

IN HOMAGE TO SHMUEL N. EISENSTADT

On behalf of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

This book pays tribute to a great intellectual leader, scholar and teacher: Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt. Professor Eisenstadt is a rare combines dealing scholar whose working with detail and being rooted in fact but, at the same time, generating sweeping conceptualizations and bringing to the fore grand unifying themes. In addition, he exemplifies how local-oriented research can be incorporated into a global scheme. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Israeli academic community are fortunate that a thinker such as Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt has played such an important and formative role. In the name of his large intellectual offspring, in the name of his alma mater and his academic home, and in the name of the Israeli scholarly community, it is an honor and pleasure to be able to pay this tribute.

Menachem Magidor

President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

On behalf of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities

On the occasion of the publication of this book at his homage, I have the honour of conveying the Academy's blessing to Professor Eisenstadt, coupled with our wish for many more years of undiminished, fruitful creativity. Professor Eisenstadt was among the first members to be elected to the Academy, and he is today the most senior colleague in the Section of Humanities. Over the years, he has made contributions of singular significance to the Academy with the gift of his wise counsel, in times of plenty as well as in harder days.

I am not a sociologist, and my interests as a historian are rather remote from the scholarly discourse of the social sciences and the numerous fields of research to which Professor Eisenstadt has turned his critical attention. I have, however, approached one aspect of Eisenstadt's scholarly concerns, that of axiality. He strongly urged me to come to the first conference on the subject at Bad Homburg

and to the second one in Florence. This professional encounter with him was a momentous one for me; I was dazzled by his intellectual ability, the breadth of the knowledge at his disposal, his organizational ability, and the astuteness of his comments, as well as by the geniality and tact that he displayed in every interaction.

I wish to convey the Academy's greetings to the honoured contributors to this book who have gathered from all over the world, from the Far East to the furthestmost west. The chapters presented in this book bring some of the finest minds in the field today to bear upon Eisenstadt's manifold interests, all of which are at the forefront of sociological concern in the twenty-first century.

Hayim Tadmor

Vice-President of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities

On behalf of the International Sociological Association

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to pay homage to Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, on the occasion of his 80th birthday and almost 60 years of academic work. As President of the International Sociological Association (ISA), the biggest professional representation of sociologists in the world, I guess I can speak on behalf of the world sociological community.

This community is indebted to Eisenstadt in many senses. He certainly belong to those great scholars who left a strong imprint on the sociology of our time. His innovative and deep theoretical work, particularly in the macrosociological and historical scrutiny of great civilizations and multiple modernities, has opened new vistas in the interpretation of the heritage and prospects of humankind. With no exaggeration Eisenstadt is one of the XXth century sociological classics. At the same time he has been probably the most international of the great sociologists. His readiness for the active participation and always creative contribution to innumerable conferences, seminars, symposia, and research projects all over the world has become famous. Within the association that I represent, the ISA, he has not only been one of the founding fathers but then took part in almost all world congresses of sociology, where his presentations were always true intellectual events.

Sociologists of the world are deeply grateful to him for the wisdom he has shared with all of us, for his commitment to the disci-

pline and his openness to the world and its challenges. We wish him many more years of intellectual creativeness, health, prosperity and deserved satisfaction with a work so important for others.

Piotr Sztompka
President of the International Sociological Association

On behalf of the International Institute of Sociology

I want to congratulate Shmuel Eisenstadt, first as his former student in Jerusalem, second as a member of the Israeli sociological community, and third as the president of the International Institute of Sociology.

