

COMPARATIVE CIVILIZATIONS AND  
MULTIPLE MODERNITIES

# COMPARATIVE CIVILIZATIONS AND MULTIPLE MODERNITIES

PART I

BY

S.N. EISENSTADT



BRILL  
LEIDEN · BOSTON  
2003

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Comparative civilizations and multiple modernities / by S.N. Eisenstadt.  
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN: 9004129936 (set)

1. Civilization, Modern—20th century. 2. Civilization, Modern—1950-  
3. Social change. 4. Civilization, Modern—Philosophy. 5. Comparative  
civilization.

CB427 .E37 2003

909.82—dc21

2003041895

ISBN 90 04 12993 6 (Set)

ISBN 90 04 12534 5 (v. 1)

ISBN 90 04 12992 8 (v. 2)

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To Robert K. Merton 1910-2003  
great scholar and devoted friend  
in piam memoriam.

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## CONTENTS

Preface .....	vii
List of Permissions .....	ix
1. Introduction: Comparative Studies and Sociological Theory—From Comparative Studies to Civilizational Analysis: Autobiographical Notes .....	1

### I. *Theoretical Approach*

2. The Civilizational Dimension in Sociological Analysis ....	33
3. Social division of labor, construction of centers and institutional dynamics: A reassessment of the structural-evolutionary perspective .....	57
4. Cultural Programs, the Construction of Collective Identities and the Continual Reconstruction of Primordality .....	75
5. Some Observations on the Dynamics of Traditions .....	135
6. Comparative Liminality. Liminality and Dynamics of Civilizations .....	167

### II. *Axial Civilizations*

#### A. *General Analysis*

7. The Axial Age: The emergence of transcendental visions and the rise of clerics .....	195
8. Cultural traditions and political dynamics: the origins and modes of ideological politics .....	219
9. Transcendental vision, center formation and the role of intellectuals .....	249
10. Utopias and Dynamics of Civilizations: Some concluding observations .....	265

B. *Analyses of Selected Axial Civilizations and of Japan*

11. This-worldly transcendentalism and the structuring of the world: Weber's "Religion of China" and the Format of Chinese History and Civilization .....	281
12. Some Observations on the transformation of Confucianism (and Buddhism) in Japan .....	307
13. A Short Comparative Excursion on the (Theravada) Buddhist Civilizational Format and Historical Experience .....	319
14. Cultural Traditions, Conceptions of Sovereignty and State Formations in India and Europe .....	329
15. The Crystallization of Christian Civilizations in Europe .....	345
16. The Jewish Historical Experience in the Framework of Comparative Universal History .....	359
17. Civil Society, Public Sphere, the Myth of Oriental Despotism and Political Dynamic in Islamic Societies .....	399
18. Japan and the multiplicity of cultural programmes of modernity .....	435
19. Some Comparative Indications about the Dynamics of Historical Axial and non-Axial Civilizations .....	457

## PREFACE

Most of the papers collected in this volume were published in the last twenty years and focus on the comparative analysis of civilizations—especially of the Axial civilization and of modernities—two topics which constitute—as I explained in chapter I—central focus my work in this period. Many of my theoretical papers which have been published during this time, have been collected in the volume *Power, Trust and Meaning*—University of Chicago Press—1995.

Given the relatively long time space and the numerous occasions for which the papers were written—there are many repetitions or overlaps between them. These were not taken out so as to keep the flow of the argument of each of these.

I would like to thank the various publishers who have granted the permission or agreed to have chapters published by them to be republished in this collection; Nadav Chorev for help in the preparation for this collection; Joel Elich from Brill Publishers for his initiative and Anita Roodnat-Disseldorp, also from Brill Publishers for supervising with great care the preparation of the volume and Caroline Diepeveen for preparing the index; and to Mayan Zigda for the preparation of the bibliography of all my publications.

Jerusalem, November 2002  
S.N. Eisenstadt



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## CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION: COMPARATIVE STUDIES AND SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY—FROM COMPARATIVE STUDIES TO CIVILIZATIONAL ANALYSIS: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

### I

In the following article I would like to present a brief survey on the development of my sociological studies and research, especially on the ways in which I have explored in these studies the relations between comparative studies and major problems and developments in sociological theory.

The major lines of my scholarly interests were formed from the early forties through the fifties, under the impact of two sets of influences. The first influence was the scholarly environment in Jerusalem in the early and middle forties—possibly even earlier, the intellectual environment I encountered while a high-school student in Tel Aviv in 1935–1940—and later on in my post-doctoral year of 1947–1948 at the London School of Economics.

The second set of influences have been the momentous social and political processes through which I lived or observed from far away—the struggle for the establishment of the State of Israel, its establishment in 1948 and the processes of its crystallization and the development of Israeli society; and the worldwide process of the first waves of democratization and development after the Second World War, with the many ensuing crises and tribulations on the world scene.

The central focus of my interest as it crystallized under these influences has been the problem of human creativity and its limitations, especially as it relates to the social arena, of the construction of different social formations—ranging from the so-called microsituations to the more formalized institutional and macroinstitutional formations—the problem of charisma and its routinization.

The problem of creativity, and the closely connected problem of the potential range of human freedom in social contexts, have recently

re-emerged in theoretical discussions in the social sciences as the problem of human agency in relation to social structure. This problem was, of course, already central in classical sociological theory. One of the most succinct formulations of it can be found in Marx's famous statement, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." Similarly, Weber's continual concern with charisma and its routinization is, of course, tantamount to this problem.

My own interest in this problem was greatly influenced by my studies with Martin Buber, whose major sociological concern was to identify those situations wherein there exist the greatest chances for human creativity in the social and cultural realm.<sup>1</sup> It was also greatly influenced by the comparative approach to which—of its major guises, the Weberian one and that of comparative institutional analysis as it developed above all in British sociology and social anthropology—I was fortunate to be exposed during my graduate and postgraduate studies. I was exposed to the Weberian approach first through Buber's teaching and later on at the London School of Economics, especially in the seminars of Edward Shils. It was also during my postdoctoral studies at the London School of Economics that I came face to face with the great tradition of comparative studies represented by Morris Ginsberg and T.H. Marshall and by the then leading group of British anthropologists—Raymond Firth, E.E. Evans Pritchard, M. Fortes, Edmund Leach, Audrey Richards, Max Gluckman and their students.

It is, thus, not very surprising that I approached some of the major problems of sociological theory, as well as the more general problem of human creativity in the social and cultural realm, mostly through comparative studies, especially comparative political studies. This interest developed in two major lines of research: one was broad comparative studies, in which historical and sociological analysis were combined; and second, studies of modernization and development. These two lines have converged in the last decade or two in the

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<sup>1</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, ch. I, idem (ed.) Martin Buber. *On Intersubjectivity and Cultural Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1992, pp. 1–22.

comparative study of civilizations and their dynamics. Cutting across them was the continual interest in sociological theory and it was indeed the combination of the different types of comparative analyses with central problems of sociological theory that I want to discuss here.

## II

The first major theoretical problem around which my research became focused was that of solidarity. My first research was only tangentially comparative, but it dealt with some central aspects of social change. This was the research on the absorption of new immigrants in Israel—undertaken between 1949–1950, published in Hebrew in 1951, and then in a broader version in English in 1953.<sup>2</sup>

These researches addressed the problems of construction of trust and solidarity and their importance in processes of change. More specifically they emphasized the fact that it is those groups which evince a high level of internal solidarity and trust which are best able to adjust or adapt themselves in situations of change. This conclusion was based on the work on primary groups developed during that period by Edward Shils. Basing myself on this work, I analyzed not only the internal cohesiveness of different immigrant groups, but also emphasized the importance of different elites in building such cohesiveness and solidarity—and especially their role in connecting the solidarity of small groups with that of broader organizational, institutional, even macrosocietal, frameworks. In this connection, another analytical point was made, namely the importance of various influentials and elites in constructing the reference orientations and reference groups of members of different social sectors—concepts which were developed and applied in research in that period by R.K. Merton,<sup>3</sup> P. Lazarsfeld,<sup>4</sup> as well as by the social

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<sup>2</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Absorption of Immigrants* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952, and Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953).

<sup>3</sup> R.K. Merton, *Continuities in Social Research* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1950); idem, *Mass Persuasion* (New York: Harper, 1946); *Essays* (Chicago: Aldine, 1967).

<sup>4</sup> P.F. Lazarsfeld, *The People's Choice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952); idem, *The Varied Sociology of Paul F. Lazarsfeld* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

psychologist Muzafer Sherif,<sup>5</sup> and somewhat later on by T. Shibutani and H. Hyman<sup>6</sup> and their students.

More systematically in several research projects these problems of transference and transformation of trust from family and kinship groups to broader societal settings, and the general importance of such transference in the constitution of social order have subsequently been explored.

These problems constituted the central problem of my first broad systematic comparative work, *From Generation to Generation*.<sup>7</sup> In that work, which analyzed the different types of age and youth groups in different societies, I showed that such groups tend to arise especially in societies in which there is a basic discontinuity between the particularistic and ascriptive principles regulating behavior within family and kinship groups on the one hand and on the other, those usually universalistic principles and those of achievement which regulate the broader sectors of institutional formations. In such societies, whether primitive, tribal, archaic, historical, or modern, there tend to arise age and youth groups.

Within such groups, attempts are made to transfer the solidarity and trust of the family and kinship group to broader sectors of society with more universalistic and achievement orientations. This is effected by connecting the achievement-oriented activities that are embedded in relatively particularistic settings of these groups.

The problems of trust and solidarity and their flow between different sectors of a society and their interweaving with the institutional foundations have also been discussed in analyses of ritual kinship,<sup>8</sup> and later on of friendship<sup>9</sup> and especially in studies of patron-client relations, which I undertook later in the early eighties with Luis Roniger.

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<sup>5</sup> M. Sherif, *Groups in Harmony and Tension* (New York: Harper, 1953); idem, ed. *Intergroup Relations and Leadership* (New York: John Wiley, 1962); idem, *Social Interaction Process and Products, Selected Essays* (Chicago: Aldine, 1967).

<sup>6</sup> H.H. Hyman, ed. *Readings in Reference Group Theory and Research* (New York: The Free Press, 1968).

<sup>7</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation* (Glencoe, Ill: The Free Press and London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956, paperback edition, 1959. Second paperback edition with a new introduction, 1963).

<sup>8</sup> "Delinquent Group-Formation among Immigrant Youth." *British Journal of Delinquency* 2, 1951, 34-45.

<sup>9</sup> Ritualized Personal Relations: Blood Brotherhood, Best Friends, Compadre, etc.: Some Comparative Hypotheses and Suggestions, *Man* (o.s.) 55, 1956, 90-95.

## III

The major comprehensive comparative work of mine which confronted directly, frontally, some of the major problems of sociological analyses and theory was the book on *Political Systems of Empires*.<sup>10</sup>

The analysis of *Political Systems* was set in the framework of then prevalent structural-functional analysis with a strong Weberian tinge. The central concept employed in the analysis of these regimes was that of free resources. The *Political Systems of Empires* was characterized by the development and internal reproduction of relatively high (compared with various tribal, patrimonial and certain type of city-state regimes) degrees of free resources; that is, resources not embedded in various ascriptive groups or social sectors and committed to use in such sectors. The rulers were interested in freeing resources from commitments to traditional aristocratic, rural, or urban groups and in the development of relatively free groups that could create and reproduce such resources. At the same time, the rulers were also highly interested in controlling these resources themselves.

Thus, the rulers attempted to create and maintain an independent peasantry with small holdings against large encroachments by powerful landowners. By this means they sought both to assure the peasants' independence and to provide resources for themselves. They also established colonies and settlements of free peasant soldiers, not controlled by the aristocracy, to ensure sufficient military manpower for the state. Parallel orientations developed also in policies aimed at other factions: urban merchants, professional and religious groups.

At the same time I stressed that in contrast to modern political systems, the level of such free resources was limited in these empires because of the coexistence of traditional, undifferentiated political activities together with more differentiated, specifically political goals. I have noted especially how the latter were limited by the traditional, ascriptive settings. Moreover, I emphasized that these more differentiated activities were limited not only by various traditional ascriptive groups but also by the rulers themselves whose legitimation was usually couched in traditional terms.

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<sup>10</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (New York, The Free Press, 1963, paperback edition 1969. Reprinted with a new introduction by Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1992).



A central part of the argument of *Political Systems* is the analysis of various organizations, such as bureaucracies that developed within these empires, mostly through the efforts of rulers to implement policies designed to maintain institutional contours and characteristics, that is their specific systemic external and internal boundaries and the balance between free resources and more ascriptive settings.

#### IV

However, the analysis presented in *Political Systems* in many ways went beyond what had been the prevalent thrusts of structural-functionalism at the time. It went beyond the assumptions of structural-functional analysis because it did not accept the natural givenness of any social system—in this case of these Empires, and because of its emphasis on the central role of institutional entrepreneurs in the construction of such systems. This analysis also went beyond the assumptions of structural-functional analysis by its emphasis on the internal contradictions which develop in any such system, on the processes of change that take place in it and on the importance of internal and external forces in giving rise to such changes—and to the possible demises of such systems. It also went beyond these assumptions—even if just implicitly—by recognizing the autonomy of cultural visions and in turn, their impact on the promulgation of various goals by both rulers and other groups, and on the specific dynamics of the respective empires.<sup>11</sup>

#### V

*Political Systems of Empires* also went beyond the evolutionary assumptions which were most prominent in many studies connected with the structural-functional school, especially in the early studies of modernization which developed in the late forties and early fifties. The first criticism held that not all massive social change necessarily leads to differentiation. The second, and more important, maintained that institutional developments that take place at seemingly similar “stages”

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<sup>11</sup> See in greater detail, S.N. Eisenstadt, “Introduction” in the Transaction edition on *Political System of Empires*, op. cit.

of differentiation may nevertheless lead in different directions. In other words, the institutional responses to the problems arising out of growing structural differentiation—the patterns of integration—that emerge in different societies at seemingly similar stages of differentiation may vary considerably across societies.<sup>12</sup>

Here again I stressed the central role of various entrepreneurs, elites and their coalition, the visions they bore and the goals they promulgated, in the crystallization and reproduction of different types of institutional formations.

## VI

To the extent that *Political Systems* went beyond the premises of the structural-functional model it evinced, at least implicitly, a close affinity with some of the strong criticisms directed at this model—by different “schools” or “approaches” which gathered momentum from the early sixties on, such as the conflict model, the exchange model and the symbolic structuralist model of Claude Levi-Strauss.<sup>13</sup> Other older models were reaffirmed or elaborated further. These included the symbolic-interactionist one, then, later the ethnomethodology and the Marxist ones—or rather the great variety of different Marxist and neo-Marxist approaches. In fact, all these approaches shared an unwillingness to accept the “natural” givenness of any single institutional setting. Instead, the very setting up of such institutional arrangements was problematized; i.e., it was transposed from a given into a problem to-be-explained; and the question was now asked what the forces were, beyond the major organizational needs of any social setting, that could explain these institutional arrangements.

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<sup>12</sup> See “Social Change Differentiation and Evolution,” *American Sociological Review* 29, 1969, pp. 375–386, reprinted as ch. 5 in *Power, Trust and Meaning*.

<sup>13</sup> C. Levi-Strauss, “Introduction a l’œuvre de Marcel Mauss,” pp. IX–LII in *Mauss, M. Sociologie et Anthropologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), idem, *Structural Anthropology*, Vol. I (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1963). See also Vol. II (1982); idem, *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966); idem, *Totemism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967); idem, *Mythologiques: du Miel aux Centres* (Paris: Plon, 1967); idem, *Mythologiques: L’origine des Manieres de Table* (Paris: Plon, 1968); idem, *Mythologiques: The Raw and the Cooked* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969); idem, *Mythologiques: L’homme Nu* (Paris: Plon, 1971).

Such explanations crystallized in these approaches around two analytical poles: that of “negotiated order” vs. that of “deep structure”; and cutting across these two poles was the emphasis on “culture”—or the symbolic dimension of human interactions—as against the emphasis on “material” or power dimensions.

The emphasis on negotiated order stressed that any such institutional order develops, is maintained and changes through a process of continuous interaction, negotiation, and struggle among those who participate in it. Concomitantly, a strong emphasis was laid on the autonomy of any sub-setting, subgroup of system—and perhaps above all of individuals—that could find expression in the definitions of goals that differed from those of the groups dominant in it; emphasis was also put on the environments within which the social setting operates, and, above all, on the international system, for the analysis of “total” societies or macrosocietal orders.

The second seemingly contradictory approach is to be found among the structuralists à la Levi-Strauss and among some, especially French, Marxists.<sup>14</sup> That approach explained the nature of any given institutional order—and especially its dynamics—in terms of some principles of “deep” or “hidden” structure, akin to those which provide the deep structure of language, according to linguists such as Chomsky. In attempting to identify such deep principles the structuralists stressed the importance of the symbolic dimensions of human activity, and some inherent rules of the human mind, while the Marxists stressed above all the rules of production and reproduction of different social formations, and the relations or contradictions between modes and relations of production as carried out by different classes.

These controversies were in many ways the forerunners of the more radical ones which developed, as we shall see, from about the seventies on and which raised the problems of the relations between agency and structure, and between culture and social structure.

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<sup>14</sup> See for instance, M. Godelier, *Horizons, Trajets Marxistes en Anthropologie* (Paris: Maspero, 1973). L. Goldmann, *Sciences Humaines et Philosophie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964); idem, *Structures Mentales et Creation Culturelle* (Paris: Edition Anthropos, 1970). H. Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 1971). L. Sebag, *Structuralisme et Marxisme* (Paris: Petite Bibliotheque Payot, 1964). *Sur le Monde de Production Asiatique*, with a preface by R. Garaudy (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1969). F. Tokei, *Sur le Mode de Production Asiatique* (Budapest, Akademiai, Kiado: Studia Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, 1966).

Although these controversies did not deal directly with the problem of creativity in the social realm—yet, the problem was to some extent at least, implicit in them; in the stress on the autonomy of culture and of individuals, on going beyond the “oversocialized conception of man.”<sup>15</sup>

## VII

I address these problems related to the processes of the construction of institutional formations—and especially, the central problem of the relation between the actions of individuals and social structure, in the chapter on “Societal Goals, Systemic Needs, Social International and Individual Behavior” in a book devoted to the confrontation of *The Sociologies of Talcott Parsons and George C. Homans*,<sup>16</sup> as well as in the first chapter in a collection of my *Essays in Comparative Institutions*.<sup>17</sup> In this chapter, I focused on what in later parlance was called the problem of agency vs. structure.

The starting point of these analyses was a concept which was central to the controversies of that period—namely, that of exchange. The exchange model constituted one of the major critiques of the structural-functional approach. It stressed very strongly—in a way which would be later taken up by various “rational choice” models or approaches—that social behavior cannot be explained in terms of norms or roles, but above all in terms of interaction between social actors, especially individuals, acting rationally in terms of some combination of utilitarian considerations and punishment-reward system, in pursuance of their goals. The various discussions around the problem pointed to a more general problem, namely, the necessity first of identifying and analyzing the goals which are pursued in human interaction and exchange; and of the preferences among such goals;

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<sup>15</sup> D. Wrong, “The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology,” in idem, *Skeptical Sociology* (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 31–46, Postscript pp. 47–54.

<sup>16</sup> H. Turk and R.L. Simpson (eds.) *Institutions and Social Change—The Sociologies of Talcott Parsons and George C. Homans* (Indianapolis & New York: Bob Merrill Co., 1971).

<sup>17</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Study of the Process of Institutionalization—Institutional Change and Comparative Institutions,” in idem, *Essays in Comparative Institutions* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1965), pp. 1–68.

of the criteria of such interaction and exchange, and the institutional settings within which it takes place; and the different modes in which exchange may be regulated in different arenas of social life.

In my works from the mid-sixties on, I have addressed these problems, indicating that they all demonstrate the limitations of the “simple,” “direct” exchange modes. In the chapter “Societal Goals etc.,” I discussed first the importance of individuals’ different goals, not only the utilitarian ones assumed by exchange models, but also other ones, especially the search for a good social order. Moreover, I indicated that goals and preferences are themselves socially constituted through what I called simulation of desiderata and that a crucial aspect of any exchange process is the creation of artificial scarcities which influence the starting positions of different individuals in the process of exchange, and the institutional frameworks of such exchange.

