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Theme section

The Formation of Modern Muslim Subjectivities: Research Project and Analytical Strategy

Keywords

modernity; multiple modernities; subjectivity; Islamic traditions; Islamic reform

Abstract This article introduces research questions, theoretical premises and analytical tools on which the Modern Muslim Subjectivities Project (MMSP) builds. The project takes its point of departure in sociological theories on the formation of modern forms of subjectivity and applies these to the Muslim world. The present article discusses three theories in particular: Theories on multiple modernities, theories on successive modernities and post-structuralist approaches to the formation of modern subjectivities. The hypothesis of the project – and thereby the hypothesis of the present article – is that the mentioned so-called “Western” theories can be used in our analyses and understanding of the modern Muslim world as well. The article presents this argument in three steps and illustrates the theoretical discussions with examples from the different subprojects carried out within the shared frame of the MMSP.

Why engage in research on modern Muslim subjectivities? The answer to this question is twofold. First of all, I advocate research in the formation of modern Muslim subjectivities as a well-suited approach to tackle more general questions of modernity. In particular, I consider inquiries into the construction of the modern subject as a fruitful research strategy in addressing some of the most persistent problems of social theory which are represented by dichotomies such as structure and agency, the role of macro and micro levels of the social or the differentiation be-

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tween society and the individual. Secondly, studying modern Muslim subjectivities makes a contribution to the ongoing theoretical debate on multiple modernities. In this debate, we are confronted with an ever increasing number of approaches and examples of modernity in the plural and contemporary research on Islam engages in this debate, too.

Since Saba Mahmood's publication of *Politics of Piety* a growing number of scholars in Islamic studies have discovered the theme of the modern subject (Mahmood 2005). However, in many of the studies of this innovative strand of modern subjectivity research in Islamic studies, the modern Muslim subject appears to be female, pietistic and representing a fundamental alternative to subjectivity in the so-called West. Taking my point of departure in both my overall theoretical concerns regarding the concept of modernity and my critique of this rather narrow representation of modern Muslim subjectivities in contemporary scholarship on Islam, this essay asks two interrelated questions: Are modern Muslim subjects fundamentally different from Western subjectivities? Or do they both represent historical variations on a common theme? To a large extent, these two questions were instrumental in framing the "Modern Muslim Subjectivities Project" (MMSP) that as an umbrella for a number of subprojects has been established at the University of Southern Denmark in 2013.¹

I will start with a brief and necessarily very sketchy discussion of the state of the art of authors of social theory and literature from Islamic studies relevant for the project. To be sure, given the overwhelming amount of publications in these two fields of scholarship, the reader should not expect a detailed review of the literature. Rather, I situate the MMSP in referring to a few paradigmatic examples with respect to both social theory and Islamic studies. In the first part I argue that both disciplines are still hostage to an overarching and mutually reinforcing discourse of alterity between Islam and the West. In a second step, I discuss the concept of multiple modernities and introduce the modern subject as a conceptual tool to study modernity and its multiple historical realizations. Here, I advocate modern subjectivity formation as an analytical strategy for understanding modernity in both its generic form and its multiple appearances. Finally, I move on to the more specific framework of research of the Modern Muslim Subjectivities Project and illustrate it

1. I am grateful for two grants by the VELUX Foundation and the Danish Council for Independent Research (FKK) respectively which have made possible the establishment of this larger umbrella project. More information about activities, subprojects and publications is available under the following web-link: sdu.dk/en/om_sdu/institutter_centre/ih/forskning/forskningsprojekter/mmsp

with references to scholarly literature and to some preliminary empirical findings of those researchers who together with me have been working on it and contribute to this special issue of the Danish *Tidsskrift for Islamforskning* (Islamic Studies Journal).