I was a student, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I remember Shmuel Eisenstadt's seminars as a genuine intellectual experience. My comrades and I have all been deeply marked by his intellectual and scientific mind, as well as, of course, by his good nature and openness to discussion. I don't remember that he ever raised his voice, got anxious or intolerant. Year after year, we liked to gather in his classroom and ponder, in good spirit, on a new subject, a new model, a new approach, according to his changing interests. We have learned from him about sociological theories, of course, but also about age groups, revolutions, socialism, Latin America, the Moslem world, Africa, the Welfare State, stratification and, last but not least, the Israeli society. Later, from the distance or from the close, we also followed his investigations of fundamentalism, Japan, axial-age civilizations, and his comprehensive grasping of multiple modernities. Shmuel Eisenstadt has always been for us a living reference, and a source of knowledge, understanding and perspectives. It was an invaluable privilege to have such a great professor. The most difficult problem for his students was that, as a rule, he always finished writing a new book, before we finished reading the former one.

I am also proud to congratulate Shmuel Eisenstadt on his eightieth anniversary, as a member of the Israeli sociological community. Shmuel Eisenstadt was the worthy student of Martin Buber in Jerusalem many years ago, and he also served as the editor for his work. Ever since, Shmuel Eisenstadt has laid down the ground for the development of an Israeli sociology; he set up a whole generation of students who, in turn, raised students of their own. For years,

Shmuel Eisenstadt served as the head of the Department of Sociology at the Hebrew University from where came those who brought sociology to Israel's new universities that were created in the 60s and 70s. Up to now, Shmuel Eisenstadt is the leading figure of Israeli sociology and the greatest contributor to its presence on the world scholarly scene. A desired guest in the prestigious universities of the world and a member of major academies of social sciences, he has been the founder of schools of thought and the tireless forerunner of new perspectives.

It is also as the President of the International Institute of Sociology that I want to pay homage to Shmuel Eisenstadt. This Institute, the oldest world association of sociology that was created in Paris in 1893, holds world congresses every two years and numbers a following of sociologists on all continents. For many years, Shmuel Eisenstadt is a prominent key has been speaker to IIS congresses; he has contributed enormously to its development and renown. His strongest contribution, if I may speak out my personal feeling, has been his participation in the preparation and realization of the 34th world congress that was held in Tel-Aviv in 1999. I had the privilege to closely cooperate with him on the academic program. He endowed the whole enterprise its genuine importance and impact. Again, two years later, in 2001, Shmuel Eisenstadt was again a major contributor to the 35th world congress in Krakow. The Bureau of the IIS, the members of the association as well as the many friends of the IIS join me to wish Shmuel Eisenstadt to continue to amaze his colleagues and admirers, with his fruitful endeavor, for the decades to come.

Eliezer Ben-Rafael

President of the International Institute of Sociology

On behalf of the Central European University at Budapest¹

Prof. Shmuel Eisenstadt is today one of the most powerful intellectual figures of our time. He has done more than any other scholar to combine sociological theory with historical and empirical research

¹ On the occasion of the award of an honorary doctorate to S.N. Eisenstadt by the Central European University, Budapest, 4th December 2003.

besides promoting our knowledge of the uniqueness and affinities, as also the interrelationships, of ancient and modern societies in Asia, Europe, Middle East, North and Latin America. No one has done more to raise the appreciation of the possibilities of sociology amongst related disciplines and especially in the fields of history and the humanities. If today modern and medieval historians, classical scholars and students of religion, scholars of ancient India and modern Japan, look at sociology as a source of deeper understanding of their own subjects, it is in no small measure due to the reception of his wide-ranging writings all over the world.

Prof. Eisenstadt has consistently framed all his enquiries in a comparative framework often spanning several continents and centuries. He has provided bold innovative answers to the big questions in sociological theory. But more importantly, his scholarship has changed the nature of the very questions that we now ask. The hallmark of his scholarship, at the intersection of sociology and history, is its synthesis of a vast and varied body of specialist literature into a unitary and universal analytical framework for the comparative study of civilisations. His contribution to an analysis of social change in axial civilisations as well as in the modern world is unique thanks to his profound knowledge and understanding of times and of places outside the modern western world.

