

**Globalization: Theoretical Perspectives**  
**Professor R. Santhosh**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Science**  
**Indian Institute of Technology Madras**

**Lecture 24**  
**Continuation of Reflexive Modernity: Ulrich Beck-1**

(Refer Slide Time: 00:16)

**The Discontinuity at the Heart of Modernity: The Hypothesis of an Historical Break**

When we contrast first and second modern society like this, it naturally leads to the question of continuity and discontinuity. On the basis of what has been said so far, it should be clear that the distinction between the two cannot be that second modern society is full of breaks and crises and first modern society is not. Radical change and crisis are a normal part of all modernization. Both the political order and the dynamics of 'creative destruction' mean that conflict and the institutional consequences of resolving it are an inherent part of modern society. After each round of creative destruction, after every political landslide, there are winners and losers who press their claims. On top of that, there are the claims of individuals to run their own lives versus the claims of institutionalized authority; the claims of innumerable special interests in conflict against each other; and, finally, the autonomous values of social subsystems against which all of the above must be judged. There is no pre-established harmony in modern society; among all the claims that the economic and political systems imbue with legitimacy.

Our central thesis is that side-effects of modern Western society eventually put its touchstone ideas into question. Both its attitude towards problem-solving and its institutionalized answers seem progressively less suited to meet the challenges at hand. The more the foundations are



Welcome back to the class. As you know, we are in the middle of a very important article, we have been discussing this article since the last class and I think I may have to spend this session as well as the next session in order to complete this argument or this essay, I am spending more time compared to other sections, because this is a very important argument, especially by scholars like Ulrich Beck and others where they are talking about the reflexive modernization and I have mentioned it several times why I consider it has an important intervention is because this is a distinctively different from the postmodernist take on the global changes that have been happening say after 1980s. So, while this looks quite similar to the arguments of postmodernist positions, these arguments are significantly different as well and that you will already have some idea about it and these points will be made further clearer in the subsequent sections.

So, unlike, the postmodernist positions who have completely thrown away the argument of modernity and who very categorically argued that we have entered a post-modernist position, the scholars including Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens and others, they are of the very firm opinion including Sigmund Bauman, one of the very respected social sociologists, is that, what we are seeing today or what is being ascribed as or described as the postmodernist situation is nothing but a radicalized form of modernity, modernity itself has been radicalized and so, you need to understand that particular argument. So, that is a very important point of view that these scholars put forward and, in this essay, as we discussed from in the last class, Ulrich Beck and others, they talk about this very important argument about reflexive modernization, they make a distinction between first modernity and second modernity and how these are qualitatively different.

So, we are continuing with that same discussion and the second point that or the next section that they are talking about, is the discontinuity at the heart of modernity, the hypothesis of an historical break. So, this is again important, because when we talk about modernity, we always conceive of it as a break from something else and usually this something else is often understood as tradition, because we always pose modernity as well as tradition as to as binaries and modernization is seen as a transition away from a tradition to something new that is known as modernity.

And this particular formulation has created quite a lot of issues quite a lot of problems, because modernity assumes a teleological position that there is already something that are pre decided, is waiting for us in the future and the whole society supposed to reach that particular position and modernizing this whole idea of modernity versus traditional also created lot of issues about possibilities about multiple modernities or alternative modernities.

Because we know that by 1980s or 1990s, it became very evident that not all societies or not all countries are going to follow the path of European societies in terms of embracing the values of modernity or the institutional process of achieving modernity. For example, India a country like India has charted out very distinct kind of encounter with modernity. And this has become even more spectacular or even more visible in the recent times, when we see before the last two or three decades that there is a resurgence of religion.

There is a politicized form of religion in the public sphere and so, this is something an inconceivable in the typical formulation of modernization. In the typical formulation of modernization, as envisaged by say scholar like Max Weber, religion must have been receded, as say has happened in the case of some of these Scandinavian countries, but in India and a host of other countries, religion has not receded to the background, rather religion has become more active, it has entered into more and more avenues and vistas, which has not been done so far.

So, religion has come back or religion has become more visible, it has become more active and thereby, at the same time these countries are quite modern, we are the one who are exporting code or software technologies and other things in days definitely modernizing. So, these countries really put forward very difficult kind of models, which are being, understood or which are been made to make sense of by using these terms like multiple modernities and other things.

So, in this section, Beck and other his co-authors are making very important arguments about some of the very fundamental notions associated with historical change that is whether, a transition from tradition to modernity, does it really represent a break or can it be described by a term, what they describe as a discontinuity and discontinuity is a very interesting term.

So, let us see what they are talking about. So, we must contrast the first and second modernity like this, it is naturally leads to the question of continuity and discontinuity especially if you talk about first modernity and then that is giving way to second modernity. On the basis of what has been said so far, it should be clear that the distinction between these two cannot be that the second modernity is full of breaks and crisis and the first modern societies do not.

