

Taşansu Türker¹

CASES OF MODERNIZATION AND POST, POST-POST OR NEO MODERNITY

Likhachov Square has been a platform for me for improving my thoughts on a comparison of the West, Russia and Turkey for the last three years. I have structured that comparison especially on the perspective of a historical view which especially focuses on 19th century. I first of all do wish to underline the fertility of comparison of the two cases of modernization; Russia and Turkey. Just on the shores of the West, the two cases have enjoyed the benefits of modernization for the last three centuries while they have created their self-consciousness on that impact and also were largely determined by geo-strategies related to the West again. Very similar to each other to compare and very different from each other to produce analysis, those two cases need to be compared in depth. The layer of modernization idea, the layer of implementation of modernity and the layer of the real politics which are founded on geo-strategies of and related to the West brings the West itself to a focus in that comparison. Those three layers mentioned above can give a huge opportunity of analysis and even creating paradigms for all areas of social sciences on that triangle zone. And, without questions, depth on that zone should be a historical view which especially focuses on 19th century since not only talking about the similarities of contemporary and 19th century is becoming more popular each day, but also the patterns coming from that century is still determinant and instructive still.

Last year at the plenary meeting, that was the reason that I tried to underline the necessity to rethink about 19th century with enthusiasm. So as to do that Bauman and Bordini's "liquid modernity" term referring the current crisis of modernity was at the center of my report since modernity itself could be founded as a status quo during and after the long 19th century and 21st century is again a period of obscurity a quest for a new status quo or the description of today by Umberto Eco, "a trespassing for tomorrow's unsettled contingency, yet." Bauman and Bordini at their book "State of Crisis" were arguing that a two way crisis is actual for modernity; where the first is the *impotence of the states* and the second is the *radical change in social structures*. And the results of the crisis of modernity can be categorised as political and social. The most prominent political result, which I want to underline can be titled as the loose of identity or a collective consciousness which was created by the nation-states for their continuity and the whole international system depending on those again. That identity or collective consciousness has two faces: The local one describing the particularity referencing nation, language, religion, history etc. by providing cohesion inside the *borders* of the country, and the universal one referencing security, justice, democracy, human rights, etc. by providing the continuity of the values system and even international system as

well. Except for the debates on universalism vs. particularism here, I guess it is acceptable that the particularity of nation-states is depending on the universality of values which creates the international system, meaning that a huge erosion for universal values is another important fact. Another side of the political result can be summarized as the weakness of the state against the political demands of the masses where legitimate and effective ways for governance are still searched. Here, throughout the demands of the masses, social results can be linked to political ones. It can be argued that the demands of masses have transformed as well. In current social debates it is observed that masses do not know what they want, but they know very well what they do not want, which makes those social wishes less governable throughout modern ways like representation, parliament or parties, even civil society. The other side of social results is the mass hunger for consumption. As authors' conceptualisation, a *consumer society* is the new fact for all social and political spheres instead of citizens and that makes the consumption is the current *telos*. The crisis of modernity and the current fluidity which are summarized above are actually indicating the crisis of *sovereignty* and the crisis of *democracy* as well for the modern world.

Post version of modernity was generally founded on those evaluations by the claims of postmodernity as supranational organizations and micro nationalisms will be replacing nationstates and nations even, updated versions of democracy will be improved by the means of social media, civil society, etc., number of blue collars will be reduced by white collars and economy will depend on more technology and innovation. A short glance at the program of World Economic Forum from January 2016 in Davos can explain much about that apprehension for tomorrow. A few titles from the program are; A Common Stance against Extremism, A New Platform for the Digital Economy, A Social Contract to Transform Our World, A World without Work, Around the World without Fuel or Fear, Culture and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, From Migration to Integration, Ethics and Corporate Governance, Infusing Emotional Intelligence to Artificial Intelligence, Internet Fragmentation, Humankind and Machine, Educating the Masters of Fourth Industrial Revolution, Education for One Million Refugee Children.

