



Issues of Historicity, Succession, and Modernity In Socio-Civilizational Development

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47134/pssh.v3i4.737>

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Received: 22-04-2026

Accepted: 22-05-2026

Published: 22-06-2026



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Abstract: This article analyzes the continuity and contradictory nature of socio-civilizational development from the perspective of concepts of historicity, continuity, and modernity. Historicity is illuminated as the need to take into account the past stages of civilization and to critically review experience. It is argued that the continuity of traditions, cultural codes, and intergenerational connections can lead to long-term civilizational silence, while total negation can lead to the loss of identity. Modernity is analyzed as issues of adaptation to the near future in the context of globalization, technogenic transformation, and changes in values. The article examines the contradictions between historicity, continuity, and modernity, as well as the mechanisms of their emergence, using various civilizations as examples.

Keywords: Social Civilization, Historicity, Continuity, Modernity, Development, Globalization, Cultural Code, Transformation of Traditions

Introduction

The development of humanity and the evolutionary or revolutionary progress characteristic of societies are invariably grounded in specific traditions and accumulated experiences; no human society achieves a stage of development spontaneously or in isolation. Therefore, within socio-civilizational development, the phenomena of historicity, continuity, and modernity exist not only as scientific categories but also as problems intrinsically connected with objective reality, social necessity, and existential demands. The study of these issues, the elucidation of their socio-philosophical significance, and the determination of their role in the formation of civilization theory are essential both for the advancement of scientific knowledge and for identifying rational solutions to contemporary social problems.

Furthermore, the Turkic civilization examined in this study, together with its position, significance, and future within world civilization, is closely interconnected with the phenomena of historicity, continuity, and modernity. Indeed, historicity and continuity, in particular, have historically functioned as permanent characteristics of Turkic civilization.

In social philosophy, historicity is interpreted as a methodological principle for examining objective reality in its dynamic development [1, pp. 189–211]. The object or event under investigation must therefore be understood not as a static phenomenon, but as a process inseparably connected with real life and historical transformation. This methodological requirement imposes several important tasks upon the researcher.

First, the researcher must investigate the origins, genesis, and evolution of the phenomenon whose socio-philosophical essence is to be revealed. Second, the object of study should not be approached as fixed or immutable; rather, it must be analyzed dynamically within the context of real social needs, transformations, and historical changes. Third, the object should be examined together with its contradictions, internal tensions, and immanent characteristics. Fourth, the phenomenon must not contradict socio-civilizational development; on the contrary, it should embody positive significance and contribute to human and societal progress. Fifth, not every historical event automatically becomes an object of scientific inquiry. The selected phenomenon should enrich socio-civilizational development, introduce new intellectual or cultural dimensions, and elevate scientific thought to a qualitatively new stage. Sixth, and most importantly, the object must integrate the three temporal dimensions constituting the essential attribute of socio-civilizational development—past, present, and future—without which objective analysis becomes impossible.

Within this framework, historicity as a socio-philosophical problem raises a number of epistemological questions: Is the past evaluated through the perspective of the present or the future? Can the present and future guarantee an objective understanding of the past? Is the future always interpreted through historical experience, or does it possess alternative methods capable of providing rational responses to contemporary contradictions and challenges? More broadly, to what extent is historicity rationally necessary and methodologically useful in evaluating socio-civilizational development? Such questions expand the epistemological horizons of social philosophy and enrich it with new methodological approaches. However, these discussions must remain connected to concrete socio-civilizational problems; otherwise, they risk degenerating into speculation and tautology.

Socio-civilizational development incorporates the unity of the three temporal dimensions—past, present, and future—and it is often difficult to separate them analytically. Nevertheless, from a scientific perspective, the effective use of the retrospective method remains indispensable. According to Professor V. Alimasov, retrospective (historical) analysis constitutes a method for examining the genesis, stages of formation, dissemination, and systemic integrity of an object. Nothing in social existence emerges from nothingness; every phenomenon undergoes stages of emergence, development, decline, and transformation into new forms [2, p. 97]. Consequently, retrospective analysis seeks answers to fundamental scientific questions concerning the origin, formation, evolution, decline, and transformation of socio-cultural phenomena.

