

macro-societal scale the utopian vision with strong gnostic components. It was in these revolutions that such sectarian activities were taken out from marginal or segregated sectors of society and became interwoven not only with rebellions, popular uprisings and movements of protest but also with the political struggle at the centre. They were transposed into the general political movements and the centres thereof, and themes and symbols of protest became a basic component of the central social and political symbolism. It was this transposition that can be designated as the Second Axial Age, in which a distinct, cultural, political and institutional programme crystallized and expanded throughout most of the world encompassing all the 'classical' Axial Civilizations, as well as preand non-Axial ones.

This civilization, the distinct cultural programme with its institutional implications, crystallized first in Western Europe and then expanded to other parts of Europe, to the Americas and later on throughout the world. This gave rise to continually changing cultural and institutional patterns which constituted, as it were, different responses to the challenges and possibilities inherent in the core characteristics of the distinct civilizational premises of modernity.

## II

The modern project, the cultural and political programme of modernity as it developed first in the West, in Western and Central Europe, entailed distinct ideological as well as institutional premises. It entailed some very distinct shifts in the conception of human agency, of its autonomy, and of its place in the flow of time. It entailed a conception of the future in which various possibilities which can be realized by autonomous human agency – or by the march of history – are open. The core of this programme has been that the premises and legitimation of the social, ontological and political order were no longer taken for granted; there developed a very intensive reflexivity around the basic ontological premises as well as around the bases of social and political order of authority of society – a reflexivity which was shared even by the most radical critics of this programme, who in principle denied the legitimacy of such reflexivity.

The central core of this cultural programme has been possibly most successfully formulated by Weber. To follow James D. Faubion's exposition of Weber's conception of modernity: 'Weber finds the existential threshold of modernity in a certain deconstruction: of what he speaks of as the "ethical postulate that the world is a God-ordained, and hence somehow meaningfully and ethically oriented cosmos".'

What he asserts – what in any event might be extrapolated from his assertions – is that the threshold of modernity has its epiphany precisely as the legitimacy of the postulate of a divinely preordained and fated cosmos has its decline; that modernity emerges, that one or another modernity can

## 4

# The Civilizational Dimension of Modernity

## *Modernity as a Distinct Civilization*

Shmuel N. Eisenstadt

## I

In this article I would like to analyse modernity from a civilizational perspective – as a distinct type of civilization (Eisenstadt, 2000a). The view of modernity as a distinct civilization implies that modernity has to be seen as a new type of civilization – not unlike the formation and expansion of the Great Religions. According to this view, the core of modernity is the crystallization and development of mode or modes of interpretation of the world, or, to follow Cornelius Castoriadis's terminology, of a distinct social *imaginaire*, indeed of the ontological vision, of a distinct cultural programme, combined with the development of a set or sets of new institutional formations – the central core of both being, as we see later in greater detail, an unprecedented 'openness' and uncertainty.

Modernity, the modern cultural and political programme, developed in one of the Great Axial Civilizations – the Christian-European one (Eisenstadt, 1982, 1986). It crystallized as a transformation of the heterodox visions with strong gnostic components which sought to bring the Kingdom of God to earth and which were often promulgated in medieval and early modern European Christianity by different heterodox sects. The transformation of these visions as it took place above all in the Enlightenment and in the Great Revolutions, in the English Civil War and especially the American and French Revolutions and their aftermaths, entailed the transposition of these visions from relatively marginal sectors of society to the central political arena.

The Great Revolutions constitute the concretization of the sectarian heterodox potentialities which developed in the Axial Civilizations – especially in those in which the political arena was seen as at least one of the arenas of implementation of their transcendental vision. These revolutions constitute the first or at least the most dramatic, and possibly the most successful attempt in the history of humankind to implement on a

emerge, only as the legitimacy of the postulated cosmos ceases to be taken for granted and beyond reproach. Countermoderns reject that reproach, believe in spite of it:

One can extract two theses: Whatever else they may be, modernities in all their variety are responses to the same existential problematic. The second: whatever else they may be, modernities in all their variety are precisely those responses that leave the problematic in question intact, that formulate visions of life and practice neither beyond nor in denial of it but rather within it, even in deference to it. (Faubion, 1993: 113–15)

It is because of the fact that all such responses leave the problematic intact, the reflexivity which developed in the programme of modernity went beyond that which crystallized in the Axial Civilizations. The reflexivity that developed in the modern programme focused not only on the possibility of different interpretations of the transcendental visions and basic ontological conceptions prevalent in a society or societies, but came to question the very givenness of such visions and of the institutional patterns related to them. It gave rise to the awareness of the existence of a multiplicity of such visions and patterns and of the possibility that such visions and conceptions can indeed be contested (Eisenstadt, 1982, 1986).