So, radical changes and crisis are the normal part of all modernization, both a political order and dynamics of creative destruction mean that conflicts and institutional consequences revolving it is an inherent part of modern society.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:51)

https://www.nptel.ac.in/ at Indian Inst. Tech. Madras on March 15, 2019'. Below the slide, there is a small video feed showing a man in a blue shirt sitting at a desk." data-bbox="257 119 735 372"/&gt;

So, our central thesis is that the side effects of modern western society eventually put its touchstone ideas into question. Both its attitude towards problem solving and its institutionalized answers seem progressively less suited to meet the challenges at hand. So, what do they mean by this radicalization of modernity? So, their argument, they send a thesis that the side effects of our modern Western society that is a point that we have been talking about and when you look at other arguments of Ulrich Beck I say, risk society, this argument comes to the fore in a more profound manner.

So, Beck has been arguing consistently, that or even Anthony Giddens has been arguing consistently, that the side effects. So, we create certain institutional mechanisms, we create certain technological innovation, so technology, techno-managerial systems in place or maybe an expert system, or an abstract system, as Gideon says.

But these systems also bring in quite a lot of consequences, some of these consequences we have anticipated, but they also bring in quite a lot of unanticipated, unintended, unwanted consequences and these consequences after some time become a problem in itself and they actually question even the touchstone ideas of modernity, into question. So increasingly, we realize these institutions, through the prisms of these consequences and these consequences become a real matter of urgent engagement in its own right.


And that poses a lot more questions which cannot be really resolved from the background of the basic ideas of the first modernity. Both its attitudes towards problem solving and its institutionalized answers seem progressively less suited to meet the challenges at hand. The more the foundations are undercut, the more thinkers and social actors feel themselves at sea, the more the western project of modernization loses its telos

So, the whole idea that some of the inherent biases or inherent assumptions about modernization theory, that we are supposed to reach a particular place. So, it was seen as a kind of a teleological thing and all this serves to weaken the claim that only West can validly interpret the vicissitudes of modernity. Second modern society begins with an argument over the meaning and worth of modernization as part of a larger struggle to redefine entangled modernity.

So, this is the other term that is entangled modernity, so multiple modernities or alternative modernities. So, we scholars who were forced to come up with this kind of arguments, because they could see that in many parts of the world, the kind of a prescribed march towards modernization shaped after the west simply is not taking place or different cultures, different societies are charting out do their own complicated ways of defining what means to be modern.

So they talk about the meta change of first modern society involves everything that defines it. So, the kind of consequences that are forcing large scale changes are of much larger magnitude.


(Refer Slide Time: 10:20)



Beck, Bohns & Lau - The Theory of Reflexive Modernization 9


defines it: its coordinates, its correlations, its categories and even its ideas of change. Insofar as this meta-change takes place within modern society, it presents a question of continuity. But what does 'modernity' mean in a world where the modern promises of affluence and self-determination have been replaced for whole swathes of countries with the reality of exclusion? Or, in a world in which the premises of Western modernity seem to be everywhere dissolving? How, under such conditions, can we maintain that this historical break is still contained within the organizing principles of modernity that were developed in the 17th and 18th centuries? Our answer is as follows: the meta-change of the modern could only take place on the basis of its own peculiar normative and cognitive infrastructure, which includes:

- the advent of the socio-historical;
- the idea of the political mouldability of society (however differently this has been interpreted); and
- the principle that all decisions can and must be justified.



It forces changes its coordinates, its correlations and categories and even the ideas of change. Insofar as this meta change takes place, within modern society, it presents a question of continuity, but what does modernity mean in a world where modern promises of affluence and self.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:41)




WHERE DISSOLVING: FROM WHICH SOCIAL COORDINATES, CAN WE MAINTAIN THAT THIS historical break is still contained within the organizing principles of modernity that were developed in the 17th and 18th centuries? Our answer is as follows: the meta-change of the modern could only take place on the basis of its own peculiar normative and cognitive infrastructure, which includes:

- the advent of the socio-historical;
- the idea of the political mouldability of society (however differently this has been interpreted); and
- the principle that all decisions can and must be justified.

It is not possible to get around this horizon of claims, although it may be enlarged upon or disputed in its details.<sup>5</sup> This is why present-day upheavals should not be interpreted as a farewell to modern society so much as a result of its radicalization, and a shedding of its Western fundamentalism.