Indeed, if one proceeds from the socio-philosophical approach of Oswald Spengler, culture undergoes stages of birth, growth, maturity, aging, and decline, while modern civilization emerges upon the foundations of declining cultures [3, p. 24]. Spengler described this process as the “determination of future history,” placing historicity at the center of his theoretical framework.

Socio-civilizational development has often been studied through periodization and formational stages. Although recent decades have witnessed the emergence of alternative approaches in social philosophy and cultural studies—including theological (“yin and yang,” Arnold J. Toynbee), socio-psychological (passionarity, Lev Gumilev), axial-age theory (Karl Jaspers), cultural-civilizational (Spengler, Nikolay Danilevsky, Konstantin Kantor), division of labor (Émile Durkheim), spiritual-mental, “mentalological” (Sri Aurobindo), and chronological approaches (Ibn Khaldun)—the formational paradigm continues to retain a dominant position.

Critics of the formational approach reject its linearity, arguing that the complexity of socio-civilizational processes cannot be adequately represented through schematic models. Yet these alternative perspectives themselves often resort to schematic abstractions in attempting to explain historical reality. Science cannot replicate reality in its entirety; it inevitably interprets complex processes through conceptual models, theories, and paradigms, which are themselves products of subjective inquiry.

The evaluation of subjective realities such as culture, artistic creativity, art, and civilization has always generated methodological difficulties and contradictions. The primary challenge of retrospective analysis lies in the fact that its object belongs to the past, which cannot be fully reconstructed or repeated. This places particular demands upon research methodology in the study of culture and civilization.

Addressing this issue, V. Alimasov recommends several methodological approaches for researchers: distinguishing retrospective analysis from historicism; applying historicism to cultural-civilizational processes; utilizing comparative analysis in the study of cultural artifacts; employing analogy and isomorphism methods; integrating sociodynamic and futurological observation in the study of artistic creativity; applying projection methods to artistic and aesthetic ideas; and using falsification approaches when analyzing historical personalities and cultural heritage [4, p. 112].

Methodology

These methodological considerations confirm that socio-civilizational development is an extraordinarily complex phenomenon requiring multidimensional research approaches. Historicity is not merely a methodological preference of the researcher; rather, it is an immanent characteristic of the object itself and a rational means of comprehending reality.

Continuity, in turn, represents the transmission of cultural and civilizational heritage from one generation to another, from older subjects to younger ones. Without continuity, socio-civilizational development—and social existence more broadly—would lack

permanence, coherence, and sustainability. As a principle, continuity guarantees intergenerational connection and historical memory. Without historical memory, each generation would be forced to rediscover socio-civilizational achievements anew.

The prominent ethnographer Margaret Mead interpreted continuity as a guarantee of evolutionary cultural development [5, p. 30]. Drawing upon Mead's ideas, cultural theorist S. N. Ikonnikova identified three types of cultural transmission: the postfigurative type, in which younger generations learn from elders; the configurative type, in which both generations learn together; and the prefigurative type, in which elders learn from younger generations [6, pp. 312–317].

Result and Discussion

These cultural types embody the principal dimensions of historicity and continuity. In postfigurative culture, continuity functions largely in a monological form: the older generation assumes the dominant educational and moral role, transmitting socio-civilizational values to younger generations. Spengler's conception of culture as undergoing birth and growth closely corresponds to Mead's postfigurative stage. In this context, the older generation bears responsibility not only for cultural transmission but also for the future trajectory of socio-civilizational development itself. A generation indifferent to this responsibility is simultaneously indifferent to the future.

Configurative culture, by contrast, presupposes collaborative learning between generations [7, pp. 102–128]. Here, "learning" should be understood broadly—as the joint processes of acquisition, creation, and transformation of socio-civilizational values. Socio-civilizational development cannot remain confined within a postfigurative model, for such confinement would undermine continuity and produce intergenerational rupture. Instead, generations must function as mutually complementary and supportive subjects. Civilization itself emerges through their cooperative efforts.

However, this raises further questions regarding the forms, mechanisms, and scope of such cooperation. The institutions of education, morality, and cultural transmission have historically sought rational responses to these challenges by developing diverse methods and technologies of influence. Yet every historical epoch produces new socio-civilizational problems requiring new solutions. Consequently, each generation is compelled to reinterpret continuity according to its own historical conditions. This sociodynamic phenomenon cannot be denied, for it constitutes an essential attribute of social life and cultural development.