Such awareness was closely connected with two central components of the modern project, emphasized in the early studies of modernization by Dan Lerner and later by Alex Inkeles. The first such component is the recognition, among those becoming and being modernized – as illustrated by the famous story in Lerner's book about the grocer and the shepherd – of the possibility of undertaking a great variety of roles beyond any fixed or ascriptive ones, and the concomitant receptivity to different communication messages which promulgate such open possibilities and visions. Second, there is the recognition of the possibility of belonging to wider translocal, possibly also changing, communities (Lerner, 1958; Inkeles and Smith, 1974).

Concomitantly, closely related to such awareness and central to this cultural programme were the emphasis on the autonomy of humankind: his or hers – but in the initial formulation of this programme certainly 'his' – emancipation from the fetters of traditional political and cultural authority and the continuous expansion of the realm of personal and institutional freedom and activity, and of human ones. Such autonomy entailed several dimensions: first, reflexivity and exploration; and second, active construction, domination of nature, possibly including human nature, and of society. In parallel, this programme entailed a very strong emphasis on autonomous participation of members of society in the constitution of social and political order and its constitution; on autonomous access, indeed of all members of the society to these orders and their centres.

Out of the conjunctions of these conceptions there developed the belief in the possibility of active formation of society by conscious human activity. Two basic complementary but also potentially contradictory tendencies about the best ways in which such construction could take place developed within this programme. The first was that the programme as it crystallized

above all in the Great Revolutions gave rise, perhaps for the first time in the history of humanity, to the belief in the possibility of bridging the gap between the transcendental and mundane orders, of realizing through conscious human actions in the mundane orders, in social life, some of the utopian, eschatological visions. The second such tendency was rooted in the growing recognition of the legitimacy of multiple individual Eisenstadt *The Civilizational Dimension of Modernity* 323 and group goals and interests and of multiple interpretations of the common good (Eisenstadt, 1992: 385–401; 1985: 315–88; 1981: 155–81; Voegelin, 1975; Seligman, 1989).

### III

The modern programme entailed also a radical transformation of the conceptions and premises of the political order, of the constitution of the political arena, and in the characteristics of the political process. The core of the new conceptions was the breakdown of traditional legitimization of the political order, the concomitant opening up of different possibilities of construction of such order, and the consequent contestation about the ways in which political order was to be constructed by human actors. It combined orientations of rebellion and intellectual antinomianism, together with strong orientations to centre-formation and institutionbuilding, giving rise to social movements, movements of protest as a continual component of the political process.

These conceptions were closely connected with the transformation of the basic characteristics of the modern political arena and processes. The most important of these characteristics was first the openness of this arena and of the political process; second a strong emphasis on at least potential active participation of the periphery, of 'society', of all its members in the political arena. Third were the strong tendencies to permeation of the peripheries by the centres and of the impingement of the peripheries on the centres, of the concomitant blurring of the distinctions between centre and periphery. Fourth was the combination of the charismaticization of the centre or centres with the incorporation of themes and symbols of protest which became components of the modern transcendental visions as basic and legitimate components of the premises of these centres. Themes and symbols of protest – equality and freedom, justice and autonomy, solidarity and identity – became central components of the modern project of emancipation of humankind. It was indeed the incorporation of such themes of protest into the centre which heralded the radical transformation of various sectarian utopian visions into central components of the political and cultural programme.

Out of the combination of the ideology and premises of the political programme of modernity and the core characteristics of the modern political institutions, there emerged three central aspects of the modern political process – namely, first the strong tendency to the politicization of the

demands of various sectors of the society and of conflicts between them, and second, the continual struggle about the definition of the realm of the political. Such drawing of the boundaries of the political has in itself constituted – unlike in most other political regimes in the history of humankind – one of the major foci of open political contestation and struggle. Third, and in close connection with the two preceding characteristics, the continuous restructuring of centre-periphery relations has become the central focus of political process and dynamics in modern societies (Ackerman, 1991).