I can hardly think of a central problem in sociological theory on which Prof. Eisenstadt has not written during the course of his long and distinguished academic career. The range of issues he has dealt with is as impressive as the originality of his approach to them. He has had an abiding interest in issues of structural differentiation and social change but also in questions of agency, cultural values and meaning. His boundless intellectual curiosity has been brought to bear on questions of power, legitimation, charisma, trust, solidarity as well as on the role of elites, heterodoxies and protest movements in shaping both institutional continuity and change. His work stands out for its breadth of learning, its profound theoretical analysis and its ability to marshal vast amounts of historical evidence from a range of societies past and present. This empirical material is used by him in order to discuss a set of clearly formulated hypotheses. His extraordinary skill in bringing together abstract generalisations with concrete data in support of these hypotheses is a hallmark of his writings which has rendered them accessible to students and scholars across several disciplines and continents.

Prof. Eisenstadt was always ahead of his times in taking up questions which became fashionable many decades later. For example, he emphasised the importance of trust and solidarity in the early 1950s in his work on social change in Israel. He published an empirical study on youth culture in the mid 50s, a subject which has been the focus of a great deal of attention since the 1970s under the influence of cultural studies. As early as 1961 he explored the fruitfulness and the limitations of applying anthropological methods to the study of complex societies, a matter of continuing debate among anthropologists today as they question the traditional intellectual division of labour between sociology and social anthropology. With his work on the political systems of empires he opened a new era of macro-sociological comparative analysis in 1963 at a time when decolonisation and the emergence of new nation-states exercised the scholarly imagination and the “Age of Empires” was considered to be over. I do not think that he deliberately chose to swim against the tide with his choice of topics. Rather he remained unconcerned about the fashions of the time as his themes were derived from his own abiding scholarly interests. He chose to address some of the central theoretical questions in classical sociology but his work also shaped the terms in which these issues have been discussed since.

In Prof. Eisenstadt we honour an illustrious scholar who was, and continues to be, deeply involved in society and politics in the state of Israel and whose scholarship is also coloured by that experience; someone who has lectured at almost all major universities in the world but has not accepted a permanent teaching position outside his country. We honour in him a rooted cosmopolitan, someone whose moorings in Israel are as important as his reception of European intellectual influences, someone who has contributed as much to the intellectual life of his country as he has changed research paradigms in social sciences and humanities all over the world. He wrote his doctoral dissertation in Jerusalem with Martin Buber with whom he first studied Max Weber’s writings which exercised a formative influence on his intellectual pursuits. During the post-doctoral year he spent at the London School of Economics in 1947–48, he pursued this early interest in Weber’s comparative historical sociology with Edward Shils. But that year also introduced him to the comparative institutional analysis which was the hallmark of British sociology and social anthropology broadening his comparative framework beyond the Weberian one. Prof. Eisenstadt is commonly regarded

as working in the Weberian tradition, in fact he has often been described as the Max Weber of our times. But such an understanding of his work overlooks the role of his teachers Morris Ginsberg, David Glass and T.H. Marshall in his intellectual life. More importantly, it neglects the equally formative influence on his work of social anthropologists such as Raymond Firth, Audrey Richards and Fred Nadel with whom he also studied at the London School of Economics and those like Evans-Pritchard, Meyer Fortes, Max Gluckmann and Edmund Leach whose work he admired and assimilated in many subtle and sophisticated ways into his own analytical framework.

On his return to Jerusalem, in the then newly formed state of Israel, he took up a position as an assistant lecturer in the department of sociology headed by Martin Buber. Prof. Eisenstadt continued to teach at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem till 1990 where he was the Rose Isaacs Professor of Sociology from 1959 till his formal retirement in 1990. His published work has been as influential as his lectures and colloquia as a visiting professor in universities abroad. In a long and distinguished academic career he has been a visiting professor at universities or a Fellow of centres of advanced studies in the USA, England, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Latin America, Austria and Australia. He is a member of the Israeli Academy of Science and Humanities, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, the US National Academy of Sciences, and the Institute of Comparative Civilisations in Brussels. He received the prestigious Balzan prize for Sociology in 1988, followed by the Amalfi Prize in Sociology and Social Sciences as well as the Max Planck Forschungspreis. He has been awarded honorary doctorates from the universities of Harvard, Helsinki and Tel Aviv.

