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Introduction: Europe As Modernity

Atsuko Ichijo

The current volume proposes a fresh angle to the study of European identities, ‘Europe as modernity’ drawing from works carried out for a collaborative research project funded by the European Commission.¹ The project, ‘Identities and Modernities in Europe (IME)’ investigates a wide range of definitions about ‘us, the Europeans’ in Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Turkey and the United Kingdom in order to answer the question: ‘What is it to be a European now?’ The consortium set out to look into this question with an assumption that ‘Europe’ (as shorthand for a collection of related concepts such as the idea of Europe, various processes of Europeanisation and European identity), national identity and modernisation are intricately enmeshed. As research progressed, it has emerged that ‘Europe as modernity’ would be an angle through which the entanglement of ‘Europe’, nations and modernity could be meaningfully investigated. The volume thus presents the outcomes of our collective endeavour, a collective reflection on the entanglement of ‘Europe’, nations and modernity – so far. This is not a definitive and final account of European identities; in fact there will never be a definitive account in social sciences for the social world is continuously evolving, manifesting itself in a number of, sometimes contradictory, ways. What is presented here therefore is an interim report, but this is an interim report that introduces a fresh angle to the study of Europeanisation and a critical assessment of this approach. As such, the volume promises to encourage further investigation into the issues of European identities.

‘Europe’, nations and modernity

By adopting the ‘Europe as modernity’ angle, this volume proposes to adopt a tripartite framework consisting of ‘Europe, nations and

modernity' in studying European identities. This is an attempt to synthesise different strands of scholarly works carried out so far in relation to European identities, nationalism and their relationship to modernity.

On the one hand, European identities are conventionally studied and discussed in contrast to national identity. Experiences of nation- and state- building of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are typically used as a benchmark to define and measure European identities (Bruter 2005; Hermann, Risse and Brewer 2004; Duchesne and Frogner 2008; Risse 2010). It is widely acknowledged that European identities come with political and normative baggage because of their close association with the project of European integration, a project some would characterise as an attempt to transcend the constraints imposed by the nation-state structure to build a community on the basis of more enlightened values (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009; Demossier 2007; Duchesne 2008; Fligstein 2008). While Europe is an old idea arguably dating back to ancient times, the contemporary discussion of 'Europe' and European identities invariably sets out nations and national identity as the 'other'.

Turning our attention to the study of nationalism, one of the contentious issues is the relationship between nations and nationalism on the one hand and modernity on the other (Ichijo and Uzelac 2005; Smith 1998; Özkırımlı 2010). Some scholars hold that nations and nationalism are intrinsic to modernity, an answer to a wide range of needs that arise from processes of modernisation. The debates on the antiquity of nations appear to have reached stalemate with two major, diametrically opposed views – primordialism and modernism – firmly entrenched in their positions. On the point of the modernity of nationalism, however, it seems there is a consensus. According to Ernest Gellner, nationalism is a functional necessity in facilitating industrialisation and managing the social change that comes with it (Gellner 2006). Benedict Anderson has argued that nationalism is a replacement of the religious order which became possible because of the emergence and consolidation of large scale, coherent communicative spaces, supported by the spread of print capitalism (Anderson 2006). Other theories align nationalism with the rise of the modern state in the form of the nation-state. Anthony Smith has linked the emergence of nationalism to the bureaucratisation of the state which modernity necessitated (Smith 1971). Eric Hobsbawm suggests that nationalism is one of the techniques of mass mobilisation which became essential with democratisation (Hobsbawm 1992). In a similar light, Michael Mann has linked the development of nationalism to democratisation in the form of a struggle for representation (Mann

1993). John Breuilly sees nationalism as something that facilitates integration of society and the state (Breuilly 1993). The aspects of modernity each theorist looks to are not identical and the relationship between nations and nationalism is still contentious, but at least there is a something akin to a consensus on the modern nature of nationalism.

The 'Europe as modernity' angle brings together these two observations: that 'Europe' and European identities are studied in reference to nations and national identity and that nationalism – therefore nations and national identity, too – is theorised in connection to modernity. If 'Europe' and European identities are made sense of in contrast to nations and national identity, and if nationalism, nations and national identity are comprehended in reference to modernity, it makes sense to use the tripartite framework of 'Europe', nations and modernity in order to obtain a more comprehensive view. Moreover, the intention behind this new framework is well supported by the attempts made by the theory of multiple modernities.