*The Beginning of Society and the Beginning of History*

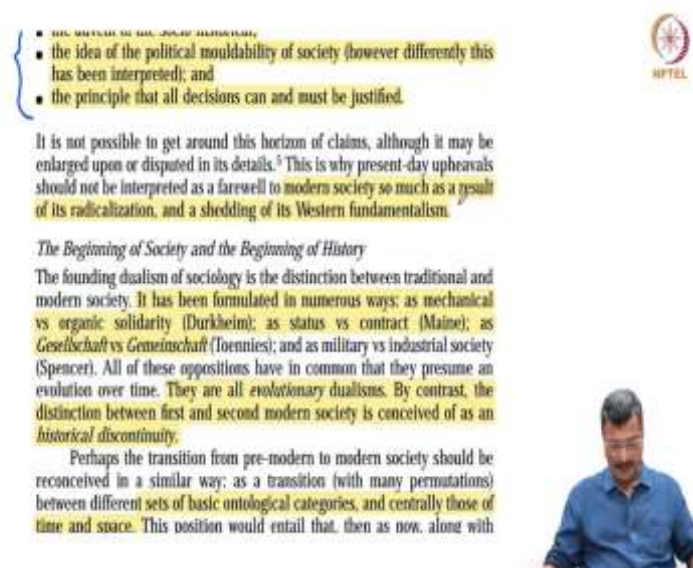
The founding dualism of sociology is the distinction between traditional and modern society. It has been formulated in numerous ways: as mechanical vs organic solidarity (Durkheim); as status vs contract (Malinowski); as *Gesellschaft* vs *Gemeinschaft* (Tönnies); and as military vs industrial society (Spencer). All of these associations have in common that they presume an



So, the whole question of continuity or break or whether it should be supplanted by the term of discontinuity? They say that our answer is as follows. The meta change of the modern world could take place on the basis of its own peculiar normative and cognitive infrastructure, which include, so these arguments are very important arguments to make sense of first modernity.

The advent of the socio-historical, the idea that the political mouldability of society (however differently this has been interpreted); and the principle that all decisions can and must be justified. Beck argues that these are the three important normative and cognitive infrastructure on which the first modernity was built and what we are increasingly seeing is that these three important assumptions or important, taken for granted principles have been called into question.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:38)



- the idea of the political mouldability of society (however differently this has been interpreted); and
- the principle that all decisions can and must be justified.

It is not possible to get around this horizon of claims, although it may be enlarged upon or disputed in its details.<sup>5</sup> This is why present-day upheavals should not be interpreted as a farewell to modern society so much as a result of its radicalization, and a shedding of its Western fundamentalism.

*The Beginning of Society and the Beginning of History*

The founding dualism of sociology is the distinction between traditional and modern society. It has been formulated in numerous ways: as mechanical vs organic solidarity (Durkheim); as status vs contract (Maine); as *Gesellschaft* vs *Gemeinschaft* (Toennies); and as military vs industrial society (Spencer). All of these oppositions have in common that they presume an evolution over time. They are all evolutionary dualisms. By contrast, the distinction between first and second modern society is conceived of as an *historical discontinuity*.

Perhaps the transition from pre-modern to modern society should be reconceived in a similar way: as a transition (with many permutations) between different sets of basic ontological categories, and centrally those of time and space. This position would entail that, then as now, along with

So, it is not possible. It is not possible to get around the horizons of these claims, although it may be enlarged upon or disputed in its details. This is why personally upheavals should not be interpreted as farewell to modern society, so much as a result of its radicalization and shedding of western fundamentalism. So, that is the point where they are repeatedly telling again and again, that it is not the time to completely discard the project of modernity, but rather to look at it from very different and novel perspectives.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:10)



of its radicalization, and a shedding of its Western fundamentalism.

#### *The Beginning of Society and the Beginning of History*

The founding dualism of sociology is the distinction between traditional and modern society. It has been formulated in numerous ways: as mechanical vs organic solidarity (Durkheim); as status vs contract (Maistre); as *Gesellschaft* vs *Gemeinschaft* (Tönnies); and as military vs industrial society (Spencer). All of these oppositions have in common that they presume an evolution over time. They are all evolutionary dualisms. By contrast, the distinction between first and second modern society is conceived of as an *historical discontinuity*.

Perhaps the transition from pre-modern to modern society should be reconceived in a similar way: as a transition (with many permutations) between different sets of basic ontological categories, and centrally those of time and space. This position would entail that, then as now, along with social change, the conceptual framework in which social order and dynamics were represented changed. Discontinuity conceived of in this way, as ontological change, is especially visible in the way society projects itself. Reinhard Koselleck elaborates on this point when he says that the transition to modernity involved the change from the dominance of the past to the dominance of the future (Koselleck, 1998). This change, like those now visible on the second modern horizon, disclosed what David Harvey has



So, the beginning of society and the beginning of history and this is a very important point where they talking about how born modernity brought in a particular notion of historicity, it brought in a particular notion of historical consciousness and awareness. The founding dualism of sociology is the distinction between traditional and modern society, we have discussed it.