Second, I also started to explore systematically the limitations on “pure” exchange which are inherent in the constitution of social life, and to analyze the institutional frameworks within which exchange takes place. In this context E.O. Schild and myself, in a series of unpublished papers, explored and analysed the inherent features of the media of exchange—money, power and prestige—and the ways in which such features also structure such limitations on simple exchange—especially the access to exchange and to positions of differential power in such exchange.

The analysis of friendship and patron-client relations which Luis Roniger and I undertook in the early eighties<sup>18</sup> was a first step in the direction of a systematic analysis of such processes, and of a comparative exploration of the relations between generalized and specific or routine exchange. It built on the earlier research on strata formation but went beyond it.

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<sup>18</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, *Patrons, Clients and Friends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). See also, for other formulations: L. Roniger, “Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, 42–77 will be brought into this collection. R. Lemarchand, eds., *Political Clientelism, Patronage and Development* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications) with L. Roniger, “The Study of Patron-Client Relations and Recent Developments in Sociological Theory,” idem: on 271–289 and with L. Roniger, “Cultural and Structural Continuities in Situations of Change and Development: Persistence and Transformation of Patron-Client Relations.” In R. Hettlage, ed., *Die post-traditionelle Welt der Bauern/Le Monde post-traditionnel du paysans* (special issue of *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Soziologie/Revue Suisse de Sociologie*) 8, 29–52.

It also connected systematically the analysis of general exchange with that of constitution of trust and solidarity and their flow between different sectors of society. In these researches we again analysed—albeit in a broader theoretical setting—how the different patterns of trust in both micro- and macrosettings were related systematically to different patterns of institutional formations, and especially to the prevalence of different types of patron-client relationships. Here, a major distinction was made between those societies whose “clienteleistic” relations constitute a central core of the institutional structure, and which are characterized by a low level of trust within their different sectors, and those societies in which they constitute a sort of addendum to other, more universalistic, principles, and which are characterized by a higher degree or trust. It was shown that each of these institutional patterns entails a different mode-of-interweaving of generalized and specific exchange. In those societies where the “clienteleistic” pattern is predominant, a continual blurring takes place between the two types of exchange, while in the others, distinct institutional settings develop (such as the age groups which we have analyzed above) which both separate these types of exchange and create interlinking institutions which are not embedded in either type of exchange.

In this research, we also systematically explored the relations between such institutional patterns and cultural orientations and identified the social actors who play a central role in effecting such patterns. We have shown that the development of the “clienteleistic” pattern is very closely related to—or has a strong elective affinity with—the prevalence in their societies or sectors of distinct cosmological conceptions, namely those conceptions in which the tension between the transcendental and mundane worlds is relatively low, and is usually combined with a strong otherworldly orientation. Second, we showed how such conceptions are borne by elites embedded in particularistic settings who usually serve as the apex of the patron-client hierarchies and how these conceptions and elites are related to the structure of trust in these societies.

## VIII

At the same time in this period, in close relation to studies of modernization, and cutting across the comparative analysis of political

systems (and other institutional arenas),<sup>19</sup> I have taken up in a series of researches the reexamination of central analytical problems in sociological theory, as they bear on the more general problem of human creativity. This was done by the reexamination of two central concepts: charisma and center. Charisma has constituted, of course, a central concept in sociological analysis since Weber. It was the way in which Edward Shils reinterpreted and combined this term with the concept of center—which he had coined—that provided the starting point of the line of analysis which I undertook in that period.<sup>20</sup>

In these analyses, the center or centers of a society were conceived as dealing not only with the organizational aspects of the social division of labor, but they were also seen as primarily dealing with the connection of these aspects of the social division of labor to the charismatic dimensions of social order. That is to say, the centers of society were connected to the attempts to relate the mundane realities of social life, of institutional formations, to what is conceived by humans as the source of existence, of life and its predicaments.

I have addressed myself earlier to some of the more general principled problems, of the nature of the processes through which the charismatic dimensions of human action became interwoven with processes of institution building or with the crystallization of institutional formations in the article on “Charisma and Institution Building.”<sup>21</sup> The essay on “Charisma and Institution Building,” showed that this inherence of change in the process of institution formations, in the very construction of social life is to be attributed not only to the inherent systemic contradictions and conflicts it entails, but also to the very nature of the charismatic dimension of human action. It was suggested that the central characteristic of this dimension—the attempt to come close to the very essence of human endeavor, to the essence of being, i.e., to come close to the cosmological visions

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<sup>19</sup> See in greater detail the articles collected in *Power, Trust and Meaning*, op. cit., and especially the analysis in chs. I and XIII thereof.

<sup>20</sup> Shils, *Center and Periphery; Charisma: Order and Status*. In idem, *Center and Periphery*, pp. 3–17 and pp. 256–276 respectively (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

<sup>21</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Charisma and Institution Building,” introduction to Max Weber’s *On Charisma and Institution Building*, edited by S.N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968). Reprinted as ch. VII in *Power, Trust and Meaning*.

and conceptions of social order—entails by its very nature both constructive and destructive elements or components.

## IX

These analyses of the relations between charisma and institution building touched on the more radical controversies which arose from about the middle seventies and went beyond the stage of controversy prevalent in the social sciences in the sixties and even beyond the declarations about the crisis of sociology which abounded in the seventies.<sup>22</sup>

These controversies focused not only on the non-givenness of any institutional formations and on the necessity of explaining the processes through which such formations are crystallized and changed. More radical was their very powerful rejection of the assumption (only implicit in the earlier controversies)—which could be attributed to the functional-structural approach—that it is the organization of social division of labor in systemic patterns that constitutes the central focus of the constitution of social order. Social division of labor organized in systemic frameworks was no longer seen as being at the core of the constitution of social orders—such a core was searched for in “culture,” in some social structural entities such as the state or in individuals’ behavior. This radical rejection led also to the reconsideration of the epistemological and ontological standing of the major concepts of sociological analysis—especially of those of culture, social structure, and individuals—and of the relations between them.

These controversies entailed far-reaching shifts in the basic concepts of social-science analysis that include culture as well as religion,

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<sup>22</sup> At the time, I examined these controversies from the point of view of the development of sociology as a scholarly endeavor, in the sociological tradition. I wanted to especially understand here why it is that in sociology a strong tendency developed—towards a combination of scholarly discourses with ideological sectarianism and with “crises.” I have addressed this last problem in a book co-authored with Miriam Curelaru, *The Form of Sociology: Paradigms and Crises* (New York: John Wiley, 1976), referred to above, and in “Some Reflections of the ‘Crisis’ in Sociology,” *Sociologische Gids* 73, 255–269, in *The Sociological Tradition: Origins, Boundaries, Patterns of Innovation, and Crises*. In J. Ben-David, T.N. Clark, eds., *Culture and Its Creators: Essays in Honor of Edward Shils* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 43–72. And see also “Autonomy of Sociology and Its Emancipatory Dimensions,” *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences* (Series 2) 39, 28–31.



and social structure. These concepts became increasingly conceptualized as distinct and “real” ontological entities (not as in earlier periods of sociological and anthropological analysis) and indeed also in the world of Talcott Parsons as analytical constructs referring to different aspects or dimensions of human action and social interaction, constitutive of each other and of patterns of social interaction. Concomitantly, a shift of emphasis developed—with respect to several dimensions of culture and social structure, and especially a shift away from the structural-functional school’s emphasis on values and norms.

One view of this shift—explicit among the structuralists and implicit to some degree at least among some of the ethnomethodologists—regards culture as containing the programmatic code of human behavior, and espouses (to use Geertz’s felicitous, if ironic, expression) the view of man as cerebral savage. According to this view, culture is fully structured or programmed, based on clear principles embedded in the nature of the human mind, which, through a series of codes, regulates human behavior. In contrast, the symbolic anthropologists, such as Clifford Geertz,<sup>23</sup> Victor Turner,<sup>24</sup> and David M. Schneider,<sup>25</sup> shifted away from values and norms to a conception of culture as a set of expressive symbols of ethos, a “worldview” constructed through active human interaction.

Parallel shifts in the concept of social structure have also evolved since the mid-sixties. The concept has become redefined in new definitions of social structure and institutions, especially the “State,” as “real” and “autonomous” agents or actors.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See, for instance, C. Geertz, “Religion as a Cultural System,” in idem, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 1973, pp. 142–170; idem, “Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example,” in idem, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, op. cit., pp. 87–126; idem, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” in idem, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, op. cit., pp. 412–455.

<sup>24</sup> V.W. Turner, *Fields and Metaphors* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974); idem, *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967); idem, *The Drums of Affliction* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1968).

<sup>25</sup> D.M. Schneider, *Class Differences and Sex Roles in American Kinship and Family Structure* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1973); idem, *American Kinship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); idem, (ed.) *Symbolic Anthropology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

<sup>26</sup> T. Skocpol, *States of Social Revolutions. A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); P.B. Evans, R. Dietrich and T. Skocpol, (eds.) *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

A parallel—if somewhat paradoxical—trend developed with respect to the conception of the individual—especially in various rational choice approaches which have become prominent in contemporary theoretical discourse in the social sciences. Building on the foundations of the earlier exchange theory, these approaches depicted the individual as a totally independent, autonomous, ontologically distinct entity or monad. In these approaches, social structure and culture were viewed as networks or organizations arising from the aggregation of individual interactions, with almost no autonomous characteristics except for some emergent qualities often described as “primitive effects.”<sup>27</sup>

## X

These shifts, and the researches connected with them, sharpened the problem of the place of culture in the construction of social order, and of the relations between culture and social structure. These shifts continuously oscillated between seeing the relationship between culture and social structure in any given society as either static and homogenous—or as entirely open, almost endlessly malleable and continuously changing.

The first view, typical of some structuralists and extreme Marxists, depicts cultural orientations or rules as relatively uniform and homogenous within society and as relatively static throughout the major period of the histories of the societies or civilizations in which they are institutionalized. This is true in both cases, whether they are, as among the structuralists, reflections of some basic rules of the human mind, or as among the Marxists, reflections of some “deep” social forces. Such a picture leaves little room (beyond the initial institutionalization of the different cultural visions) for reconstruction and change in the relations between culture and social structure. It does not either explain the development of strategies of choice, maximization, and possible innovation as they are depicted in individualistic approaches.

In the second view, culture is seen as an aggregate result of patterns of behavior, of structure or of power, or as Ann Swidler put

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<sup>27</sup> L.A. Hirshfeld, S. Atran and A.A. Yengoyan, “Theories of Knowledge and Culture,” in *Social Science Information*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1982, pp. 161–198.

it “as a tool-kit of different strategies of action which can be activated in different situations, according to the ‘material’ and ‘ideal’ interests of different social actors,”<sup>28</sup> and apparently entirely without any specific contours of its own.

These shifts in the definition and status of both culture and social structure were accompanied by a preference for exclusively deterministic, reductionist, “idealist” or “materialist” interpretations of social action and culture creativity. This tendency to reify major concepts of social analysis became closely interwoven with an ontological reduction of all social behavior to some of them, especially to power such as in the work of Michel Foucault, which gained great popularity in that period. These shifts were also connected with a growing dissociation between the studies of culture and those of social structure.

One of the rather paradoxical outcomes of these shifts in the ontological standing of the basic concepts of sociological analysis and of the oscillation in views about the relative importance of culture and social structure was the almost total initial neglect of the analysis of the construction of the division of labor, and of rules and norms, rates and institutions. All these aspects of social life were either taken for granted, simply ignored, or seen as derived from culture, “social structure” or individuals, conceived as distinct ontological entities. In a sense what took place here was that the “baby”—division of labor, rules, norms, and institutions—was thrown out with the “water” of the closed structural functional analysis.

It is only recently that attempts have been made to explain the emergence of norms and institutions<sup>29</sup>—at least from the individualist, rational choice point of view. These attempts have highlighted the importance of the processes through which institutional formations crystallize—and have made interesting contributions to the analysis of such processes. But at the same time they have clearly

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<sup>28</sup> A Swidler, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies,” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 51, May 1986, pp. 273–286.

<sup>29</sup> J.S. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990). M. Hechter, K.D. Opp and R. Wippler (eds.) *Social Institutions: Their Emergence, Maintenance and Effects* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1990). K.S. Cook and M. Levi (eds.) *The Limits of Rationality* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990). K.S. Cook (ed.), *Social Exchange Theory* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1987).

indicated the limitation of this position in dealing with the very central theoretical problem which these controversies raised.

## XI

These theoretical problems have become closely interwoven with shifts in my own work—especially with that from comparative institutional to comparative civilizational analysis in which I frontally analyzed the processes through which relations between the construction of the social division of labor, the regulation of power, the construction of trust (solidarity) and of meaning, and their impact on institutional and cultural dynamics, are interwoven in shaping the crystallization, reproduction and change of social formations. In this way, I also attempted to redefine the relations between agency, culture, and social structure.

The analysis of these relations was undertaken in the study of the so-called Axial civilizations which constituted one of the centerpieces of the research program on Comparative Civilizations.<sup>30</sup> This program developed in close relation with the revival of interest in comparative civilizational analysis in a Weberian mode, one of the most important nuclei of which was the meeting reexamining the Weberian program organized by Professor W. Schluchter of Heidelberg.

The Axial Age civilizations provide an unusually instructive arena for the examination of both the difference between structural differentiation and the differentiation of elite activities—as well as of the variety of possible elite coalitions bearing different cultural visions or orientations. They facilitate an analysis of the impact of these elite coalitions and counter-coalitions on the institutional structure of their respective societies, on the *modes* of structural differentiation, and on the dynamics of these societies. Above all, the analysis of the Axial civilizations provides an arena for a most fruitful analysis of the relations between cultural, civilizational visions and institutional formations; and for an analysis of the interweaving of cultural and structural social dimensions in the construction of such formations.

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<sup>30</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Civilizations* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1986); idem (ed.), *Kulturen der Achsenzeit*, 2 Teil (3 vols.), Frankfurt Suhrkamp, 1991; idem, *Civilita Compare*—Ligouri Editore, Napoli, 1990.

The most central aspect of the Axial Age civilizations from this analytical perspective was that they were characterized by a sharp distinction between the social division of labor and the functions which articulate the charismatic dimensions of the constitution of social order which are beyond the organization of the social division of labor. These latter functions were to a very large extent borne by various autonomous cultural elites and intellectuals which emerged as a distinct type of social actors within all Axial civilizations.

The emphasis on distinct, autonomous cultural actors—and on the articulators or promulgators of the solidarity of different social collectives—brings us to a major aspect of civilizational dynamics of the Axial civilizations and the processes of change within them.

The main point here involves the close relations between such autonomous cultural elites and intellectuals and new types of social movements, especially different sects and heterodoxies that upheld different conceptions of the resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order, as well as different sociological visions and the proper way to institutionalize such visions, that also constituted the most active element in the protest movements.

The transformation of these alternative conceptions into heterodoxies was effected, of course, by their confrontation with some institutionalized orthodoxy, and it was from then on that the continuous confrontation between orthodoxy on the one hand and schism and heterodoxy on the other, and with it also the development of strong and potentially widespread antinomian tendencies, became a crucial component in the history of mankind.<sup>31</sup>

Because of this, the possibility of structural and ideological linkages between different movements of protest and foci of political conflict emerged in these civilizations. Thus, a new type of civilizational dynamics developed. These new dynamics of civilization transformed group conflicts into political class and ideological conflicts, cult conflicts into struggle between the orthodoxies and heterodoxies. Conflicts between tribes and societies became missionary crusades for the transformation of civilizations. The zeal for reorganization informed by each society's transcendental vision made the whole

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<sup>31</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "Heterodoxies, Sectarianism and Dynamics of Civilizations," *Diogenes* 120, 1982, 5–26; idem, "Transcendental Visions—Other Worldliness—and Its Transformations: Some More Comments on L. Dumont," *Religion* 13, 1983, 1–17.

world at least potentially subject to cultural-political reconstruction, and in all these new developments the different sectarian movements and movements of heterodoxy played a central role for the reasons outlined above. The place of such heterodoxies in the dynamics of Axial civilizations bears on a more general point of the central place of intellectuals in the construction of societal centers.<sup>32</sup>

One of the most interesting subjects of comparative analysis—of an unusual combination of a very high level of structural differentiation together with a low level of distinction between social division of labor and elite functions, that is, a low degree of autonomy of the major elites—is Japan. In terms of comparative analysis the uniqueness of Japanese civilization lies in the fact that it did not experience an Axial Age transformation, leading to a strong conception of a very strong chasm between the transcendental and the mundane order. Yet it did exhibit some of the structural characteristics as well as a very high level of philosophical literary and ideological discourse, and self-reflexivity that can be found in Axial Age civilizations.<sup>33</sup>

## XII

The analysis of the interweaving of cultural and social structural dimensions of human interaction and social order was applied not only to the study of the overall macrosociological dynamics of the Axial civilizations, but also to that of specific institutional arenas within these civilizations.

Such analysis had already been undertaken in the comparative analysis of patron-client relations, in which it was first shown how the development of such relations is closely related to the prevalence—in different societies or sectors thereof—of distinct cosmological visions borne by highly embedded elites who usually serve as the apex of the patron-client hierarchies, and how these conceptions and elites are related to the structure of trust in these societies.

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<sup>32</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, *Heterodoxy and Dynamics*, op. cit., and idem, with R. Graubard (eds.), *Intellectuals and Tradition* (New York: Humanities Press, 1973).

Also idem, "Transcendental Vision, Center Formations and the Role of Intellectuals," in L. Greenfield and M. Martin (eds.), *Center Ideas and Institutions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, pp. 96–109).

<sup>33</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization in a Comparative Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

Later on such analysis was undertaken systematically and in much greater detail in other studies. Thus, for instance, in a comparative study of cities and urban hierarchies of the major historical civilizations,<sup>34</sup> it was shown that major dimensions of urban structure cannot be explained purely in terms of ecological, economic conditions or in terms of structural differentiation. In addition to these factors, cosmological visions and conceptions of social order promulgated by the elites of the respective societies are of great importance. The importance of these latter factors can be seen in the impact of the Confucian cosmology promulgated by the Chinese literati in shaping the urban structure of Beijing, or of the Muslim conceptions of social order that have changed the construction of the urban space of Istanbul in comparison with that of Constantinople—both capitals are great agrarian bureaucratic empires with great similarities in their respective social structures and in their geopolitical location.

At the same time, I undertook an analysis of the different heterodoxies and their impact on the dynamics of their respective civilizations in a series of researches (in the framework of conferences on these topics, organized by a core group under the chairmanship of Professor W. Schluchter, to which I referred to above) that started with a reexamination of Weber's Protestant ethic of some of the major civilizations—Jewish, early Christian, Indian, Buddhist, Chinese, and Islamic.<sup>35</sup>

All these analyses have enabled me to shed light on many aspects of the dynamics of the different Empires analysed in the *Political Systems of Empires* which were only hinted at there. Such new insights were made possible by the combination of new theoretical approaches

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<sup>34</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt & A. Shachar, *Society, Culture and Urbanization* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1987).

<sup>35</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "Die Paradoxie von Zivilisationen mit auserweltlichen Orientierungen," in *Max Weber's Studie über Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, edited by Wolfgang Schluchter (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1984); idem, "Weber's Analyse des Islams und die Gestalt der Islamischen Zivilization." In *Max Weber's Sicht des Islams*, edited by Wolfgang Schluchter (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1987), pp. 342–359; idem, "Max Weber's Überlegungen zum Westlichen Christentums." In *Max Weber's Sicht des Okzidentalens Christentums*. Edited by Wolfgang Schluchter (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, 1988), pp. 554–585; idem, "Max Weber's Sicht des fruhen Christentums und die entstehung der Westlichen zivilisation. Einige vergleichende uberlegungen." In *Max Weber's Sicht des Antiken Christentums*. Edited by Wolfgang Schluchter. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, 1985).

together with the choice of broader—civilizational—units of comparison. The choice of such wider units does not negate the importance of the “smaller” units—the Empires as political systems. It does, however, show how the analysis of the impact of the broader civilizational setting on the “narrower” one (the Empires as political systems) has enriched the latter. But this was made possible only insofar as we could identify and analyze the specific social processes and actors through which such impact was effected, “autonomous intellectuals,” heterodoxies, and the like.

