a common name for a situation in which human societies turned out to be under the impact of on-going cultural rationalization. The impact of reason on cultures led to disintegration of traditional world-views where truth, good and beauty were the same. The history of human societies under the dominance of rational structures is thus called modernization. The theories of modernization developed in the 20th century have viewed modernization as mutually reinforcing processes of change in spheres of values, human identities, politics, economy and culture at large.

In human history, modernization is a long-durée process of the melting crystalized tradition or dissociation of traditional world-view was an extremely long process. Reinhardt Koselleck, Jürgen Habermas and many later historians studied how Western rationalism commenced with almost simultaneous events of finding the New World, destruction of Western religious unity and scientific revolution. These simultaneously destructive (for traditional forms of life in Europe and Americas) and creative (for new – modern – forms of life) processes have started a long process of preparatory modernization that only in the 19th century became a dominant discourse in most of Europe and North America, and in 20th cen-

tury became a global reality. In the process of modernization the principles, practices, models and patterns of Western modernity were stimulating the same rationalization processes in other parts of the world. The vision of the whole of humanity was fuelling modernization, but nonetheless the diffusion of traditional world-views and creation of structural transformation of modernity as institutionalization of the public and private spheres took place in a different way, with its own speed and in specific correlation with other regional modernities.

Today global modernity is depicted by the World Values Survey as a map with geographically and culturally diverse provinces that have different level of impact of rational non-secular and individualist self-expression values on individual and collective lives. This survey shows that – in pursuit of emancipation and disseminating interest in democracy – we still have different local responses to modernity's values and practices. They also show how modern values make different impact upon societies at different stages of their modernization.

Modern rationality has profoundly changed the world we live in. However, while modernity has common universal ends and a common geohistorical beginning in Western Europe,

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Kurzvita

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My research is dedicated to processes of modernization and evolution of political cultures in imperial Russia/Soviet Union/Post-Soviet Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

Taking into account a multitude of modernization processes in which political reason manifests itself, I concentrate on analysis of how mutual impacts of philosophy and politics promote modernity projects in the period of 1801 – 2014 in the lands of Western Eurasia. My main hypothesis is that analysis of interrelationships between authorities and philosophy/social sciences & humanities during the Eastern European modernization can identify the main factors defining the role, limits and functions of public rationality in political life of contemporary Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. De-modernizing antidemocratic

tendencies in political life of Eastern European countries are based on legitimacy structured by dominance of irrational values and distrust to political reason.

As a result of my studies, I come up with the theory of de-modernization as culture-bound effect of political modernization in post-Soviet regimes. Post-Soviet de-modernization takes place in societies where Soviet industrial society was already ruined, but cultural, economic and political institutions of the post-information era did not evolve to a necessary level to define the social structure. Instead, one can witness a reverse development process: some Soviet and pre-Soviet forms of collective life are being restored – and even take dominant positions.

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yet it has different modernization patterns vis-à-vis human historically-lasting collectives. Understanding of cultural complexity of modernity has let Shmuel Eisenstadt coined the definition of specific relations between Western and other modernities:

"Western patterns of modernity are not the only, 'authentic' modernities, though they enjoy historical precedence."

Today's world represents many emerging, developing and declining local projects of modernity. It includes

- » 1) Western European cultures undergoing new understanding of religious, scholarly, political, and economic life in 16th century,
- » 2) the European absolutism - 16-18th centuries,
- » 3) great revolutions in the second half of the 18th ct.,
- » 4) global empires intervening into traditional societies of the entire world in the 19-20th centuries,
- » 5) the totalitarian modernities of USSR, China and far Eastern Marxist projects,
- » 6) Latin-American modernities in the 20th century,
- » 7) the new global cleavage of Northern and Southern modernities of 20th - early 21st centuries.

These local differences took place in different time-spans and were produced by two major factors:

- » the modern projects that were developing in the worlds created by different cultures and/or civilizations; this situation predisposed different style, speed and depth of impact of modernization on forms of human lives;
- » competition of the modern projects was and is making a profound impact on the speed and results of transition in different contemporary societies.
- » The starting points of modernization processes took place in different times in dif-

ferent cultures/civilizations. Both factors of modernizations created lasting institutions and practices. These institutions and practices pre-describe the correlation of the public and private spheres, strengthen the instrumental reason and impact of the System, damage the Life-World during the industrial period of modernization etc. Basically, these institutions and practices were/are the limiting factors for humanity to become one undivided realm of modernity that on the table of 'Cultural map of the world' would be just one cohesive point.