The theory of multiple modernities developed from civilisational analysis has been employed by scholars of comparative sociology and historical sociology in their attempt to understand the patterns of development of modernity – as well as the relationship between the West and the East.²

According to the theory of multiple modernities, modernity first emerged out of revolutions in the Christian-European civilisation, revolutions which were based on the belief in human agency's ability to bridge the gap between transcendental and mundane orders. Modernity, which emerged in Western and Central Europe, then spread elsewhere in the world. Because of the centrality of human agency in interpreting the surrounding environment, modernity could crystallise in numerous forms. So there are a number of forms of modernity; therefore it is necessary to explore *modernities* in the plural, not the singular (Eisenstadt 2000, 2001, 2005a, 2005b; Delanty 2006a; Arnason 2006).

The theory maintains that modernity should not be understood as a linear and homogenising process as represented by conventional theories such as secularisation or rationalisation, but as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of political and cultural programmes (Eisenstadt 2000, 2001, 2005a; Delanty 2006a; Arnason 2006). The theory agrees that what is distinctive to modernity is the centrality of human agency and that thus modernity is characterised by the outcomes of human reflexive nature, expressed most explicitly in perpetual self-correction. It argues that there are a number of ways of becoming and being modern – being a self-reflexive agent.

As a result, it is now possible to conceptualise modernity not as the product of a homogenising, teleological process but as a social and psychological setting that reflects the particularities of the place. Shmuel Eisenstadt has pointed out that 'some distinct shifts in the conception of human agency' marks out modernity, and elaborated this insight with different aspects, such as 'intensive reflexivity' and 'an emphasis on the autonomy of man' (Eisenstadt 2000, 2001). The idea that the significance of human agency ultimately defines modernity is shared by others. Johann Arnason has described modernity as an 'unprecedented affirmation of human autonomy' (Arnason 2006: 233), while Gerard Delanty has gone so far as to suggest that modernity is 'a particular kind of time-consciousness' (Delanty 2006b: 275).

The theory of multiple modernities also allows us to introduce a more agency-driven perspective on the linkage between modernity and nationalism, in contrast to many of the established theoretical approaches identified above, which are mainly structure-oriented. There are some attempts to locate nationalism at the centre of modernity. Some would look at nationalism as a quintessential expression of self-reflexivity in modernity (Eisenstadt 2000; Arnason 1990). Some would focus on the ideological power of identity in modernity, which divides along 'taken-for-granted' ethnic and national lines and highlights the strength of the belief system called nationalism (Malesevich 2006). It has also been argued that nationalism is in essence a modern cognitive framework (Greenfeld 2006). These insights, focusing on the agency-centred nature of nationalism, suggest that nationalism is intrinsically bound with modernity and characterised by enhanced self-reflexivity.

Recalling the coupling of 'Europe' with nations and nationalism discussed earlier, it is now clear that the 'Europe as modernity' framework proposed here is an effective means of consolidating our understanding of European identities. European identities can now be investigated in the wider context of modernity, no longer confined to an 'either/or' relationship with national identities or in a normative framework.

Plan of the book

The volume collects nine case studies which outline different ways in which 'Europe' has been reflexively made sense of, mainly by intellectuals and political elites, in relation to their encounter with modernity. It sheds light on the ways in which these different meanings attached to 'Europe' have influenced an articulation of national identity and

European identity in each case. It therefore maps different constellations of 'Europe, nations and modernity' in the selected cases.

All the nine case studies point to some ambivalence about 'Europe' found in our investigation; in no case has there been an unquestioned, total identification with 'Europe'. 'Europe' has always been a problematic issue. What distinguishes the nine cases is each country's specific path to modernity, nation- and state-formation and geo-politics – as well as the degree to which this ambiguity has mattered. In some cases, the question of Europe has triggered an intense level of self-reflection; in others, the question has not been self-reflective but dealt with in an instrumental manner. The nine cases therefore form a rather uneven spectrum and the volume is organised to represent that spectrum.

