Information Society Strategy – Seeking New Solutions for Post-Modern Societies

The Case of Finland

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The information society provides a future-oriented strategy for post-industrial economies. It is essential to remember that the information society was originally an economic strategy, not a societal strategy for future development of post-industrial economies. The key issues in European information society strategies have been: 1. Identifying a future-oriented model for economy and society, 2. meeting the challenges of globalization of the economy through extensive use of information and communication technology, 3. trying to plan the society and (national) economy so as to overcome unpredictable societal changes, 4. reallocating responsibilities among citizens and the state (the private and the public sector), 5. using IT as a means to overcome economic and societal changes, and 6. allocating societal resources exclusively for use in IT education and R & D.

I will discuss the following issues: How does the globalization of economies change the role of the state (one of the main actors in the information society discourse)? Can the information society be seen at a national level as a contributor to the globalization process? Or does it promote the civil society? Alternatively, is it a national survival strategy in a globalized world economy?

This article discusses the Finnish National Information Society Strategy, phases one and two. What is Finland’s status as an information society? Finland has been rated as the second most developed information society in the world after the United States. These quantitative results are based on the use of IT (penetration of cellular phones, PCs, use of Internet etc.), penetration of media and level of education. Every second Finn has a cellular phone and Internet is used widely. Finland has also one of the most developed telecommunications infrastructures, a high level of basic and advanced education, and the IT-industries and services are the fastest growing sector in the economy. In other words, quantitatively, Finland could be called an information (technology) society.

What has caused a small country of 5.1 million inhabitants to become an information society and to promote the information society as a national strategy? Briefly, the reasons are historical and economic ones. In the 20th century, the country has experienced two major societal and economic changes after the Second World War, the first being the rapid industrialization of the country. From the early 1950’s to the 1970’s, Finland changed from an agricultural to an industrial society and urbanization took place. The second major change was the collapse of the industrial economy at the end of 1980’s, as a result of economic depression, and the beginning of globalization of the economy. This produced a need to search for a new (national) strategy for economic growth, an information society strategy, that was based on development and use of information and communication technology and that promoted technology-oriented education.

Before discussing the Finnish strategy, it is relevant to discuss the concept of modernization and how the information society reflects the process of modernization.

Reflexive Modernization

Modernization

Modernity remains at the core of an analysis of the modern industrial society. Therefore, before dis-
cussing late modern or postmodern society, it is necessary to stop for a while and look at modernity. Modernization represents progress, change into a new ‘society’. Today’s society is often called late modernity, high modernity (Giddens, 1990), post-modernity or new modernity. Modern society has emphasized the central role of the state and its surveillance over the citizens, as well as homogeneity, instrumental reason and the individual as belonging to a structure, whether a state, a region, a class or a family. The industrial society has emphasized structure and control and the role of the state (Beck 1994, 10, Bauman 1996, 27).

The modern industrial society produced various structures, both social and economic. The structure of the industrial economy consists of sectors like agriculture, manufacturing industries, services and the construction industry. Moreover, the labor force is divided into categories like services, industrial work, civil servants or agricultural work. This serves the purpose of classification, producing a structure that can be both planned and controlled. The modern society emphasized the central role of the state. It also emphasized the role of the citizen as a member of the state. These structures are functional, since the categories, such as labor or social class, have a place in them. Currently, modernization is a process of changing the categories of the industrial society.

Modern Industrial Society

A central concept of industrial modernity is that as society becomes more complex (contains more categories), a strong instrument like the state is needed to control societal functions. But the state is also a social structure constructed by the citizens who participate through other social structures like family, class or organization and who work at building the state. The modern industrial society is based on the principal of democracy, which is founded on the idea of building society through political participation.

The state has a functional role in modern society. It has a monitoring and protective role in society, as well as a control or surveillance role (see Giddens in Webster 1995, 58-66). The modern society is often understood to be a welfare state. The state is expected to distribute, on an equal basis among the citizenry, certain ‘goods’, such as education, healthcare, information services and physical infrastructure like roads and railways. However, this presupposes and demands willingness on the part of the citizens to participate in building the state by working, paying taxes, participating in education and voting in elections.