#### IV

This programme entailed also a very distinctive mode of construction of the boundaries of collectivities and collective identities. There developed new concrete definitions of the basic components of collective identities – the civil, primordial and universalistic and transcendent 'sacred' ones; and of the modes of their institutionalization. There developed, first, a strong tendency to their absolutization in ideological terms; second, the growing importance of the civil components thereof; third, a very strong connection between the construction of political boundaries and those of the cultural collectivities; and fourth, the closely related strong emphasis on territorial boundaries of such collectivities and a continual tension between the territorial and/or particularistic components of these collectivities and broader, potential universalistic ones. At the same time, the most distinct characteristic of the construction of collectivities, very much in line with the general core characteristics of modernity, was that such construction was continually problematized in reflexive ways. In some even if certainly not total contrast to the situation in the Axial Civilizations, collective identities were not taken as given or as preordained by some transcendental vision and authority, or by perennial customs. They constituted foci of contestations and struggles, often couched in highly ideological terms (Eisenstadt and Giesen, 1995; Shils, 1975).

A very central component in the construction of collective identities was the self-perception of a society as 'modern', as bearer of the distinct cultural and political programme, and its relations from this point of view to other societies – be it those societies which claim to be, or are seen as, bearers of this programme, and various 'others'.

#### V

The civilization of modernity as it developed first in the West was from its very beginning beset by internal antinomies and contradictions which constituted a radical transformation of those inherent in Axial Civilizations. This gave rise to continual critical discourse and political contestations

which focused on the relations, tensions and contradictions between its premises and between these premises and the institutional developments in modern societies.

The tension which was perhaps the most critical, both in ideological and political terms, has been that between totalizing and pluralistic visions – between the view which accepts the existence of different values and rationalities as against the view which conflates such different values and above all different rationalities in a totalistic way. This tension developed above all with respect to the very conception of reason and its place in the constitution of human society. It was manifest for instance, as Stephen Toulmin (1990) has shown, even if in a rather exaggerated way, in the difference between the more pluralistic conceptions of Montaigne or Erasmus, which entailed also the recognition and legitimizing of other cultural characteristics of human experience, and the totalizing vision of reason promulgated by Descartes. Among the most important, such conceptions of different rationalities has been the one – which was often identified as the major message of the Enlightenment – of sovereignty of reason, which subsumed value-rationality (*Wertrationalität*) or substantive rationality under instrumental rationality (*Zweckrationalität*) in its technocratic mode or under a totalizing moralistic utopian vision. In some cases, as for instance in the Communist ideology, there may develop some combination of both the technocratic and the moralistic utopian visions under one totalistic canopy. Concomitant tension between totalizing, absolutizing, as against more pluralistic tendencies developed also in the definition of other dimensions of human experience – especially the emotional ones.

Cutting across these tensions, there developed within the cultural and political programme of modernity continual – even if changing in their concrete manifestations – contradictions between the basic premises of the cultural and political programmes of modernity and the major institutional developments of modern societies. Among these contradictions of special importance have been those so strongly emphasized by Weber, those between the creative dimension inherent in the visions which led to the crystallization of modernity and the flattening of these visions, the 'disenchantment' of the world inherent in the growing routinization and bureaucratization; between an overreaching vision through which the modern world becomes meaningful and the fragmentation of such meaning generated by the growing autonomous development of the different institutional arenas – the economic, the political and the cultural. Closely related has been the tension between, on the one hand, the emphasis on human autonomy, the autonomy of the human person, and, on the other hand, the strong, restrictive control dimensions inherent in the institutional realization of modern life, depicted even if in different ways among others by Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault – or in Peter Wagner's formulation between freedom and control (Wagner, 1991).

## VI

Closely related were the tensions which crystallized within the modern political discourse, the most important among which has been the relation between, on the one hand, the legitimacy of plurality of discrete individual and group interests and of different conceptions of the common good and of moral order, and, on the other hand, of totalizing ideologies which denied the legitimacy of such pluralities.

One form of such totalistic ideology emphasized the primacy of collectivities perceived as distinct ontological entities based on common primordial and/or spiritual attributes – above all a national collectivity. The other such totalistic ideology has been the Jacobin one, the historical roots of which go back to medieval eschatological sources, the essence of which was the belief in the primacy of politics and in the ability of politics to reconstitute society, and in the possibility of transforming society through totalistic, mobilized participatory political action. Whatever the differences between these collectivistic ideologies, they all shared deep suspicion of the open political process and institutions, especially the representative and those of public discussion, as well as strong autocratic tendencies.