State of the art: juxtaposing religion and Western liberalism

In designing the framework for the MMSP I took my inspiration from the reading of Andreas Reckwitz' book on modern subjectivity formation. In *Das hybride Subjekt* (The Hybrid Subject) Reckwitz developed a number of analytically useful categories of modern subjectivity. Departing from Michel Foucault's general perspective of the construction of modern subjects as a complex process of the elaboration of oneself in everyday life, Reckwitz synthesized a broad variety of studies of cultural, historical and sociological inquiries. Addressing modern subjectivity formation in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, these studies basically draw on the historical experiences of Western European and North American peoples. In elaborating his conceptual apparatus, the empirical focus of Reckwitz is on the history of Great Britain, Germany, France and the United States. To be sure, Reckwitz himself is aware of this limitation and points in the introduction to his book to his omission of the "rest of the world." There he states that the most important restriction of his study is its focus on European and Northern American culture. Modernity, however, developed into world society. Consequently, he considered it the task of further studies to reconstruct non-Western subject cultures and their hybrid formations in time and geographical space. In addition, religion does not play a role in the construction of those three hegemonic cultural types that, according to Reckwitz, have dominated modern subjectivity formation in the West. Therefore, he appeals to undertake future research in taking up other relevant fields of discourses and practices for the formation of modern subject cultures such as politics, law and religion (Reckwitz 2006, 29-30).

With his omission of religion and his focus on the history of a few Western countries, Reckwitz followed a well-established

kind of reductionism in contemporary social theory. Social theorists tend to rely in their conceptual discussions on empirical references to the history of the West. Even more important, leading social theorists such as Zygmunt Baumann, Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, Michel Foucault or Charles Taylor consider their different concepts of modernity to apply predominantly to the analysis of Western societies alone. They argue that the phase of “liquid modernity,” the advance of “risk society,” the shift toward “late modernity,” forms of “modern governmentality,” or the rise of “secular humanism,” has characterized social developments in Western societies.² In sharp contrast to one of the founding fathers of sociology, Max Weber, contemporary social theorists underpin their theoretical insights with historical data from the Western world alone. Seemingly they have abandoned building their conceptual reflections on the comparative study of world cultures that had once characterized Weber’s work. This Weberian tradition, a sociological approach to the study of cultural history in a global dimension, has only been maintained by a comparatively small group of scholars, most important among them those who have been advocating “civilizational analyses” as a model for studying social change in a transnational perspective. While this model has not yet been fully incorporated in mainstream sociology (Tiryakian 2001, 283), it has increasingly been discussed in various branches of the humanities and social sciences under the term of “multiple modernities” (Eisenstadt 2000).

The widespread assumption of the exclusiveness of Western modernity finds its mirror image in the field of Islamic and Middle East studies. In his famous book *Orientalism* Edward Said (1978) has fundamentally criticized this previously hegemonic tradition of oriental exceptionalism in Islamic studies. In the eyes of orientalist scholars the culture of the Muslim world was essentially different from the West, only understandable in departing from the alleged rootedness of Muslim social life in religious principles. Meanwhile, in contemporary Islamic studies this tradition only plays a rather marginal role although an influential group of “neo-orientalist” scholars has remained, such as Bernard Lewis, Daniel Pipes or Bassam Tibi (cf. Sadowski 1993). Looking at current scholarship on Islam, the discipline has increasingly incorporated and applied various elements of social theory and anthropological methods. Islamic studies have

2. These authors mention all their “Western” bias in: Baumann (2007), Beck (1986), Foucault (1980), Giddens (1991), Taylor (2007).

moved from the analysis of canonic texts to the exploration of forms of religious discourse and social practices in the everyday life of Muslims. The publication of *Politics of Piety* by Saba Mahmood (2005), for instance, initiated a series of studies about Islamic modernities in focusing on female piety movements. In her study of a pietistic women's movement in Cairo, Mahmood explicitly wanted to criticize feminist theories that build exclusively on "secular-liberal understandings of agency, body, and authority" in constructing the everyday lives of modern women (Mahmood 2005, 191). In *An Enchanted Modern*, Lara Deeb (2006) stressed further this argument of the existence of modern models for female subjects beyond the constructs of Western Liberalism. In analyzing the discourse, symbolic representation, and social practices of a Shiite women's movement in Beirut, Deeb pointed to their specifically modern desire to live an authentic form of Islam representing an alternative way of life to what they consider to be the moral emptiness of Western modernity.³

