

This paper will try to show to which degree the original modernist project, the prioritizing of reason as a project for a whole culture, has affected and still affects world affairs today. Therefore, three spheres will be analyzed: the strategical, economical and social sphere.

It is hard to point to the exact beginnings of the modernist project and modernism. Scholars agree to disagree on this issue, but it is rooted in enlightenment and features rationalism at its core. Modernity, as a result of modernist thought, is self-made by Western societies and was first applied thoroughly in the "New World". For some limited aspects of modernity, such as architecture, wide agreement about the period of modernism and even its end can be found, for general aspects of world affairs, as this paper will illustrate, the same cannot be said.

**The strategical sphere:** As a result of enlightenment and the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the notion of the nation-state was born. Sovereign states had not been a feature of world affairs before. Elements such as the rule of law, representative institutions and a respect for human rights developed. Today, world affairs are still structured in modernist ways, as nation states remain the prevailing system of geographical and, to a lesser degree, cultural order. In the past, the West exported its modernist project by force, which happens to a much lesser degree nowadays (Iraq might be a current example). Today, modernist thought is easier to describe as something non-Western societies import. Non-Western societies basically shop in the world of modernity and thus create multiple modernities by applying the framework of western civilization to their needs. The idea of one modernity to begin with is also challengeable, as pluralism has been a constant feature of modernity. Today, globalization diminishes the powers of nation-states, but this does not stipulate an end of modernism, as globalization is largely based on rationalism and thus modernist in itself.

**The economical sphere:** Science resulted in the industrial revolution and the West's superior technology in the production of weapons and commodities. Based on rationalism and science the West developed capitalism and was able to impose its ways onto the world. Today's neoliberal process of globalization is part of the modernist project, as reason seems to indicate that free markets with individuals as free, self-determining actors deliver the best results.

**The social sphere:** Modernism created a society that based reason at its core. Nothing came without a "why?", and even though all non-modernist cultures have or have had rationalist elements, none view reason as an end in itself. On a social level, modernism led to the definition of premodernism, a label used for people that could consequently be defined as inferior, undeveloped or primitive. In modernist societies, the individual had to move on the path of rationalist individuation, a preferable option to non-rationalist associations other cultures featured. Today, truly modernist thought is hard to find. One cannot argue that rationalism and science are of tremendous importance, but the beyond plays an increasingly important role in world affairs. Reason is not allowed to take humanity where it wants to anymore, as scientific progress in areas such as embryonic stem cell research are highly contested and nobody would agree that the jeopardizing of ones cultural self by means of knowledge and thus the emancipation from long-lived traditions and cultures is a favourable result of rational thought. Of course, human thinking is highly influenced by rationality and modernism, but not alone. Also, non-Western societies have gladly accepted items of modernist development on a strategical or economical level, but kept their social structures relatively unchanged.

**Conclusion:** One can conclude that world affairs are extremely influenced by modernist thought. It also seems to be impossible to define a division line between modernism and postmodernism, except in areas such as architecture where a common opinion about this division has been reached. As modernism is based on rationalism and science, a new economical, strategical or social sphere would have to be shaped by nonrational and non-scientific thought, which currently appears unrealistic. Therefore, the world will continue to develop in a modernist way and stay in a state of constant change. What might change are the internal margins the modernist project erected, as feminists, people with indigenous ancestors or environmentalists are not fully incorporated yet, but might do so when reasoning by those who marginalize entitles them to.