Throughout these researches, I have also pointed to the ways in which the various Axial visions are institutionalized and their dynamics greatly influenced both by the technologies that develop within their respective societies and by the political-ecological conditions in which they develop. In the study of urban structure, we have shown how cultural orientation and social process shape (urban) spaces. A comparison between the Byzantine Empire and European Christianity as well as between Hindu civilization and the more compact Buddhist polities has indicated the impact of ecological-political comparisons, as opposed to the decentralization of formations and the dynamics of civilization. I have further analyzed the problem of the impact of political-ecological formations on institutional dynamics in a series of analyses of the different aspects of small states.<sup>36</sup>

All these constitute however only the first steps in a more systematic analysis of the relations between ecological patterns and institutional dynamics—a rather neglected problem, with the possible exception of the works of Hans Gehser,<sup>37</sup> Randall Collins,<sup>38</sup> Peter Katzenstein,<sup>39</sup> and a few others<sup>40</sup> in sociological analysis.

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<sup>36</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Sociological Characteristics and Problems of Small States: A Research Note.” *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* 2, 35–50 in German: 1977, *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 3, 67–85; idem, “Reflections on Center-Periphery Relations and Small European States”, in *Small States in Comparative Perspective*. Oslo, 1985, pp. 41–49.

<sup>37</sup> H. Gehser, “Kleine Sozialsysteme. Strukturmerkmale und Leistungskapazitäten,” in *Koelner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Social, Psychologie* JG. 32 (1980), S. 205–239; idem, “Kleine Sozialsysteme—ein soziologisches Erklärungsmodell der Konkordanzdemokratie?” In *Politischer Wandel in konkordanz-demokratischen Systemen*, edited by Helga Michaksky. Vaduz, 1991, pp. 93–121. (Liechtenstein Politische Schriften, Bd. 15).

<sup>38</sup> R. Collins, *Weberian Sociological Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), chs. 6, 7, 8 f.

<sup>39</sup> P. Katzenstein, *Small States in World Markets* (Ithaca, London, 1985).

<sup>40</sup> A. Skuhra, “Industrialized Small States: Some Comparative Considerations.



## XIII

The various macrosociological and comparative institutional analyses which I was engaged in over the last twenty years have also facilitated the reexamination—in close connection with the reappraisal of basic issues of sociological theory—of some central aspects of historical processes, especially of the relations between cultural visions, institutional patterns, agency and historical contingency.

Such reexamination can be illustrated by the analysis of revolutions and in the reappraisal of the visions of modernity and modernization. The analysis of revolutions started with a critical review of the numerous studies of the “causes” of revolutions, which strongly emphasized various structural and psychological factors. This review indicated that such causes may explain the breakdown of regimes, but not the nature of the outcome of such breakdowns—that is, whether it will be a revolutionary one or not.<sup>41</sup>

Since revolutions are, by definition, concomitant with the breakdown of regimes, it is the various causes or conditions of the breakdown of regimes—the various constellations of inter-elite and inter-class struggles; the development of new social groups and economic forces which are blocked from access to power; the weakening of regimes through such struggles, through economic turbulence and through the impact of international forces—which constitute the necessary conditions for the development of revolutions. But it is only insofar as these processes take place in specific historical circumstances, and within the frameworks of specific civilizational premises, political regimes, and specific types of political economy—that they may trigger revolutionary processes and outcomes.

These specific historical circumstances are those of early modernity, when the autocratic modernizing regimes face the contradictions inherent in their own legitimation and in their politics and

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O. Holl,” in *Small States in Europe and Dependence* (Hersg, Austrian Institute for International Affairs, Luxembourg, 1983) pp. 69–82. A. Waschkuhn (ed.), *Kleinstaat: Drundsatzliche und aktuele Probleme* (Vaduz: Verlag der Liechtensteinischen Akademischen Gesellschaft, 1993).

<sup>41</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies* (New York, The Free Press, 1978); and idem, “Frameworks of the Great Revolutions: Culture, Social Structure, History and Human Agency,” *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 33, 1992, pp. 385–401; and see also the special issue (vol. 10, no. 2, April 1989), of *International Political Science Review* on The Historical Frameworks of Revolution.

confront the development of new economic strata and new "modern" ideologies.

The civilizational frameworks are those of "this-worldly" or combined (and other-worldly Axial civilizations and political regimes) either imperial or feudal imperial ones. When for various historical reasons, such regimes do not develop in these civilizational frameworks, the processes of change as it were, tend to be deflected from the revolutionary route.

The concrete outcome, however, of these processes depends greatly on the balance of power between the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces and their respective cohesion.

The combination of civilizational and structural conditions and historical contingencies that generated the Great Revolutions has been rather rare in the history of mankind. With all their dramatic importance, these revolutions certainly do not constitute the only, main or even the most far-reaching types of such changes—whether in premodern or modern times. When other combinations of structural and institutional factors develop, for instance, in Japan, India, South Asia or Latin America, they give rise to other processes of change and new political regimes. These are not just "faulted" would-be revolutions. They should not be measured by the yardstick of the Revolutions; rather, they denote different patterns of change, "legitimate" and meaningful transformation of societies, and they should be analyzed in their own right.

#### XIV

These considerations also brought a reexamination of the vision of modernization and modernity. Such reexamination focused above all on the problem of the so-called convergence of industrial and modern societies or, in a somewhat broader formulation, on whether what we witness on the contemporary scene is the development of one modern civilization encompassing most contemporary societies, but with local sub-variations, or of several modern civilizations. That is to say, civilizations sharing common characteristics but which yet tend to develop as distinct civilizations with different ideological and institutional dynamics.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "A Reappraisal of Theories of Social Change and Modernization,"

Contrary to the vision implicit in the “classical” studies of modernization and the convergence of industrial society, behind which there loomed a conviction of the inevitability of progress towards modernity, whether political, industrial, or cultural, there slowly developed a growing recognition of the great symbolic and institutional variability and of the different modes of ideological and institutional dynamics attendant on the spread of modern civilization. A new perspective on the process of modernization emerged from a critical examination of these various theories—such as those which stressed the importance of traditions or the dynamics of international systems for the understanding of this variability—and from the comparative civilizational approach. Accordingly, the process of modernization should no longer be viewed as the ultimate end of the evolution of all known societies. This new perspective on modernization does not assume that the process of modernization brings out the evolutionary potential common to all societies. Rather, it considers that modernization or modernity is one specific type of civilization that originated in Europe and spread throughout the world, encompassing—especially after the Second World War—almost all of it.

The crystallization and expansion of this new type of civilization was not unlike that of the great religions or of the great imperial expansions in the past. But because the expansion of this civilization almost always combined economic, political, and ideological factors, its impact on the societies on which it spread was much more intensive than in these other historical cases. Just as when historical civilizations expand, so does the expansion of modernity challenge the symbolic and institutional premises of the societies that are incorporated into it. This challenge calls for responses from within these societies, which have the effect in turn, of opening up new options and possibilities. A great variety of modern or modernizing societies have developed out of these responses, out of the interaction between the expanding civilization of modernity and the various Asian, African, and Latin American civilizations. They share many common characteristics but also evince great differences among themselves. They share many common problems—such as those arising from urban-

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in H. Haferkamp and N.J. Smelser (eds.), *Social Change and Modernity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 412–429; and also idem (ed.), *Patterns of Modernity*, 2 vols. (London: Frances Pinter, 1987).

ization, industrialization, the expansion of communication, and widespread politicization—but they differ in the institutional “solutions” to these problems, as we have seen in the definitions of these problems or “needs.” These differences crystallize out of the selective incorporation—hence, also the transformation—of the major symbolic premises and institutional formations of the original Western civilization, as well as that of the traditions and historical experiences of their own civilizations. The systematic analysis of the ways in which the historical experience of different societies and civilizations emphasize the different modernities which crystallize them constitutes, in my mind, the most fascinating and challenging task for comparative analyses—a task which is very much before us. Indeed, the exploration of the meaning of such changes is the central problem of sociological analysis.

## XV

In this context it might indeed be worthwhile to point out some of the implications of the comparative analyses of civilization and modernity on these problems of sociological theory—especially those bearing on the problems of agency and social structure, and culture and social structure.<sup>43</sup>

The preceding analyses noted that research based on the assumption that culture, social structure, and agency are distinct, ontological realities cannot explain certain crucial aspects of human activity, social interaction, and cultural creativity.

Many aspects of institutional formations and dynamics, such as the structure of the centers or the construction of boundaries of collectivities and modes of political protest, cannot be explained entirely in terms of either the “natural,” autonomous tendencies of these spheres of activity or “routine,” “rational,” utilitarian activities. That is, they cannot be explained in purely structural terms, whether of structural differentiation, exchange, or power relations or, despite the claims of such structuralists, as emanations of certain principles of the human mind. Similarly, the analyses of the patterns of cultural creativity, such as the various modes of organizing and structuring

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<sup>43</sup> This last paragraph is based on S.N. Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization, A Comparative View*, pp. 381–383.

worlds of knowledge or religious beliefs and their impact on the structure and dynamics of social life cannot be explained only in terms of the inherent dynamics of ideas or symbols.

The rational-choice approaches, on the other hand, claim that major institutional formations and behavioral patterns—for instance, juridical behavior—can be best explained in terms of the rational, ability-oriented consideration of the actors and not in terms of some inherent cultural belief, predisposition, or tradition. Our analysis has indicated that such an extreme culturological explanation is not valid. At the same time it has shown that central dimensions of “culture” are of great importance in shaping institutional formations and patterns of behavior, but only when effected through specific social processes and institutional frameworks. Such social processes do not shape directly the concrete behavior of different individuals. Rather they shape the frameworks, within which such behavior is undertaken, the institutional ground rules—the “rules of the game”—within which the rational, utilitarian considerations (although not only they) may play an important role. But these considerations explain neither the constitution of such rules nor the social processes through which culture and social structure are interwoven to create such frameworks and rules.

Rather, central aspects of social interaction, institutional formations, and cultural creativity could be better understood in terms of the processes through which symbolic and organizational aspects or dimensions of human activity and social interaction are interwoven. Thus, culture and social structure are best analyzed as components of social action and interaction and of human creativity, as constitutive of each other and of the social and cultural orders.

Beyond these general indications, these analyses have specified several systematic attributes of such processes of institutionalization, especially those bearing on the relations between culture and social structure: first, the different aspects of the symbolic and cultural dimensions of human life that are important for the constitution of the various institutional frameworks or organizational settings, and of daily praxis; second, the patterns of social interaction and especially of macroinstitutional order on which the various aspects of the cultural or symbolic dimension have the greatest impact; third, the social processes, especially those of social control, through which the relations between the cultural and institutional dimensions of social life

are mediated; and last, the relations between cultural and power components in the activation of such processes.

These considerations bear also on the explanation of social change. Such changes are not caused naturally by the basic ontologies of any civilization, or by structural forces or patterns of social interaction in themselves, but rather by the continual interweaving of these two dimensions—the “cultural” and the “social structural.”

True, the cultural visions, ontological processes, models, codes, and “ethics” contain within them some of the potential developments that occur in the societies or civilizations in which they become institutionalized. But the types of social formations that have developed in various civilizations have certainly not been located merely in the basic premises of inherent tendencies of any culture.

Historical changes and the constructions of new institutional formations have been the outcome, as we have seen, of basic institutional and normative forces, of processes of learning and accommodation, and of different types of decision-making by individuals placed in appropriate arenas of action, necessarily responding to a great variety of historical events. Similar contingent forces, however, can have different impacts in different civilizations—even civilizations sharing many concrete institutional or political-ecological settings—because of the differences in their premises.

Thus, any concrete pattern of change is to be understood as the combination of historical contingency, structure, and “culture”—the basic premises of social interaction and the reservoir of models, themes, and tropes that are prevalent in the particular society. At the same time, the rise of new forms of social organization and activity entails new interpretations of the basic tenets of cosmological visions and institutional premises, which greatly transform many of a civilization’s antecedent tenets and institutions.

In other words, the restructuring of the meaning of situations is in some cases—on both the macro- and the microlevels—concerned not only with attributing new meanings to specific actors or actions, redefining concrete arrangements, and selecting different themes and symbols according to the various interests or inclinations of the participants. It may also be concerned with redefining and legitimizing some of the basic premises of action through a redefinition of the ground rules that delineate the frameworks of social interaction and activity—in Carlo Rosetti’s words, the constitutional parameters of

social order—within the framework of which, and in relation to which, concrete rules and strategies of actions are formed and developed.

The most dramatic of such changes are relatively rare in history. When they do occur, as in the crystallization of the Axial Age civilizations, in the great revolutions, or in the Meiji Ishin, their historical impact is enormous. Attempts at such reconstruction may also take place in less dramatic fashion, in various informal or formal situations and organizational frameworks, as well as through long processes on different macrolevels, in which they tend to become more formalized and more fully articulated. The continuous, less dramatic developments in this direction that have taken place in most societies may be ultimately no less important in effecting changes in the construction of society.

All of these processes develop in all societies, but in different ways and constellations, and the comparative analyses of civilization and modern societies indicated—even if in a preliminary way—some of these different problems.

PART ONE

THEORETICAL APPROACH



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## INTRODUCTION TO SECTION I, “THEORETICAL APPROACH”

In this section are brought together articles which present the major dimensions and problematiques of the theoretical approach on which the comparative studies of civilization and of modernity collected in this volume are based.

The first chapter presents some of the basic assumptions of civilizational analyses, the core of which is the recognition of the analytical autonomy and distinction of the process of constitution of the order of meaning, of the “imaginaire” of social formations. A central component in such constitution is the concept of “center”—a concept introduced in contemporary sociology by Edward Shils.<sup>1</sup>

The second chapter indicates the ways in which our analysis goes beyond conceptions of social division of labor which emphasize the structural organizational dimensions thereof and which constitute also the basis of many evolutionary approaches.

Here special emphasis is laid on the distinction between on the one hand those social formations and roles, such as the economic, political and the like which are rooted in organizational dimensions of social division of labor, and on the other hand elite functions, such as center formation, constitution of collective identities and of “meaning”—all of which play a central role in the constitution of the civilizational dimension of social formation.

The third chapter presents an analytical and comparative analysis of one component of the constitution of social life which has been, till lately at least, relatively neglected in sociological analysis—namely that of collective identities. In this chapter it is emphasized that the constitution of collective identities constitutes a distinct universal analytical component of social order, and that the modern national communities or nation states, which have indeed been abundantly analyzed in more recent analyses, is only one type of collective identity which cannot be fully understood without taking account of the universal characteristics constitutive of such identity.

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<sup>1</sup> E. Shils, *Center and Periphery*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970.

The last two articles presented in this section address themselves to some central problems in the analysis of dynamics of societies and civilizations—problems which will be taken up in greater detail in other sections of this book. *Some Observations on the Dynamics of Tradition*, which goes back to the late sixties, analyzes the ways in which different types of societies or groups reconstruct, in situations of change, different dimensions of their traditions. The chapter on *Liminality* analyzes dissension and protest as inherent in the constitution of social order and presents/indicates about the ways in which these tendencies develop in different types of societies.

## CHAPTER TWO

# THE CIVILIZATIONAL DIMENSION IN SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

### I INTRODUCTION: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The approach to the civilizational dimension in sociological analysis presented here is based on a shift in the comparative analysis of institutions which took place in the early seventies of this century. This was essentially a move from a strong emphasis on structural differentiation, as well as to some extent on ecological factors as the major criteria according to which societies have to be compared—an emphasis to be found in many of the evolutionary approaches of the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century—to a perspective which stresses the interweaving of structural aspects of social life with its regulatory and interpretive context. Social division of labour is an evolutionary universal human problem-solving device, but it also generates new problems, and responses to them which have been the major themes of the classical sociological approaches—be they those of Marx, Tocqueville, Durkheim or Weber. The have to do with the regulation of power; the construction of solidarity and trust; and the articulation of meaning. Contrary to the presuppositions of classical evolutionary and structural-functional analyses, different dimensions of structural differentiation do not always go together in the same ways. Each of these components of social life develop some autonomous tendencies and they may come together in different ways in different societies (Eisenstadt 1995, 1998). It was this move which gave rise, among other things, to the research that provides the background for the following analysis.

The ways in which such varying combinations of the major components of social action come together in different settings have been explored in the framework of a far-reaching programme on the comparative analysis of civilizations (Eisenstadt 1990).

CIVILIZATIONS AS COMBINATIONS OF ONTOLOGICAL  
OR COSMOLOGICAL VISIONS, WITH THE DEFINITION, CONSTITUTION  
AND REGULATION OF THE MAJOR ARENAS OF SOCIAL LIFE  
AND INTERACTION

The central analytical core of the concept of civilization as developed in these researches and as presented here—in contrast to such social formations as political regimes, different forms of political economy or collectivities like “tribes,” ethnic groups or nations, and from religion or cultural traditions—is the combination of ontological or cosmological visions, of visions of trans-mundane and mundane reality, with the definition, construction and regulation of the major arenas of social life and interaction.

The central core of civilizations is the symbolic and institutional interrelation between the formulation, promulgation, articulation, and continuous reinterpretation of the basic ontological visions prevalent in a society, its basic ideological premises and core symbols on the one hand, and on the other the definition, structuration and regulation of the major arenas of institutional life, of the political arena, of authority and its accountability, of the economy, of family life, social stratification, and of the construction of collective identities. Such definitions and regulations construct the broad contours, boundaries, and meanings of the major institutional formations and their legitimation and greatly influence their organization and dynamics.

The impact of such ontological visions and premises on institutional formation is effected through the various processes of social interaction and control that develop in a society. Such processes of control—and the opposition to them—are not limited to the exercise of power in the “narrow” political sense; as even sophisticated Marxists have stressed, they involve not only class relations or “modes of production.” Rather, they are activated by major elites and influentials in a society. The most important such elite groups and influentials are the political, the cultural, and the economic ones, as well as those which construct the solidarity and collective images of the major groups, all of which have different cultural visions and represent different types of interests.

The structure of such elite groups is closely related, on the one hand, to the basic cultural orientations prevalent in a society; that is, different types of elite groups bear different type of orientation or visions. On the other hand, and in connection with the types of

cultural orientations and their respective transformation into basic premises of the social order, these elite groups tend to exercise different modes of control over the allocation of basic resources in the society.

Such combinations of ontological visions with institutional patterns and collective identities are integral components of the formation of any society, and always closely interwoven with the more organizational aspect of any institutional formation—political, economic or family and kinship, but they are analytically distinct, and this distinctiveness can translate into full awareness or consciousness, especially among some of the leading elite groups.

The very implementation or institutionalization of such premises and the concomitant formation of institutional patterns through processes of control, symbolic and organizational alike also generate also tendencies to protest, conflict, and change. The crystallization of these potentialities of change usually takes place through the activities of secondary elite groups who attempt to mobilize various groups and resources to change aspects of the social order as it was shaped by coalitions of ruling elite groups. Although potentialities for conflict and change are inherent in all human societies, their concrete development—their intensity and the concrete directions of change and transformation they engender—vary greatly among different societies and civilizations according to the specific constellations within them of the factors analyzed earlier; that is, the different ontological visions, different types of elite groups, patterns of the social division of labor, and political-ecological settings and processes.

In most societies in the long history of mankind, such combinations of ontological visions and of definition, structuration and regulation of institutional areas—this is what we designate as “civilization”—were embedded in the concrete institutional organizations and collectivities without being the object of specific institutional formations or bearers thereof, and with but very weak—if any—distinct distinctive collective identity or consciousness. This has been above all true not only of “small” tribal preliterate societies but also of so-called archaic societies. A full development of the distinct ideological and institutional civilizational dimensions and of some awareness of their distinctiveness—an awareness most fully articulated in the conception of “others”—occurred only in some very specific historical settings—namely, the so-called Axial Civilizations—even if some very important steps in that direction can be identified in some archaic civilizations such as the ancient Egyptian, Assyrian or

Mesoamerican ones, and especially in what may be called proto-Axial ones, such as in the Iranian-Zoroastrian one (see Eisenstadt 1982a, 1986; Breuer 1994).