The ethnographic studies of Saba Mahmood and Lara Deeb reflect a currently popular attempt to examine the modern Muslim world in claiming "to approach Islam on its own terms" (Haj 2009, 5). This strand of research has been dealing with various kinds of Islamic modernities whose representatives have explicitly understood themselves in terms of modern alternatives to the hegemonic representation of modernity by the so-called secular West. In this way, contemporary research on Islamic modernities tends to apply a similar exclusivist and therewith reductionist perspective on their subject area as the abovementioned social theorists. At least implicitly, they both continue within the discursive paradigm of a principal alterity between Islam and the West. It is the central concern of the MMSPP to break with this circular reinforcement of exclusivist and reductionist perspectives. Therefore its core hypothesis claims that the critical application of concepts of so-called Western social theory to Muslim contexts can tell us something about ongoing social transformations in the Muslim world. In methodological terms, this approach can be labeled as a form of "heuristic Eurocentrism". Coined with reference to the work of Max Weber, this term means basing cultural studies on ideal types that have been derived from European social experiences (Huff and Schluchter 1999). As heuristic instruments, however, we employ

3. See in particular the books of: Deeb (2006), Hafez (2011), Jouili (2015), Mahmood (2005), and McLarney (2015). For a more detailed discussion of the state of the art in this field of Islamic studies, see Jung (2017, chapter 2).

these concepts only for analytical and interpretative purposes. They do not represent normative blueprints about the ways in which modern societies ought to unfold. In doing so, our project aims at indicating a more global relevance of these concepts beyond their Eurocentric origins and therewith questioning the very assumption of the exclusiveness of Western modernity as such.

Based on these methodological premises, the MMSP puts its focus on similarities in the historical analysis of social developments in the Western and Muslim worlds. However, this focus on similarities does not imply that we discard differences. On the contrary, we claim that our understanding of differences has to be grounded in more precise knowledge about similarities. Having been academically raised in the atmosphere of Weber's neo-Kantian epistemology, in my view the observation of differences logically implies the conscious or unconscious application of universals. In methodological terms, we therefore use the "Eurocentric" conceptual tools of social theory to develop a standard against which we interpret differences resulting from historically contingent paths of social change. The MMSP aims at combining social theory with Islamic studies in a novel way. Firstly, it wants to contribute to the field of cultural studies in showing the fruitfulness of the applicability of supposedly "Western concepts" in "non-Western" contexts. Secondly, it wants to enhance our knowledge of the multiple ways in which Muslims have constructed historically different forms of "modernities." From a comparative perspective we aim at researching Muslim modernities as an inherent part of the evolution of global modernity (Jung 2016a, 23).

Multiple modernities, successive modernities and the formation of modern subjects: the analytical framework of the Modern Muslim Subjectivities project

In the 1950s and early 1960s, social scientists tended to perceive modernization as a more or less linear historical process of the convergence of societies toward one institutional, organizational, and cultural model. From this perspective of classical modernization theory, Daniel Lerner once concluded in *The Passing*

of *Traditional Society* that the West is what “the Middle East seeks to become” (Lerner 1958, 47). Today, hardly anybody in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies would dare to make such a claim. This scholarly representation of modernization as a linear convergence of societies has been deconstructed by postcolonial, postmodern, and poststructuralist theories. In contemporary social research modernity is narrated in multiple forms, and it is the term multiple modernities that became the buzzword of our times. The late Israeli sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt coined this term in basing it on his more general civilizational theory (Eisenstadt 2000). In borrowing from the axial age theory of the German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), Eisenstadt argued that different civilizational complexes such as Confucianism, Hellenism, Judaism, Hinduism, and, as historical late-comers, Christianity and Islam have reacted to the “program of modernity” in historically different and path-dependent ways (cf. Jaspers 1956). Eisenstadt defined modernity as a distinct, cultural, political and institutional program with its origin in the West. Structural features of modernity such as capitalism, urbanization, industrialization and the rise of the modern state have expanded throughout most of the world. Yet, contrary to the expectations of classical modernization theories, according to Eisenstadt’s reasoning, this has not led to a convergence of societies but to the appearance of multiple modernities. Historically we observe modernity to develop in changing patterns of culturally and institutionally varying forms over a common theme (Eisenstadt 2001, 321-22).