Part I of the volume presents three cases – Turkey, France and Germany – which can be described as proto-types or, in a more sociological sense, ideal types in the constellation of Europe, nations and modernity. In the Turkish case, one finds a clear equation of 'Europe' and modernity wherein 'Europe' is seen as something clearly novel and alien. Modernity is therefore something to be learned and absorbed. In other words, the Turkish case represents a typical outsider's experience, some aspects of which are shared by other cases, covered in Part II. The French and German cases represent two opposite orientations regarding 'Europe' and modernity from 'within'. In the case of France, self-reflection as a modern agent is accompanied by a strong national orientation, while in the German case it is strongly trans-nationally oriented. These three cases mark the extremities of the spectrum the volume presents.

Part I opens with the case of Turkey, a country that is often described as being at the bridge between Europe and Asia. In this chapter, Ayhan Kaya and Ayşe Tecmen outline Turkey's path to modernity, which they hold as radically different from that of other European countries. They nonetheless place the issue of 'Europe' in one of the major ruptures of modern Turkey, that is the establishment of the Kamalist regime, which was built on 'the formation of binary oppositions sustaining each other'. They argue that it 'is the radicalization of dualities between different life-worlds that marks a distinctive feature of the Turkish experience of modernity', thus the question of 'Europe' has encouraged a great degree of self-scrutiny by the Turkish elite. This has led to a series of self-correcting cultural programmes, different from Western European cases.

Géraldine Bozec and Sophie Duchesne in their discussion of the French case use the 'Europe as modernity' angle to highlight a very

strong national orientation in being a self-reflexive agent. They point out that intellectuals rarely referred to modernity during the last century in their discussion of identity, but that a range of issues, positions and divisions have been constrained and reduced to a single choice between being 'pro-' and 'anti-' Europe in the post-war era. This has come about, according to Bozec and Duchesne, because governing elites are using European integration as a means of preserving French power in the world. Bozec and Duchesne argue, from the 'Europe as modernity' perspective, that the post-war French discourse of modernity has missed the chance to open up to the evolving discourses on Europeanisation.

In the German chapter, Thea D. Boldt investigates the main identity semantics produced by different social agents from the 'Europe as modernity' angle. The chapter demonstrates that discussions on German identity – a quintessentially self-reflective activity – are often conducted with explicit reference to 'Europe', and that as a result, German national identity is increasingly articulated as German European identity, while European identity is acquiring a 'national' flavour. Self-reflexivity in German public discourse is therefore transnational-oriented, in a clear contrast to the French case. Boldt argues 'the particular definitions of what it means to be European cannot be understood in one common or diversified history of the European idea but can only be comprehended in the context of the various types of discourse in which they emerge.' There are multiple ways of being European, as there are of being modern.

Part II brings together six case studies which can be located in the space outlined by the Turkish, French and German cases. Elements of the Turkish proto-type can be clearly found in the Bulgarian and Greek cases, as well as the Croatian and Hungarian cases in the form of some uncertainty about being European. The Croatian and Hungarian cases also share the French national orientation, which is complimented by some striving for a transnational orientation, as found in the German case. The Finnish and British cases share the national orientation found in the French case while the level of self-reflexivity as Europeans appears to be low.

The case of Bulgaria is analysed by Maya Kosseva, Antonina Zhelyazkova and Marko Hajdinjak. By providing an overview of the history of the Bulgaric-European relationship and the Bulgarian paths to modernity, they point out that twenty years after the fall of Communism and in the fourth year of EU membership, Bulgarians are still uncertain about the Europeaness of their national identity and the level of their modernity.

'Europe' has mostly been an object of aspiration for Bulgarian elites, to bring the Bulgarian nation and state to the modern world, but a few historical ruptures have sometimes sharpened the dichotomy between 'us, the Bulgarians' and 'them, the Europeans', an experience that bears similarity to the Turkish case. Kosseva, Zhelyazkova and Hajdinjak also point out that the Europeanisation process is further complicated by the fact that there are several Bulgarias, all with a different identity and a very different level of modernity, echoing Boldt's point about the inherent plurality of the modern world.