AXIAL AGE CIVILIZATIONS: THE RECONSTRUCTION  
OF THE WORLD AND THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF DISTINCT  
CIVILIZATIONAL COMPLEXES

By Axial-Age civilizations (to use Karl Jaspers' nomenclature) we mean those civilizations that crystallized during the half-millennium from 500 B.C. to the first century of the Christian era, within which new types of ontological visions, conceptions of a basic tension between the transcendental and mundane orders emerged and were institutionalized in many parts of the world. Examples of this process of crystallization include ancient Israel, followed by Second-Commonwealth Judaism and Christianity; Ancient Greece; possibly Zoroastrianism in Iran; early imperial China; Hinduism and Buddhism; and, beyond the Axial Age proper, Islam. It was through the emergence of the Axial civilizations that civilizations crystallized as distinct entities and an explicit consciousness thereof developed (Schluchter 1985, 1989; Weber 1970–71).

The crystallization of these civilizations constitutes a series of some of the greatest revolutionary breakthroughs in human history, which have shaped the contours of human history in the last two-to-three millennia. The central aspect of these revolutionary breakthroughs was the emergence and institutionalization of new basic ontological metaphysical conceptions of a chasm between the transcendental and mundane orders.

The development and institutionalization of these ontological conceptions entailed the perception of the given mundane order as incomplete, inferior—often as evil or polluted, and as in need of reconstruction. Such reconstruction was to be effected according to the basic transcendental ontological conceptions prevalent in these societies, i.e. in line with the conception of bridging the chasm between the transcendental and the mundane orders, according to the precepts of a higher ethical or metaphysical order or vision. In all these civilizations it gave rise to attempts to reconstruct the mundane world, from the human personality to the socio-political and economic order, according to the appropriate “higher” transcendental vision.

These revolutionary conceptions, which first developed among small groups of autonomous, relatively unattached “intellectuals” (a new social element at the time), particularly among the carriers of models of cultural and social order, were ultimately transformed into the basic “hegemonic”—even if never fully accepted—premises of their respective civilizations, and were subsequently institutionalized. That is, they became the predominant orientations of both the ruling elites as well as of many secondary elites, fully embodied in the centers or sub-centers of their respective societies.

One of the most important manifestation of such attempts was a strong tendency—manifest in all these civilizations—to construct a societal center or centers to serve as the major autonomous and symbolically distinct embodiments of respective ontological visions, and therefore as the major loci of the charismatic dimension of human existence. But at the same time the “givenness” of the center (or centers) could not necessarily be taken for granted. The construction and characteristics of the center tended to become central issues under the gaze of the increasing reflexivity that was developing in these civilizations and which focused above all on the relations between the transcendental and mundane orders. The political dimension of such reflexivity was rooted in the transformed conceptions of the political arena and of the accountability of rulers. The political order as one of the central loci of the “lower” mundane order had to be restructured according to the precepts of the transcendental visions. It was the rulers who were usually held responsible for organizing the political order according to such precepts.

At the same time the nature of the rulers became greatly transformed. The king-god, the embodiment of the cosmic and earthly order alike, disappeared, and a secular ruler appeared (even if he often retained strong sacral attributes). He was, in principle, accountable to some higher order. Thus there emerged a new conception of the accountability of rulers and community to a higher authority, God, Divine Law, and the like. Accordingly, the possibility of calling a ruler to judgement appeared. A striking case of such developments occurred in ancient Israel, with elaborations of the ancient Israeli Judaic religion. More secular versions of such accountability, with a stronger emphasis on the community and its laws, appeared on the northern shores of the eastern Mediterranean, in ancient Greece, as well as in the Chinese conception of the Mandate of Heaven. In varying forms the idea of accountability appeared in all Axial-Age civilizations.



Concomitantly with the emergence of these conceptions of accountability of rulers there began to develop autonomous spheres of law as more or less distinct from ascriptively bound custom and from purely customary law. Such developments could also entail some beginnings of a conception of rights, even if the scope of these spheres of law and rights varied greatly.

Of special importance from the point of view of our analysis is the fact that one of the major manifestations of the attempts to reconstruct the social order in these civilizations was the development of a strong tendency to define certain collectivities and institutional arenas as most appropriate for the implementation of their respective transcendental visions. This tendency created new types of collectivities or endowed existing "natural" and primordial groups with special meaning derived from the distinctive transcendental visions. The most important transformation of this sort was the construction of "cultural" or "religious"—indeed of civilizational collectivities—as distinct from "ethnic" or "political" ones. A very crucial component of the construction of such civilizational collectivities was the development of specific collective "civilizational" consciousness or identity as distinct from purely religious, political or "ethnic" ones. Such civilizational collectivities or frameworks always comprised many different political and ethnic groups, while at the same time continually impinging on and interacting with these units, which became subcurrents within the broader civilization frameworks—but which could also cut across such different frameworks.

#### AUTONOMOUS ELITES AS BEARERS OF CIVILIZATIONAL VISIONS; CHANGE, PROTEST AND HETERODOXIES

In the Axial-Age civilizations, the development and institutionalization of these new ontological metaphysical conceptions and modes of consciousness was closely connected with the emergence of a new social element, of a new type of elite, of carriers of models of cultural and social order. These were often autonomous intellectuals, such as the ancient Israelite prophets and priests and later on the Jewish sages, the Greek philosophers and sophists, the Chinese literati, the Hindu Brahmins, the Buddhist Sangha, and the Islamic Ulema. Initial small nuclei of such groups of cultural elites or of intellectuals developed the new ontologies, the new transcendental visions and

conceptions, and were of crucial importance in the construction of the new “civilizational” collectivities and the concomitant patterns of collective identity.

The new type of elites that arose with the processes of institutionalization of such transcendental visions differed greatly from the ritual, magical, and sacral specialist in the pre-Axial Age civilizations. They were recruited and legitimized according to autonomous criteria, and were organized in autonomous settings distinct from those of the basic ascriptive political units of the society. They acquired a conscious, potentially countrywide and also trans-country status of their own. They also tended to become potentially independent of other categories of elites, social groups, and sectors.

At the same time there took place a far-reaching transformation of other elites, such as political elites, or the articulators of the solidarity of different collectivities. All these elites tended to develop claims to an autonomous place in the construction of the cultural and social order. They saw themselves not only as performing specific technical, functional activities—be they those of scribes, ritual specialists, or other similar categories—but also as potentially autonomous carriers of a distinct cultural and social order related to the transcendental vision prevalent in their respective societies. All these elites saw themselves as the autonomous articulators of the new order and rival elites as both accountable to them and as essentially inferior.

Moreover, each of these elites was more or less heterogeneous, and within each of them as well as within the broader sectors of the society there developed a multiplicity of secondary elites and influentials, often carrying different conceptions of the cultural and social order—and frequently competing strongly with each other, especially over the production and control of symbols and media of communication.

These new groups became transformed into relatively autonomous partners in the major ruling coalitions. They also constituted the most active elements in the movements of protest and processes of change that developed in these societies and which evinced some very distinct characteristics at both the symbolic and organizational levels (Eisenstadt 1982b).

First, there was a growing symbolic articulation and ideologization of the perennial themes of protest which are to be found in any human society, such as rebellion against the constraints of division

of labor, authority, and hierarchy, and of the structuring of time dimension, the quest for solidarity and equality and for overcoming human mortality.

Second, utopian orientations were incorporated into the rituals of rebellion and the double image of society. It was this incorporation that generated alternative conceptions of social order and new ways of bridging the distance between the existing and the "true" resolution of the transcendental tension.

Third, new types of protest movements appeared. The most important were intellectual heterodoxies, sects, or movements which upheld different conceptions of the resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order, and of the proper way to institutionalize such conceptions. Since then, continuous confrontation between orthodoxy on the one hand, and schism and heterodoxy on the other, and the accompanying development of strong antinomian tendencies, has been a crucial component in the history of mankind.

Fourth, and closely related to the former, was the possibility of the development of autonomous political movements and ideologies—with their own symbolisms—usually oriented against existing political and sometimes also religious centers.

Closely related to these changes in the symbolic or ideological dimension of protest movements were important organizational changes—especially the growing possibility of structural and ideological links between different protest movements and foci of conflict. These links could be effected by different coalitions of different secondary elites, above all by coalition between "secondary" articulators of models of cultural order and political elites.

All these developments opened up—for the first time in human history—the possibility of the conscious ordering of society, but they also exposed society to the continuous tensions that this possibility generated. The new dynamics of civilization transformed group conflicts into potential class and ideological conflicts, cult conflicts into struggles between the orthodox and the heterodox. Conflicts between tribes and societies could become missionary crusades. The zeal for reorganization, informed by the distinctive transcendental vision of each civilization, made the entire world at least potentially subject to cultural-political reconstruction.

Concomitantly, out of these social conflicts, protest movements, and the awareness of a variety of choices, there developed new ways

of generation and perception of change. While the concrete attitude toward change, negative or positive, adaptive or transformative, varied according to the society and period, yet within all of the post-Axial Age civilizations there developed strong tendencies toward a highly articulated symbolical and ideological attitude toward change. They shared a certain totalistic view of change which attempted to mould concrete changes according to the prevalent transcendental vision. Specific concrete changes were associated with broader visions, and in this way the possibility of the society simply absorbing piecemeal change was weakened.

### EXPANSION OF AXIAL CIVILIZATIONS

Concomitantly, with the institutionalization of Axial civilizations, a new type of intersocietal and intercivilizational world history or histories emerged. Within all these civilizations there developed, in close connection with the tendencies to reconstruct the world, a certain propensity to expansion, in which ideological, religious impulses were combined with political and to some extent economic ones. To be sure, political and economic interconnections have existed between different societies throughout human history. Some conceptions of a universal or world kingdom emerged in many post-Axial civilizations, as in the case of Genghis Khan, and many cultural interconnections developed between them, but only with the institutionalization of Axial civilizations did a more distinctive ideological and reflexive mode of expansion with potentially strong semi-missionary orientations develop. Such expansion could be geographically concomitant with that of religion, but these two processes were not necessarily identical. This mode of expansion also gave rise to greater awareness of civilizational frameworks or collectivities encompassing many different societies, and of collective consciousness and identities, which usually encompassed different political or ethnic groups.

It was indeed in close connection with the Axial civilizations' tendency to expansion, that there developed the new "civilizational" collectivities, distinct from political and from "primordial" ones, yet continually impinging on them, interacting with them, continuously challenging them, and provoking continual reconstruction of their respective collective identities. Such processes were effected by the continual interaction between the new autonomous cultural elites and

the various carriers of solidarity and political elites of the different continually reconstructed “local” and political communities. A very crucial component of such crystallization was the development of a distinct “civilizational” consciousness or identity as distinct from “purely” religious or political ones.

The expansion of Axial civilizations entailed the possibility of the continual selection in different settings of the various components of the civilization complex—i.e. of the ontological conceptions of the major patterns of structuration of institutional arenas, of the concrete institutional organizations, and of distinctive civilizational consciousness. These components, carried by different social actors, could coalesce in different ways in different historical and ecological settings; often generating possibilities of attenuation of each of these components and always giving rise to multiple interpretations of each of these components and to diverse institutional formations.

The expansion of Axial civilizations entailed their continuous encounter with non Axial or pre-Axial ones. In the encounter of Axial with non-Axial it was usually the Axial side that came out victorious, without however necessarily obliterating many of the symbolic and institutional features of the latter. These were often incorporated in the former, transforming them and often leading to their attenuation. Japan has been the most important continuous case of an encounter of non-Axial with Axial civilisation in which the former absorbed the latter and de-Axialization of many of its components (Eisenstadt 1995).

#### THE MULTIPLICITY OF AXIAL CIVILIZATIONS AND OF WORLD HISTORIES

The general tendency to reconstruct the world, with all its symbolic-ideological and institutional repercussions, and to continual expansion was common to all the post-Axial Age civilizations. But their concrete implementation, of course, varied greatly. No one homogeneous world history emerged nor were the different types of civilizations similar or convergent. Rather, there emerged a multiplicity of different, divergent, yet continuously mutually impinging world civilizations, each attempting to reconstruct the world in its own mode, according to its basic premises, and either to absorb the others or consciously to segregate itself from them.

Two sets of conditions were of special importance in shaping the different modes of institutional creativity and of expansion of these civilizations. One such set consists of variations or differences in the basic cultural orientations. The other is the concrete structure of the social arenas in which these institutional tendencies can be played out.

Among the different cultural orientations the most important have been differences in the very definition of the tension between the transcendental and mundane orders and the modes of resolving this tension. There is the distinction between the definition of this tension in relatively secular terms (as in Confucianism and classical Chinese belief systems and, in a somewhat different way, in the Greek and Roman worlds) and those cases in which the tension was conceived in terms of a religious hiatus (as in the great monotheistic religions and Hinduism and Buddhism).

A second distinction, within the latter context, is that between the monotheistic religions in which there was a concept of God standing outside the Universe and potentially guiding it, and those systems, like Hinduism and Buddhism, in which the transcendental, cosmic system was conceived in impersonal, almost metaphysical terms, and in a state of continuous existential tension with the mundane system. The "secular" conception of this tension was connected, as in China and to some degree in the ancient world, with an almost wholly this-worldly conception of salvation.

A third major distinction refers to the focus of the resolution of the transcendental tensions, or Weberian—basically Christian—terms, of salvation. Here the distinction is between purely this-worldly, purely other-worldly and mixed this- and other-worldly conceptions of salvation. The metaphysical non-deistic conception of this tension, as in Hinduism and Buddhism, tended towards an other-worldly conception of salvation, while the great monotheistic religions tended to emphasize different combinations of this- and other-worldly conceptions of the transcendental vision.

A second set of cultural orientations which influenced the expansion of the various Axial civilizations had to do with access to their centers and major manifestations of the sacred, and the extent to which this was open to all members of the community or was mediated by specific institutions.

Further differences related to the way in which relations between cosmic and social order, the civilizational collectivities, and the major primordial ascriptive collectivities were conceived—there may be

a total disjunction between these levels, or they may be mutually relevant and each can serve as a referent of the other without being totally embedded in it.

But the concrete working out of all such tendencies depends on the second set of conditions—namely the arenas for the concretization of these broad institutional tendencies. These conditions included, first, the respective concrete economic political-ecological settings, whether they were small or great societies, whether they were societies with continuous compact boundaries, or with cross-cutting and flexible ones. Second was the specific historical experience of these civilisations and the societies, including encounters with other societies, especially in terms of mutual penetration, conquest, or colonization. It is the interplay between the different constellations of the cultural orientations analyzed above, their carriers, and their respective visions of restructuring of the world and the concrete arenas and historical conditions in which such visions could be concretized, that has shaped the institutional contours and dynamics of the different Axial Age civilizations, and the subsequent courses of world histories.

The different combinations of these sets of conditions have been very important in shaping the broad institutional contours and dynamics of the different Axial Age civilizations. Above all, they influenced the degree of unitary homogeneous organization of the new types of elites and ruling coalitions which characterized the Axial Age civilizations: the relations between them; their place in the ruling coalitions; the modes of control of the major institutional spheres effected by them; and the degree to which there developed different types of links between the different ruling and secondary elites and processes of change, links which could give rise to different modes of societal transformation.

#### INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE AXIAL CIVILIZATION— SECONDARY BREAKTHROUGHS AND THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF MODERN CIVILIZATION

One of the most important aspects of the dynamics of Axial civilizations was the development of an internal transformative capacity which sometimes culminated in secondary breakthroughs. Examples of that include Second Temple Judaism and Christianity, later fol-

lowed by Islam; but also Bhuddism and to a lesser extent Neo-Confucianism—all of which developed out of heterodox potentialities inherent in the respective “original” Axial civilization.

But the most dramatic transformation from within one of the Axial civilizations has probably been the emergence of modernity as it first crystallized in Western Europe and then expanded to most other parts of the world, giving continually rise to development of multiple, continually changing modernities.

The view of modernization and modernity presented here is to a large extent contrary to the vision implicit in the “classical” studies of modernization and the convergence of industrial societies, behind which there loomed a conviction of the inevitability of progress towards modernity, whether political, industrial, or cultural. But from the sixties on, there slowly developed a growing recognition of the great symbolic and institutional variability and of the different modes of ideological and institutional dynamics attendant on the spread of modern civilization. Building on this recognition there crystallized the view that modernity is best analyzed as the emergence of a distinct new civilization, which promulgated a distinct cultural and institutional programme, a distinct mode of interpretation of the world, of a social “imaginaire” (Castoriadis 1987).

The cultural and political programme of modernity as it crystallized in Europe constituted in many ways a sectarian and heterodox breakthrough in the West and Central European Christian Axial civilization. Strong sectarian heterodox visions had been a permanent component in the dynamics of these civilizations, but with some partial exceptions, especially among some Islamic sects, they did not give rise to radical transformation of the political arena, its premises and symbols. Such transformation took place in the realm of European-Christian civilizations through the transformation of these sectarian visions through the Reformation and later the Great Revolutions, in which there developed a very strong emphasis on the bringing together of the City of God and the City of Man (Eisenstadt 1999).

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, movements of protest but also with the political struggle at the center and were transposed into general political movements with aspirations to control the center. Themes and symbols of protest became a basic component of the core social and political symbolism.



It was above all in the French Revolution that a fully secular transformation of the sectarian antinomian orientation with strong gnostic components took place. This transformation was epitomized in the Jacobin orientations which became a central component of the modern political programme—to reappear yet again forcefully, as Raymond Aron has shown in an incisive article, following Alain Besançon's analysis in Lenin's conceptions and in the Russian Revolution, and later in the Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions (Aron 1993).

The religious (more specifically sectarian) roots of modernity, and especially of the tensions between totalistic Jacobin and pluralistic orientations which developed initially in Europe, could—in the course of European expansion—find a very strong resonance in the utopian sectarian traditions of other Axial civilizations. The religious roots of the modern political programme also help to explain the specific modern characteristics of what have often been portrayed as the most anti-modern type contemporary movements—namely the various fundamentalist movements. Contrary to the view which sees them as traditionalistic they constitute a new type of modern Jacobin movements which reconstruct tradition as a modern, totalistic ideology (Eisenstadt 1999).

#### THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL PROGRAMME OF MODERNITY; PREMISES AND ANTINOMIES

The cultural and political programme of modernity, as it crystallized first in Western Europe from around the seventeenth century, was characterized by some very distinct ideological features and entailed some very distinct institutional implications. This programme was rooted in the distinctive premises of the European civilization and European historical experience and bore their imprints—but at the same time it was presented and was perceived as being of universal validity and relevance.

This program of modernity entailed a very major shift in the conception of human agency and of its autonomy, and of its place in the flow of time. It entailed a very strong component of reflexivity and uncertainty about the basic ontological and cosmological premises as well as about the bases of social and political order of authority prevalent in society, far beyond the reflexivity that developed in the

Axial Civilizations—a reflexivity which was shared even by the most radical critics of this program, who in principle denied the legitimacy of such reflexivity. The reflexivity that developed in the modern cultural program focused not only on the possibility of different interpretations of the transcendental visions and basic ontological conceptions prevalent in a society or civilization, 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 multiplicity of such visions and patterns and of the possibility that such visions and conceptions can indeed be contested, thus creating a situation in which specific patterns of legitimation lost their markers of certainty (Lefort 1988). Closely related was development of a conception of the future as open to various possibilities which can be realized by autonomous human agency, or by the inexorable march of history. Concomitantly 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 of the major social sectors, indeed of all members of the society to these orders and their centers.

The radical innovation of this cultural program as it developed in Europe lay first in the “naturalization” of man, society and nature; second in the promulgation of the autonomy and potential supremacy of reason in the exploration and even shaping of the world; and third the emphasis on the autonomy of man, of his reason and/or will. Concomitantly, central to this cultural program was the emphasis on the growing autonomy of man; his or hers, but in this program at least 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 three dimensions—first reflexivity and exploration; and second active construction, mastery of nature, possibly including human nature and of society.

Out of the conjunctions of these different conceptions there developed, within this modern cultural program, the belief in the possibility of active formation, by conscious human activity rooted in critical reflection, of central aspects of social, cultural and natural orders.