On the other hand, the state is expected to minimize societal ‘dysfunctions’, such as criminality, environmental disasters or problems with central organizations, such as transport, telecommunications or the legal system. This emphasizes the monitoring and control functions of the state. As long as citizens are motivated to participate in building the (welfare) state, i.e., benefits exceed their inputs in building the society, the structure of society remains stable. However, when the control functions of the state are called into question, and the general equilibrium (to use an economic term) in different societal domains becomes disturbed, the role of the state will weaken and its actions become issues of public debate, thus requiring new politics (see Beck, 1994).

One of the basic assumptions of modern societies has been democracy. Democracy functions through public elections and participation in political parties. The citizen has had a role in that structure as a member of another social structure, be it a family, a social class, a trade union or a political party (see Siltala, 1996). In the industrial society, these structures allowed participation in building society. In modern society, individuals were seen as having been liberated from a feudal society into an industrial society. Now, as Beck points out, individualization means liberation from an industrial society into a global society, and also into uncertainty (Beck 1995, 28). This return to uncertainty means liberation from the dominance of instrumental reason, leading to the ambivalence of reason and understanding (Bauman 1996, 16).

Risk Society

Why all this? My point is to discuss modernization, or rather reflexive modernization (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994), in terms of a process of change into something that could be called another modernity. The change per se is taking place inside the modern and industrial society and is part of its evolution – continuity. On the other hand, there is a break in modernization that Ulrich Beck calls the risk society (Beck, 1992). I follow in my analysis Beck’s concept of reflexive modernization, which means the self-destruction of industrial modern society and its transformation into a risk society. Risk society is “a phase in modern society in which social, political, economic and individual risks increasingly tend to escape the institutions for monitoring and protection in industrial society” (Beck
1994,5). Thus, reflexive modernization means change of modern society, its radicalization into another modernity (Beck 1994, 3).

One of the main concepts of modern times is uncertainty, whether at a societal or individual level. The change of the industrial society into another modernity takes place, according to Beck, through reflexive modernization. An industrial society turns into a risk society when the hazards or ‘bads’ or risks of modern society exceed the ‘goods’ (Beck 1994, 5).

The industrial society primarily produces effects and threats that are observed, but that do not become issues of public debate in politics and media. At the moment, we are in a risk society, but the logic of industrial society predominates, and the threats produced are multiplied and ‘legitimated’ as residuals of decision-making. In the second phase of the risk society, the risks or threats have become issues of public and private debate, and the institutions of industrial society become recognized as producers of economic, social and political risks they cannot control. In that phase, the decisions are still made according to the old logic of industrial society, but, on the other hand, they are being discussed and recognized – in politics, interest organizations and the media – as requiring solutions (Beck 1994, 5).

This change of the industrial society into a risk society takes place unnoticed and unseen, as it is a continuous process of the modern society we live in. The increasing number of threats finally results in a demand for action in politics and individual life, which cannot be achieved according to the logic of industrial society. Thus, reflexive modernization means self-confrontation with the effects of the industrial society – effects that cannot be solved with the means of the industrial society. (Beck 1994, 6)

There are three domains where the transformation of an industrial society into a risk society take place, according to Beck: 1. The modern industrial society is constructed on the existence of natural and cultural resources which are now dissipating. This applies to human and non-human cultural and social resources, such as the nuclear family, homework and women as labor resource. 2. The assumptions about social order are in danger because risks produced by the society exceed the safety measures of the same society, and this affects politics, media, science, business and social culture. 3. The collective and group-specific meanings in industrial society, like faith in progress or class consciousness, are suffering from exhaustion and lack of meaning. These values have supported Western democracies and societies. As they are now disappearing or changing, the individual becomes central in defining his or her own life, i.e., we see a process of individualization. This implies the need to meet different risks in one’s personal life throughout the life-time. (Beck 1995, 19)

Because economic growth and belief in progress are often considered identical to development, the industrial society has produced through economic growth characteristics that Beck calls risks. These risks can be economic, political, social, cultural or environmental. But in Beckian terms, modern (industrial) society produces risks that elude the ‘old politics’ and ‘structure’ of an industrial society.

Let us look closer at the economic risks, such as level of growth, that are expected to increase at a certain rate. If this growth rate is not reached, the result is rising unemployment, cutbacks in social services, educational funding etc. throughout the whole economy. Furthermore, economic risks can be individual ones, such as short-term employment, low income level, lack of income (unemployment) or under-employment. Political risks include quick changes in the political structure and decreased participation in politics. Social risks include increased individuation and fragmentation of society. This produces uncertainty, insecurity and social chaos. Further, social risks can be seen as increased chaos or anarchistic behavior, which indicates a lack of social cohesion or solidarity in society. In terms of social cohesion, the breakdown of family structures and the growing individualization of society may be called risks.