If there is any lesson learned from the history of transitions, it should be formulated this way: structural similarity does not necessarily mean commonality of development. This dissimilarity of complex modernity is connected not only with the specificities of those traditions from which these modern projects started. Each modernizing society has gone through modernity with its own losses and gains, with its own specific features of the periods common for most modern societies. Today's complex modernity is a result of both cultural diversity of traditions and transitional diversity of modernities.

The framework of global modernization describes the development of post-traditional societies as a permanent change. The Touraine's model of historical development of modernizing envisages that rationality is a permanent factor in changes of society. Accordingly, the history of complex modernity has the following stages:

- » periods of external principles of legitimacy: from confessional identities to political (imperial absolutism, nationalism), and socio-economic (socialism and capitalism),
- » period of internal principle of legitimacy: from industrial modernity to information society.

Whenever modernizing society started its departure from its traditional state, it is expected that it goes through periods of rationalized rule, rationalized economic behavior, and network society.

However the modernizing societies do not necessarily evolve through their own specific forms of absolutism, nationalism, industrialism and/or post-industrialism. In some cases, transition is reversible: a society moves from a later period of its modernity to a preceding one. In my opinion, this de-modernization begins in those situations when the modern institutions destroy the life-world's resources to such a level when the System needs to abuse even more the life-assuring force of traditional forms of life; this way, the System abuses institutions like church, kinship or local community by re-inventing them as pervert forms of 'archaic', which uses the 'traditional names' for hybrid forms of organizations promoting instrumental rationality, loneliness of individual and dominance of the mass-politics.

In the Eastern Europe/Western Eurasia departure with tradition and first attempts of modern political projects are connected to the 'absolutist projects' of Peter the Great (rules 1692-1724) and Catherine the Great (rules 1764-1796). But the both attempts have actually created cultural situations of co-existence between politically modernized imperial centers and traditional societies in imperial provinces.

This cultural situation of modernity-tradition coexistence was articulated in the governance structures, practices of keeping distance to the imperial center, and ideological 'normalization' of this duplicity in intellectual works by Thoephan Prokopovych (), Hrihoryi Skovoroda (), Mikhaila Lomonosov () and others. Objectifying gaze of their ideas has made the Orthodox Christian identity to become a legitimizing idea of an empire of the Orthodox Christians with its mission of standing to

the Catholic and Protestant West and Moslem East. It has given a start to the System's evolution in the Eastern Europe and Western Eurasia.

Merger of confessional identity with political structures have long been strong idea for development of Russian Empire in the 18th century. But on the break of 18th and 19th centuries, the imperial center has become too strong. Its modernization plans of homogenization of imperial space started ruining the Life-Worlds of traditional societies. A reaction to imperial System, local cultures produced – if not entirely anti-colonial identities, then – alternative identities vis-à-vis the imperial one. Among them: sectarian and schismatic Russian identities, Ukrainian identity as articulated in 'Istoria Rusiv', romantic visions of Ukraine and Belarus etc. In 19th century the Russian empire has had a growing conflict between modernizing socio-political and economic processes on one side, and archaic reaction from provinces.

The imperial modernization projects had the following results:

- » rule of Alexander I (): homogenous imperial systems of education;
- » rule of Nicolas I (): united system of governance, economy, education and military;
- » rule of Alexander II (): enhanced system of governance and self-governance with minimal respect to local differences (Poland, Finland, Southern Caucasus), reformed system of education;
- » in late XIX-early XX centuries Russia has got several developed industrial regions, Parliament and academic culture.

Existing order was growing fragile. This conflict has been both articulated and supported by growing debates between 'Westerners', 'Populists', and 'Slavophiles', as well as later social-democrats and nationalists. The three have simultaneously represented philosophical, political and ideological groups that pro-

posed different aims and tools for Empire's development.