In connection with these orientation there took place far-reaching transformations of symbolism and structure of modern political centers as compared with their predecessors in Europe or with the

centers of other civilizations. The crux of this transformation was first the charismatization of the political centers as the bearers of the transcendental vision promulgated by the cultural program of modernity; second the development of continual tendencies to permeation of the peripheries by the centers and of the impingement of the peripheries on the centers, of the concomitant blurring of the distinctions between center and periphery; and third was the combination of such charismatization with the incorporation of themes and symbols of protest which were central components of the modern transcendental visions as basic and legitimate components of the premises of these centers. Themes and symbols of protest became central components of the modern project of emancipation of man—a project which sought to combine equality and freedom, justice and autonomy, solidarity and identity of modern political discourse and practice. It was indeed the incorporation of themes of protest into the center which heralded the radical transformation of various sectarian utopian visions into central components of the political and cultural program.

This programme entailed also a very distinctive mode of the construction of the boundaries of collectivities and collective identities. Such identities were not—in some even if certainly not total—contrast to those which have crystallized in the Great Civilizations—taken as given or as preordained by some transcendental vision and authority, and legitimized by them, but continually constructed and continually problematized in a reflexive way and that it constituted focus of continual struggles.

The civilization of modernity as it developed first in the West was from its very beginning beset by internal antinomies and contradictions, giving rise to continual critical discourse which focused on the relations, tensions and contradictions between its premises and between these premises and the institutional development of modern societies.

The most important such tensions and antinomies in this programme were first that between totalizing and more diversified or pluralistic conceptions of the major components of this programme—of the very conception of reason and its place in human life and society, and of the construction of nature, of human society and its history; second between reflexivity and active construction of nature and society; third, those between different evaluations of major dimensions of human experience; and fourth between control and auton-

omy. In the political arena these tensions coalesced with those between a constructivist approach which views politics as the process of reconstruction of society and especially of democratic politics—active self-construction of society as against a view which accepts society in its concrete composition; between liberty and equality, between the autonomy of civil society and the charismatisation of state power; between the civil and the utopian components of the cultural and political program of modernity; between freedom and emancipation in the name of some, often utopian, social vision; above all between Jacobin and more pluralistic orientations or approaches to the social and political order.

These basic tensions, contradictions and antinomies of inherent in the cultural programme of modernity were continually played and worked out in the major institutional arenas—political, economic and educational, as well as those involved in the construction of new collectivities. They unfolded within successive modern forms—from the territorial state to the nation-state; and from the early modern mercantile economy to the later industrial-capitalist one. In each of these arenas there developed specific dynamics and contradictions, which have become closely interwoven with the antinomies and contradictions of cultural programmes of modernity of its basic civilizational premises.

### THE CRYSTALLIZATION AND EXPANSIONS OF MODERNITY

The new and distinctive civilization of modernity crystallized out of the conjunction of these cultural orientations with of the development of capitalism through its successive market, commercial and industrial phases as well as the formation of new political order and state system, together with the military and imperialist expansion inherent in the whole pattern. Its crystallization and expansion were not unlike the formation and expansion of the Great religions, or the great imperial expansions of earlier times. The modern expansion resembled those earlier cases in undermining the symbolic and institutional premises of the societies affected by it, causing very intensive dislocations while at the same time opening up new options and possibilities.

Military political and economic expansion were not of course by themselves new in the history of mankind, especially not in the history of the “great” civilizations. What was new was first that the

great technological advances and the dynamics of modern economic and political forces made this expansion, the changes and developments triggered by it and their impact on the societies to which it expanded, much more intensive. The result was a tendency—new and practically unique in the history of mankind—towards the development of universal, worldwide institutional, cultural and ideological frameworks and systems. All of these frameworks were multi-centered and heterogenous, each generating its own dynamics and undergoing continual changes in constant relations to the others. The interrelations among them have never been “static” or unchanging, and the dynamics of these international frameworks or settings gave rise to continuous changes in these societies. The dynamics of these frameworks and systems—and the different countries within them—were closely interwoven with the specific cultural programs of modernity as it crystallized first in Europe.

The crystallization of early and of later modernities and later their expansion, were not peaceful developments. Contrary to the optimistic visions of progress, they were closely interwoven with wars and genocides; repression and exclusion were permanent components of modern social structures. Wars and genocide were not, of course, new in the history of mankind. But they were radically transformed through their interweaving with the basic cultural programme of modernity with its institutionalization in the nation states, which became the main frame of reference for citizenship, and with symbols of collective identity. This interaction was of course intensified by the technologies of communication and of war, constituting a continual component of the crystallization of the modern European state system and of European expansion beyond Europe.

At the same time, the crystallization of the first modernity and its later developments were continually interwoven with internal conflicts and confrontations, rooted in the contradictions attendant on the development of the capitalist systems and, in the political arena, with the growing demands for democratization.

It was out of the continual interaction between the development of these economic, technological, political and cultural processes and the attempt to institutionalize the cultural and political programme of modernity with its tensions and contradictions, that the concrete institutional and cultural patterns of different modern societies crystallized.

## CONTINUALLY CHANGING MULTIPLE MODERNITIES

The concrete contours of the different cultural and institutional patterns of modernity, and of the distinct programs of modernity as they crystallized in different societies were continually changing. They 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 changing because of the continual confrontations between premises enunciated or promulgated by respective centers and the elites and the concrete developments, conflicts and displacements attendant on the institutionalization of these premises.

Third, they were continually changing through the political struggles and confrontation between different states, between different centers of political and economic power that played a constitutive role in the formation of European modernity, and later through the conflict-ridden expansion of European, 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 sixteenth or seventeenth centuries on.

Fourth, they were continually changing because of the shifting hegemonies in the major international systems that developed in the wake of ongoing changes in the economic, political, technological and cultural arenas, and in centers thereof.

Fifth the institutional and cultural contours of modernities were continually changing due to the very contradictions and antinomies inherent in the cultural program of modernity and to the potentialities inherent in its openness and reflexivity, and due to the continual promulgation by different social actors (especially social movements) of varying interpretations of the major themes of this program and of the basic premises, narratives and myths of the civilizational visions.

The differences between the different cultural programmes of modernity were closely related to some basic problems inherent in the corresponding political and institutional programmes. Thus, in the political realm, they were closely related to the tension between the utopian and the civil components in the construction of modern politics; between "revolutionary" and "normal" politics, or between the general will and the will of all; between civil society and the state,

between individual and collectivity. The different cultural programmes of modernity entailed also different conceptions of authority and of its accountability, different modes of protest and of political activity, of questioning of the basic premises of the modern order and different modes of institutional formations.

In close relation to the crystallisation of the different cultural programmes of modernity there has been taking place in different modern societies a continual process of crystallization of different modes of critical discourse, which focused on interrelations and tensions between different institutional arenas, and between them and the different premises of the cultural and political programmes of modernity and their continual reinterpretations.

Multiple modernities, made up of all the components mentioned above developed around the basic antinomies and tensions of the modern civilizational programme—from the very beginning of the institutionalization of modern regimes in Europe. With the expansion of modern civilizations beyond the West, in some ways already as a result of the European conquest of the Americas, and with the dynamics of the continually developing international frameworks or settings, several new crucial elements have become central in the constitution of modern societies.

Of special importance in this context was the relative place of the non-Western societies in the various—economic, political, ideological—international systems. Non-Western constellations different greatly from Western ones—not only because Western societies were the “originators” of this new civilization. More importantly, the expansion of the world systems, especially in so far as it took place through colonization and imperialist expansion—gave Western powers a hegemonic place within them. But it was in the nature of these international systems that they generated a dynamics which gave rise both to political and ideological challenges to existing hegemonies, as well as to continual shifts in the loci of hegemony within Europe, from Europe to the United States, then also to Japan and East Asia.

But it was not only the economic, military-political and ideological expansion of the civilization of modernity from the West throughout the world that was important in this process. Of no lesser—possibly even of greater—importance was the fact that this expansion has given rise to continual confrontation between the cultural and institutional premises of Western modernity, and those of other civiliza-

tions—those of other Axial civilizations, as well as non-Axial ones, the most important of which has, of course, been Japan. Truly enough, many of the basic premises and symbols of Western modernity as well as its institutions—representative, legal and administrative—seem to have been accepted within these civilizations, but at the same time far-reaching transformations, challenges have taken place and new problems have arisen.

The preceding considerations about the multiple programmes of modernity do not of course negate the obvious fact that in many central aspects of their institutional structure—be it in occupational and industrial structure, in the structure of education or of cities, in political institutions—very strong convergences have developed in different modern societies. These convergences have indeed generated common problems but the modes of coping with these problems, i.e. the institutional dynamics attendant on the development of these problems differed greatly between these civilizations.

Thus, while the spread or expansion of modernity has indeed taken place throughout most of the world, yet it did not give rise to just one civilization, one pattern of ideological and institutional response, but to at least several basic versions which in turn are subject to further variations. New questionings and reinterpretations of different dimensions of modernity develop continuously within all societies—and competing cultural agendas have emerged in all of them. All these attested to the growing diversification of the visions and understandings of modernity, of the basic cultural orientations of different sectors of modern societies—far beyond the homogeneous and hegemonic paradigms of modernity that were prevalent in the fifties. The fundamentalist—and the new communal-national—movements are one of the most recent episodes in the unfolding of the potentialities and antinomies of modernity.

Such developments may indeed give rise also to highly confrontational stances—especially with regard to the West, but the positions in question are formulated in continually changing modern idioms, and they may entail an ongoing transformation of these indications and of the cultural programs of modernity.

While this diversity has certainly undermined the old hegemonies, it was at the same time closely connected—often paradoxically—with the development of new multiple common reference points and networks, and with the globalization of cultural networks and channels of communication far beyond what existed before.



## CONCLUDING REMARKS: AGENCY, STRUCTURE AND CULTURE FROM A CIVILIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Civilizational analysis, as presented above, has some bearing on central problems of sociological analysis—above all the problems of agency and social structure, as well as culture and social structure.<sup>1</sup> Here we can only outline a few themes and issues to be explored.

Theories which treat social structure, and agency as distinct, ontological realities cannot explain certain crucial aspects of human activity, social interaction, and cultural creativity. The civilizational perspective highlights interconnections between the three levels. In particular, many aspects of institutional formations and dynamics, such as the structure of the centers or the construction of boundaries of collectivities and modes of political protest, cannot be explained entirely in terms of either the “natural,” autonomous tendencies of these spheres of activity or a homogeneous, overarching, dynamic embeddedness of institutional structures in specific cultural contexts is a key theme of civilizational analysis.

At the other end of the spectrum, rational-choice theorists claim that major institutional formations and behavioral patterns—for instance, juridical behavior—can be best explained in terms of the rational, ability-oriented consideration of the actors and not in terms of some inherent cultural belief, predisposition, or tradition. The present version of civilizational theory is not committed to extreme cultural explanations. But as argued above, central dimensions of “culture” are of great importance in shaping institutional formations and patterns of behavior, even if they always operate through specific social processes and institutional frameworks. The crystallization of such central aspects of social interaction, institutional formations, and cultural creativity is best understood in terms of the processes through which symbolic and organizational aspects or dimensions of human activity and social interaction are interwoven. Such social processes do not shape directly the concrete behavior of different individuals. Rather, they shape the frameworks within which such behavior is undertaken, the institutional ground rules—the “rules of the game”—within which the rational, utilitarian considerations (although not only they) may play an important role.

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<sup>1</sup> See in greater detail, S.N. Eisenstadt, *Power, Trust and Meaning*, op. cit.

Thus, culture and social structure are best analyzed as components of social action and interaction and of human creativity, as constitutive of each other and of the social and cultural orders.

These considerations bear also on the explanation of social change. Such changes are not caused naturally by the basic ontologies of any civilization, or by structural forces or patterns of social interaction in themselves, but rather by the continuous interpenetration of these two dimensions—the “cultural” and the “social structural.” Historical changes and the constructions of new institutional formations presuppose processes of learning and accommodation, as well as different types of decision-making by individuals placed in appropriate arenas of action, responding to a great variety of historical events and drawing on a range of interpretive frameworks. Similar contingent forces, however, can have different impacts in different civilizations—even civilizations sharing many concrete institutional or political-ecological settings—because of the differences in their premises.

Thus any concrete pattern of change is to be understood as the combination of historical contingency, structure, and culture—the basic premises of social interaction and the reservoir of models, themes, and tropes that are prevalent in a particular society. At the same time, the rise of new forms of social organization and activity entails new interpretations of the basic tenets of cosmological visions and institutional premises, which greatly transform many of a civilization’s antecedent tenets and institutions.

The most dramatic of such changes are relatively rare in history; as argued above, the two outstanding cases are the emergence of Axial civilizations and the transition to modernity.

It seems not inappropriate to conclude with a brief comment on the problem so succinctly posed in Marx’s famous statement: “Men make their own history, but they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.”

While we may expect that this basic problem will never be fully resolved and will continue to pose a challenge to social and historical analysis, the preceding discussion may help to advance our understanding of some aspects. The structures and frameworks of activity and interaction are created by human action and interaction, but no human action or interaction can become actualized except through such frameworks and structures.

The civilizational perspective adds three main points to this very general thesis. First, the radical indeterminacy of the frameworks—the absence of any natural or rational, evolutionary or revolutionary, foundation for uniform development—provides a n opening for cultural and institutional variety. Second, the most fundamental and far-reaching cultural patterns which develop within such broad frameworks co-determine all dimensions of social life, and the long-term combinations of cultural and structural formations give rise to distinctive civilizational complexes. Finally, the creative indeterminacy that is at the root of civilizational pluralism may reappear within a given civilizational framework and find expression in dissent, heterodoxy and critical questioning, as well as in innovative patterns of cultural and institutional production. A comparative approach to questions of agency will need to take all these aspects into account.

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## CHAPTER THREE

# SOCIAL DIVISION OF LABOR, CONSTRUCTION OF CENTERS AND INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS: A REASSESSMENT OF THE STRUCTURAL- EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

This article critically examines some of the major assumptions of structural-evolutionary theory. This examination has accepted as valid one basic implication of this approach—namely the strong tendency, among human beings, to “expansion”, and has examined the different dimensions of such expansion.

But contrary to the classical evolutionary perspective, our approach has emphasized that the different dimensions of such expansions—especially the symbolic and the structural differentiation, need not always go together.

Of central importance in such a reappraisal is the distinction between, on the one hand, social division of labor which contains the core of structural differentiation and on the other hand what has been called the basic elite functions—those functions or activities which are oriented to the problems generated by the very constitution of social division of labor, i.e. the constants of trust, regulation of power, construction of meaning and legitimation. The social activities oriented to these problems can be defined as elite functions and which are indeed distinct from those engendered by the social division of labor.

This distinction has, however, not been fully recognized in the relevant literature and it is the examination of this distinction and its implications for sociological analysis that constitutes the starting point, or the reappraisal, of structural-evolutionary perspective which is presented in this article and which is based above all on some of the research in comparative macro-sociology which I have undertaken in the last three decades—starting with the analysis of the Political Systems of Empires.

This reappraisal has accordingly emphasized that it is indeed the different combination of these dimensions that gives rise to the dynamics of societies and civilization which indicate a much greater variability than has been proposed in classical and contemporary structural-evolutionary analysis.

## I

A central concept in the classical structural evolutionary theory is that of “differentiation;” of cultural and social differentiation and

evolution. It was this dimension that was strongly emphasized by the various evolutionary theories—from the classical ones leading to the more recent version expounded by Talcott Parsons and some of his followers in the sixties and seventies—and it has come under strong attack from many quarters.<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that in its original version—which stressed the unilineal development of all societies on a universal evolutionary scale and the conflation between the differentiation of all institutional arenas and between the structural-organizational and symbolic dimensions of social interaction—this evolutionary perspective is not tenable.

But all these criticisms notwithstanding, the evolutionary perspective has a strong kernel of truth in it: namely, the recognition of the propensity of human action to continuous expansion and to the decoupling of the different components or dimensions of social action from the frameworks within which they are embedded and from one another. Processes of differentiation may be seen as a very important dimension of such a tendency to expansion. The core of such processes of differentiation is the decoupling of “formerly” mutually embedded activities. Such differentiation may develop with respect to both the structural and symbolic dimensions of social interaction and structure.<sup>2</sup> On the structural level, the major process of such “decoupling” has been that of *structural* differentiation, i.e. of the crystallization of specific, organizationally distinct roles—such as for instance an occupational one as against their being firmly embedded in, for instance, different family or local settings, and of the concomitant development of new integrative mechanisms. On the symbolic level, the process of such decoupling is manifest above all in the disembedding of the major cultural-orientations from one another—i.e., the decoupling of such orientations and the growing autonomy of the different components of codes. Such decoupling is usually connected with a growing problematicization of the conception of ontological and social reality, and with an increasing orientation to some reality beyond the given one and with growing reflexivity and second order thinking. Some of the most important illustrations of such decoupling can be seen in the transition from immanent to tran-

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<sup>1</sup> T. Parsons, *The Evolution of Societies*, edited and with an introduction by Jackson Toby, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> For a recent reappraisal of the concept of differentiation, see J. Alexander and P. Colony (eds.), *Social Differentiations*, Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1989.

scendental orientations, or in the structuring of collectivities and models of legitimation of regimes, from primordial to civil and transcendental ones.

Contrary, however, to the presuppositions of classical evolutionary and structural-functional analyses, different dimensions of structural differentiation and disembedding of cultural orientations and a growing problematicization of the perceptions of the sources of human existence do not always go together and our reappraisal of the structural-evolutionary perspective on the development of human society stems from the recognition of this fact.

Of central importance in such a reappraisal, based on the recognition of the fact that the differentiation of different dimensions of social action and cultural orientations need not, do not always go together in the development of human society, is the distinction between, on the one hand, social division of labor which contains the core of structural differentiation and on the other hand what has been called the basic elite functions—those functions or activities which are oriented to the problems generated by the very constitution of social division of labor. These problems generated by the construction of the social division of labor—rooted in the very ubiquity of the social division of labor—have been identified by the Founding Fathers of Sociology—especially Marx, Durkheim and Weber—as the most important dimensions of the constitution of social order. The Founding Fathers stressed that the very construction of the social division of labor (of the “market” in modern societies) generates uncertainties with respect to each of several basic dimensions of social order, i.e., with respect to trust, regulation of power, construction of meaning and legitimation. Because of this, they claimed that no concrete social division of labor and no concrete social order can be maintained without these dimensions or problems being taken care of. Therefore, all of these sociologists emphasized that the construction and “production” of any continuous patterns of social interaction are based on the development of some combination of the organizational structure of the division of labor with the construction of trust, regulation of power and the legitimation of the different patterns of social interaction.

In other words, it is these problems—of the regulation of power, the construction of trust and solidarity and legitimation and meaning that designate the conditions, which have as it were, to be “taken care of”—in order to ensure the continuity of any pattern of social

interaction, i.e., of relatively continuous boundaries of such interaction. It is these problems which define the systemic tendencies and sensitivities, the “needs” or prerequisites of such continuous interaction, and which have been strongly emphasized by the “structural-functional” school of sociology. However, contrary to the usual interpretation of the structural-functional approach, the concrete specification of such needs and prerequisites is not given by some “internal” features of these systems, i.e., by the level of technological development or of structural differentiation, but is effected by specific social processes, in which the construction of meaning plays a central role.<sup>3</sup> The social activities oriented to these problems can be defined as elite functions and are indeed distinct from those engendered by the social division of labor.

This distinction has, however, not been fully recognized in the relevant literature and it is the examination of this distinction and its implications for sociological analysis that constitutes the starting point, or the reappraisal, of structural-evolutionary perspective which will be presented here.

## II

This reappraisal will be based above all on some of the research in comparative macro-sociology which I have undertaken in the last three decades—starting with the analysis of the Political Systems of Empires.

In the work on Empires, I identified the locus of the elite activities in centers of societies or sectors thereof—a concept coined by Edward Shils which he then combined with the reanalysis of the concept of charisma.<sup>4</sup> I first examined the analytical dimensions of the concept of center and center-periphery relations and applied them in comparative analysis in the Introduction to the 1969 paperback edition of the *Political Systems of Empires*.<sup>5</sup> This analysis emphasized the importance of center and center-periphery relations as a

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<sup>3</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, “Functional Analysis in Anthropology and Sociology,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, (19), 1990, pp.