## VII

It was the combination of the awareness of the existence of different ideological and institutional possibilities with the tensions and contradictions inherent in the cultural and political programme of modernity that constituted the core of modernity as the Second Global Axial Age. This combination gave rise – through the activities of multiple cultural and political activists, who promulgated and attempted to implement different visions of modernity in their interactions with broader strata of society, and through continual contestations between them – to the crystallization of different patterns of modernity, of multiple modernities.

Of special importance among these activists were social movements, movements of protest, such as the liberal, then the socialist and communist; the national ones and the fascist and 'national'-socialist ones. These movements constituted the transformation, in the modern setting, of some of the major heterodoxies of the Axial Civilizations – especially of those heterodoxies which sought to bring about by political action and the reconstruction of the centre the realization of utopian visions to bring the Kingdom of God to earth, to the Kingdom of Man. These movements were international even if their bases or roots were in specific countries and they constituted continual mutual reference points. These activities have not been confined to the limits or frameworks of any 'single' society or state, even if it was such societies or states that constitute the major arenas of the implementation of the programmes and goals promulgated by such activities. It has been in the very nature of the visions of modernity and of its institutional dynamics that

they have been international in their scopes and orientations from the very beginning of the modern era. Such multiple modernities developed not only in different national states. The more successful among such movements have continually crystallized in distinct ideological and institutional patterns which became often identified, as was the case for instance first with revolutionary France and later with Soviet Russia, with specific countries but whose reach went far beyond them.<sup>1</sup> Communist and fascist movements, each of which was indeed, even if in different ways, international, constituted distinct variant patterns of modernity.

## VIII

The cultural programme of modernity was rooted in the transformations of the late medieval European civilizations and politics, and it crystallized in tandem in Europe especially after the revolutions in early modern western, military, economic, technological and ideological expansion throughout the world – first to Eastern Christianity especially to Russia, to Islam and the great Asian Axial Civilizations – the Confucian, the Hinduist and Buddhist ones; then to the only major non-Axial civilization from within which there crystallized the first successful non-western modernity – namely Japan – and to Africa. Such expansion can be seen as the first wave of modern globalization, which had by the end of the 20th century reached unprecedented dimensions.

This worldwide expansion raised, almost from the beginning of modernity, certainly from the second half of the 20th century, the question of whether the world, the modern world which crystallized under the impact of such expansion of the process of globalization, would be a uniform homogeneous world in which one transformed Axial Civilization would become hegemonic.

This was the view which was promulgated by many of the 'classical' theories of modernization and of convergence of industrial societies of the 1950s, indeed against the views of the classical sociological analyses of Marx, Durkheim and to a large extent even of Weber (1968, 1978) – or at least in one reading of him, which assumed, even if only implicitly, that the basic institutional constellations which came together in modern Europe, and the cultural programme of modernity as it developed there, will 'naturally' as it were be ultimately taken over in all modernizing and modern societies; that they will, with the expansion of modernity, prevail throughout the world.

The reality that emerged already from the beginning of modernity, but especially after the Second World War, has not borne out the assumptions of any of these approaches. The actual developments in modern or – as they were then designated – modernizing societies have gone far beyond the homogenizing and hegemonic assumptions of the original European or western programme of modernity.

A general trend to structural differentiation of various institutional

arenas – economic, the political, that of family, to urbanization, extension of education and modern means of communication, and tendencies to individualistic orientations – developed in most of these societies. Yet the ways in which these arenas were defined and organized varied among them in different periods of their development, even if not in endless ways, giving rise to multiple institutional and ideological patterns. But these patterns did not constitute simple continuations in the modern era of the respective traditions of these societies. They were distinctively modern even if their dynamics were greatly influenced by their cultural premises, traditions and historical experiences. Within all of them developed distinct modern dynamics, distinctive ways of interpretation of modernity, for which the original western project constituted indeed the crucial starting and continual – usually ambivalent – reference point. Of special importance in this context was the fact that the social and political movements which developed in the non-western societies, even while they often promulgated strong anti-western or even anti-modern themes, were distinctively modern. This was true not only of the various nationalist and traditionalist movements which developed in all these societies from about the middle of the 19th century up to after the Second World War, but also of the contemporary fundamentalist ones.