Instead of understanding modernization as the subsequent retreat of tradition, Eisenstadt’s concept of multiple modernities reintroduces religious traditions. Through the lenses of his approach, Eisenstadt suggested understanding different forms of modern culture as a combination of the program of modernity with distinct historical and religious traditions. In the current scholarly debate, however, the use of the term of multiple modernities has been largely detached from Eisenstadt’s theoretical premises, turning it into a kind of catch-all term for global cultural diversity (Thomassen 2010, 338). In addition, the approach of Eisenstadt did not really take into account the various different imaginations of modernity, which have evolved within civilizational complexes. Contemporary research on Islamic modernities exposes a multiplicity of ways in which Muslims have imagined modernity based on a broad array of institution-

4. For examples of this plurality of Muslim modernities, see Cevik (2016); Cook and Lawrence (2005); Jacobsen (2001) Mohamed Nasir (2016); and Peterson (2011).

al and normative ideas.⁴ For our project this raises the question as to how one explains these observable multiple modernities within Islam.

In order to answer this question, the analytical framework of the MMSP combines Eisenstadt's insights with some of the conceptual tools of Andreas Reckwitz' types of modern subjectivity formation and Peter Wagner's theory of successive modernities. Reckwitz defined the modern subject as the paradoxical result of the necessity of constant individual self-elaborations and the simultaneous subjugation of modern individuals to structurally prescribed cultural types. In this way, he is clearly following Foucault's idea of the modern subject. Modern subjectivity appears on the micro level of social analysis in form of a complex, difficult, and idiosyncratic elaboration of oneself (Foucault 1988, 41). Based on this assumption of Foucauldian self-hermeneutics, Reckwitz discerns from the Western history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries three subsequent hegemonic types of modern subject cultures: the morally sovereign bourgeois subject, the peer-group oriented type of the salaried masses, and the postmodern subject of the creative worker and entrepreneur (Reckwitz 2006). At the micro level, these three cultural types are constructed and reproduced within three distinct complexes of social practices: the individual as a working subject, as a subject of private and intimate relations (intimacy) and as a subject of consciously applied technologies of the self.

In my own reading, these three cultural types in Reckwitz' theory are closely related to Peter Wagner's three successive forms of modern social orders. The imaginations of successful individual forms of selfhood relate to normatively imperative structures of social order. In his theory of successive modernities, Wagner characterized the first hegemonic modern order in nineteenth-century Europe as a form of "restricted liberal modernity." In this first type of modern social order the liberal rules of a tiny elite only applied to a narrow segment of society to the exclusion of the population at large. In the early twentieth century, then, Wagner observed the rise of a state-centered model of organized modernity that gradually replaced the restricted liberalism of the nineteenth century. The major pillars of this form of modernity, for which Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck coined the term "first modernity," were collectively shared be-

liefs in linear progress and instrumental rationality. The pervasive idea of a principal management of society from above permeated the social imaginaries of this type of organized modernity. Since the second part of the 20th century, however, the rise of a pluralistic form of modernity has challenged the hegemony of organized modernity. In Wagner's third type of modernity the norms of pluralism, individualism and the disembedding of institutions from their local contexts represent the core traits of modern society. At the micro level, this type of "late" (Giddens) or "liquid" (Baumann) modernity, then, has often been characterized by constant individual experiences of ambiguity, doubt and multiple choices.⁵

To sum up, the MMSP builds the core of its analytical framework on a combination of elements from Eisenstadt's theory of multiple modernities, Wagner's conceptual elaborations on successive modernities and Reckwitz' cultural sociology of the formation of modern subjects. Taking the specifically modern need of individuals to construct themselves as subjects, the theoretical design of the project departs from an interpretation of Foucauldian theory in light of Weber's methodological individualism. In doing so, however, we consider processes of individual identity construction, that is to say the hermeneutics of modern subjects, as always taking place in a structural context at the macro and meso levels. Here, Eisenstadt's civilizational complexes and their traditions, Wagner's imaginations of social orders and Reckwitz' hegemonic cultural types offer analytical tools for observing the interpenetration of micro, meso and macro levels in the construction of multiple forms of modernity by social actors. I consider the theoretical potential of modern subjectivity formation as a research strategy resulting from this cross-cutting of the above three levels of analysis by starting from the micro level. In the next section, I am going to illustrate this abstract analytical framework with some references to our ongoing individual research projects.