It has been formulated in numerous ways as mechanical versus organic solidarity, Durkheim as *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* by Tönnies, these are all classical sociological scholars who made this kind of a binary compositions; and military versus industrial society by Spencer. All these oppositions have in common that they pursued an evolution over time. They are all evolutionary dualisms. By contrast, the distinction between first and second modernity is conceived of as an *historical discontinuity*.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:06)

(Spencer). All of these oppositions have in common that they presume an evolution over time. They are all evolutionary dualisms. By contrast, the distinction between first and second modern society is conceived of as an *historical discontinuity*.

Perhaps the transition from pre-modern to modern society should be reconceived in a similar way: as a transition (with many permutations) between different sets of basic ontological categories, and centrally those of time and space. This position would entail that, then as now, along with social change, the conceptual framework in which social order and dynamics were represented changed. Discontinuity conceived of in this way, as ontological change, is especially visible in the way society projects itself. Reinhard Koselleck elaborates on this point when he says that the transition to modernity involved the change from the dominance of the past to the dominance of the future (Koselleck, 1998). This change, like those now visible on the second modern horizon, disclosed what David Harvey has called new 'spaces of hope' (Harvey, 2000).

The concept of modernity includes many things, but one essential and inextricable component is the *creation of historical society* - that is, the



So, perhaps the transition from pre modern to modern society should be reconceived in a similar way, as transition (with many permutations) between different sets of basic ontological categories, and centrally those of time and space. So, they argue, they are pointing out that it

must be possible for us even to reconceive or to reimagine the emergence of modernity as this form, between different sets of basically ontological categories and certainly those of time and space.

The position would entail that then ask now, along with social change, the conceptual framework in which social order and dynamics are represented changes, discontinuity conceived in this way, as ontological change is especially visible in the way society projects itself. So, they argue that it is, it is not a kind of an evolutionary change that happens with evolutionary dualism, but it is a change that involves in the very change the ontology itself, in the very question of what it is the whole question of being, the whole how do we make sense of certain thing, what is that question?

So, this there is a fundamental change in the ontological question itself. So, Reinhard Koselleck elaborates this point, when he says that the transition of modernity involves a change from the dominance of the past to the dominance of the future. And this is an extremely important scholar Reinhard Koselleck, that we will come back or he is referred quite frequently in Beck's work or even in other scholarly literature, Koselleck is considered to be very important one.

Because he has something very interesting thing to say about the change the whole idea about the dominance of tradition in the pre modern society and that of the past of, that of the future in the modern societies and then Beck uses those arguments in a very interesting manner. So, the concept of modernity includes many things, but one essential and inextricable component is the creation of a historical society, that is...

(Refer Slide Time: 15:17)

10 Theory, Culture & Society 20(2)

creation of a society which places itself in continuous history instead of opposing itself to a mythical or distant past. This began with the French Revolution, experienced at the time like a bolt of lightning. The crumbling of the Eastern bloc 200 years later gave off a similar glow, and the present is once again filled with talk of revolution: the information revolution, the genetic revolution, the nanotechnological revolution and, last but not least, the revolution of the global terrorist threat. So, from its beginning, modernity is about the end of the end of history. The great political fights are never over. So in world risk society, confronted with a universal terrorist threat, suddenly government matters again. This may also be the end of the triumph of economics and neoliberalism. That is not to say that the economy will not remain central to second modern societies. But the idea that politics has to be substituted by markets and that government does not matter seems almost absurd in the light of a global terrorist threat. The state is back, and for the oldest Hobbesian reason – the provision of security in world risk society.

This institutionalized openness of social history does not refer simply to the permanence of change, or innovation, or crisis. It refers to how a discourse out of Western institutions – rationalism, industrialism, urbanism



the creation of a society which places itself into contiguous history, instead of opposing itself to a mythical or distant past, I think, we know that with the rise of modernity, with the rise of modern techniques like clock and calendar and understanding of the evolution of Earth and solar system, we know that we are talking about a historical society, there is nothing called as a creation of the world, as the way we are told by the religion and there is nothing like the end of the world as again told by most of the religion.

We are able to categorize our times into AD and BC and when we say that we are in AD 2020, we understand that this particular point can be marked in a much larger linear scale and there is kind of an infinite time ahead of us, there is an infinite time in the past as well.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:25)

creation of a society which places itself in continuous history instead of opposing itself to a mythical or distant past. This began with the French Revolution, experienced at the time like a bolt of lightning. The crumbling of the Eastern bloc 200 years later gave off a similar glow, and the present is once again filled with talk of revolution: the information revolution, the genetic revolution, the nanotechnological revolution and, last but not least, the revolution of the global terrorist threat. So, from its beginning, modernity is about the end of the end of history. The great political fights are never over. So in world risk society, confronted with a universal terrorist threat, suddenly government matters again. This may also be the end of the triumph of economics and neoliberalism. That is not to say that the economy will not remain central to second modern societies. But the idea that politics has to be substituted by markets and that government does not matter seems almost absurd in the light of a global terrorist threat. The state is back, and for the oldest Hobbesian reason – the provision of security in world risk society.

