

Summary

The 141st *NZ* issue, our first in 2022, is for the most part concerned with the problem of multiple modernities. Over the last 25–30 years this problem has become ever more relevant as a result of broad changes in the context and subjects of the contemporary humanities, social and political sciences. The move away from the West-centric approach, along with the necessity to analyse the legacy of the last century's totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, while avoiding the clichéd perception of these regimes as regrettable obstacles in the otherwise smooth path of progress that leaves no room for alternatives – these are the main reasons behind the emergence of the concept of multiple modernities. The articles published in this *NZ* issue, organised into two thematic sections, attempt to develop this concept – or to question it.

A brief editorial in which we announce our plans for 2022 is followed by the first of the two main sections, "SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXTS AND MULTIPLE MODERNITIES", which opens with an article by Saïd Amir Arjomand, an American sociologist of Iranian descent. Titled "*World Regions and the Unpacking of Multiple Modernities: A Pluralistic View of Global Sociological Theory*", it outlines the specific range of problems related to multiple modernities. Jeremy Smith, an Australian sociologist, considers an example related to Japanese modernity (the Meiji restoration era, 1868–1889) against the background of civilisational traditions and Western innovations rapidly introduced in the

country at the time, paying special attention to the public reaction to modernisation and Westernisation. In "*Legal Cultures: Comparing European, Chinese, Islamic and Russian Legal Development*", the American historian Toby E. Huff reconstructs the trajectory of European law, seen here as a primarily historical phenomenon, pointing out what he believes to be the unique and highly valuable nature of the Western path. This piece will certainly cause objections from scholars whose work is grounded in more progressive views. The section concludes with an article by Mikhail Maslovsky in which he offers a comparative analysis of Brazil's and Russia's modernisation processes in the 20th and early 21st centuries, stressing the fact that both are examples of modernities, albeit following paths different from the main thoroughfare.

The second thematic section, "MODERNISATION AND ALTERNATIVE MODERNITIES", opens with a seminal article by Johann P. Arnason, one of the founders of this branch of study. As suggested by its title, "*The Totalitarian Schism: Alternative Modernities of the 20th Century*", the main focus of the piece are two totalitarian phenomena of the past century, the Nazi and the Soviet projects, positioned at the opposite ends of the political spectrum. A more detailed analysis of the Soviet project as an alternative modernity is offered by Yulia Prozorova, the guest editor of both main sections of this *NZ* issue, in her article "*Democracy and Soviet Modernity*". To conclude the section, and to summarise the discussion thus far, we

publish a piece by the Dutch researcher Paul Blokker, *"The Strange Non-Death of Modernization Theory"*, which, in its turn, draws on present-day material sourced primarily from post-communist European states and societies.

The theme of multiple modernities is, in a sense, further developed in the latest instalment of NZ INTERVIEW, in which our regular contributor Richard Marshall talks to Alan Macfarlane, one of the classics of British anthropology. The conversation begins with a discussion of the work and views of Ernest Gellner, a prominent philosopher and social anthropologist. Macfarlane, once a friend of Gellner's and a fellow Cambridge don, strongly disagrees with him on the question of "Western modernisation-related monotheism". The interview goes on to discuss characteristics of certain Eastern civilisations and cultures, from Japanese and Chinese to those pertaining to various population groups of Nepal, where the British anthropologist spent many years conducting his research.

The 141st issue continues with a new feature, one of NZ 2022 innovations: THE REVERSE OF THE METHOD, a column by the political scientist Tatyana Vorozheikina, an expert on Latin America. The title is borrowed from the Russian translation

of *"El recurso del método"*, a novel by the Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier which portrays a Latin American dictator. Here, dictatorship viewed in relation to democracy is regarded as a "method", a means by which the state and society operate. The new column will explore the reverse of this method as its central theme, beginning with a story set in Chile. This NZ issue also contains two other regular columns: Alexei Levinson's SOCIOLOGICAL LYRICS and RUSSIAN INTELLECTUAL JOURNALS' REVIEW by Alexander Pisarev.

Elsewhere in the issue, CASE STUDY features a comprehensive article by the German-American researcher Anika Walke, *"Testimony in Place: New Approaches to Witnessing the Holocaust in Belarus"*. In POLITICS OF CULTURE, Vadim Mikhailin and Galina Belyaeva continue to interpret post-war Soviet cinema, this time turning to late Soviet school-themed science fiction and particularly *"Adolescents in the Universe"* (1975), a film by Richard Viktorov that was very popular in the USSR.

The issue ends with a NEW BOOKS section; among them Valery Dymshits response to, and a discussion of, Nadya Plungyan's book *"Wandering Stars: Soviet Jewry in Prewar Art"*, based on the eponymous exhibition held in Moscow last year.

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