5. This paragraph on Peter Wagner's theory of successive modernities is synthesized from Wagner (2008, 2010 and 2012). For more elaborated descriptions of Wagner's theory and its application in a Muslim context, see Jung et al. (2014, 13-15) and Jung (2017, 25-26).

Researching modern Muslim subjectivities: themes and first findings of the subprojects

The MMSP provides the umbrella for a number of individual subprojects. These subprojects deal in various ways with some

aspects of our general research questions: the interrelation between modern subjectivity formation and Islamic traditions; the role of religion in modern Muslim imaginations of the good life and of legitimate social orders; and the relevance of conceptual ideal types for the analysis of Muslim modernities, which have their origin in Western social theory. Thus, the unity of the project is given by the overarching theoretical perspective and not by shared geographical, historical or social attributes of its individual subprojects. In their research efforts, the individual researchers are following their own specific approaches and scholarly interests. The above presented theoretical and analytical frame of reference serves only as a mutually shared horizon to which the subprojects relate, but not as an analytical grid that each researcher directly applies. In this sense, the general theory behind the MMSP has a predominantly heuristic purpose, rather than it representing theoretical assumptions, which the individual researcher puts to empirical test. In this section, I will present some of the themes and findings of our ongoing subprojects.

In a pilot project to the current MMSP, we explored the “intersection between political structures, civil society organizations, and the formation of individual selfhoods” in Jordanian welfare and Egyptian youth organizations (Jung et al. 2014, 171).⁶ The cases studies of *Politics of Modern Muslim Subjectivities* showed the usefulness of both Wagner’s ideal types of modern social orders and Reckwitz’ three cultural forms of modern subjectivities in researching Muslim settings. The conceptual apparatus based on the work of these two theorists allowed us to analytically organize the complexities of the empirical data that we collected in Jordan and Egypt. In our case studies, we observed on the organizational and on the individual levels a number of very idiosyncratic ways in which elements of these ideal types were selectively combined with Islamic traditions. It became clear that for many, but not for all, of our interlocutors references to Islamic traditions were imperative in constructing their organizational rationales and individual identities. The study clearly indicated the relatively hegemonic role of religious traditions in bestowing Muslim modernities with socially acknowledged authenticity. However, in making these references to Islamic traditions, religion was not the independent variable. With the help of Wagner’s and Reckwitz’ theoretical frameworks, it

6. This study was first undertaken together with Marie Juul Petersen and Sara Lei Sparre at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) in the years 2006-2007. Eventually, I transformed our research material into a book during a sabbatical at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, University of Victoria, Canada, between February and July 2012. My two collaborators meanwhile made their own careers and have not been part of the MMSP.

became apparent in which ways non-religious and globally relevant social imaginaries provided the cognitive and normative frameworks within which Islamic traditions served in shaping socially accepted institutions and morally appropriate individual modern life styles. In this way, Islamic welfare organizations and other NGOs, as well as very different forms of individually lived religious lives, represent instances of the construction of specifically Islamic modernities (Jung et al. 2014).