This institutionalized openness of social history does not refer simply to the permanence of change, or innovation, or crisis. It refers to how a discrete set of Western institutions – capitalism, industrialism, urbanism, democracy, human rights – was articulated to a particular cultural imagination in which progress and rationality play central roles. This articulation is made possible by a particular relation to space and time, dominated by



So, this particular argument, he says is the very basic feature of modernity. This began with the French Revolution experienced at the time, like a bolt of lightning, the crumbling of Eastern Bloc 200 years later, gave off a similar globe and the present once again filled with the talk of revolution, the information revolution, the genetic revolution, the nano technological revolution and not last but not the least, the revolution of the global terrorist threat.

So, from the beginning, modernity is about the end of end of history. So, ever since the modernity has come into picture, we have all been jumping too much into and then saying that this is the history that that the world has come to an end or this is the final kind of transformation that the world might come across.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:15)

not remain central to second modern societies. But the idea that politics has to be substituted by markets and that government does not matter seems almost absurd in the light of a global terrorist threat. The state is back, and for the oldest Hobbesian reason – the provision of security in world risk society.

This institutionalized openness of social history does not refer simply to the permanence of change, or innovation, or crisis. It refers to how a discrete set of Western institutions – capitalism, industrialism, urbanism, democracy, human rights – was articulated to a particular cultural imagination in which progress and rationality play central roles. This articulation is made possible by a particular relation to space and time, dominated by the future rather than by the past. In it, the future becomes the unforeseeable, the accidental, that which cannot be planned for, that which cannot be controlled. The future becomes what Koselleck calls an 'expected otherness'.

The concept of 'modernity' thus combines an historical break with the creation of history. Conceived thus, break and continuity, stability and change are both inseparable sides of the same modern coin. Both have ineradicably modern meanings. The concept of 'discontinuity' makes this paradox clear by grasping the ontological change of social organization and cultural imagination as a change in the system of reference. In this manner it does not deny or ignore the observable continuity of various social





But he says that is a very misconceived understanding and we need to take a much longer understanding about it. Now, he says that the state is back and the oldest Hobbesian reason in the provision of security in the world society. So, there was a lot of optimism that the state is going to wither away or the state is going to become insignificant in the era of global flows.

But he says that state has come back, state assumes even more important roles, because of the very old Hobbesian reason that state gives you protection. The institutionalized openness of social history does not refer simply to the permanence of change or innovation of crisis. It refers how to a discrete set of western institutions, capitalism, industrialism, urbanism, democracy, human rights, was articulated a particular cultural imaginary, in which progress and rationality play central roles, this articulation is made possible by the particular relation to space and time dominated by future rather than by the past.

So, this is a very important point. So, western rationality could actually give you the impression that with these new ideas about capitalism, industrialism, urbanism, democracy and human rights, they were able to project you a particular kind of future, which is qualitatively different and better in many respects compared to that of the past. So, they were able to present the future in a more concrete manner.

This articulation is made possible by a particular relation to space and time dominated by the future rather than by the past. In it the future becomes the unforeseeable, the accidental, that which cannot be planned for, that which cannot be controlled, the future becomes what Koselleck calls the expected otherness. So, Koselleck calls this as the expected otherness, you know what it means, but at the same time, it is distinctly different from your own understanding.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:16)

ness

The concept of 'modernity' thus combines an historical break with the creation of history. Conceived thus, break and continuity, stability and change are both inseparable sides of the same modern coin. Both have ineradicably modern meanings. The concept of 'discontinuity' makes this paradox clear by grasping the ontological change of social organization and cultural imagination as a change in the system of reference. In this manner it does not deny or ignore the observable continuity of various social features, like religion and pre-market class structures, that endure into modern society. But it emphasizes that they are repositioned in a new ontology of time and space (Adam, 1995, 2000; Timlinson, 1999).


