

MODERNITY

Forms to define modernity:

- 1) **Historical:** talking about the forms of social organization of Europe (centuries XVI-XVII). These forms were extended to other areas of the world.
- 2) **Analytical:** talking about its characteristics. Comparing the pre-modernity (traditional societies) and post-modernity, with modern societies to indicate the aspects in which the change has taken place

Aspects of modernity

1) General Aspects

- Triumph of the **individual**: freedom...
- **Differentiation**: in the work, consumption...
- **Rationality**: calculation and impersonality in the bureaucratic organizations
- **Geographic Globalization** (expansion in the space)
- **Economism** (dominant in the modern life)

Economism is an [ideology](#) in which [supply and demand](#) are the only important factors in decisions, and literally outstrip or permit ignoring all other factors. It is widely believed to be a side effect of [neoclassical economics](#) and blind faith in an "[invisible hand](#)" or "[laissez-faire](#)" means of making decisions, extended far beyond controlled and regulated markets, and used to make political and military decisions. Conventional [ethics](#) would play no role in decisions under pure economism, except insofar as supply would be withheld, demand curtailed, by moral choices of individuals.

Economism should not be confused with [economic determinism](#), the belief that measurable economic circumstances drive all human psychology and choice.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economism>

2. Concrete aspects in which modernity is developed

Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Great speed and importance of economic growth- Industrialization- Great companies- Urbanization- New sources of energy- Innovations- Competitiveness- Raise of unemployment	Social Stratification - hierarchies <ul style="list-style-type: none">- From the caste-inherited or ascribed status to the achieved status- Proletarianization of workers- Increasing accumulation of wealth in few hands of capitalists- Middle-class in expansion- New professions
Politics <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Importance of the State and the Law- Citizenship and the new socio-political conquest (civil, social rights...)- Management with the raise of bureaucratic organization	Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Secularization- Importance of Science- Democratization of the education- Appearance of a culture of masses: aesthetic, Literature, art, music...
Daily life <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Work and family are now separated- Privatization of the family- Separation of the working time and leisure- Preoccupation by the consumption of goods, that acquire a symbolic value, not only an utilitarian one	

A modern personality

Authors talk about the qualities, attitudes, habits and dispositions of the population that lives in modern societies, the mentality or the model of the "**modern man/ woman**".

Characteristics:

- 1) Predisposition to the **new experiences** and opening to the **innovations** and the change
- 2) Predisposition to be **trained** on many issues
- 3)** They give a great value to the **diversity**
- 4) Orientation towards the **present and future** times
- 5) Acceptance of **schedules**, planification and organization of social life
- 6) They accept social rewards must be equivalent to merits (achieved status)

Exhaustion and fall of Modernity

It occurs after problems like:

- Alienation, economic-social-cultural oppression of individuals; lack of creativity, passivity; anomie; decay of the community, social disintegration, loss of identities, social uprooting; international inequalities: poverty, hunger; wars, violence and conflicts; etc.

New predictions of future (points of view)

1. **Continuity of modernity** to more mature and perfect forms. These forms intensify and develop existing tendencies (perspective **evolucionist**)
2. Forecast of a **radical rupture**, oriented **towards previous forms** of existence: recovery of the community...
3. Transformations are irreversible. **In the future** they will bring some model of **society** still unforeseeable but **better** than the present
4. **Analytical dissection** of modernity, without prejudging the direction of future: theory of the "**high modernity**" or the "**delayed modernity**" of Giddens.

Theory of the "high modernity" or the "delayed modernity" (Giddens).

The present situation is **not of post-modernity**. Now we are in a "high" modernity era. Consequences of **modernity are universal**.

This time is characterized by:

- **Confidence in abstracts systems of experts.** Experts flood the daily life. Experts are impersonal and they are not totally transparent: transports, markets, telecommunications, mass media, computers...
- **Greater risk.** Objective risks and subjective risks (reflexive). A greater sensitivity towards dangers and threats, greater consciousness of new dangers.
- **Opacity.** Dark and uncertainty about the future. Absence of "guidelines".
- **Continuous Globalization (see the following Lesson).**
 - o **Global + Local**

Different answers or reactions from the population:

- **People accept** (in a practical way) their reality
- **Optimism** towards the future: the providence, the technology or anything else will help.
- **Pessimism**. The best option is being hedonist ("today is important")
- **Opposition** to the perceived sources of danger, sometimes through the social movements (active reaction).

EXERCISES

1. Cite famous people with a "Modern personality"
2. Cite famous people with an "Old personality"

Why are they Modern-Old in their ways of living?

Arguments:

- *What do you think about the future? Are you optimism, pessimist...???*
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