The findings of this pilot study, in particular the idiosyncratic combination of various social imaginaries with religious traditions and the relative hegemony of religiously molded discourses in shaping authentic types of Islamic modernities, were the starting point for designing the larger research project on modern Muslim subjectivities. In a number of journal articles and a recent book, we elaborated further on the theoretical framework and on its applicability to Muslim contexts (Jung 2016a and 2016b; 2017; Jung and Sinclair 2014; 2015; 2016). In *modernitet og moderniteter*, we presented the revised analytical framework of the MMSP and briefly applied it to the history of Islamic reform (Jung and Sinclair 2014). The thrust of the empirical argument of this article runs as follows: Beginning with the rather elitist nineteenth-century Islamic reform movement associated with figures such as the Egyptian Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), the Indian Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) or the Ottoman Namik Kemal (1840-1888), through the establishment of organized Islamist mass movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood (1928) to contemporary Islamic networks, organizations and movements, a number of similar patterns to the three dominant subject formations in Reckwitz' theory of the hybrid modern subject are evident. The typical shifts from a cultivated moral individuality to collectively sanctioned peer-group behavior to rather loosely organized forms of consumerist and creative self-made identities also can be discerned in the emergence of Muslim modernities. However, contrary to the dominant narrative of a secular modernity in the West, in the Muslim world this process has gone along with an increasing "Islamization" of modernity, that is to say with religion bestowing modern authenticity to imaginations of modernity.

In taking the example of Hizb ut-Tahrir, we demonstrated in another article the logic of this social process with respect to a single case. Here we point to the combination of different tech-

nologies of domination and technologies of the self in the party's attempt to transform its members into modern Muslim subjects. These subject positions represent the ideals of Hizb ut-Tahrir's Islamist worldview. The two concepts of social technologies behind Foucault's category of modern governmentality, so far mainly applied to liberal Western contexts, contributed well to our interpretation of the party's rationale. In exerting its own form of governmentality over its members, this Islamist party tries to construct modern Islamic subjects through mechanisms of social exclusion and the monopolization of religious means. The ideology of Hizb ut-Tahrir consists of specifically modern ideas about the state, politics and the self in combination with Islamic traditions. In this way, the party has formed its own version of an imaginary of Islamic modernity (Jung and Sinclair 2016).

As mentioned before, the various subprojects of the MMSP have developed their own topics and approaches in light of the heuristic framework that the umbrella project offers. This is more than apparent in Mark Sedgwick's contributions to the project, whose studies are an integrated part of his much broader research on Sufism and Neo-Sufism. When contemporary Sufism has been studied, it has generally been seen as a response to the threats of modernity (Van Bruinessen and Howell 2007). In his essay on "Eclectic Sufism in Contemporary Cairo", however, Sedgwick argues strongly for a very different perspective. In analyzing the case of the Egyptian reception of *The Forty Rules of Love*, he presents an example of the way in which a form of contemporary Sufism appears as the reflection in a Muslim context of similar factors to those that produced Neo-Sufist streams in the West: modern conceptions of authenticity and personal fulfillment, and responses to the instrumental rationality and scientific worldview of organized modernity. In the Arab reading of this book, the combination of modern global imaginaries with Islamic, in particular Sufi Islamic, traditions goes full circle, creating a form of cultural eclecticism instrumental for the implementation of the global through the local.

Similar to Sedgwick, Mervat Hatem deals with MMSP in her own way. As one of the leading scholars in Arab women studies, she addresses modern subjectivity formation through the conceptual apparatus of a gender approach. In looking at the field of intimacy through the lenses of successive modernities, Hatem

poses the question as to the ways in which personal life, heterosexual intimacy and the body have been discussed in the context of the two Egyptian revolutions. She argues that the 1952 and the 2011 revolutions were shaped by and attempted to address two historically specific crises of Egyptian modernity. In her essay to this journal, Hatem explains the framework for her contributions to the MMSP. She is problematizing conventional approaches to the study of gender and revolution through the contextualization of the histories of Islamic modernities, as suggested by the theoretical perspective of the MMSP, and their impact on the study of modern Muslim subjectivities. In her comparative view on two Egyptian revolutions, Hatem puts her focus on the changing relations that men and women had to work, to education, and to each other in the family, through intimate/private relations.