So the Central European University, Budapest is a latecomer in this respect. If the Central European University honours Prof. Eisenstadt a little after his eightieth birthday, it is because the university is only in its early teens and the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology in its infancy. Belated as this recognition may be, we at the Central European University have several ties and affinities with his life and work. First there is a primordial bond. Prof. Eisenstadt was born in Warsaw in a family that had settled there from central Europe. Secondly, there is an institutional affinity. Two years ago the university decided to build an integrated department of sociology and social anthropology which would cover the comparative

study of societies in all parts of the world. This is an intellectual project to which Prof. Eisenstadt has made an outstanding contribution.

Last year as I struggled to formulate an integrated curriculum for the new department which would overcome the nineteenth century disciplinary division of labour separating the study of the modern West from the rest which has been institutionalised all over Europe and the USA, I drew inspiration from Prof. Eisenstadt's comparative programme on multiple modernities. It was then that I discovered to my astonishment and delight an early article of his titled "The relations between sociological theory and anthropological research". Written in 1949 for the British anthropology journal "*Man*", it begins with the sentence "in my view there is no theoretical distinction between sociology and social anthropology". The academic community at the Central European University not only shares this vision but decided to institutionalise it. In my view it is thus fitting that we celebrate the opening of the new department at the Central European University this year with the award of an honorary doctorate to Prof. Eisenstadt.

But in addition to primordial ties and a shared comparative interdisciplinary social science perspective, three themes in Prof. Eisenstadt's work are an important focus of teaching and research at the Central European University. All three resonate strongly with the experience of its students from many different post-socialist societies: (1) the legacies of the making and unmaking of several empires; (2) a recognition of the paradoxes and precariousness of democracies; and (3) finally the idea of multiple modernities with its sensitivity to the tensions between the political and the cultural projects of modernity which are resolved in a variety of different ways in different contexts. It is to a brief treatment of some of these ideas that I now wish to turn.

In the *Political Systems of Empires* Prof. Eisenstadt explored the systemic conditions of the development, continuity and change of imperial regimes focussing on the role of what he called "free resources", resources not embedded in various ascriptive groups or social sectors. Although a classical structural-functional analysis in many ways, this innovative study went well beyond the limits of such a framework. What set the book apart from the dominant structural-functional paradigm of its day was its questioning of the natural givenness, the taken-for-grantedness, of any social system. Instead of taking existing institutional arrangements as its point of departure, the study

broke new ground by treating institutions and their continuity to be as much in need of explanation as the process of their transformation. It emphasised the central role of institutional entrepreneurs, elites and their coalitions in the construction and reproduction of different institutional settings. It not only recognised that cultural values and visions influence the actions of various groups but also traced how these ideals affected the dynamics of institutional development. On the one hand, it examined the specific mechanisms and politics by which bureaucracies maintained these regimes. On the other, it identified the importance of internal contradictions and conflicts among groups which in their complex and contingent interaction with external factors influence the course of development and the disintegration of empires.

Going beyond the argument of the book, Prof. Eisenstadt later extended his study to an analysis of the composition and the cosmological visions of major social groups examining the role of heterodoxies and movements of protest in the comparative dynamics of empires and early state formation. In the light of these analyses he then re-examined the relationship between action, culture and structure suggesting the need to modify some of the basic concepts of sociological theory, for example, those of centre-periphery, systemic needs or functional prerequisites.