This contradiction and ambivalence features strongly in the Greek case study, by Ruby Gropas and Anna Triandafyllidou. The authors contend that while 'modernity is considered as being inherent to the core of Greek identity, it is at the same time in deep conflict and confrontation with the second core pillar of Greek identity, namely its religious particularism and strong traditions of the Eastern Orthodox Church.' They proceed to argue that the 'tension between modernity and tradition transcends modern Greek history, its political realm and the evolution of its relationship with the rest of Europe', casting the 'Europe as modernity' perspective as a deeply existential one. In this case study, Gropas and Triandafyllidou have found the theory of multiple modernities insightful in their efforts to comprehend the tripartite relationship between 'Europe', nations and modernity.

In the analysis of the Croatian case, Martina Topić focuses on the instrumental aspect of the European question. While discourse about modernity and nationality in Croatia have always been connected to the discourse of Europeanisation, the European aspect, according to Topić, is prone to manipulation by political actors in their efforts to define Croatian distinctiveness. The chapter suggests that the degree of instrumentalisation of discourse on Europeanisation has been stronger in the Croatian case than other cases, and investigates why that is the case.

András Kovács, Anikó Horváth and Zsuzsanna Vidra provide an analysis of the Hungarian situation and suggest that the 'Europe as modernity' framework captures well the nature of debates on Europe and modernity in Hungary – for they are often one and the same. They argue that: "The answers to the question: "In which sense are we, Hungarians, Europeans?" can be considered as competing modernity projects of different actors, triggered by the deviation of Hungarian development from European development.'

Finally, there are two cases in which the level of self-reflection triggered by the European question appears to be lower than other

cases: Finland and the UK. While in both cases the intensity of public debate regarding 'Europe' or 'modernity' appears to be low, the ways in which they are 'indifferent' to 'Europe' are not the same.

Marjo Eskola, Tiina Räisä and Henrik Stenius investigate the Finnish case and point out that 'Europe' has long been incorporated in the discourse of Finnish national identity, so 'Europe' is not an issue that would spark intense self-reflection. Since the Finnish elite have on the whole taken their Europeaness for granted, 'Europe as modernity' does not feature strongly in their collective deliberation on who the Finns are. The authors point out the salience of the language question, the proximity of the state and civil society and the secularised nature of Lutheranism in Finland as features that distinguish Finnish modernity from others.

By contrast, 'Europe' has rarely featured in the British public discourse. Atsuko Ichijo reviews public discourse in the UK and finds that public reflections on both 'Europe' and modernity are conspicuous by their absence. She then questions if Britain is modern in the same sense as other European countries are and identifies the Whig interpretation of history as a major contributing factor in marking out the British case as different. The Whig interpretation of history legitimises the British experience as natural and most advanced, thus preventing intellectuals from engaging with the type of self-scrutiny that is often found in other countries. While there is no denying that the agency of human beings in changing the world order is present in the British case, the type of self-reflexivity shown here has a different pattern from other cases investigated in this volume. The 'Europe as modernity' angle leads Ichijo to ask 'Is Britain modern?'

With the 'Europe as modernity' angle as a tool, the volume approaches the question of European identities in nine cases from a variety of disciplines. What the nine chapters present here is not uniform and they highlight many inter-related but different aspects. This heterogeneity could be a weakness of an interdisciplinary study; it could be a flaw in the robustness of the theory of multiple modernities. However, the 'Europe as modernity' angle adopted in this volume has enabled all chapters to point to the inherent multiplicity of modernity. There is not one European identity but several; there is no one national identity but a number of competing ones. And there is no single way of being modern: there are multiple ways of being a modern, self-reflexive agent with a belief in the human capacity to transform the world order. The world we inhabit is inherently diverse and made up of agents whose self-reflexivity is forever criss-crossing.

Notes

1. 'Identities and modernities in Europe: European and national identity construction programmes and politics, culture, history and religion (IME)', an international collaborative project funded under the European Commission's FP7 scheme (project number: SSH-CT-2009-215949).
2. The discussion of multiple modernities here draws from the report on the theoretical framework prepared collectively by the members of the IME consortium. A copy of the theoretical report can be obtained from <http://fass.kingston.ac.uk/public/ime/>.

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