

Abstract of doctoral thesis

This thesis deals with the problem of community conceived as an important ideal in modern societies. Its departing point in understanding modernity is the concept of social imaginaries as developed by Charles Taylor. The interpretation of this concept shows, that community is always only an alternative model of social relations. Despite this situation, it is an always recurrent ideal. The question is, why it is so and in which forms it manifests itself. The first question is answered with the help of the theory of recognition of Axel Honneth, which analyzes moral development of the subject in connection with communal relations. Identity is always anchored in the experience of recognition, and this experience needs to be confirmed in human relationships. Community, then, is the place of such confirmation. The thesis then proceeds to the reconstruction of various shapes of the ideal of community. In the reconstruction of these two most important forms of community, the thesis relies on the work of communitarian theorists and of Benedict Anderson. The first one shows small, mainly local communities growing out of free will of their members. Such communities are formed for various purposes. The second important form are imagined communities, especially nations. The thesis is concerned with differences in the internal structure of these phenomena and their different role in the public life of modern societies. In the end there is a reflection on the risks stemming out of the ideal of community and its potential to mobilize people.