If one takes this line of thought seriously, then a central theme of modern sociology, the reproduction of social structures, stands revealed as a fantasy, a wish fulfilment taken for reality. It is a utopia that has only been able to maintain its plausibility by means of continual ad hoc justifications in the face of the future's constantly expected otherness. Understood like this, the origins of the current epochal break lie not in the relation between first and second modern society, but in the heart of modern society itself. And then the question becomes: how has it been possible for first modern society to institutionally suppress the inherently historical quality of society for so long? Historicity was institutionalized in first modern society along



The concept of modernity, thus combines a historical break with the creation of history, conceived this break and continuity, stability and change are both inseparable side of the same modern coin. Both have inextricably modern meanings. The concept of discontinuity makes this paradox clear by grasping the ontological change or social organization and cultural imagination as change in the system of reference. So, instead of talking about a break from

tradition into modernity, Beck argues that this argument of discontinuity has the ability to indicate the ontological change of the very basic points of reference.


(Refer Slide Time: 19:55)



it does not deny or ignore the observable continuity of various social features, like religion and pre-market class structures, that endure into modern society. But it emphasizes that they are repositioned in a new ontology of time and space (Adam, 1995, 2000; Tomlinson, 1999).


If one takes this line of thought seriously, then a central theme of modern sociology, the reproduction of social structures, stands revealed as a fantasy, a wish fulfillment taken for reality. It is a utopia that has only been able to maintain its plausibility by means of continual ad hoc justifications in the face of the future's constantly expected otherness. Understood like this, the origins of the current epochal break lie not in the relation between first and second modern society, but in the heart of modern society itself. And then the question becomes: how has it been possible for first modern society to institutionally suppress the inherently historical quality of society for so long? Historicity was institutionalized in first modern society along

Downloaded from [www.nptel.com](http://www.nptel.com) at Indian Inst. Tech. Madras on March 15, 2019



If one takes the line of thought seriously, then a central theme of modern sociology, the reproduction of social structure stands revealed as a fantasy, a wish fulfilled meant taken for reality. It is a utopia that has only been able to maintain its plausibility by means of continued ad hoc justifications in the face of future's constantly expected otherness, understood like this, the origin of the current break lie not in the relation between first and second modernity, but the at the heart of modern society itself.


(Refer Slide Time: 20:32)



with the spread in the market, the maturity of capital and the innovative power of science and technology. But somehow, at the same time, the reality of continuous change became eternalized into the idea of an autonomous, self-reproducing society, into the structures and categories of the nation-state.

This paradox stands at the forefront of the modern and its understanding of history. On the one hand, as Koselleck (1998) has argued, the concept of modern history contains the consciousness of the constantly renewed uniqueness of the new situation. From the vanishing point of the future comes something that has not been either theologically or teleologically determined, and which is somehow both radical and expected at the same time. The creation of modern society was synonymous with the modern revolution.

In addition, when the grandiose concept of 'world history' became a topic of lively discussion in the 18th and 19th centuries, it meant both secular history and the history of mankind as a whole. But at the very moment when world history became conceivable, it was broken up and walled off into a history of nations and a history of states. The horror at the unbounded openness of the modern world was answered almost immediately by the closedness of the nation-state, both as an idea and as an institutional reality. The political subject of 'modern history' became and still is the nation-state. Modern history is so closely identified with the history of nations and states that it is rarely made explicit any more. 'History' is simply



So, again, he brings in Koselleck, this paradox stands at the forefront of modern and its understanding of history. On the one hand Koselleck have argued, the concept of modern history contains consciousness of the constantly renewed uniqueness of the new situation, from the vanishing point of the futures comes something that has not been either theologically or

teleologically determined and which is somehow both radical and expected at the same time, the creation of modern society was synonymous with the modern revolution.

So modern society, even Koselleck to a large extent, argues that modernity brings in quite a lot of uncertainty to the future, because you know that in a traditional society, your tradition is a very important resource, what kind of resource, a resource that helps you to fashion your own life and individual life and social life for the future.

So, the tradition has a set of knowledge systems, it has a set of customs and rituals and set rules and regulations and we consider these rules and regulations and knowledge system as extremely important, because we think that these systems will make us capable to understand and deal with the future.

And this sense of confidence is completely lost when the society comes into the modern system. So, Koselleck argues that in a modern society, the person what lies ahead of us or the tradition is becoming absolutely incapable of, making us prepared to meet the future, the future becomes completely unexpected. It is an expected other, it is expected of course, but what lies ahead is something absolutely beyond your understanding.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:24)

same time. The creation of modern society was synonymous with the modern revolution.