In the discourse of modernity, several themes developed. One such theme was the continual confrontation between more 'traditional' sectors of society and the modern centres or sectors that developed within them; between on the one hand the culture of modernity, the modern 'rational' model of the Enlightenment as promulgated within these centres, which emerged as hegemonic in different periods and places; and on the other hand the continually construed more 'authentic' cultural traditions of these societies. Second, there developed among the bearers of the traditional authenticity and among the more traditional sectors of these societies, continual ambivalence to these modern centres and their presumed yet also hand denial of these premises and on the other hand a strong attraction to them and to the centres in which they were promulgated and efforts to appropriate them and reinterpret them. These themes developed first within Europe and continued albeit already in a different vein with the expansion to the Americas, especially with the expansion of modernity beyond Europe – to Asian and African countries.

## IX

The attraction of many of the themes and institutional settings of the modern programme of the core modern institutions for many groups in these societies was due first to the fact of European, later western hegemony, in the global system that developed through western economic, technological and military expansion and which has undermined the

cultural premises and the institutional cores of these societies. Second, it was due to the fact that the appropriation of these themes and institutions permitted many groups in non-European nations – especially elites and intellectuals – to participate actively in the new modern (i.e. initially western) universal tradition, together with the selective rejection of many of its aspects and of western 'control' and hegemony. The appropriation of these themes made it possible for these elites and broader strata of many non-European societies to incorporate some of the universalistic elements of modernity in the construction of their new collective identities, without necessarily giving up either specific components of their traditional identities, often also couched in universalistic, especially religious terms or their negative attitude towards the West. Third, the attraction of these themes was also intensified by the fact that their appropriation in these societies entailed the transposition to the international scene of the struggle between hierarchy and equality. Such transposition of these themes from the Western European to Central and Eastern Europe and to non-European settings was reinforced by the combination, in the programmes of modernity, of orientations of protest with institution-building and centre-formation. Although initially couched in western terms, it could find resonances in the political traditions of many of these societies, especially in the tension which developed in their respective Axial premises.

## X

The appropriation of different themes and institutional patterns of the original western modern civilization in non-Western European societies did not, however, entail their acceptance in their original form. Rather, it entailed the continuous selection, reinterpretation and reformulation of such themes, giving rise to a continual crystallization of new cultural and political programmes of modernity, and the continual reconstruction of new institutional patterns. In all these societies, there crystallized continually different modern ideological and institutional constellations. The cultural and institutional programmes that have been continuing to develop in these societies entailed different emphases on different components of the cultural and political programme of modernity, its different tensions and antinomies thereof; the constitution of their conceptions of themselves as part of the modern world with ambivalent attitudes to modernity in general and to the West in particular constituting a basic component of these conceptions.

Concomitantly, in all these societies there took place far-reaching transformations which were shaped in each society by the combined impact of the historical tradition of these societies and the different modes of their incorporation in the new modern world system, of the major institutional formations adopted by them and of the conceptions underpinning them. The conceptions of authority, and its accountability, relations between state

and civil society; the structure of movements of protest; the construction of collective identities, in their self-conception as modern societies and their usually ambivalent attitudes to the western centres and programme of modernity which developed among them, differed from any of the European or the American ones – as well as from each other.

## XI

The concrete contours of the different cultural and institutional patterns of modernity as they crystallized in different societies were continually changing, due to the combination of the tensions inherent in the cultural and political programme of modernity and the continual institutional, social, political and economic developments attendant on the development and expansion of modernity. The institutional and cultural contours of modernities were continually changing, first of all because of the internal dynamics of the technological, economic, political and cultural arenas as they developed in different societies and expanded beyond them.

Second, they were continually changing in connection with the political struggles and confrontations between different states, between different centres of political and economic power that constituted a continual component first of the formation of European modernity, and later through the continual expansion of European, later American and Japanese modernity. Such confrontations developed already within Europe with the crystallization of the modern European state system and became further intensified with the crystallization of 'world systems' from the 16th or 17th centuries on.

Third, they were continually changing because of the shifting hegemonies in the different international systems that developed in the wake of the continual developments in the economic, political, technological and cultural arenas, and in centres thereof (Tiryakian, 1985, 1991, 1994).

Fourth, they were changing because of the continual confrontations between interpretations promulgated by different centres and the elites and the concrete developments, conflicts and displacements attendant on the institutionalization of these premises.

Fifth, they were continually changing because these confrontations activated the consciousness of the contradictions and antinomies inherent in the cultural programme of modernity and the potentialities given in its openness and reflexivity; and gave rise to the continual promulgation by different social actors, especially the different social movements, of continual reinterpretation of the major themes of this programme and of the basic premises of the civilizational visions and on the concomitant grand narratives and myths of modernity.

