Modernity: An Introduction To Modern Societies

The Rise of Modern Societies

Detlef Pforr 2012-01-01 Does modernization lead to the decline of religion? This question lies at the centre of a key debate in the sociology of religion. During the past few decades, sociologists have become increasingly aware of the limitations of the modernization paradigm, which was developed in the 1950s and 1960s by scholars, working with new sources of European data, who had discovered evidence that points toward an affirmative answer. This volume pays special attention to these trends and developments to provide the reader with an overview of the major arguments and evidence that have been presented in the debate on modernization versus religion.

Dimensions of Modernity

William Faulkner and the Faces of Modernity

The book offers a wide-ranging survey of the different dimensions of the crisis of identity; in so doing, they provide both theoretical and substantive insights into different approaches to understanding identity.

The nature of modernity has changed in recent decades and it will be of great value to anyone interested in the forces that are shaping our world today.

Emergence of a period of 'high modernity,' in which prior trends are radicalised rather than undermined. A post-modern social universe may eventually come into being, but this as yet lies 'on the other side' of these different changes.

The character of social changes is becoming more complex, and new approaches may be required to understand them. The international context is important, and the book examines the role of the world economy in shaping modernity.

The book concludes with a series of essays on the implications of this analysis for the future of Europe and the world.

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Religion and Modernity
Detlef Pollack 2017
This is not a book that provides a new integrated theory of religious change in modern societies, but rather one that develops theoretical elements that contribute to the understanding of some contemporary religious developments. Most of the approaches in sociology of religion are prone to emphasize either processes of religious decline or of religious upswing. For example, secularization theory usually includes a couple of relevant factors—such as functional differentiation, economic affluence or social equality—in order to account for religious change. However, the result of such a theory’s empirical analyses seems to be certain in advance, namely that the social relevance of religion is decreasing. In contrast, the religious market model devised by sociologists of religion in the US is inclined to detect everywhere processes of religious upsurge. Religion and Modernity: An International Comparison avoids a purely theoretically based perspective on religious changes. For this reason, Detlef Pollack and Gergely Rosta do not begin with theoretical propositions but with questions. The authors raise the question of how the social significance of religion in its various facets has changed in modern societies, and explain what factors and conditions have contributed to these changes.

The Transformation of Modernity
Michael Hviid Jacobsen 2017-10-05
This title was first published in 2001: For over 30 years it has been argued that contemporary society is undergoing a fundamental transformation. The portrait of the modern society or modernity offered by philosophers and social scientists from Hobbes to Parsons is no longer understood as a description of the final and highest stage in the social evolution of mankind. Modern society is not the end of history but simply another more or less contingent social and cultural formation on planet earth. This new perspective on modernity and its transformation, which has emerged from the modernist-postmodernist debate, is the subject matter of this book. It is addressed in a multidisciplinary and international way, both theoretically and empirically, and is explored not only in general and historical terms, but also through specific topics such as sexuality, identity, democracy, globalization, knowledge and leadership. Offering an important collaborative contribution to contemporary discourse in sociology, social psychology, politics and philosophy, this book represents a unique effort to come to grips with our obscure and elusive social position at the start of the 21st century.

We Have Never Been Modern
Bruno Latour 2012-11-01
With the rise of science, we moderns believe, the world changed irrevocably, separating us forever from our primitive, premodern ancestors. But if we were to let go of this fond conviction, Bruno Latour asks, what would the world look like? His book, an anthropology of science, shows us how much of modernity is actually a matter of faith. What does it mean to be modern? What difference does the scientific method make? The difference, Latour explains, is in our careful distinctions between nature and society, between human and thing, distinctions that our benighted ancestors, in their world of alchemy, astrology, and phrenology, never made. But alongside this purifying practice that defines modernity, there exists another seemingly contrary one: the construction of systems that mix politics, science, technology, and nature. The ozone debate is such a hybrid, in Latour’s analysis, as are global warming, deforestation, even the idea of black holes. As these hybrids proliferate, the prospect of keeping nature and culture in their separate mental chambers becomes overwhelming—and rather than try, Latour suggests, we should rethink our distinctions, rethink the definition and constitution of modernity itself. His book offers a new explanation of science that finally recognizes the connections between nature and culture—and us, between our culture and others, past and present. Nothing short of a reworking of our mental landscape. We Have Never Been Modern blurs the boundaries among science, the humanities, and the social sciences to enhance understanding on all sides. A summation of the work of one of the most influential and provocative interpreters of science, it aims at saving what is good and valuable in modernity and replacing the rest with a broader, fairer, and finer sense of possibility.