In addition, when the grandiose concept of 'world history' became a topic of lively discussion in the 18th and 19th centuries, it meant both secular history and the history of mankind as a whole. But at the very moment when world history became conceivable, it was broken up and walled off into a history of nations and a history of states. The horror at the unbounded openness of the modern world was answered almost immediately by the closedness of the nation-state, both as an idea and as an institutional reality. The political subject of 'modern history' became and still is the nation-state. Modern history is so closely identified with the history of nations and states that it is rarely made explicit any more. 'History' is simply assumed to be national history unless otherwise noted, and society is assumed to mean national society (for critique see Levy and Sznajder, 2001). The Christian idea of history as leading (or not leading) to salvation was replaced – after a very brief detour into world history – by the story of the rise and fall of nation-states. And suddenly the beginning and end of modern society was identified with the past and future of the nation-state, as if there was nothing modern before it and nothing modern that could come after.<sup>6</sup>

But this understanding of history is wrong. The idea that the nation-state defines both the shape of history and the shape of the future is wrong. And our hypothesis is that in second modern society the discrepancy



So, he gives the example of modern history, the political subject of modern history becomes and still is a nation-state. Modern history is so closely identified with the history of nation-states. So, here he basically says that how our preoccupation with the history, in the first modernity, we saw it erroneously because we tend to conflate the world history with the history of nation state and so, in a major way, we looked at the histories of nation-states and then mistook it for the larger world history and that becomes a kind of problematic.

(Refer Slide Time: 23:05)

the Christian idea of history as leading (or not leading) to salvation was replaced – after a very brief detour into world history – by the story of the rise and fall of nation-states. And suddenly the beginning and end of modern society was identified with the past and future of the nation-state, as if there was nothing modern before it and nothing modern that could come after.<sup>6</sup>

But this understanding of history is wrong. The idea that the nation-state defines both the shape of history and the shape of the future is wrong. And our hypothesis is that in second modern society the discrepancy between the national past and the global future will only grow.<sup>7</sup> That which is expected is becoming more and more different from that which has been experienced, and this excites both hope and anxiety. Of course, the expectation of historical consistency – that the elements of the past that remain in the present will continue to have a similar effect in the future – has never been a guarantee against the future turning out quite differently. That is what the irreducible 'otherness' of the future is all about.

To give the latest example, the question has been asked: 'What could unite the world?' And the hypothetical answer sometimes given is: 'An attack from Mars.' In a sense, the terrorist attack on the Pentagon and the Twin Towers of New York on 11 September was an attack from our inner Mars. And it worked as predicted. Although in historical terms this has only been the blink of eye so far, the warring camps and nations of the world



So, he says that this understanding of history is wrong, the idea that the nation state defines both the shape of history and the shape of future is wrong. And our hypothesis is that in second modern society, the discrepancy between national pasts and global future will only grow. That which is expected is becoming more and more different than which has been experienced, and this excites both hope and anxiety.

So, your nationalist past and global future will only grow the discrepancy between your national past, the very fact that we have been like that for the last past say 2000 years or maybe 70 years after the independence, it may have very little bearing on the way in which the globe unfolds itself and a country like ours finds itself in that. So, there is a growing disjuncture between your past and the global future. There are illustrations there.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:09)

universalism of this terrorist threat, and the universal scope of the struggle against it, that has forged alliances between opposing camps, dampened regional conflicts, and made it both possible and necessary to redraw the political map of the world.

The only consistent way to tackle this expected otherness of second modern societies, both theoretically and existentially, is by means of a thorough-going historical perspectivism. All sociological concepts must be understood as carrying with them an historical perspective that interprets events against the background of the past, the present or the future. And a single present has different meanings, depending on whether it is interpreted as the result of the past or an opening onto the future. As Koselleck emphasizes, experience and expectation are radically different modes of being. Neither can be deduced from or translated into the other. On the contrary, conceiving of the future as an expected otherness leads to a de-realization of the present. The constancy and consistency of the present are revealed by this framework to be a *construct*, as a fiction with real effects. And the view of society as something that can be conceived of as existing solely in the present, from which the past and future can be bracketed off, is shown to be false, because even the supposedly univocal 'present' always means at least two things: the present of the past, and the present of the future.

Whoever assumes that the nation-state paradigm of modern society



The only consistent way to tackle this expected otherness of second modern societies, both theoretical and existentially is by means of a thorough-going historical perspectivism. So, this is the term that he is talking about historical perspectivism. All sociological concepts must be



understood as carrying with them a historical perspective that interprets events against the background of the past, the present and the future.

And a single present has different meanings, depending upon whether it is interpreted as the result of past or opening into the future. As Koselleck emphasizes, experience and expectations are radically different modes of being, neither can be deduced from or translated into another.


On the contrary, conceiving the future as an expected otherness, leads to a de-realization of the present. The constancy and the consistency of the present revealed by the framework are to become construct as a fiction with real effects and the view of society as something that can be viewed as existing solely on the person from which the past and future can be bracketed of.

See basically, his basic argument can be summarized like this. If you think, the rise of modernity was seen as a break from the tradition, this kind of a binary proposition emerged from a very erroneous understanding of looking at society in a very different form.

So, he argues that you need to have a radically different understanding of some of the very important basic categories of sociology, including society, social structure, everything. So, once you look into that, modernity brought in a situation where the expectations are completely divorced from your experience and that was very different from that of the traditional mode of existence or traditional society and that situation is further compound in an era of late modernity.