Sixth, they were continually changing because the very expansion of modernity beginning in Europe entailed the confrontation between the concrete premises and institutional formations as they developed in Western and

Northern Europe and other parts of Europe – and later beyond Europe – of the Americas and later in Asia, in the Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian and Japanese civilizations.

The continual changeability of the institutional and ideological patterns of modernity indicates that the history of modernity is best seen as a story of continual development and formation, constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programmes of modernity and of distinctively modern institutional patterns, and of different self-conceptions of societies as modern – of multiple modernities.<sup>2</sup>

## XII

The development and expansion of modernity were not, contrary to the optimistic views of modernity as progress, peaceful. It bore within it also very destructive possibilities – which were indeed voiced, and also often promulgated, by some of its most radical critics, who saw modernity as a morally destructive force, and emphasized the negative effects of some of its core characteristics. The crystallization of the first and the development of later modernities were continually interwoven with internal conflicts and confrontations, rooted in the contradictions and tensions attendant on the developments of the capitalist systems and, in the political arena, the growing demands for democratization and with international conflicts in the framework of the modern state and imperialist systems.

Above all they were closely interwoven with wars and genocides, repression and exclusions constituted continual components thereof. Wars and genocide were not, of course, new in the history of humankind. But they became radically transformed and intensified, generating continuous tendencies to specifically modern barbarism, the most important manifestation of which was the ideologization of violence, terror and war – manifest most vividly first in the French Revolution. Such ideologization emerged out of the interweaving of wars with the basic constitutions of the nation-states, with those states becoming the most important agent – and arena – of constitution of citizenship and symbols of collective identity: with the crystallization of the modern European state system and of European expansion beyond Europe and with the intensification of the technologies of communication and of war.

## XIII

The multiple and divergent modernities of the 'classical' age of modernity crystallized during the 19th century and above all the first six or seven decades of the 20th century in the different territorial nation- and revolutionary states and social movements that developed in Europe, in the Americas, and in Asian and African societies until after the Second World

War. These contours – institutional and symbolic, ideological contours of the modern national and revolutionary states and movements which were seen as the epitome of modernity – have changed drastically on the contemporary scene with the intensification of tendencies to globalization, as manifest in growing movements of autonomy of world capitalist forces, intense movements of international migrations, the concomitant development on an international scale of social problems, such as prostitution and delinquency, all of which reduce the control of the nation-state over its own economic and political affairs, despite the continual strengthening of the 'technocratic' rational secular policies in various arenas – be it in education or family planning. At the same time, the nation-states lost some of their – always only partial – monopoly of internal and international violence to many local and international groups of separatists or terrorists without any nation-state or the concerted activities of nationstates being able to control the continually recurring occurrences of such violence. Concomitantly, the processes of globalization were closely connected in the cultural arena, with the expansion especially through the major media in many countries around the world, including western ones such as European ones or Canada, of what were seemingly uniform hegemonic American cultural programmes or visions.

Above all, the ideological and symbolic centrality of the nation- and revolutionary state, of its being perceived as the charismatic locus of the major components of the cultural programme of modernity and of collective identity, became weakened, and new political and social and civilizational visions and visions of collective identity developed. These new visions and identities were promulgated by several types of new social movements. Such 'new' social movements, that developed in most western countries, like the women's and ecological movements, all closely related to or rooted in the student and anti-Vietnam War movements of the late 1960s and 1970s, were indicative of a more general shift in many countries in the world, 'capitalist' and communist (such as China): a shift from movements oriented to the state to more local ones; the fundamentalist movements which developed in Muslim, Protestant and Jewish communities, and the communal religious movements which developed for instance in the Hinduist and Buddhist ones, and the various particularistic 'ethnic' movements and identities which constituted deformations of the classical model of nation- or revolutionary states gathered momentum especially in the last two decades of the 20th century in former republics of the Soviet Union, but also in most terrifying ways in Africa and in part of the Balkans, especially in former Yugoslavia.

These movements developed in tandem with the crystallization of new social settings and frameworks, which also went beyond the 'classical' model of the nation-state. To mention just a few of the most important such settings – new, especially to the Muslim, Chinese and Indian diasporas, were the new types of ethnic minorities like those which emerged in many of the successor states of the Soviet Union.