<sup>4</sup> E. Shils, “Center and Periphery; Charisma: Order and Status,” in: idem, *Center and Periphery*, pp. 3–17 and pp. 256–276 respectively. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1975.

<sup>5</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (paperback edition), New York, The Free Press, 1969.

distinct analytical dimension of the institutional format of centralized empires—in principle, of any society. It emphasized that this dimension is not subsumed under the scope of structural differentiation of the social division of labor.

In this analysis, the center or centers of a society were conceived as dealing not only with the organizational aspects of the social division of labor; they were also seen as primarily dealing with the connection of these aspects of the social division of labor to the charismatic dimensions of social order. That is to say, the centers of society were connected to the attempts to relate the mundane realities of social life, of institutional formations to what is conceived by humans as the source of existence, of life and its predicaments.

But centers themselves differ between societies and are not necessarily homogeneous in any single society. In generale, the differences between the respective centers of such regimes were analyzed in terms of their structural and symbolic autonomy, their distinctiveness, the types of their activities, their relationship to the periphery, and their capacity for change.

In generale, empires have been characterized by a relatively high degree of distinctiveness and autonomy of their centers and by the attempts by the centers to permeate periphery, and by the more limited impingement of the periphery on the center. It is such distinctiveness of centers that distinguishes empires such as Rome, Byzantium and many of the Muslim empires and the absolutist states of Europe from the more patrimonial empires like Egypt or the Inca and Aztec ones.

It has been shown that these various components of centers do not always go together even in the Empires, and each component may be articulated within different centers to different degrees, giving rise to different modes of control by the ruling elites. These differences, in turn, are closely related to the nature of the elite coalitions that predominate in a given center and society and to the cultural orientations they articulate. As a result, different centers and societies exhibit diverse structures and dynamics. The analysis of different types of centers, the first steps of which were undertaken in the introduction to the paperback edition of *Political Systems of Empires*, was developed further in the introductions to the various sectors of the reader on *Political Sociology*,<sup>6</sup> which I edited. Here, the

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<sup>6</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Political Sociology*, New York, Basic Books, 1970.



distinctive characteristics of centers and center-periphery relations are described—in different types of regimes, tribal societies, city-states, or patrimonial regimes and the like. The differences between the respective centers of such regimes are analyzed in terms of their structural and symbolic autonomy, their distinctiveness, their types of activities, their relationship to the periphery, and their capacity for change.

### III

The most important analytical concept connecting the structure of centers and the broader social structure is indeed, as mentioned above, the distinction between structural differentiation of division of labor and that of elite functions. Here the crucial difference lies in the distinction between, on the one hand, the degree of congruence of tasks in the social division of labor and, on the other, elite functions, that is the regulation of power, the construction of trust and solidarity, and provision of meaningful models of cultural order.

These implications of the recognition of distinct aspects of social order that go far beyond the division of labor defined in terms of structural differentiation and its evolutionary perspective have been further developed in several studies undertaken in the framework of the program on comparative civilization of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, and the Truman Research Institute of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.<sup>7</sup> Among these studies were those of the so-called Axial civilizations as well as a series of comparative macrosociological studies, especially the study of the origins of the state with special reference to Africa, edited by me with Michel Abitbol and N. Chazan.<sup>8</sup> In these studies we attempted to examine systematically the relations between social division of labor and structural differentiation and other dimensions of social order, especially the construction of trust, solidary collectivities, regulation of power, meaning, and legitimation. We have analyzed the cultural dimen-

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<sup>7</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *A Sociological Approach to Comparative Civilizations: The Development and Directions of a Research Program*, Jerusalem: The Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, Dept. of Sociology and Social Anthropology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1986.

<sup>8</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, Michel Abitbol and Naomi Chazan, (eds.), *The Early State in African Perspective: Culture, Power and Division of Labor*, Leiden, R.J. Brill, 1987.

sion of social order as it is interwoven into social structures; the roles of different types of social actors, especially coalition of elites; and processes of conflict and change.

The central point of the study of the early state was the distinction between several types of centers—especially between organizational and the “model-based” centers and their close relation to what we have called congruent and noncongruent societies.

“Organizational centers,” to be found in Africa among, for instance, the Asante, the inhabitants of the city-state of Ibadan, the Kongo, the Zulus in the days of Shaka, and the Bambahra, were structurally much more elaborate and powerful than the units at the periphery but, symbolically, were not distinct from the periphery. In other words, they did not articulate symbolic models of the cultural order or of solidarity that were different from those current in the major units of the periphery.

Attendant on growing social differentiation, the crystallization and restructuring of these centers were based on the reorganization and consolidation of family, kinship and territorial structures. The state center became articulated through the ordering of broader primordial criteria—especially those of family, kinship and territory—and, at times, through the actual redefinition of kin and territorial bases. In these cases, there was almost no separation between religious and cultural, or political and economic, centers. Symbolic meaning, regulatory trust, and expansionist power functions overlapped.

The structure of these centers tended to be relatively consistent with the degree of structural differentiation in a society, giving rise to the development of collectivities based on a diffuse symbolic identity. Within these societies there did not develop centers with a high degree of distinction between structural differentiation and the structuration of elite functions. The symbolic dependence of the periphery on the center was thus kept to a minimum, while its instrumental dependence became more pronounced.

The central element of the coalitions in these societies consisted of the various leaders of ascriptive units who articulated the solidarity of their respective groups and consequently performed other, especially political (or military), elite functions. They evinced only a small degree of specialization and were, for the most part, firmly entrenched within the same broadened kinship and territorial units. Power and authority and, to some degree, wealth, were to a large extent mutually interchangeable.

By contrast, whatever the extent of their organizational differentiation these developed “model-based centers” promulgating new visions of strong and compact social order (among the Yoruba, Kangaba, Kong Buganda and in many Islamic societies in Africa), were characterized by a much greater degree of symbolic differentiation from the periphery than were organizational centers. In model-based centers some or even most elite functions were organized distinctively. Consequently, state centers with different structures and emphases emerged.

In these cases, the development of centers and different elite functions did not occur through reconstruction of primordial familial, kinship, or territorial groups on a larger and more differentiated symbolic and territorial scale. Rather, they arose primarily through the disengagement of some or most elite functions from the scope of such groups and through the crystallization of centers defined in relatively autonomous ways, that is, according to criteria and modes of mobilization and structuring distinct from those of the periphery. Within these centers there developed, at a relatively early stage, distinct articulation of models of cultural order.

In model-based centers, the articulator of models of cultural order (“cultural elites”) tended to be organized in various distinct associational, kinship, and territorial settings. In these circumstances, power and authority were not easily interchangeable, nor was task specialization or wealth accumulation readily convertible into the symbolic functions linked to center consolidation. Consequently, as role differentiation increased, so did the inter-dependence of separate elites and, above all, of the periphery and the center. The periphery’s dependence is evident in its high degree of subordination to the center’s charismatic institutions.

#### IV

Such variations in the structure of the centers and in institutional dynamics are found in societies at similar stages of structural differentiation. Thus, such variability cannot be explained adequately by conventional differentiation theory, with its evolutionary implications. The clue to understanding such differences resides, as hinted above, in the different elites—the “visions” they articulate, the coalitions they enter into, and their relation to other groups or strata in

the society, especially their autonomy as against their inclusion or embedment in broader ascriptive units or, in other words, the extent of distinction between social division of labor and differentiation of elite functions. Only through this distinction is it possible to account more fully for the different paths of political dynamics in general, and the diverse patterns of state formation and of different types of centers in particular.

With regard to this relation between organizational specialization and the articulation of elite functions, two distinct patterns, those of congruent and noncongruent societies, can be identified in historical Africa. These patterns are closely related to the distinction between the different types of centers analyzed above.

The first pattern encompasses societies in which there was relative congruence between specialization of the social division of labor and articulation of elite functions. The second consists of societies in which a dissociation or noncongruence between elite functions and the organizational differentiation of society prevailed.

Good illustrations of the first type with many variations can be found among the Asanta, the Kongo states, the Zulu, and the Ibadan Yoruba, and in a different mode among the Bambahra, that is, in societies in which organizational centers developed. In all these societies the basic elite functions corresponded to the principle of structural differentiation, and the articulation of elite functions was deeply embedded in existing social structures and in the social division of labor.

In stark contrast, in other African societies (like the Ife, Kong, Buganda and many of the Islamic societies) such as these developed different patterns of noncongruence between the articulators of elite functions and the organizational differentiation of society and it was in these societies that model-based centers developed.

## V

The distinction between structural differentiation and the differentiation of elite functions helps to solve some of the problems for which the classical evolutionary approach is inadequate. It shows that different constellations of center types and activities are closely related to both the patterns of elite coalitions predominating in the centers and to the characteristics of their major elites. The major distinction here

is the degree to which the elites are autonomous or embedded in ascriptive units, or act as representatives of such units in the society. It is the extent and direction of the autonomy of elites and influentials that constituted one of the most important tools for the analysis of the institutional dynamics of different societies.

The elites' relative autonomy is closely related to different cultural or civilizational visions and cultural programmes, to the premises of the cultural and social order promulgated by them and is often challenged by different groups and counter-elites. These premises shape center patterns and institutional dynamics. Of special importance here is the distinction between perceptions of low as against high degrees of tension or clues in between the transcendental and the mundane, and between direct or mediated access to the sacred.

Such different cosmological or ontological views are promulgated by different elites and influentials, and there exists an elective affinity between these visions and the degree of autonomy of elites, between embedded as against autonomous elites. In most congruent societies in which embedded elites predominate, the prevalent cultural orientations were characterized by a very low degree of tension between the transcendental and the mundane, whereas in most noncongruent societies the modal perception is of a very high degree of tension.

In these latter societies, the separation of the center from the organization of tasks in the social division of labor led to the differentiation of elite functions and the consequent development of various institutionalized charismatic visions. This differentiation and development constituted the nuclei of a variety of center activities. The range of possible coalitions that could develop in these circumstances was great. In most centers, however, relatively autonomous articulators of models of social and cultural order were dominant in the ruling coalitions.

Finally, the factors just mentioned are closely related to the ability of various centers to generate and sustain different types of change. Thus, model-based centers attempt to transform the existing social order, whereas organizational centers mainly regulate existing social relations.

## VI

The Axial Age civilizations provide an unusually instructive arena for the examination of both the difference between structural differ-

entiation and the differentiation of elite activities—as well as of the variety of possible elite coalitions bearing different cultural visions or orientations. They facilitate an analysis of the impact of these elite coalitions and counter-coalitions on the institutional structure of their respective societies, on the *modes* of structural differentiation, and on the dynamics of these societies. Above all, the analysis of the Axial civilizations provides an arena for a most fruitful analysis of the relations between cultural, civilizational visions and institutional formations; for an analysis of the interweaving of cultural and social structural dimensions in the construction of such formations.<sup>9</sup>

The term “Axial Age civilization” (coined by Karl Jaspers) refers to those (“great”) civilizations that emerged in ancient Israel, in a variety of Christian settings, in ancient Greece, partially in Zoroastrian Iran, in China during the early imperial period, in Hindu and Buddhist South and Southeast Asia, and much later, beyond the Axial Age proper, in the Muslim world. These civilizations were characterized by the development and institutionalization of basic conceptions of tension and by a chasm between the transcendental and mundane orders.

These basic conceptions developed initially among small groups of “intellectuals” (who constituted, at the time, a new social element), and were closely related to various autonomous elites in general and to carriers of models of cultural and social order in particular. Ultimately, these conceptions were institutionalized in all of the Axial Age civilizations and became the predominant orientations of both the ruling and many secondary elites. These cultural visions were also fully institutionalized in their respective centers or subcenters. Such institutionalization made the intellectuals or cultural elites relatively autonomous partners in the central coalitions. Diverse clusters of autonomous intellectuals were transformed into more fully crystallized and institutionalized groups, especially groups of a clerical nature as exemplified by the Jewish prophets and priests, the great Greek philosophers, the Chinese literati, the Hindu Brahmins, the Buddhist Sangha, or the Islamic *ʿulama*. At the same time, the political elites were also transformed. It was these autonomous elites that constituted the crucial new element in the institutionalization of these civilizations.

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<sup>9</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Civilizations*, Albany, New York, SUNY Press, 1986.

Also, idem (ed.), *Kulturen der Achsenzeit*, 2 Teil (3 vols.), Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1991. And also, idem, *Civilita Comparata*, Napoli, Liguori Editore, 1990.

From our analytic perspective, the most central aspect of the Axial Age civilizations was that they exhibited, even if in different ways, the basic characteristics of noncongruent societies: they were characterized by a sharp distinction between differentiation in the social division of labor and the articulation of elite functions.

In this regard they differed from the other “congruent” types of more “developed” or archaic societies that developed in many ancient patrimonial societies: ancient Egypt, which is probably the best illustration; city-states such as those of ancient Phoenicia; and various other decentralized tribal federations. In such congruent societies the transition from one stage of political development to another (e.g., from early state to archaic kingdom) has usually been connected with the reconstruction and widening of the kinship and/or territorial elements and ascriptive categories and symbols, with the growing importance of territorial units as opposed to purely kinship ones, and with what may be called the qualitative extension and diversification of basic cosmological conceptions. It was also characterized by the increasing specialization of elites (who were, however, on the whole, embedded in various—and even very complex and wide-ranging—ascriptive units), by a close correspondence between structural differentiation and the differentiation of elite functions, and by the prevalence of cultural models and conceptions containing relatively low levels of tension between the transcendental and mundane orders.

The mode of social differentiation that developed in these congruent societies featured the crystallization of centers that were ecologically and organizationally, but not symbolically, distinct from the periphery. Such patrimonial centers crystallized around elites who were enmeshed in various types of ascriptive units, often broad and reconstructed ones, and who carried cultural orientations characterized by a relatively low degree of tension between the cosmic and the mundane orders.

In contrast, the Axial Age civilizations were marked by growing distinctions, even discrepancies, between the structural differentiation of the social division of labor and the differentiation of elite functions. In addition, these societies witnessed the emergence of autonomous elites and concomitantly more radical developments or breakthroughs in cultural orientations, especially in the direction of the radical conception of the tension between the mundane and the transcendental orders. At the same time, different modes of institutional formations appeared, including distinct, civilizational, or reli-

gious collectivities; different types of autonomous centers distinct from their peripheries. At the same time there developed in these civilizations a strong tendency to ideological politics.

## VII

Congruent patterns and the closely related organizational centers could be found in a great variety of societies and regimes—such as tribal societies, city states and patrimonial empires. However, an even greater variety of centers existed in the noncongruent societies that developed in the Axial Age civilizations: full-fledged empires (e.g., the Chinese, Byzantine or Ottoman); rather fragile kingdoms or tribal federations (e.g., ancient Israel); combinations of tribal federations of city-states (e.g., ancient Greece); the complex decentralized pattern of the Hindu civilization; or the complex imperial and imperial-feudal configurations of Europe.

The major difference, especially among Axial Age civilizations, was that between imperial and more decentralized (and in some cases also tribal) systems—of which India and feudal Europe, respectively, are the most important illustrations. However, great differences also arose within each of these types, with each general type denoting different patterns of structural differentiation and its relation to the articulation of elite functions.

In India a very high degree of autonomy of the religious elite as against a lower one of the political elite appeared. By contrast, there was a relatively small degree of differentiation of political roles of the broader strata—while in Europe there developed a much greater degree of autonomy and differentiation of all the elites. Similarly, within the imperial agrarian regimes, as we shall see later on in a more detailed analysis of the influences between the Byzantine and the Chinese Empires, there emerged far-reaching differences in the structure of their centers and the mode of their differentiation emerged, despite the fact that they shared rather similar degrees (and relatively high ones for historical societies) of structural and organizational differentiation in the economic and social arenas.

The concrete contours of these centers and their dynamics varied considerably according to the structure of the predominant elites and their coalitions, the cultural orientations they bore, and the modes of control they exercised. They also varied, of course, according to



different organizational, economic, technological, and geopolitical conditions.

Of special interest from the standpoint of our discussion is the fact that it is possible to identify some similarities between the varieties of elites and coalitions and the dynamics of centers in these (structurally) more developed or differentiated societies and those identified in the various African cases.

Thus, in the noncongruent societies of the Axial Age civilizations, such as India, we find, as in Africa, strong symbolic centers coupled with relatively weak political centers, but with a very sharp articulation of models of cultural order and a strong emphasis on the maintenance of the solidarity of ascriptive units. Similarly, many of the Islamic centers developed characteristics similar to those we have identified in some Islamic states in Africa. (Needless to say, in the whole realm of Islamic civilization a greater variety of centers developed than we found in Africa.) Similar parallels can be found in the structure of elites and centers in “tribal” and in highly developed patrimonial congruent societies.

The analysis of the relations between different types of congruent and noncongruent societies and the characteristics of ruling elites constitutes one of the most interesting and challenging problems for comparative historical-sociological research.

## VIII

One of the most interesting subjects of comparative analysis—of an unusual combination of a very high level of structural differentiation together with a low level of distinction between social division of labor and elite functions, that is, with a low degree of autonomy of the major elites—is Japan, which has lately become a central focus of my comparative civilizational research.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Cultural Premises and the Limits of Convergence in Modern Societies: An Examination of Some Aspects of Japanese Society,” in: *Diogene*, 147, 1987, 125–146.

See *idem*, “Civilisational Frameworks, Historical Experiences and Cultural Programmes of Modernity: The Structuring of Protest in Modern Societies,” in Lars Gule and Oddvar Storebo (eds.), *Development and Modernity: Perspectives on Western Theories of Modernisation*, Bergen, Ariadne, 1993, pp. 11–37.

In terms of comparative analysis the uniqueness of Japanese civilization lies in the fact that it did not experience an Axial-Age transformation, leading to a strong conception of a very strong chasm between the transcendental and the mundane order, yet it did exhibit some of the structural characteristics as well as a very high level of philosophical literary and ideological discourse, and self-reflexibility that can be found in Axial-Age civilizations.

There developed accordingly in Japan a very strong similarity of the institutional history of Japan—to that of the Western one—yet combined with some very crucial differences from it, especially in the mode of the ideological or semantic definition of these institutional arenas of patterns of activities.

The rather unusual combination of similarity with many institutional aspects of Japan with those of the West, together with some very distinct characteristics—can be identified not only in the contemporary era, when Japan became incorporated in their modern world system, but also in earlier periods of history when almost no contacts existed between the two. Japan shared with Western Europe many characteristics of major institutional arenas and processes: patterns of family structure and kinship organization; feudalism and the development of the absolutist state; a relatively high degree of urban development and organization; the development of many peasant rebellions especially in the medieval and Tokugawa periods; the great modern transformation attendant on the Meiji restoration giving rise to the establishment of a modern state; far-reaching social and economic modernization and numerous related crises; and finally, the crystallization of a democratic-capitalist regime after the Second World War. Moreover, Japan shared with Europe not only the existence of such arenas but also the historical sequence of their development.

At the same time some very far-reaching differences from Europe can be identified. As Marc Bloch pointed out long ago, in Japanese feudalism there never developed full-fledged contractual relations between vassal and lord; Japanese vassals could have only one lord; fully autonomous Assemblies of Estates were weak—if they existed at all; and Japanese feudalism was much more centralized than European, with distinct foci of such centralization—Emperor and Shogun (or the Bakufu)—the former being, unlike in Europe, outside the feudal nexus.

Again, within Japanese peasant rebellions there never developed very strong utopian (as distinct from millenarist) orientations, a strong

class consciousness, or strong linkages with heterodox intellectual elites, and with rebellious samurai groups.

Similarly, the strong semi-autonomous and independent castle towns of the pre-Tokugawa period and early Tokugawa period never evolved the conceptions and institutionalization of corporate urban autonomy that constituted the major characteristic of Western European cities.

The common denominator of all these differences in the arenas that were structurally similar to those of Western Europe was that they were not defined in terms that differentiated them sharply from one another. Instead, they were defined in some common primordial, sacral, or “natural” terms as embedded in the overall societal contexts.

These definitions of the major institutional arenas were very closely related to the specific strongly immanentist and particularistic ontological conceptions that have been prevalent in Japan throughout its history.