Written 40 years ago, his work on empires and their changing fortunes has lost none of its significance, though Prof. Eisenstadt himself would probably be the first to acknowledge some of its limitations in retrospect. In fact, he has modified and extended his own earlier argument in the light of subsequent research, much of which was inspired by his own work. The *Political Systems of Empire* was sensitive both to the institutional constraints on social action and to the contingency of historical changes. But it also dealt with the diversity of their outcomes even under very similar historical conditions and structural features, a theme which would recur in Prof. Eisenstadt's later studies of patterns of modernity too. The focus on the interrelations between institutional patterns and cultural orientations of various social actors would also remain a central theme in his later writings. For example, when in the early eighties he took up a classic anthropological theme, the patterns of exchange in friendship and in patron-client relations, he shifted the traditional anthropological focus to show how different patterns of trust in micro and in macro settings were related systematically to different institutional formations.

If today many of these arguments, or this way of conceptualising the problem of agency, structure and culture seem self-evident to us, it is in no small measure due to the seminal contributions of Prof. Eisenstadt to these subjects.

Most recently it is his ideas on the plurality of the origins and outcomes of different trajectories of modernity in different regions of the world, its structural concomitants, historical pathways and cultural embeddedness which have attracted a great deal of attention across the social sciences in many parts of the world. His idea of multiple modernities has changed our understanding of modernity and led to a reappraisal of many traditional premises of modernisation theory. He has made a strong argument for replacing the classical linear teleological narrative of modernisation, which equates it with westernisation, by a recognition of the symbolic and institutional variability of various dimensions and configurations of modernity in different societies. He has focussed on those movements which have redefined and appropriated modernity in their own terms, be they ideological or cultural, both within Europe and outside it.

In numerous studies he has analysed the cultural and political programmes of modernity as it developed in western and central Europe with its distinct ideological and institutional premises and as it travelled to other regions of the world. As a result of the impact of his writings the idea of a homogenous and hegemonic western modernity which has dominated social science research for far too long has begun to be replaced by a recognition of the diverse origins, outcomes and contestations of modernity. Any pluralisation of modernity, therefore, must also acknowledge its multiple paths and patterns *within* Europe. Western European modernity, he has shown, is only one among many variations on the theme of modernity.

Given its historical precedence and its global diffusion and dominance, European modernity continues to remain a point of reference for other modernities, though as Prof. Eisenstadt shows, it is often a rather ambivalent one. In the light of his work we can rewrite the history of modernity as a story of the continual constitution and reconstitution of a plurality of cultural and political programmes including some rather violent and repressive ones. He has analysed not only the radical break from the civilisations of the axial age which modernity represents but also the internal antinomies of this western project, its unique conception of autonomous human agency, its radical transformation of the nature of political order and legiti-

macy, its restructuring of the permeability of the boundaries between centre and periphery within a society. Interestingly, he has contributed to the ongoing debates on globalisation by reminding us of the similarities and differences of contemporary patterns of globalisation in a historical perspective, thus pluralizing both modernity and globalisation. And he has also examined the transnational dimensions of fascist, communist and fundamentalist movements which have pursued different, and often contradictory, programmes of modernity in the 19th and 20th centuries.

No other scholar since Max Weber has explored so systematically the specificity of western modernity and the rupture with the past which it marked in European societies. He has explored its emancipatory potential and its exclusionary dynamics, he has contrasted its ideals of inclusion with its practices and drawn attention to its violence and repression. But what makes Prof. Eisenstadt's contribution to the study of modernity unique is his delineation of the common core of modernity together with an analysis of its enormous cultural and institutional diversity in different contexts including within Europe itself. At a time when the nature of European identity is a matter of public debate all over the continent and across the Atlantic, such a reformulation has enormous political implications, even if characteristically Prof. Eisenstadt does not spell these out himself. In a highly ideological and normative debate on "the end of history", the "clash of civilisations" and on the "old and new Europe", Prof. Eisenstadt's dispassionate and nuanced analysis is a very welcome interjection indeed. Acutely aware of the pernicious potential of both modernity and globalisation, he does not celebrate either. His work strives instead to situate both sets of processes in a historical context and study their variations in different locations. And it retains an acute sense of their antinomies and of the relative autonomy and degrees of freedom of various actors in shaping these phenomena in different ways and directions. It changes the terms of the debate and offers an alternative intellectual perspective. A perspective which is exemplary not the least due to its refusal to yield to the temptation to turn sociological theory into a mere diagnosis of contemporary affairs.