The research of Kirstine Sinclair is revolving around the relationship between Islam and the West. This research agenda she has been closely following in her own subproject for the MMSP which deals with Islamic universities in Great Britain and the United States. Her essay on the Cambridge Muslim College and Zaytuna College in Berkeley is an interesting analysis of the contextualized combination of modern higher education with Islamic education. Using elements of the analytical toolbox of the MMSP, Sinclair attempts to understand the combination of educating both successful working subjects and moral (religious) subjects at the same time. In doing so, both institutions draw on resources from the national and global contexts of education. Establishing themselves in close proximity to Cambridge University and Berkeley, for instance, the two Islamic universities inscribe themselves in a global discourse on higher education with reference to specific British and U.S.-American emblematic institutions. Moreover, they claim to continue Western traditions of the liberal art colleges, therewith revitalizing nineteenth-century approaches of educating modern subjects beyond the professional realm.

In addition to these three senior scholars, four PhD researchers have been involved in the MMSP with their own distinct research projects. Two of them are also represented in this special issue of the journal. Line Mex-Jørgensen's interest is in the relationship between the Egyptian revolution of 2011 and the formation of subjectivities in everyday life. More precisely, taking

her departure in the occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo, she is looking at the imaginations of a good social order and the good life that were behind the activities of this early stage of the revolution. In the article to this journal, Mex-Jørgensen presents very preliminary findings from a small set of data derived from slogans and songs. The article relates the imaginations of a post-revolutionary future in these data to the overall theoretical framework of the MMSP and tries to find out which elements of successive modernities and forms of modern subjectivities are represented in them. The project of Sofie Pedersen, then, takes a very different direction. She is again addressing Muslim minority communities in the West, more particularly integration policies vis-à-vis Muslims in Denmark. Pedersen's project puts its focus on the side of the state and its prescriptive campaigns to integrate ethnic and religious minorities into the Danish welfare state system. In her study, the theoretical framework of the MMSP serves as a heuristic tool to understand the construction of the normative standards Danish institutions apply in their assessment of what makes a "good Danish Muslim." The nexus of Pedersen's analysis is based on the interlacement of governing welfare state policies and the construction of individual identities.

Finally, there have been two PhD projects involved in the MMSP which are not represented in the collection of essays here. Gry Hvass Pedersen has also been working on Islamic universities but in Asia. Her case studies comprise the Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) in New Delhi and the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) in Kuala Lumpur. While both see themselves as Islamic, the meaning of this religious identity marker in the two cases seems to be quite different. This applies not only to the institutional level, but also to the way in which the respective students relate to Islamic traditions. Gry Hvass Pedersen published first findings of her fieldwork at Jamia in a recent article in which she looks more closely at the intersection of institutions and concepts of global higher education with both the national Indian context and Islamic traditions (Hvass Pedersen 2016). In *Oscillations of Nationhood: National Identity in the United Arab Emirates*, Martin Ledstrup contributed with a thesis to the MMSP which largely built on his own analytical framework derived from the German sociologist Georg Simmel. The thesis draws on fieldwork in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Ras al

Khaimah, the latter turning into the major empirical site of the study. In line with the overarching project, Ledstrup also put his focus on the meeting of the global and the local, of distance and nearness, that he captured through Simmel's concept of "in-betweenness." This encounter he explored in case studies about fashion and cars, the wearing of the national dress Kandoura and the role of automobiles, in Emirati society. Both cases show the inseparable unity of the global and the local from which patterns of meaning for modern subjects emerge (Ledstrup 2015).

Conclusions: What do we know and where do we go from here?

This essay is based on a preliminary assessment of the research on modern Muslim subjectivities as conducted by the research group of the MMSP since September 2013. Consequently, these conclusions refer to work in progress and are therefore of a tentative nature. In addressing different aspects of modern subjectivity formation, the various projects apply perspectives that integrate both conceptualizations of contemporary modernity on the structural and on the individual level. The projects of Sinclair and Hvass Pedersen are fine proof for this integrative capacity of subjectivity research. The two projects oscillate among the observation of global structures of higher education, Islamic traditions, national educational policies and individual student aspirations. Departing from the micro level of modern individuals trying to construct themselves as successful working subjects, these individual strategies are only understandable in analyzing them in the context of structural opportunities and constraints. The same applies to Pedersen's study in which global neo-liberal discourses, Danish welfare state policies and the narratives of individual role models interlace. All three levels play essential parts in the social interaction of migrants with Danish society. This research with its focus on the construction of modern working subjects is nicely accomplished by Hatem's work on the practices of establishing oneself as a subject of intimate relationships. Dietrich Jung's research on the Islamic reform movement further emphasizes this interlacement of macro, meso and micro levels in shaping different forms of modernity. His work on Islamic history of ideas, Sedgwick's analysis of