So, the very fact that the rise of modernity itself has these kinds of elements and these elements have become more radicalized, they have become more apparent only in this second modernity.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:29)




Whoever assumes that the nation-state paradigm of modern society reproduces itself through a flow of continuous self-renewal is presuming a particular hierarchy of history, namely the dominance of the past and the present over the future. This picture of time dovetails with the picture of space that dominates first modern society. In the same way that society is presumed to be contained in a determinate space, so it is assumed to rise and fall in its own independent time zone, in an extended present projected into both future and past. National societies, territorial societies and societies of the present are all different aspects of the same phenomenon. The idea of the autonomous reproduction of first modern society rests on a mystification of time, on the idea of a self-reproducing present. And the historical metaphysics of the society of the present rests on the three identities of the nation state:

1. the homology of space and time;
2. the identity of space and people; and
3. the equivalence of past and future.

All of these identities are called into question by the dynamics of second modern society. And when the expected otherness of the future is fully integrated into our thinking, perhaps these hierarchies of space and time can be overturned.

*Of course, one must realistically take into account the resistance to*



So, he says, the first modernity, the idea of the autonomous reproduction of first modern society rests on a mystification of time, on the idea of a self-producing present and the historical metaphysical of the present rest on the three identities of the nation-state: the homology of space and time, the identity of space and people and the equivalence of past with future.

So, this, he says, are the three important identities of the nation- state, one is the homology of space and time, you think that a given place has to be at a given time and this is before the advent of global technological and telecommunication facilities, this we had a discussion earlier, when we spoke about Giddens and others.

So, a social action, a particular action has to take place at a given time, at a given place, you simply did not have the infrastructure or capacities to enact this action across globe at a given time. And the identity of space and people, you believe that the people are placed in a geographical place and they are relevance or their action is confined with that and second one is the equivalence of past and future, argued that your past will be more or less continuation of the future.


(Refer Slide Time: 27:53)



Beck, Bonis & Lau - The Theory of Reflexive Modernization 13

temporally extended present is a methodological advantage, not least in the social sciences. Surveys and poll data not only depend on this assumption, but embody it into a professional interest group. Against this perspective, the theory of second modern society aims to found a new social science of the transnational: a cosmopolitan sociology, a cosmopolitan political science and so on, each with a new set of concepts, a new set of theories and a new methodology (Beck, 2000a, 2001a). The reason this change is necessary is that today the future is less and less deducible from the past. When even armed borders can be breached by electronic communications, and new streams of migration are possible, the nation-state can no longer be treated as the unmoved mover. When even national catastrophes like the Holocaust can be moulded in this new environment into global standards (Levy and Sznajder, 2001), it is clear that the future is opening on transnational possibilities that the past never held. And it requires a social science appropriate to the task.

Forms of Meta-change



So, all these identities are called into question by the dynamics of second modern society and when the expected otherness of the future is fully integrated into our thinking, perhaps these hierarchies of space and time can be overturned. So, against this perspective, the second modern society aims to found a new social science of the transnational, a cosmopolitan sociology, a cosmopolitan political science with its own concepts, a set of theories and new methodology. This point I think, we will discuss in the coming class when we discuss Ulrich Beck maybe in the eighth week on his theory on cosmopolitan state, we will look at his argument about cosmopolitan sociology, because he argues that the conventional sociological categories are no longer valid and then he talks about a cosmopolitan methodology, a cosmopolitan sociology, a cosmopolitan political science and other things.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:54)

can be moulded in this new environment into global standards (Levy and Smolider, 2001), it is clear that the future is opening on transnational possibilities that the past never held. And it requires a social science appropriate to the task.



#### Forms of Meta-change

As stated above, the theory of reflexive modernization maintains that we are now experiencing a meta-change in the formation of Western industrial welfare states, a formation that had been stable for a long time. A meta-change means that the experiential and theoretical coordinates are changing at the same time as the basic institutions. Other theories that have examined the same phenomena have also put forth the notion that the present represents a structural break with the past. Most of the others, however, trace this break back to developments in autonomous subsectors of society, for example to developments in the sphere of information technology (as with the theories of post-industrial society, information society and network society) or to the loss of key certainties in the cultural sphere (as in the theory of postmodern society).

In contrast to such narrow or even monocausal theories, the model of reflexive modernization tries to take into account the whole breadth of the



In the remaining part as well, he further elaborates this nature of meta change. Maybe I will take a break here and the remaining part we will discuss in the coming class, we will conclude this essay in the coming class. It is not a very easy essay; I would request you to download this paper and then read it a couple of times for you to make sense of it. So, thank you and we will meet in the next class.