There are many other ideas of Prof. Eisenstadt's that I could discuss which would be of interest to this audience. But I cannot hope to do justice to his writings, the list of which spans a formidable 61 pages. It comprises 592 entries enumerating articles in all major

English language social science journals across the world. And it lists 94 monographs and edited books including translations into Hebrew, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Japanese and Korean. Their subjects range from classical sociological questions of structural differentiation and stratification to classical anthropological preoccupations like age sets among the plains Indians in north America. They include the absorption of immigrants in Israel, the generalisation of trust and patron-client relationships in Latin America, patterns of social change in India, Japanese civilisation in comparative perspective, charisma and institution building, the dilemmas of development in post-colonial societies, youth culture in Israel, the reconfiguration of the political in modern protest movements, the reconstruction of tradition in post-traditional societies, the modernity of religious fundamentalist movements, the deconsolidation of contemporary democracies and the dynamics of revolutionary change, to mention only a few of the topics which bear witness to the extraordinary range of his scholarly interests. He brings a wealth of historical and empirical material to bear on these issues moving effortlessly from the macro level to the micro level, linking social structure and cultural traditions with collective action by diverse groups of actors. Not everything he has written may be equally persuasive, but even when one disagrees with him one learns more than from most scholars.

Prof. Eisenstadt is no stylist. What his prose lacks in elegance, it makes up for in clarity and the coherence of the argument. One always reads him with profit, but listening to his lectures is a special pleasure. I do not know if it is years of teaching experience, or just a natural gift, which enable him to deliver a public lecture without even a set of notes, let alone a manuscript. Never rambling, timed to the minute, these well-structured oral presentations, in which he never loses the thread of his complex argument, could go into print without any alterations. His lectures have the informality of a personal conversation with him and bear some testimony to his delightful sense of humour of which there is no trace in his writings. But they would not qualify as Eisenstadt lite. However brief his talks, or informal the setting in which they are delivered, they are full of stimulating ideas. Remarkable is the effortless ease with which he links the large picture to little details drawn from a vast variety of sources. So lightly does he wear his learning that even audiences with a limited acquaintance of the enormous range of secondary

literature on which he draws find his talks and writings accessible. Yet even the specialist never fails to be impressed by the new insights she gains in her own fields of expertise from his erudition.

Prof. Eisenstadt himself has identified the one common concern in all his writings to be the problem of human creativity and its limitations, or put differently the exploration of the potential range of human freedom in a variety of social contexts. I hardly need stress the importance of this issue for the faculty and students of the Central European University as an institution devoted to the ideal of the promotion of open societies all over the world but especially in eastern and central Europe after long years of authoritarian rule. His ideas on the paradoxes and precariousness of democracies are not meant to sour the fruits of democracy but to caution us about the challenges ahead. His writings on the subject may not persuade those currently involved in the task of its global diffusion to give up their efforts. They are not intended to do so. By complicating the currently hegemonial simple narrative of the triumph of democracy worldwide, they seek to warn us against the seduction of easy solutions. That is the privilege and the prerogative of the intellectual.

Let me end this laudation on a personal note. Of all the scholars who contribute to this volume in his honour, I probably have the shortest personal acquaintance with Prof. Eisenstadt. But I have read with pleasure, and taught with profit, his writings for almost 20 years. Over the last few months in preparation for this laudation I have been able to renew my acquaintance with many of his writings, and to discover many more which I had missed earlier. Reading through the manuscript of his new book on “Political theory in search of the political”, which he gave me in Jerusalem this summer, I realised with some amazement that it would be his 95th published book. He is not only the most prolific reader that I know, but also the most prolific writer.

Prof. Dr. Shalini Randeria
The Central European University, Budapest