Accordingly, the historical dynamics in Japan developed some very distinct characteristics—above all the relative weakness, in comparative terms, of the institutional changes. Changes in structural differentiation or in regimes were not connected as on the Axial civilizations with ideological changes couched in transcendental universalistics. Rather they were absorbed, as it were, within the framework of the continuously expanding immanentist and primordial conceptions. Significantly enough Japan was able even to transform the major premises of Confucianism and Buddhism.

On the institutional level this transformation was manifest in the absence, in Japan, of an autonomous stratum of literati and the examination system (so important in China, Korea and Vietnam), as well as by the prevalence of a new type of Buddhist sectarianism characterized by strong group adherence with tendencies to hereditary transmission of leadership roles.

In parallel, some of the major premises or concepts of Confucianism and Buddhism were transformed in Japan. Here we can note the transformation of transcendental orientations that stressed the chasm between the transcendental and mundane order into a more immanentist direction. Such transformation had far-reaching impacts on some of the basic premises and concepts of the social order such as the Mandate of Heaven, with its implication for the conception of authority and the accountability of rulers, as well as conceptions of

community. Unlike China, where in principle the emperor, even if a sacral figure, was “under” the Mandate of Heaven, in Japan he was sacred and seen as the embodiment of the sun and could not be held accountable to anybody. Only the shoguns and other officials—in ways not clearly specified and only in periods of crises, as for instance at the end of the Tokugawa regime—could be held accountable.

The strong universalistic orientations inherent in Buddhism, and more latently in Confucianism, were subdued and “nativized” in Japan. When Japan was defined as a divine nation, this meant a nation protected by the gods, being a chosen people in some sense, but not a nation carrying God’s universal mission.

Contrary to many non-Axial civilizations (e.g., Ancient Egypt, Assyria, or Mesoamerica)—which unlike Japan were also pre-Axial civilizations—Japan evolved sophisticated intellectual, philosophical, ideological, and religious discourses—as manifest, for instance, in the development of the intensive debates between different neo-Confucian schools and schools expounding the so-called nativistic learning in the Tokugawa period.

The specific institutional and cultural dynamics that developed in Japan were closely related to the fact that Japan had almost no autonomous elites, that the major elite functions were embedded in ascriptive settings.

The common characteristic of these elites and their major coalitions was their embodiment in groups and settings (contexts) that were mainly defined in primordial, ascriptive, sacral and often hierarchical terms, and much less in terms of specialized functions or of universalistic criteria of social attributes.

Linked to these characteristics of the coalitions and counter-coalitions prevalent in Japanese society was the relative weakness of autonomous cultural elites. True, many cultural actors—priests, monks, scholars, and the like—participated in such coalitions. But with very few exceptions, their participation was based on primordial and social attributes and on criteria of achievement and social obligations according to which these coalitions were structured and not on any distinct, autonomous criteria rooted in or related to the arenas of cultural specialization in which they were active. These arenas—cultural, religious, or literary—were themselves ultimately defined in primordial-sacral terms, notwithstanding the fact that many specialized activities developed within them.

## IX

The preceding analysis has critically examined some of the major assumptions of structural evolutionary theory. This examination has accepted as valid one basic implication of this approach—namely the strong tendency, among human beings, to “expansion,” and has examined the different dimensions of such expansion.

But contrary to the classical evolutionary perspective, our approach has emphasized that the different dimensions of such expansions—especially the symbolic and the structural differentiation, need not always go together. This emphasis was rooted in the recognition of the crucial analytical distinction between on the one hand structural differences rooted in social division of labor, and the crystallization of the major elite functions. It has accordingly emphasized that it is indeed the different combination of these dimensions that gives rise to the dynamics of societies and civilization which indicate a much greater variability than has been proposed in classical and contemporary structural-evolutionary analysis.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES AND THE CONTINUAL RECONSTRUCTION OF PRIMORDIALITY AND SACRALITY—SOME ANALYTICAL AND COMPARATIVE INDICATIONS\*

### PART I. ANALYTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### I

Collectivities, collective identities and boundaries—be they “ethnic,” “national,” religious, civilizational or under whatever name they are designated—are not, as has been often assumed in relevant literature, ephenomenal or secondary to power and economic forces and relations constituting “imagined” communities which in modern times developed in response to the expansion of capitalism, industrialism and imperialism, nor are they continual semi-natural, primordial and ontologically independent entities, existing as it were almost in eternity.<sup>1</sup>

The construction of collective identities and boundaries—a construction which has been going on in all human societies throughout human history—constitutes, like the exercise and regulation of power, the production and distribution of economic resources and the structuring of economic relations with which it is indeed continually interwoven, a basic component of social life, of the construction of human societies. The central core of this analytical component is the cultural, “symbolic” and social organizational or institutional, construction of boundaries of collectivities, and of trust and solidarity among the members of such collectivities.

The construction of boundaries of collectivities constitutes an aspect or component of the more general human tendency to the

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\* I am indebted to Prof. E. Tiryakian for very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> This part of the discussion is based on S.N. Eisenstadt and B. Giessen, 1995, “Construction of Collective Identities,” *European Journal of Sociology*, 36, pp. 72–102; and on extension of some of the arguments presented there.

construction of symbolic and organizational boundaries of social interaction. This general tendency is rooted in the openness of the human biological program; in the concomitant development of basic indeterminacies in the structuring of any continual interaction between human beings and in the consciousness among them of such indeterminacies.<sup>2</sup>

The most crucial such indeterminacies in any continual social interaction are: first, those among actors, whether individuals or collectivities; second, between actors and their goals; third, between actors and their goals on the one hand, and the resources at their disposal, including the activities of other actors on the other hand. It is the first indeterminacy—that in the relations between actors interacting in any situation—but in continual interrelation with the other ones—that is of special interest from the point of view of our analysis. This indeterminacy is manifest in the fact that the range of actors who are, as it were, admitted to any such situation of continual interaction is not specified either by genetic programming or by some general rules or tendencies of the human mind; and that neither the boundaries of such interaction, nor the criteria determining who is entitled to participate, are automatically given by either of those determinants, and hence they necessarily constitute a focus of continuous change and of at least potential struggle.

The existence of some degree of such indeterminacy in patterns of behaviour and interaction is true of many other species, although in a more limited way than among humans. But human beings are also fully conscious of that indeterminacy and of the openness of their own biological program. Such consciousness is closely related to the consciousness, manifest in the construction of burial places, of death and of human finitude, and it generates among human beings a core existential anxiety and a closely related fear of chaos. This anxiety is exacerbated by the human capacity for imagination, so brilliantly analyzed by J.P. Sartre, i.e., by the ability to conceive

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<sup>2</sup> E. Mayer, 1976, *Evolution and the Diversity of Life*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; P.J. Wilson, 1980, *Man, The Promising Primate*, New Haven, Yale University Press; A. Portman, 1944, *Biologische Fragmente zu einer Lehre von Menschen*, Basel; A. Gehlen, 1971, *Studien zur Anthropologie und Soziologie*, Berlin, Luchterhand; H. Plessner, 1966, *Diessseits der Utopie: Ausgewählte Beiträge zur Kulturosoziologie*, Dusseldorf; E. Diederichs, H. Plessner and A. Augen, 1982, *Aspekte einer Philosophischen Anthropologie*, Stuttgart, Ph. Reclam.

of various possibilities beyond what is given here and now,<sup>3</sup> and in the closely related universal predisposition to play.<sup>4</sup> All these lead human beings to problematize the givens of their own existence and to a quest for the construction of meaningful order as an integral part of their self-interpretations and self-awareness, and of their self-reflexivity.

Such anxiety and fear of chaos and the quest for the constitution of a meaningful order through which such chaos can seemingly be overcome, generate among human beings strong predisposition to construct a realm of sacred, in which direct contact with the roots of cosmic or social order is established, and which serves as a focal point for the construction of symbolic and institutional boundaries inherent in the constitution of such order.

It is such construction of the realm of the sacred that constitutes the core of human charismatic activity. Such activity, oriented to the construction of a meaningful order, does entail not only constructive but also destructive tendencies or potentialities. Such destructive potentialities are rooted in the fact that the constitution of such order cannot do away with either the indeterminacies inherent in any pattern of continual human interaction, with the awareness thereof or with the core existential anxiety. Indeed, the very construction of such an order generates a strong awareness of its arbitrariness and a strong ambivalence towards it in general and towards any concrete social and cultural order in particular. The construction of such order gives often rise to a dim, yet deep, awareness that any concrete answer to the problem of potential chaos imposes limitations on the range of possibilities open to human beings, giving rise to a yearning to break through any such restrictions and actualize some different possibilities.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> J.P. Sartre, 1972, *Imagination: A Psychological Critique*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press.

<sup>4</sup> J. Huizinga, 1970, *Homo Ludens: A Study of Play Elements in Culture*. London: Paladin; Roger Caillois, 1961, *Man, Play, and Games*. New York: The Free Press; J.S. Brunner, S.A. Jolly and K. Silva (eds.), 1979, *Play—Its Role in Development and Evolution*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

<sup>5</sup> G. Bateson, 1972, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, New York, Ballantine Books; C. Taylor, "Self-Interpreting Animals," in *Human Agency and Language*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985; G. Van Der Lieuw, "Primordial Time and Final Time," in J. Campbell (ed.), *Man and Time*, New York, Bollinger Foundation, 1957, pp. 324–353.



Hence the fervor attendant on many charismatic activities may also generate fear of the sacred and hence opposition to it, and contain a strong predisposition to sacrilege, manifest for instance in the close relation between the consciousness of death and search for the sacred to be found in many sacrificial rituals; and it may breed opposition to any more attenuated and formalized forms of this order.<sup>6</sup>

Needless to say, the awareness of the openness of human biological programs, the fear of chaos and the concomitant search for a meaningful vision rooted in the realm of the sacred are not equally developed among different people, and are not structured or defined in the same mode among different societies and cultures. Nor are they necessarily central in most daily activities of most people. But the general propensity to such awareness and reflexivity and to the quest for the construction of a meaningful order is inherent in the human situation and is of far-reaching importance in the constitution of social life.

## II

The constitution of collective identities and boundaries constitutes one of the most important manifestations of the search for constitution of such order and of charismatic human activity. The central focus of the construction of collective identities is the combination of the definition of the distinctiveness of any collectivity, with the specification of criteria of membership in it; and of the attributes of similarity of the members of these collectivities. Or, in D.M. Schneider's terms,<sup>7</sup> it is the combination of "identity" and membership in different collectivities; the definition of the attributes of similarity of members of collectivity with the specification of range of "codes" available to those participating in such collectivities—delineating in this way the relations to other "collectivities," to various "others"—that constitutes the central focus of the construction of collective identities.

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<sup>6</sup> Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*; Taylor, "Self-Interpreting Animals"; S.N. Eisenstadt, "Action, Resources, Structure and Meaning," in idem., *Power, Trust and Meaning: Essays in Sociological Theory and Analysis*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1995, pp. 328–289, section xxxiv, pp. 378–380; idem, "Charisma and Institution Building: Max Weber and Modern Sociology," in idem, *Power, Trust and Meaning*, pp. 167–201.

<sup>7</sup> D.N. Schneider and R.T. Smith, 1973, *Class Differences and Sex Roles in American Kinship and Family Structure*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall.

The construction of collectivities and collective identities entails the specification of the distinct attributes of such collectivities as related to basic cosmological and ontological conceptions and visions—i.e. to a specific cultural program—and the concretization thereof in specific location in space and time.<sup>8</sup> The construction of collective identity or consciousness is also related to the distinction, recognized long ago by Durkheim, between the sacred and the profane, and to the different combinations of these two dimensions of social order.

The attributes of similarity of members of a collectivity are manifest in the formation of human types and patterns of behavior which seem to be appropriate for such members—be it the English gentleman, the “good bourgeois,” or, to follow Norbert Elias,<sup>9</sup> the civilized person; the good Confucian, and the like. The construction of “similarity” of the members of any collectivity entails the emphasis on their contrast with strangeness, on the differences distinguishing them from other or others. It is such emphasis on the similarity of members of a collectivity that provides Durkheim’s pre-contractual elements of social life, the bases of mechanical solidarity, and of solidarity and trust.<sup>10</sup>

The definition of the “other” or “others”—and the relations to such others—poses the problem of crossing the boundaries of how can a stranger become a member; of how can a member become an outsider or a stranger. Religious conversion and excommunication represent obvious illustrations of the crossing of boundaries.

### III

The construction of collective identities is influenced or shaped, as is that of most arenas of social activity, by distinct codes, schemata or themes, rooted in ontological or cosmological premises and conceptions of social order to be found in all societies.<sup>11</sup> The major

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<sup>8</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Action, Resources, Structure and Meaning,” section xxxiv, pp. 378–380; idem., “Charisma and Institution Building: Max Weber and Modern Sociology,” pp. 16–201.

<sup>9</sup> Norbert Elias, 1982, *The Civilizing Process*, 2 vols., Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

<sup>10</sup> E. Durkheim, 1933, *The Division of Labor in Society*, New York, Free Press.

<sup>11</sup> Such codes are somewhat akin to what Max Weber called “wirtschaftsethik.” Unlike contemporary structuralists, Weber did not consider such an ethos, like the economic one, to be a purely formal aspect of the human mind which generates only a set of abstract, symbolic categories. He saw such an ethos as given in the nature of man, in his social existence and carrying a direct implication for the order

codes or themata which shape the construction of collective identity are those of *primordially*, *civility*, and *sacredness* (sacrality) or transcendence—each of which delineates distinct patterns of specification of boundaries of collectivities, of the range of codes or patterns of behavior, and of allocation of resources and regulation of power.

The theme or code of primordially<sup>12</sup> focuses on such components as gender and generation, kinship, territory, language, race, and the like for constructing and reinforcing the boundary between inside and outside. This boundary, though constructed, is perceived as naturally given. The second theme, that of civility or civic consciousness, the civic code, is constructed on the basis of familiarity with implicit and explicit rules of conduct, traditions, and social routines that define and demarcate the boundary of the collectivity.<sup>13</sup> These rules are regarded as the core of the collective identity of the community.<sup>14</sup> The third theme—the sacral or transcendent—links the constituted boundary between “us and them” not to natural conditions, but to a particular relation of the collective subject to the realm of the sacred and the sublime, be it defined as God or Reason, Progress or Rationality.<sup>15</sup> This code, just as the first two, can be found in all including preliterate and above all “archaic” societies—in which it was usually embedded or interwoven in the two other types of codes—but the purest illustrations of such distinct sacred

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of society. Weber conceived of such codes as variant expressions of the symbolic orientation of human beings towards the facts of their existence in general and towards the problems of social interaction in particular. Thus, a “wirtschaftsethik” does not connote specific religious injunctions about proper behavior in any given sphere; nor is it merely a logical derivative of the intellectual contents of the theology or philosophy predominant in a given religion. Rather, a “Wirtschaftsethik,” or a status or political ethos, connotes a general mode of “religious” or “ethical” orientation, focused on the evaluation of a specific institutional arena, and with broad implications for behavior and distribution of resources in such an arena. The orientation is rooted in premises about the cosmic order, about the nature of ontological reality and its relation to human and social existence. See on this, in greater detail, S.N. Eisenstadt, *Power, Trust and Meaning*, chapters 1 and 13.

<sup>12</sup> See Edward Shils, “Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties,” in idem, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1975, pp. 111–126; C. Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiment and Civil Politics in the New States,” in idem, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, Basic Books, 1973, pp. 255–310.

<sup>13</sup> E. Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*.

<sup>14</sup> This of course is due to the fact that tacit and formal knowledge are not of the same order. Cf. M. Polanyi, 1962, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, pp. 87 ff.

<sup>15</sup> F.H. Tenbruck, 1989, *Die kulturellen Grundlagen der Gesellschaft*, Opladen.

codes are the Axial-Age religions which will be discussed later on.<sup>16</sup>

These three codes or themes are of course ideal types. Within each there may develop many variations. Thus, to give only two illustrations, within the general framework of primordial orientation there may develop different emphases on territory, culture, language, or other components of primordiality, and on different conceptions of collective time. Similarly, the differences between, to follow Weber's nomenclature, between this-worldly and other-worldly Axial religious ontological conceptions and orientations, have been abundantly analyzed.<sup>17</sup>

The construction of collective identities entails the concretization of such codes or themes and the specification of their different contents; of different combinations thereof, and the designation of different institutional arenas as the bearers of such codes—as for instance the emphasis on primordiality in “local” or “ethnic” collectivities; on civil rules in the political collectivity or on the banality in broad religious ones. The different combinations of such codes or themes and the specification of the institutional arenas in which they are implemented vary greatly between different societies and social settings—and it is the specific ways in which such themes are defined, combined and institutionalized that constitute the distinct characteristics of different collectivities. Whatever the concrete specification and combination of such themes in any collectivity, the construction of collective identity entails some—highly variable—combination of most—usually all—such codes or themes, and continual tension between them.

#### IV

The construction and reproduction of collective identity or consciousness is effected through the promulgation and institutionalization of models of social and cultural order. Such models of cultural and social orders—the Geertzian models “of and for society”<sup>18</sup>—represent and promulgate the unassailable assumptions about the nature of reality and a social reality prevalent in a society, the

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<sup>16</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), 1983, *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Civilizations*, Albany, NY, SUNY Press; idem, 1987, *Kulturen der Achsenzeit: Ihre Institutionelle und Kulturelle Dyanamik*, 2 vols., Frankfurt am Main.

<sup>17</sup> See on this in greater detail, S.N. Eisenstadt, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Civilizations*.

<sup>18</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 93–94.

core symbols of a society, the evaluation of different arenas of human activity, and the place of different symbolic (“cultural”) activities as they bear on the basic predicaments and uncertainties of human experience.

The promulgation of models of social and cultural orders and of the appropriate code-orientations takes place above all in several types of situations—especially socializing and communicative ones, in different rituals and ceremonies, and through various agencies of socialization and educational institutions, “mass media,” religious preachings and the like.<sup>19</sup> Among such situations of special importance from the point of view of the construction of collective identities are those of induction of members into the collectivity and various collective rituals—especially commemorative ones and public ceremonies in which the distinctive identity and cultural program of the collectivity are portrayed.

In all such communicative, ritual, ceremonial and socializing situations, the “natural” givens—sex, age, and procreation; vitality, power, force are presented, dramatized, often highly ritualized, and related to the organizational problems of the respective institutional arenas. In such situations, the distinctive attributes of any given collectivity and its relation to the cosmic order, to the cosmic attributes which it represents; its specific location in time and space; its relations to what is designated as its natural environment and to nature and to the sources of vitality; its collective memory and the perception of its continuity are portrayed, articulated and promulgated in visual and narrative ways and in various combinations thereof. In these situations the distinctive attributes of the collectivities are endowed with some, often very strong components or dimensions of sacrality and with very strong emphasis on the electivity or “chosenness” of the collectivity in terms of such sacrality. Accordingly the designation of the distinctiveness of the collectivity is in these situations often portrayed in terms of inside and outside: of the purity of the inside as against the pollution of the outside.

Such sacrality and electivity can be expressed in terms of each of the major codes or themes of construction of collective identities—the primordial, civil or sacral one, and in different combinations

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<sup>19</sup> See in greater detail S.N. Eisenstadt, *Power Trust and Meaning*, chs. 2 and 13, pp. 55–70, 328–390.

thereof—with different combinations thereof shaping, among others, the relations to other collectivities.

It is in these situations that the attachment of members of a collectivity to symbols and boundaries thereof are inculcated; and that such orientation to collective identities and attachment to them become as it were components of one's personal identity. But needless to say, the extent to which such attachment to the different collectivities becomes an important component of a person's identity varies greatly between different individuals and different collectivities.

The construction of collective identity entails also usually very strong gender designations, manifest in such expressions as "mother country" or "Father of the people," in which different vital forms are related to different codes are attributed to different genders and often defined in opposing yet complementary terms.<sup>20</sup>

## V

Given the inherent multiplicity of themes or codes of collective identity, the construction thereof and the specification of attributes of similarity among its members is never, in any collectivity, in any setting, homogeneous. Such construction always entails, in any concrete situation, some plurality of collective identities and of human types, as well as contestations between often competing constructions and interpretations thereof. The nature of such plurality or heterogeneity varies greatly according to the constellations of codes and themes according to which the different collectivities, above all the respective macro-collectivities, are constituted.