Modern society, particularly in the contemporary era, increasingly demands mobility, pragmatism, creativity, and intellectual initiative. Only mobile and adaptive individuals are capable of fully utilizing the opportunities provided by modern socio-civilizational development. Thus, mobility and pragmatism have become defining requirements of contemporary civilization.

In reality, historicity and continuity transform socio-civilizational existence into a stable and meaningful phenomenon. Yet it is not merely these principles themselves, but

configurative relations, creative interaction, intellectual inquiry, and social mobility that align them with modernity. In this sense, modernity maintains an organic and dialectical relationship with both historicity and continuity [8].

In socio-philosophical literature, it is frequently argued that modernity is inherently embedded within historicity and continuity, and that modern science seeks its foundations in them. Friedrich Nietzsche even claimed that “the more we serve history, the more history serves life” [9, p. 119]. Yet serving the past cannot simply mean preserving historical artifacts. It also requires revitalizing them, transmitting them to younger generations as living symbols, and transforming historical values into active cultural and existential forces.

Thus, while retrospective analysis remains indispensable, prospective orientation—the application of historical values to contemporary challenges—is equally necessary. Modernity must therefore be understood not merely as present-day reality, but as a dynamic relationship between tradition, historical memory, and future-oriented development.

Past, present, and future constitute distinct temporal categories. The past can never become the present or the future; otherwise, temporal differentiation itself would disappear. Nevertheless, socio-civilizational development simultaneously preserves and transcends temporality. Although human life is transient and irreproducible, civilization seeks permanence through tradition, cultural artifacts, and collective memory. In this sense, culture and civilization resist the transience of time by granting relative permanence and continuity to human achievements.

Consequently, socio-civilizational development differs from other social phenomena by its capacity to immortalize finite human existence through cultural creation. Within it, the three dimensions of time—past, present, and future—coexist as expressions of human aspirations toward meaningful and perfected existence.

Modernity also reflects the relationship of ethnic groups and superethnic communities to real-life problems. Such relationships inevitably rely upon traditions, for tradition constitutes the core of civilization. Tradition should not be interpreted as a rigid or static inheritance; rather, every civilization generates new traditions appropriate to its historical conditions. Modernity becomes a socio-civilizational phenomenon precisely when it is grounded in tradition.

Researchers distinguish between “Tradition” as the foundational condition of civilization and “traditions” as everyday customs and practices. The former encompasses language, mentality, religious beliefs, national character, and fundamental values resistant even to social revolutions. The latter includes changeable aspects of daily life such as fashion, consumer culture, media influence, technological development, and occupational skills.

While culture and civilization differ conceptually, culture reflects what an ethnos or superethnos does, whereas civilization expresses how these activities are organized and realized [12, p. 13].

Conclusion

Modernity requires adaptation to the demands imposed by contemporary social life. Market economy, for example, profoundly influences socio-economic relations, production systems, and consumer culture. Without such transformations, socio-economic development and modernization become impossible. Contemporary globalization and international integration increasingly proceed through adaptation to the global market economy, which simultaneously generates opportunities and risks. The formation of a globalized economic and cultural space may threaten weaker ethnocultural identities through processes of assimilation and unification. In response, advocates of ethnocultural preservation emphasize the necessity of protecting national identity within global processes.

Modernity also shapes collective perceptions of “we” and “ours,” often generating opposing notions of “they” and “theirs.” Under certain conditions, historicity and continuity may intensify such distinctions and produce conflicts between ethnic or national communities. Territorial conflicts and ethnic tensions that emerged in the post-Soviet and Eastern European regions during the late twentieth century illustrate how socio-civilizational identities may become sources of confrontation.

Nevertheless, modernity itself should not be rejected. It constitutes one of the most significant dimensions of socio-civilizational development. Culture and civilization do not merely strive toward modernity; rather, they incorporate it as a stable and intrinsic attribute of human and social existence. Genuine modernization occurs naturally, through the selective acceptance of elements compatible with a society’s cultural foundations. When modernization is imposed coercively through forced assimilation, it produces resistance, nostalgia for traditional lifestyles, and intensified conflict between old and new values, potentially leading to profound social upheavals and even revolutions.

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