Cultural risks can be best described in the context of identity. In modern society, cultural products have been easy to identify, as they represent a category and an origin from a certain culture. Nowadays, however, this originality or classification is no longer seen. Today we have a mixture of cultural products that are in constant transformation and that lack identity or originality in a traditional sense. This may be considered as a risk for identification or originality.

The identity as a cultural risk concerns members of a certain culture and society. Am I a cosmopolitan, a European or a Finn originating from Hame, a region in Finland, or am I a mixture of all these things? And furthermore, is identity important and to whom? Is identity the ultimate construct of a culture and a society that is now produced in a mélange of global and local culture, and increasingly in an environment of uncertainty and change?
Finally, the environmental risks, such as pollution of environment and nuclear power, and the technological risks are produced by an industrial society whose strategy is that of more growth – ‘more of the same’. Typical of these risks is that solutions are sought within the framework of the industrial society – the society that has produced them. The other relevant point is that these risks are connected to uncertainty; more risks are the result of increasing uncertainty.

Now, what does reflexive modernization do to these risks? How does reflexive modernization transform the industrial society into another modernity? Beck suggests at least two ways: 1. by simply destroying itself from the inside and 2. by giving birth to another modernity through new politics.

According to Beck, the industrial society is responding to an increasing number of defects through expertise and insurance systems. The purpose of the expertise is to produce technology, particularly control technology, and knowledge in order to control the risks or defects produced by industrial society. Because societal systems are becoming more complex and uncontrollable due to the very nature of technological development, there is no certainty as to the effects of technology, such as nuclear or space technology. On the other hand, there is no certainty as to the effects of technology, such as nuclear or space technology. On the other hand, uncertainty in modern society is a process of positive individualization. This means that individuals will have the opportunity to make choices in their own lives; it means increasing chances to create one’s own biography. The question is: How are citizens managing these changes and choices in their lives?

Thus, reflexive modernization is a process of internal change in modern society, of turning it into a risk society, where the hazards of industrialization or the risks are bigger than the ‘goods’ of that society. When the risk society faces its hazards, the change into new modernity begins at the individual or societal level by discussing these risks. This revealing of risks and uncertainty is not only an issue of order in society but also of responsibility. These are issues at the core of modernity that will produce a new modernity or another modernity.

Risks and Uncertainty
The central domains of analysis of reflexive modernization are risks and uncertainty. Because modern society emphasized structure and control over these structures, it also produced predictability. This required classification and methods for planning. The risks in society or individual life were seen as ‘something that eluded this order’. Thus, risks were flaws in the system or society that needed to be brought under control again. This argumentation is based on the assumption of cognitive understanding of the world, which in turn produces dichotomies like order or structure and chaos. Risks in the predictable world are dysfunctions in the structure and they need to be controlled and solved. Thus, in modern society, risks are hazards or threats to individuals or society (Eräsaari 1997, 82), something that has a negative connotation. But risks can be seen as a potential, as the capacity to face the world’s uncertainties. A more essential question to be raised is, what do we mean by risks and why do we need to control them?

In modern industrial society, risks meant ‘chaos out of order’, the increasing number of risks were seen as a threat to societal order. Thus, the insurance experts (insuring the risks produced by economic growth) challenged the control or risk management experts, and yet the risks remained uncontrolled. Thus, the process that Beck, Giddens and Lash (1994) call reflexive modernization produces internal change by disembedding the risks of industrial society by viewing risks as objects. The power and symbolic capital of modernization have been discussed also by Pierre Bourdieu in his analysis of societal change (see Bourdieu, 1997). According to Beck, reflexive modernization is the radicalization of modern society (Beck 1994, 13) – it means finding new politics, codes of interpretation and negotiations between social systems and social agents. It also means finding new methods of negotiation between these agents.

One of the results of reflexive modernization is uncertainty, or rather the return to uncertainty. This is often considered a challenge to an individual or to the structure of society. However, uncertainty in Beckian terms is a process of positive individualization. This means that individuals will have the opportunity to make choices in their own lives; it means increasing chances to create one’s own biography. The question is: How are citizens managing these changes and choices in their lives?