In these, and in many other settings, there crystallized new types of collective identities often promulgated by some of the movements mentioned earlier which went beyond the models of the nation-state and which were no longer focused on it. Many of these hitherto seemingly 'subdued' identities – ethnic, regional, local and transnational alike – moved albeit naturally in a highly reconstructed way into the centres of their respective societies and also often in the international arena. They contested the hegemony of the older homogenizing programmes, claiming their own autonomous places in central institutional arenas – be it in educational programmes, in public communications and media, and very often they are making also far-reaching claims with respect to the redefinition of citizenship and of rights and entitlements connected with it.

At the same time, there took place continual shifts in the relative hegemony of different centres of modernity – first European and US ones, moving to East Asian – shifts which became continually connected with concomitant growing contestations between such centres around their presumed hegemonic standing (Tiryakian, 1994).

#### XIV

Such developments raised the problem as to whether the contemporary world would now, as it were, withdraw from the modern programme either in the direction of the 'end of history' as promulgated by Francis Fukuyama (1992), in which the ideological premises of modernity with all their inherent tensions and contradictions have become almost irrelevant, enabling paradoxically the rise of multiple postmodern visions, or in the direction, to use S.P. Huntington's terminology, of the 'clash of civilizations', in which western civilization – the seeming epitome of modernity – is confronted often in hostile terms with other, especially the Muslim and to some extent the so-called Confucian ones within which traditional, fundamentalist, anti-modern and anti-western movements are predominant (Huntington, 1996).

Both these approaches implied that we may be witnessing here a process of de-Axialization: that the Axial programme or at least the 'secondary Axialization' has been by now exhausted – such exhaustion being manifest both in the development of multiple postmodern and in seemingly anti-modern and anti-western, possibly non-Axial movements and identities. A closer examination of the contemporary scene indicates a rather more complex situation.

All these developments do indeed indicate far-reaching changes or shifts from the model or models of modern nation- and revolutionary states. They do indeed attest to the weakening of the ideological and symbolic centrality of the nation-state, its position as the charismatic locus of the major components of the cultural programme of modernity and collective identity. But do they all signal the 'end of history', the end of the modern programme –

epitomized in the development of different 'postmodernities' – and above all in the retreat, as it were, from modernity in the fundamentalist and the communal religious movements which have been portrayed, and in many ways have also presented themselves, as *diametrically* opposed to the modern programme?

## XV

Several characteristics present a much more complex picture. First is the fact that the extreme fundamentalist movements evince distinct modern Jacobin characteristics which paradoxically share many characteristics – sometimes in a sort of mirror image way – with the communist ones, albeit combined with very strong anti-western and anti-Enlightenment ideologies. Both these movements promulgate distinct visions formulated in the terms of the discourse of modernity and attempt to appropriate modernity on their own terms; and bring about the total reconstruction of personality and of individual and collective identities by conscious human, above all political, action, and the construction of new personal and collective identities entailing the total submergence of the individual in the totalistic community.

There were, of course, radical differences in the respective visions of the two types of Jacobin – the communist and the fundamentalist – movements and regimes, above all in their attitudes to modernity, and in their criticism thereof; in their attitudes to the basic antinomies of modernity and in the concomitant rejection and interpretation by them of different components of the cultural and political programmes of modernity – or, in other words, in their interpretations of modernity and their attempts to appropriate it. But they all evince a strong preoccupation with modernity as their major reference frameworks.

Second, these attempts to appropriate and interpret modernity in their own terms were not confined to the fundamentalist movements. They constitute a part of a set of much wider developments which have been taking place throughout the world, seemingly continuing the contestations between different earlier reformist and traditional religious movements that developed in different societies and religious frameworks throughout non-western societies. But in fact in these movements the basic tensions inherent in the modern programme, especially those between the pluralistic and totalistic one as well as the relations to the West, and the perception of the relations between the West and modernity, are played out in new terms. Within all of them the continuous tensions between pluralistic and totalistic tendencies, between utopian or more open and pragmatic attitudes, between multifaceted as against closed identities, are continually played out. But at the same time, all entailed an important, even radical, shift in the discourse about the confrontation with modernity and in the conceptualization of the relation between the western and non-western civilizations, religions or societies (Eisenstadt, 1974).

