



“Theorising the Post-Communist Condition: Search for New Forms of Social Integration”

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In the paper, an attempt is made to discuss the relations between individual, society and the state in the post-Communist societies in the theoretical framework of theories of modernity. While discussing the developments in post-Communist societies, if and how should we take into account the theories that concentrate on the profound changes taking place in the Western (modern) societies, as well as on the global scale? The scenarios envisioned by the theorists of most modern modernity seem to suggest that the key threat in modern societies in the face of weakening normative regulation and growing contingency of everyday life is that of societal fragmentation. While the source for new integration is seen in institutionalised discursivity, i.e. adopting the communication between state and the individuals to environment of increased discursivity and reflexivity (in the due hope that all citizens with their grown capacity for social action are indeed willing to participate in this discursivity), this seem considerably harder to achieve in the post-Communist societies, carrying the legacy of another type of modernity, which, according to the same theories, until recently were defined namely by the suppression of such reflexivity.

However, the tacit assumption of the level of efficiency of the Communist states to suppress such reflexion can be challenged both theoretically and with historical evidence. The Communist society as a modernising society was as dependent on the scientific and technical progress as its Capitalist contender. This could be achieved only through increased use of scientific knowledge, which due to its amorphous and uneducable nature, provided into the emancipation of the members of the society. Also, the exhaustion of the ideological legitimacy of the system and the existence of the parallel symbolic interpretation of the political reality are signs of reflexive capacities of the society (especially accentuated in the „peripheries“ of the communist system). The argument can be made that if the capacity for social action are related to people’s reflexive capabilities, citizens of the post-communist societies are not much less equipped for “managing” the changed reality (or there exist as big individual variations as in the Western societies).

Thus, if the Communist societies were defined in terms of lack of reflexivity in state structures, rather than lack of reflexivity in the society altogether, the logic of the new modernity theories allows us to speculate that the similar sources for new social integration can be found in the post-Communist societies, though perhaps, with a lesser role of state. Especially taking into account that in several societies, at one point these already transformed into democratisation movements, which, however, with its somewhat outdated (high modern) nation-state discourse, soon exhausted itself.

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