In 2016 the developments in world politics, but especially at the domestic level of the West have not only challenged, but also unsettled that apprehension of a postmodern tomorrow. First Brexit, than Trump becoming the President of the US, and moreover rising tide of rightwing populism in the Netherlands, France and Italy was a shock to the new world imagination of postmodernity. And also the rise of leftwing populism against those has created the result of loosening the center of politics nearly every corner in the West. The first speech of Sean Spicer, spokesman of the White House, was a milestone in American politics with the occupation of classical, conventional or modern figures in that speech. Automotive sector, promotions, industrial employment, tax issues, American values, being American, etc. were the themes reminding the old, modern America and appreciating the voters of Trump who have support-

¹ Director of the Research Centre for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies, Professor, Doctor of Political Sciences Faculty at the Ankara University (Turkey). Area of expertise: History of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, modern foreign policy of Russia and Turkey. Author of article theses, scientific publications on history of the Ottoman and Russian Empires and issues of modern international politics, including: "Questions on Crisis of Modernity, Search for Identity and Democracy on the Shores of the West", "History of Nation and beyond; Empire and the West in Russia and Turkey", etc.

ed him by their modern demands. Brexit was the result of nearly same intentions and demands of the British people. France, the Netherland and Italy are expected to get on that track of modernity as well in this year. What is seen up to now is a renaissance of modernity? Is this period a time of post-post modernity or a neo-modern era has begun? Or just a tactical retreat of postmodern ideals of Greenwich village of Manhattan, Bloomsbury of London, entire Berlin, Bolotnaya square of Moscow or Taksim square of Istanbul?

I consider the answer is important and will be content with only underlining the fact that intellectuals are generally more farsighted than the progress of the society itself which does not mean that their expectations are utopic and again which does not mean that their apprehensions are the perfect predictions. History does always create itself sometimes disappointing the intellectuals, but not making them entirely wrong. The important question is when, in which intellectuals are generally wrong meaning that the world is temporary in a period of modernity that can be described as post-post or neo modernity. The return of the conventional in every area will be the essence of that temporary period. Blue collars, social politics, industrial societies, nationalism, nationstates, national interest based international system, etc. Turkey and Russia by resisting to those postmodern winds for approximately the last fifteen years are advantageous or disadvantageous at the moment can be a timely question now.

Actually the modernist challenge in the 21st century has come from Russia with the concept of "sovereign democracy" as a signal flare of this post-post or neo-modernist tide. Any historian writing or speaking about 21st century Russia could easily focus on the continuity of her modernization process of three centuries. Sovereignty, democracy, infrastructure investments, centralization attempts, etc. were all the modern arguments and implementations. Russia of this century can be said to have the motto "classical is good" which made her the champion of modernity by permanent modernization. Turkey getting on that track later than Russia was more uneasy than Russia, but on the same track. Nation-state, national interest based foreign policy and infra-

structure investments have been the main themes of her for at least the last five years. Above timely question deserves the timely answer here of both countries are more adoptive and advantageous to the new conjuncture. However for future predictions a short glance to historical patterns of the two with the West can give some aspirations.

Turkey and Russia have had relations with the West in opposite positions as a rule except for two periods in history, first the last quarter of 19th century and the second is the first decades of the 21st century. The opposite positions were the results of geostrategic choices, but which have determined the comprise processes of the western impact. The similar positions were both for conservative and defensive motivated. 19th century can be summarized as Ottomans trying to catch the West in spite of the fact that nationalism winds destroying the empire and Russians trying to stop the western impact in the country. Crimean war is an essential example for that contrary positioning and the west-sceptic government in Russia and western hegemony in Ottoman capital. Entire 19th century while Russia was championing the ancient regime, Ottoman empire was in a fast modernization process even at the cost of endangering the integrity of the empire. While Turkey chose to be articulated to the Western system, Russia was in a quest for an alternative model, at the cost of staying underdeveloped. Abdulhamid II and Alexander III created an exceptional period to that pattern at the end of 19th century which in Turkey is very popular nowadays to compare to contemporary politics.

As a result some questions and references can be put as an epilogue here: – Ideals and political implementation of postmodernity is entirely dead? Referring "Europe is dead." By Alexander Herzen. – Post-post modernity or neo-modernity are the same with modernized Russia and Turkey? Referring the 1876 constitution of Ottoman Empire and 1905 of Russia? – Geo-strategy can disperse domestic politics? Referring the modernization patterns of two cases. – In a post neo modern world will two cases have the advantageous position again? Referring to the fact that ideals of French Revolution have succeeded after 1815, 1830, 1848 and 1871 in a more different way, but essentially.