Third, one can identify some very significant parallels between these various religious, including fundamentalist movements with their seemingly extreme opposites – the different postmodern ones with which they often engage in contestations about hegemony among different sectors of the society. While within these movements there develop similar combinations of different cultural tropes and patterns, they compete among themselves about who presents the proper 'answer' to the ambivalences towards processes of cultural globalization. All these movements shared the concern which, as we have seen, has constituted indeed a basic component in the discourse of modernity from its beginning in Europe, about the relations between their identities and the universal themes promulgated by the respective hegemonic programmes of modernity; and above all the concern about the relation between such authentic identities and the presumed hegemony of, on the contemporary scene, especially American culture. At the same time, in most of these movements this fear of erosion of local cultures and of the impact of globalization and its centres was also continuously connected with an ambivalence towards these centres giving rise to a continuous oscillation between this cosmopolitanism and various 'particularistic' tendencies.

## XVI

The preceding analysis does not imply that the historical and cultural traditions of these societies are of no importance in the unfolding of their modern dynamics. Such importance is manifest, for instance, in the fact that among the modern and contemporary societies, fundamentalist movements develop and abound above all within the societies which crystallized in the framework of monotheistic Muslim, Jewish and some Christian societies, civilizations in which, even in their modern postrevolutionary permutations, the political system has been perceived as the major arena of the implementation of the transcendental utopian vision – even in the modern era if such vision was couched in modern secular terms. As against this, the ideological reconstruction of the political centre in a Jacobin mode has been much weaker in those civilizations with 'other-worldly' orientations – especially in India and to a somewhat smaller extent in Buddhist countries – in which the political order was not perceived as an area of the implementation of the transcendental vision, even though given the basic premises of modernity very strong modern political orientations or dimensions develop also within them (Eisenstadt, 1974). Concomitantly, some of the distinct ways in which modern democracies developed in India or Japan – as distinct from the European or American patterns, which do also vary greatly among themselves – have indeed been greatly influenced by the respective cultural traditions and historical experience of those societies. The same has been true also of the ways in which communist regimes in Russia, China, North Korea or South Asia were influenced by historical experience and traditions



of these respective societies (Ho and Tsou, 1968; Arnason, 1993; Tismaneanu, 1999). This, however, has of course been also the case with the first, European, modernity – which was deeply rooted in specific European civilizational premises and historical experience (Eisenstadt, 1987). But, as was indeed the case in Europe, all these ‘historical’ or ‘civilizational’ influences did not simply perpetuate the old pattern of political institution or dynamics. In all of them, universalist, inclusivist and ‘exclusivist’ seemingly traditional and primordial tendencies are constructed in typically modern ways, and continually articulate, in different concrete ways in different historical settings, the antinomies and contradictions of modernity.

Moreover, the importance of the historical experiences of various civilizational ‘traditions’ and historical experience in shaping the concrete contours of different modern societies does not mean that these processes give rise on the contemporary scene to several closed civilizations, which constitute continuations of their respective historical pasts and patterns. Rather, these particular experiences influence the crystallization of continually interacting modern civilizations and movements which cut across any single society or civilization, maintaining a continual flow between them, continually interacting and constituting continual mutual reference points. Moreover, the political dynamics in all these societies are closely interwoven with geopolitical realities, which while needless to say are also influenced by the historical experience of these societies, are yet shaped mostly by modern developments and confrontations which make it impossible to construct such ‘closed’ entities (*The Economist*, 1999).

## XVII

Thus the processes of globalization that have been taking place in the contemporary scene do not entail either the ‘end of history’ theme in the sense of end of ideological confrontational clashes between different cultural programmes of modernity – or of ‘clash of civilizations’ which seemingly take themselves out of the programme of modernity and deny it. They do not even constitute a – basically impossible – ‘return’ to the problematic of premodern Axial Civilizations. Rather, all these developments and trends constitute aspects of the continual reinterpretation and reconstruction of the cultural programme of modernity, of the construction of multiple modernities; of attempts by various groups and movements to reappropriate modernity and redefine the discourse of modernity in their own new terms. At the same time, they entail a shift of the major arenas of contestations and of crystallization of multiple modernities from the arenas of the nation-state to new areas in which different movements and societies continually interact and cross each other. Thus indeed modernity is – to paraphrase Leszek Kolakowski’s felicitous and sanguine expression – ‘on endless trial’ (Kolakowski, 1990).

## Notes

1. On the Revolutions and modernity, see, for instance, the special issue on ‘The French Revolution and the Birth of Modernity’ of *Social Research* (1989). On the role of groups of heterodox intellectuals in some of the revolutions and in the antecedent periods, see Cochin (1924, 1979), Baechler (1979; 7–33), Furet (1982) and Nahirny (1981).
2. See Eisenstadt’s (2000b) ‘Multiple Modernities’ in *Daedalus*, and the entire work devoted to this topic.

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