After disasters of WWI (1914–1918) and Civil War/Independence Wars (1917–1924), a new modernity projects has got dominance over territories from Minsk to Vladivostok. The Soviet modernization represents an unprecedented colonization – in terms of length and depth – into Life-Worlds of Belarusians, Russians, Ukrainians and other societies. Soviet philosophy – being at the core of Marxist ideological machine – has long been under control of Communist Party. The therapeutic mission of philosophy – with rare exception (Florenskyi, A.Losev, A.Zinovyev, V.Lisovyi, M. Mamardashvili) – was close to minimum. On the contrast, academic philosophers were reproducing those thought-limiting practices that constituted the canon of Soviet Marxism. With the collapse of Soviet Union, there opened opportunities for constructions of new nations and political systems. This opportunity has required ideological support for re-unification populations living in post-totalitarian neo-capitalist society. But with the Soviet legacy in philosophical departments, post-soviet philosophy – be it in Ukraine, Belarus or Russia- have mainly re-used either Western ideas or pre-revolutionary theories. From the palette of ideas covering from 19-century nationalism to post-modern decadence and neo-liberalism, post-Soviet political systems has accepted mostly irrational and archaic ideas for nation-building. Once again church, blood and ground gat a dominant position in the de-modernizing political development.

De-modernization creates hybrid societies with mutual colonization of the Life-World and the System. Even though these deliberations sound too metaphysical, the pragmatic ratio behind it – in my opinion – is that theory of de-modernization may help understand challenges for human life in societies like the Ukrainian, Chinese, Russian or Brazilian. Un-

like optimistic modernization theories, the concept of the austerity of hope may give us a better understanding of the need and opportunity of current human believing in progress of freedom and having his/her personal experience of dependency and subjugation in societies that keep evolve from one form of unfreedom into another. The gap between expected freedoms and recurring servitude gives birth to unfruitful and humiliating desperation. Today, in spite of several centuries of global emancipation, Rousseau's paradox – "L'homme est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers" – is as true as in times of the Enlightenment.

United by the totalitarian Soviet Union with its specific industrial modernity project, contemporary post-Soviet Ukrainians, Russians, Kazakhs and Estonians live in societies that in a very short historic time have become different societies with different human development results. Yet they also share de-modernizing effect.

Post-Soviet de-modernization takes place in societies where Soviet industrial society was already ruined, but cultural, economic and political institutions of the globalizing information era did not evolve to a necessary level to define the social structure. Instead, one can witness a reverse development process: some Soviet and pre-Soviet forms of collective life are being restored.

Political creativity of the Bolsheviks with their variety of cultural, social and economic revolutionary projects in 1920s was summed up and used by the totalitarian project of Stalin in the early 1930s. This lasting totalitarian project was based on the logic of industrial society. In spite of the Marxist metaphysics, the way Soviet society was structured resembles the radically industrial mind. Industrial logic unified the cultural rhizome of peoples living between Lviv and Vladivostok by same forms of organization of collective life in cities and

rural areas. The two global wars, genocides, Soviet industrialization and collectivization, political purges have profoundly changed the human, collective and biological strata of the Life-World on these territories between 1922 and 1991. The public sphere was immensely oversized in Soviet society; thus family, religion and business were either subordinated to public institutions, or radically marginalized. Structural transformation of the Soviet public sphere publicity made it to be a System unlimited, while the private sphere was diminished to a minimum. Soviet society was a radical case of industrial modernity with extreme forms of Life-World colonization.

In the de-modernization context, post-Soviet societies were undergoing just another problematic structural transformation of the public sphere. The Soviet institutions have survived collapse of the USSR and in their hybrid forms were colonizing both the public and the private spheres, the System and the Life-World. This on-going mutual colonization

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has its own huge risks for post-Soviet humans. If in the Soviet context those remnants of Life-World were providing the second half of Orwell's doublethink and doublespeak: in addition to ideological 'truth' there always was the moral stance. Life in the situation of doublespeak was painful because it was ruining the individual's integrity: one knew right, but spoke (and acted) in the opposite way.

In the de-modernizing context, a human loses the reasons for pain. Once religious feelings or the sense of kinship are used for political purposes or for administrative subjugation, there is a huge risk that meanings and values represented by those Life-World guardians (church, family, community) become as manipulative, as ideology itself. The doublethink is in place, but now both thoughts are misleading and alienating. The doublespeak remains needed, but the words and the reference are equally deceiving. There is no certainty in what's right and genuine in this new double-situation.

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