Politics of Another Modernity
How to tame the ambivalence of modernization? Because we need to legitimize technological-industrial development and face its flaws and effects, how do we treat technology that is both a cause and a result of the modernization process? This requires new politics and new decision-making among different social agents. According to Beck, this pre-
supposes a new sub-politics, one that accepts the
ambivalence of modern society and tries to find
new solutions to risks produced by that society.
This requires re-evaluation of expertise, expanding
expertise into socially relevant areas, and bringing
new groups in society into the decision-making areas.
Further, decision-making needs to be made
public and understood as transparent (see also
Vattimo, 1989). This means incorporating expert
knowledge and everyday knowledge.

This also means re-evaluating of the role of the state.
The ambivalence of the role of the state in a
risk society may result in negotiations between the
official politics of the state and the sub-politics of
new groups. The essential question is, what are the
‘new’ functions of the state or rather the welfare
state? Are they increasingly safety and order
functions, or new functions of incorporating social, eco-
nomic and cultural functions through new round-
table-politics?

These issues also concern the information soci-
ety, which represents a risk society in several ways:
The growth of uncertainty, the need for new poli-
tics, the increasing individual responsibility, the
decreasing role of the welfare state and the increas-
ing number of technology risks.

A Brief History of the
Finnish Information Society

Information Society Development

The Finnish development towards an information
society is based on the following phenomena: 1. The
governmental decision to build an information
society, which means to build a (information) tech-
nologically developed society, 2. a technologically
developed telecommunication infrastructure and 3. historical co-existence of private and state telecommu-
nication structures. If one looks at other techno-
logically developed countries like the USA and
Canada, it is necessary to add long distances and a
large geographical area.

In the following sections I will present the main
goals of building an information society, its strate-
gies and the state of the art – the kind of society we
are building. Therefore, I will also describe the his-
torical development of this project.

The first proposals for building an information
society were presented in the early 1980’s. This in-
cluded high technology projects, such as how to
computerize schools, libraries and public medical
centers. At the same time, the computerization of
work, mainly office work and services like banking
and social services, was taking place. Universities
were well ahead in terms of computerization as
compared to other institutions. However, compu-
terization, and building LANs, was the major de-
velopment of the 1980’s.

Finland was, unlike, e.g., France, in the begin-
ning stages of computerization and telecommunications, as we did not have a national information
technology project like MINITEL. However, there
was an emphasis on building quicker information
transfer (data and voice) networks, at least between
bigger cities and inside industries (companies) that
were located around the country. This effort was
possible because the private telephone companies
were eager to invest in new technologies and enter
new markets, and their technological development
allowed the building of telecommunication net-
works for high speed information transfer. These
networks transferred mainly data and voice.

At the same time, videotext services were de-
veloped for information services through TV-chan-
nels. Another effort was made by Helsinki Media
Ltd, which started a teletext service giving informa-
tion on weather, train schedules, and news, and
different kinds of information could be sought
through their service. This service functions
through the telecommunication (telephone) net-
work. Also, Finnish Telecom (PT), today Sonera,
started their information service called Tele Sampo
in the 1980’s. This service functions via telecom-
munication networks as well. These information
services were and have been used mainly by com-
panies, and the videotext service produced by the
Finnish Broadcasting Company as a part of the
broadcasting service has been used by private
homes.

These developments quickly introduced com-
puters and wider use of telecommunications, first
to the institutions like universities, schools, librari-
es, medical centers and private companies. The big
media companies invested also in the building of
LANs and inter-institutional networks. Data trans-
mission and voice transmission (digitalization)
were the first to be developed.

Also at that time, the first work was being done
on harmonization of information statistics and in-
formation labor. This was necessary to understand
the shift of society from a service society to an in-
formation society, if we understand information so-
ciety to mean a society where information work is
the main activity. Clearly, the technological devel-
opment facilitated the change of society from an in-
dustrial society to a post-industrial society. As this
technology produced new kinds of work and jobs, it
also nullified earlier ones and increased loss of industrial jobs. Thus, institutions needed more skilled labor to be able to function in this new environment, and that required more education and training of the work force. Also, it created new jobs on the labor market.

The other factor or change produced by information technology concerned the control function of society. Information on individuals and institutions was easier to transfer, and it was also easier to compile files of information on individuals. This meant that increasing amounts of information were supplied to, and also demanded by, decision-makers, whether these were organizations or individuals. The risk of appearing in the unwanted files was increasing, and information security thus became an issue.