contemporary versions of Sufism, and Mex-Jørgensen's thesis on Egyptian constructions of the "post-revolutionary good life" show the usefulness of Reckwitz' and Wagner's analytical categories of cultural types and social orders. While the latter seem to represent globally acknowledged forms of modernity, their enactment depends on contingent local interpretations by Muslim intellectuals, contemporary authors and political activists.

In his theory of multiple modernities, Eisenstadt stressed the importance of the cultural heritage of "civilizational complexes" in shaping contemporary imaginations of modernity. In this heritage religious traditions often play a significant role. In particular when it comes to specifically Islamic modernities, references to religion have almost become imperative throughout the twentieth century. However, these references to religion themselves are subject to re-interpretations in local and national contexts. Eisenstadt's rather static concept of civilizations, therefore, does not help to understand the multiplicity of modernities within Islam. Here the post-structuralist theories of Foucault and Reckwitz offer analytical tools to grasp the historical growth of hybrid forms of modernity within the hegemonic claim of Islamic authenticity. While the reference to religious traditions has achieved a hegemonic status in Islamic modernities, the interpretation of these traditions is dependent on other discourses and social practices. Consequently, in the analysis of historical forms of Islamic modernities religion remains a dependent variable.

These findings indicate the utility of concepts of so-called Western social theory in order to understand instances of Muslim modernity. Approaching the history of Muslim people from the methodological perspective of "heuristic Eurocentrism" provides important insights into the ways in which Muslims have enacted and constructed modern institutions, ideas, norms and practices. From this perspective, specifically Islamic modernities represent inherent parts of global modernity. Moreover, in following this methodological path the empirical findings of the MMSP serve the purpose of a form of "analytical inductivism" (Rueschemeyer 1991). The initial theoretical perspective and its related analytical framework are necessarily based on previous research. Pure empirical observation without analytical tools and theoretical assumptions in mind is impossible. The application of analytical concepts derived from European history to Muslim contexts will feed back into the analytical and theoret-

ical framework from which we started. Consequently, these ideal types will lose their previously exclusively Eurocentric empirical content. This has already led to a number of conceptual revisions and innovations with regard to the MMSP's larger theoretical framework, some of which have been most recently published in a small book (Jung 2017). It will be a major task of future research efforts to utilize the findings of the various sub-projects to continue this way of analytical inductivism and to confirm, contest, and revise the conceptual apparatus from which we once started. This work on concepts will aim at underpinning further the preliminary answers to the two questions posed in the introduction to this essay with which I conclude. In my opinion the very visible varieties in both Muslim and Western modernities are not due to fundamental cultural differences. Rather, they represent the result of historical contingencies that have shaped different paths of modernization.

Abstract på dansk

Denne artikel præsenterer de forskningsspørgsmål, teoretiske præmisser og analytiske redskaber, som The Modern Muslim Subjectivities Project (MMSP) bygger på. Projektet tager udgangspunkt i sociologiske teorier om dannelsen af moderne former for subjektivitet og anvender dem i forhold til den muslimske verden. Nærværende artikel diskuterer især tre teoretiske kilder: teorier om mangfoldige moderniteter (multiple modernities), teorier om fortløbende moderniteter (successive modernities) og poststrukturalistiske tilgange til dannelse af moderne subjektiviteter. Projektets og dermed også artiklens hypotese er, at disse såkaldte "vestlige" teorier også kan bruges i vores forståelse af den moderne muslimske verden. Artiklen fremlægger dette argument i tre trin og illustrerer de teoretiske diskussioner med eksempler fra de forskellige delprojekter, som bliver gennemført inden for den fælles forskningsramme i MMSP.

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