Information technology has increased or enhanced productivity, it has made information a commodity that is easily and quickly transferred, and telecommunication networks have enhanced the saving of travel time and transfer of goods. IT has also shifted society into a new phase.

The 1990’s

Globally and in Finland, the early 1990’s saw the introduction of a strategy to build an information highway or information society. The global aspect of the information highway or global information society has made national telecommunication policy one of the key elements in enhancing this development. Also, the telecommunication industries have found a strategic place in this growth. The telecommunication industry is not only investing in and building infrastructure and developing new products and services for the national market, but this time also for the global market. It seems that the national telecommunications infrastructure, the regulatory policy and its synchronic position in international regulations, provided the basis for a successful telecommunications cluster, such as in Finland. The demand is enhanced by new services in a competitive environment: There are more services, they are easier to use and there is a principle of universal access.

When the technology exists, it enhances development of new kinds of work and productivity, it saves expense and generates new value added services. Also, the value of information services changes as the environment becomes competitive: Some services may become low-priced or free, others will command a higher price. This kind of environment also enhances R & D in information technology in order to produce new products to sell on the market. It seems that the national environment creates a basis for entrance into international markets, and, thus, cases like Finland provide examples of information society development.

Giving this brief historical introduction, it is time to look at the information society programs from the early 1990’s up until today: What are the goals, what are the proposed means to reach these goals and what kind of society is being built?

The First National Strategy

The first Finnish information society strategy, intended as a national strategy, was published in 1994. It appeared at a time when the economy was suffering from prolonged recession, there was a mass unemployment (18%), the industrial structure was broken and the financial system (banks) was dependent on the state. At the same time, the European integration process was becoming more intensive, and new countries like Finland and Sweden began the process of applying for membership in the European Union.

The National Strategy: Finland’s Way to the Information Society was outlined by the Ministry of Finance in 1994. The Cabinet Office drew up a position paper for measures to bring about the Information Society, and this paper was approved by the Government (Aho) in January 1995. The strategy was followed by concrete action plans in all administrative agencies and departments. The Information Society was included in the program of the new Government (Lipponen) in 1996. In 1997, the Government produced several reports emphasizing the development of an information society. In 1997, a public agency, SITRA, initiated a second phase of the national strategy work.

First, the report presents three important challenges that are the keys to the country’s future: 1. the challenge of the global economy, 2. the internal challenge of recovering from an economic depression that has produced mass unemployment and an expansive growth of public debt, and 3. the challenge of the changes produced by technological development (see the National Strategy 1995, 5).

The economic goals of the information society strategy are: 1. successful adaptation to the world economy, 2. high employment, 3. vibrant entrepreneurship and 4. a competitive public sector. The societal goals are: 1. a balanced social development, 2. better opportunities for individual advancement, 3. a citizen society and 4. a civilization based on knowledge (Ibid, 6).
The strategy emphasizes readiness for change. In a global open economy, firms and national economies need to constantly look for ways to ‘improve productivity and competitiveness’ (ibid, 6). This needs to be done to secure ‘the well-being of citizens and the resources required to develop the society, there are no alternatives’. This requires readiness for change, know-how and development of technology, according to the strategy.

The key role is given to information technology: “Information technology...has been integrated in all procedures, products and structures in businesses and entrepreneurs. It is an essential competitive factor for products and production. It is also gaining foothold at a personal level in work, studies and leisure time activities” (Ibid, 6).

Furthermore, the role of information technology in economic development is described as follows: “The latest, the most radical model of implementing information technology... are information networks in which information merges with the exchange of data and communications. It integrates with publications technologies as well as audio-visual technologies within culture and entertainment. This merger guides the information industry towards becoming the leading economic sector” (Ibid, 6). The general direction in the renewal process is networking and the networked economy. “A networked economy with a developed information network... provides a real opportunity for Finland, as it reduces problems caused by distance and makes it possible to take advantage of our high level of education.” (Ibid, 7)

This introduction seems to reflect a positive approach to the role of the country in adjusting to global economic competition. It suggests that we have the technological infrastructure and level of development, high level of education and key role of information technology required to meet the challenges of a global economy (see Beck, 1999). The information society appears to be a ‘salvation strategy’ for a small country in the wake of global competition. This strategy is also optimistic, as it suggests that if we become an information society and have the information industry as a main sector of our economy, we will be able to meet the challenges of globalization.

This strategy views society as an economy and citizens as resource in this development. It emphasizes the technology adjustment line of thinking. The intent is that Finland will be a leading economy in ICT-development, in Europe and in the world.

The first national strategy has been published during a time of strong globalization of economies and development of ICT. A technological and economic approach to this development seem to be key. The strategy does not mention the risks or uncertainties in society, nor does it include a discussion on the role of the state. It suggests continued economic growth excluding the “risks”, understood in a Beckian sense.

As the uncertainties and risks are increasing in society, the roles of institutions like trade unions, parliament, political parties and the state are also changing. The new risks produced by the integration of the national and global economy are not discussed. This means the that, according to a Beckian analysis, risks exist but are not reflected in the strategy. The first national strategy proposes a continuation of the earlier industrial society.

The Second National Strategy

The second national strategy approaches the information society from the point of view of the citizens. The information society issues are a part of the present Government’s (Lipponen) program. This strategy calls for an information society as Quality of Life, Knowledge and Competitiveness. It defines knowledge as the basis for Finland’s economic competitiveness globally, and continues building Finland as a leading information society. It adds, however, ‘knowledge as the basis for education and culture’ (Quality of Life, Knowledge and Competitiveness, 1998, 5).

The economic depression of the early 1990’s is reflected in the strategy. ICT should be used as a means to increase jobs and welfare, to improve competitiveness and entrepreneurship as well as to strengthen democracy and equal opportunities in society. Further, sustainable development is supported. (Ibid, 7)

In all, the strategy extends beyond the economic indicators to all domains of society, but proposes as its primary goal to enhance economic growth based on ICT – which will in turn enhance quality of life and social interaction.

The economic indicators in the late 1990’s show that the ICT-sector is the most rapidly growing sector in the Finnish economy. Nokia has become a global player in the production of mobile phones and networks, and the general economic indicators show extensive growth. The second national strategy seems to place more emphasis on society and culture than the first. It also puts citizens in a more
central position in the ICT-driven development and economic growth. However, the structural and societal issues have become more central in the development of the Finnish economy. The marginalization that is taking place among the large number of unskilled laborers, and the risks issues, like crime and drugs, have become more visible in society. The society in general is doing well, but the risks of social instability are also growing. As Beck (1994) and Bauman (1998) point out, the return to uncertainty and lack of commitment produce risks that are a source of instability in society.

At the same time, the economy is growing, and there is a high demand for experts in technology and other fields. As Castells says, the global technology elite of experts and the power elite of the global economy determine life for the rest of the society and world (Castells, 1996).

**Conclusions**

This study presents a theoretical background and historical review of the information society. I have discussed the risk society and reflexive modernization in the context of information society. The information society represents another modernity, in that it tries to meet its own risks with the means and thinking of the modern industrial society. It represents another modernity because it has evolved from modern society.

The history of the idea of the information society reveals three changes: an economy and technology based on information, qualitative changes in economy and society, and information-dependent economy and globalization. These changes are, however, connected to the continuation of modernity. The concepts of risk and uncertainty become ambivalent when trying to solve the problems of modern societies, information societies. They become risks in the old order, but they can be seen as alternatives or possibilities in the new order of modern societies. The decisions and visions are still constructed in the frame of an industrial order.

The concepts of risk society and reflexive modernization operate in this discussion as a framework for discussing the issues of the information society. The risks of the industrial society may turn out to be opportunities in the information society. The changes in modernization towards an information society seem to continuously give importance to rationality and scientific-technological information. Information technology serves as an agent of change in the economy and society, but also causes constant problems. Therefore, the risk society continues as the information society, where we give authority to experts and expert knowledge and believe in technological progress.

However, the globalization of the economy and its integration challenge the belief in technological progress. The risks increase and uncertainty as well. The rationality used during planning and decision-making for the future and today, increasingly operates in an environment of risk, although the same technology controls these risks. The questions of order in society, control functions of society and the responsibilities of both individuals and the state become issues of order and stability.

The role of the citizen or individual becomes a question of belonging to something – of identity. For individuals, modern information technology produces flexibility in many domains of everyday life, for example, education, entertainment and work. It also produces increased individuation. The information society is in many ways another risk society, but also another modernity characterized by belief in progress through technology. The ‘other’ knowledge, that of culture, seems to be outside these strategies. These strategies reflect the continuity of modernization and represent the information society as a “progress utopia”.

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