## VI

The promulgation of the distinctiveness of any specific collectivity is closely related to, even if not identical with major patterns of cultural creativity—such as artistic, literary, philosophical arenas, in architectural and "plays," as well as in what has been sometimes designated as "popular culture" in the great variety of their concrete manifestations.

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<sup>20</sup> See for instance Tamara Dragadze, 1996, "Self Determination and the Politics of Exclusion," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19, 2, pp. 341–351; Carol Delany, 1995, "Father State, Motherland and the Birth of Modern Turkey," in Carol Delany and Sylvia Yanagisako (eds.), *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*, London, Routledge, 1995.

The themes and problems depicted and elaborated in the great works of art, be it in literature, in philosophical discourse, in architecture, sculpture, and the like, as well as in popular culture, while each follows the “internal” logic of its own field, are yet continually interwoven with the portrayal of the distinctiveness of the cultural program of a given collectivity, and of the collectivity thereof.<sup>21</sup> Of special importance in this context are naturally those arenas of cultural creativity which focus on the depiction of the distinct memories of the different collectivities—genealogies, chronicles, and histories. Concomitantly the tension between the different components of collective identity often constitute—as for instance in *Antigone*—one of the major foci of great works of literature, or art.

### VIII

The construction of collective identities is effected by various social actors, especially various influentials and elites in interaction with broader social sectors. The core of this interaction is the activation of the predispositions to and search for some such order which are inherent, even if not fully articulated, among all, or at least most, people. Such predispositions or propensities are activated by different influentials and actors who attempt to attain hegemony in various settings. Of special importance are those actors—like for instance the different promulgators of the visions of the Great Axial Civilizations or the bearers of the modern Great Revolutions, or of different conceptions of modern statehood and nationality—who attempt to promulgate distinct visions of collective identity, and/or distinct cultural programs. In so far as such activists find resonance among wider sectors of the population, they are able to institutionalize the distinct symbols and boundaries promulgated by them, and crystallize different concrete collective identities and boundaries. Such actors often compete with each other, as was for instance the case of the competition between different religions in late antiquity.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Explorations in the Sociology of Knowledge: The Steriological Axis in the Domains of Knowledge,” in S.N. Eisenstadt and Ilana Friedrich-Silber (eds.), *Cultural Traditions and Worlds of Knowledge: Explorations in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Greenwich, Conn., JAI Press, 1988, pp. 1–71.

<sup>22</sup> See for instance Peter Brown, 1978, *The Making of Late Antiquity*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; idem, 1982, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*, London, Faber and Faber; idem, 1992, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Toward*

The competition between such activists is not purely “symbolic.” The construction and promulgation of collective identities is not a purely “symbolic” exercise—it is manifest not only in the “symbolic” depiction of the boundaries of the collectivity, but also in the institutionalization thereof. The institutionalization of boundaries of collectivities takes place through the interweaving of the promulgation of such models of cosmic and social order and of the visions of distinctiveness of any collectivity, and of the attributes of similarity of its members, appropriate to the members of these collectivities, with the control of the production and distribution of resources, with regulation of power and with access to such resources.

There exist certain affinities between the different codes or themes of collective identity and different criteria of allocation of resources.<sup>23</sup> To give a few very preliminary illustrations, primordial codes or themes tend to emphasize very strong egalitarian orientations and have a strong elective affinity with the institution of relatively wide “package deals” of resources and access to public goods for all members of the community; and of the concomitant denial of any such access and entitlements to “strangers”, and of the constitution of relatively wide arenas of public goods. However, differences may arise between different primordial codes and communities—like territorial, linguistic, or kin-based ones—regarding the relative emphasis on equality versus hierarchy.

Civil codes tend to restrict the egalitarian distributions of entitlements to particular spheres or social arenas and unequal distributions of such entitlements in other spheres. The range of public goods and entitlements distributed to all the members is smaller than in primordial communities and have developed under these circumstances a distinction between private and public arenas. This has a certain affinity to the separation of the political from the economic sphere, with a sharp distinction between, on the one hand, the rights to entitlement and access to public goods, and on the other hand, access to various goods and commodities exchanged on economic markets. The former are restricted to members of the community, while access to the latter may also be permitted to strangers.

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*a Christian Empire*, Madison, WIS, University of Wisconsin; Walter Burkert, 1987, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

<sup>23</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt and B. Giessen, 1995, “Construction of Collective Identities,” op. cit.



Sacral, especially transcendental code-orientations emphasize the universal access of all “believers” to those basic resources distributed and to the public goods constituted by the “cultural” collectivity, but not necessarily by other “civil” or “primordial” ones.

Given the close relation between different codes and patterns of allocation of resources and regulation of power, the promulgation and institutionalization of different patterns of collective identity and boundaries entails power struggles and struggles over resources—material and cultural or “symbolic” alike. Such struggles are undertaken through the cooperation between different, often competing, bearers of collective identity and between other actors—“influentials,” political cultural elites, representatives of economic groups and social classes.

## VIII

The constitution of collective identities and boundaries—as that of any social order—bears within itself both constructive and destructive possibilities. The constructive dimension of such construction lies in the fact that it is such construction that generates trust without which no continuous human interaction can be assured and creativity take place,<sup>24</sup> but at the same time by its very nature such construction entail exclusiveness and exacerbates the ambivalence to social order.

The destructive potentialities inherent in the construction of collective identities are inherent in the very structure of the situations in which the charismatic dimensions of human activity and interaction are promulgated. The promulgation in such situations of the models of cosmic and social order attempts to imbue the given order with charismatic dimension, to bring it in closer, often direct relation with the sacred, and concomitantly to “convince” the members of a given society that the institutional order in general, and the concrete order of their society in particular, are the “correct” ones. The symbols and images portrayed in these models extol the given order: the purity of the world inside the boundaries, and the danger of the world outside—or the need to remain within the boundaries despite the continuous attraction of the world outside, reinforcing,

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<sup>24</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Action, Resources, Structure and Meaning,” *op. cit.*

as it were, the existing ideologies or hegemonies.<sup>25</sup> Yet at the same time paradoxically there develops in such situations an awareness of the arbitrariness of any social order and of the limitations on human activities which it imposes, as well as a growing awareness of the possibility of constructing new themes and models. Hence in such situations there tends also to develop a potentially strong ambivalence to any social order and especially to the given concrete social order, enhancing the attraction of stepping outside the boundaries thereof as well as the anxiety about doing so.<sup>26</sup>

Such ambivalences and the consciousness of the arbitrariness of social order and of its fragility are intensified by the fact that the promulgation of such models is connected with the exercise and legitimation of power.<sup>27</sup> Consequently there may develop in such situations strong tendencies to sacrilege, transgression, violence and aggression—manifest among others in the close relation between the consciousness of death and search for the sacred which is apparent in many sacrificial rituals and in the concomitant tendencies to exclusion of others, making them the foci or targets of such ambivalence; in their depiction not only as strange but also as evil.

## IX

The constitution of collective identities and boundaries as effected through the promulgation of different combinations and concrete specifications of the basic themes or codes and subcodes, as it is continuously interwoven with economic, political processes has been going on throughout human history in all human societies and in different historical and international settings.

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<sup>25</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "Action, Resources, Structure and Meaning," op. cit.; idem, "The order-Maintaining and Order-Transforming Dimensions of Culture," in idem, *Power, Trust and Meaning: Essays in Sociological Theory and Analysis*, pp. 306–327.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, S.N. Eisenstadt, "Action, Resources, Structure and Meaning," op. cit.; idem., "Charisma and Institution Building: Max Weber and Modern Sociology, in idem., *Power, Trust and Meaning*," op. cit., pp. 167–201.

<sup>27</sup> Walter Burkert, 1996, *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; Walter Burkert, 1983, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (trans.), Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press; Jean Pierre Vernant, 1991, *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press; Roy A. Rappaport, 1999, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Maurice Bloch, 1992, *Prey into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Of crucial importance in the construction of collective identities have been intersocietal and intercivilizational contacts. No “society” exists as a single enclosed system. The populations which live within the confines of what has been designated as a “society” or a macrosocietal order—and also of most other collectivities—are never organized into one “system,” but in several regimes, economic formations, different ascriptive collectivities, and civilizational frameworks. These different structures or frameworks evince different patterns of organization, continuity and change. They may change within the “same” society to different degrees and in different ways in various areas of social life. Moreover, it is only very rarely that members of such a population are confined to any single “society”—even if one such “society” seems to be the salient macro-order for them; usually they live in multiple settings or contexts.

The importance of such various “international” forces or intersocietal interactions in the process of construction of collective identities becomes visible already with the disintegration of relatively narrow tribal or territorial units, in connection with the crystallization of Great Archaic Empires—Ancient Egypt, Assyria, or the Meso-American ones—and later Axial-Age Civilizations.<sup>28</sup> These processes of disintegration and reconstruction of collective identities were in all cases connected with advances in agricultural and transport technology, with growing mutual impingement of heterogeneous economic (nomadic, sedentary, etc.) and ethnic populations, with some degree of international political-ecological volatility in general, and with processes of immigration and/or conquest in particular. All these cases of growing internal structural differentiation involved the concomitant crystallization of new broader collectivities, and new patterns of collective identity.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Eisenstadt (ed.), *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Civilizations*.

<sup>29</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, Michel Abitbol and Naomi Chazan, “The Origins of the State Reconsidered,” in S.N. Eisenstadt, Michel Abitbol and Naomi Chazan (eds.), *The Early State in African Perspective: Culture, Power and Division of Labor*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, pp. 1–27; S.N. Eisenstadt, Michel Abitbol and Naomi Chazan, “State Formation in Africa: Conclusions,” in S.N. Eisenstadt, Michel Abitbol and Naomi Chazan (eds.), *The Early State in African Perspective: Culture, Power and Division of Labor*, pp. 168–200. See also Per Bilde et al. (eds.), 1990, *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, Aarhus, Denmark, Aarhus University Press; J. Gledhill, J.B. Bender and M.T. Larsen (eds.), 1995, *State and Society: The Emergence and Development of Social Hierarchy and Political Centralization*, London, Routledge.

The processes of construction of collective identities within different broader societal settings, entail also the crystallization of a multiplicity or plurality of collectivities and collective identities. The broader international settings within which such collectivities develop and the interaction between these settings and the various "internal" groups and elites, does greatly influence the ways in which such multiplicity or plurality of collective identities and interpretations thereof develop both between different collectivities as well as *within* any relatively clearly defined macro-collectivity.

It is also in such situations that the continual reconstruction of the concrete specifications of the major themes of collective identity became most visible. One of the most interesting aspects of the processes of reconstruction of collective identities is the continual reconstruction of primordiality. Contrary to some of the recent studies on nationalism and ethnicity which assume that the primordial components of collective identity are naturally and continually given, and on the whole unchanging; in fact those components have been continually reconstituted in different historical contexts and under the impact of intersocietal forces. Although primordiality is always presented by its promulgators as "primordial," as naturally given, yet in fact it is also continually reconstructed under the impact of such forces—and in close relation to promulgation and continual reconstruction of other—civil or sacred, above all universalistic—codes or orientations.

## PART II. COMPARATIVE INDICATIONS: CULTURAL PROGRAM AND CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES IN PREMODERN SOCIETIES

### A. SOME COMPARATIVE INDICATIONS

#### X

The construction of collectivities and collective boundaries continuously interwoven with power struggles and over economic resources has been going on throughout human history, and it is possible to distinguish some broad types of such construction, but at the same time within each such type there have indeed developed great variations.

One convenient, and to some extent conventional way—rooted in evolutionary perspectives—to distinguish between such types is according to the extent to which there developed, in connection with the

promulgation of different codes of distinctive collectivities, or whether these different codes or orientations were embedded together in common collective frameworks. The latter was in a very schematic way the case in “tribal” societies, such as many different African, Polynesian or Mesoamerican “preliterate” societies, or “archaic” ones—like ancient Egypt or Assyria, the Maya and Aztec Kingdom and the like.<sup>30</sup> In most of these societies there tended to develop a relatively close interweaving of the different codes or themes of collective identity within the frameworks of the same collectivities with some primordial criteria, often with strong sacral attributes being predominant. Such collectivities were constituted on different micro-levels from local, family and kinship units—up to the broader “macro” society of, for instance, the Great Egyptian Kingdom or Empire.<sup>31</sup>

In most of these societies there tended to develop a certain fluidity with respect to the categories “race,” “language,” “kin” as specification of membership in different collectivities and a certain porosity of the boundaries between them<sup>32</sup>—with partial exception of some caste-like arrangements for “inferior” groups to certain professional occupations.

But even within this broad type, needless to say, there developed far-reaching differences with respect to the relative importance of the different themes or codes of collective identity; their concrete specifications, which were indeed wrought with many tensions and contestations among their respective bearers, the distinctiveness of the construction of collective identities. Given the relative neglect of the analytical distinction of the construction of collective identity as against the study of power, economic-class forces there have been but few systematic analyses of these problems, and such systematic research is still very much before us.

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<sup>30</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Civilizations*, op. cit.; Eisenstadt, Abitbol and Chazan, op. cit.; Per Bilde et al. (eds.), 1990, *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, op. cit.; J. Gledhill, B. Bender and M.T. Larsen (eds.), 1995, *State and Society: The Emergence and Development of Social Hierarchy and Political Centralization*.

<sup>31</sup> For a general discussion of these processes and the relevant references, see S.N. Eisenstadt, Michel Abitbol and Naomi Chazan, “The Origins of the State Reconsidered,” pp. 1–27; and “State Formation in Africa: Conclusions,” pp. 168–200, in idem., (eds.), 1988, *The Early State in African Perspective: Culture, Power and Division of Labor*. Moret, Alexandre, Goerges Davy and Gordon Childe, 1926, *From Tribe to Empire: Social Organization among Primitives and in the Ancient East*, London, Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co.

<sup>32</sup> Martin van Bakel, Renee Hagestiejn and Pieter van de Velde (eds.), 1994, *Pivot Politics: Changing Cultural Identities in Early State Formation Processes*, Amsterdam, Het Spinhuis Publishers.

At this point of our discussion, suffice it to point out that, as the numerous studies of the early state in its great variety point out, that with growing structural differentiation; broadening of the scope of the “macro”-societal communities (as to follow Davy’s and Moret’s classical even if certainly rather simplified distinction, implied with respect to Ancient Egypt “between Tribe to Empire”<sup>33</sup> and growing centralization, there tended to develop both a growing distinction between different “local” communities, and between them and the more central ones, as well as strong tendencies to fuller formalization of criteria of membership thereof and to some closure of the boundaries between them.

## B. THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES IN AXIAL-AGE CIVILIZATIONS—GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

### XI

One of the most important “breakthroughs” with respect to the crystallization of distinct collectivities combined with distinct cultural program, took place in the Axial civilizations.<sup>34,35</sup>

The Axial-Age civilizations brought about some of the greatest revolutionary breakthroughs in human history. The essence of these revolutionary breakthroughs was the development of revolutionary ontological visions, the central core of which was the emphasis on the chasm between a higher, transcendental order and the mundane given social one, and the call for the reconstruction of the latter according to the principles of the former. Such visions, which first developed among small groups of autonomous, relatively unattached “intellectuals” (a new social element at the time), particularly among the carriers of models of cultural and social order, were ultimately transformed into the basic “hegemonic” premises of their respective

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<sup>33</sup> Alexandre Moret, Georges Davy and Gordon Childe, *From Tribe to Empire: Social Organization among Primitives and in the Ancient East*, op. cit.

<sup>34</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *The Origins and Diversity of Axial-Age Civilizations*, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> By Axial-Age civilizations (in Karl Jasper’s nomenclature) we mean those civilizations that crystallized during the centuries from 500 B.C.E. to the first century C.E., within which new types of ontological visions, of conceptions of a basic tension between the transcendental and mundane orders emerged and were institutionalized in many parts of the world—in ancient Israel, later in Second-Commonwealth Judaism and Christianity; Ancient Greece; Zoroastrian Iran; early Imperial China; Hinduism and Buddhism; and, beyond the Axial Age proper, Islam.

civilizations. In institutionalized forms they became the predominant orientations of both the ruling as well as of many secondary elites, fully embodied in the centers of sub-centers of their respective societies. The hegemonic elites in all of these civilizations attempted to reconstruct the mundane world-human personality and the socio-political and economic order according to the appropriate transcendental vision, the principles of the higher ontological or ethical order. At the same time, institutionalization gave rise to numerous heterodoxies and secondary interpretations of the hegemonic one.

The development and institutionalization of the perception of basic tension between the transcendental and the mundane order in the Axial civilizations was closely connected with the emergence of a new social element, of a new type of elite, carriers of models of cultural and social order. These were often autonomous intellectuals, such as the ancient Israelite prophets and priests and later on the Jewish sages, the Greek philosophers and sophists, the Chinese literati, the Hindu Brahmins, the Buddhist Sangha, and the Islamic Ulema. Initial small nuclei of such groups of cultural elites or of intellectuals developed the new ontologies, the new transcendental visions and conceptions, and were of crucial importance in the construction of the new "civilizational" institutional formations in these societies, collectivities and the concomitant patterns of collective identity.

Within these civilizations there developed strong tendencies to construct a societal center or centers to serve as the major autonomous and symbolically distinct embodiments of the implementation of the transcendental visions; as the major loci of the charismatic dimension of human existence. The centers' symbolic distinctiveness from the periphery received a relatively strong emphasis; yet at the same time the center tended to permeate the periphery and restructure it according to its own autonomous visions, conceptions, and rules. Sometimes this tendency was accompanied by a parallel impingement by peripheries on the center. Concomitantly, in close connection with the institutionalization of Axial civilizations' cultural programs, there developed a strong tendency to define certain collectivities and institutional arenas as the most appropriate ones to be the carriers of the distinct broader transcendental visions, and of new "civilizational"—"religious"—collectivities. While these collectivities were indeed distinct from political and from various "primordial" "ethnic" local or religious ones, yet they continually impinged on them, interacted with them, and challenged them, generating continual

reconstruction of their respective identities. Such processes were effected by the continual interaction between the various autonomous cultural elites, the carriers of solidarity and political elites of the different continually reconstructed “local” and political communities.

## XII

The construction of the Axial civilizations, with their distinctive cultural programs and their continual confrontation between the civilizational and other collectivities was also connected with the development of new patterns of cultural creativity.

On the purely “intellectual” level it was above all of theological or philosophical discourse that flourished and became constructed in much more elaborate and formalized ways, organized in different worlds of knowledge in manifold disciplines, and generating continual developments within such frameworks.<sup>36</sup> Within these discourses many problems attendant on the relations between the autonomous developments in different arenas of cultural creativity and some central aspects of the constitution of collectivities and of the relations between them, as for instance concern with the conception of cosmic time and its relationship to the mundane political reality; different conceptions of *historia sacra* in relation to the flow of mundane time; of sacred space in relation to mundane one, became very central, giving rise to the construction of new types of collective memories and narratives thereof.<sup>37</sup>

## XIII

The very differentiation between different collectivities and themes of collective identity promulgated by them gave rise in the Axial civilizations to the emergence of open spaces in which different combinations and greater autonomy of primordial, “ethnic,” regional as well as political collectivities could develop. The relations between these different collectivities constituted a continual aspect of the dynamics of Axial civilizations—indeed of struggles and contestations within them.

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<sup>36</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt and Ilana Friedrich-Silber, 1988, *Cultural Traditions and Worlds of Knowledge: Explorations in the Sociology of Knowledge*, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> See for instance Benjamin Z. Kedar and Zwi R.J. Werblowsky (eds.), 1988, *Sacred Space: Shrine, City, Land*, New York, The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, New York University Press.



Whatever the differences in this respect between different Axial civilizations, the very differentiation and distinction between different collectivities and themes of collective identity promulgated by them gave rise within the Axial civilizations to the development of continually reconstructed civil and primordial themes in relation to the sacral civilizational ones; to a multiplicity of combinations of primordial, civil and sacred themes on the local, regional and central levels, and to the concomitant potentiality of continual confrontation between them. No single locus, not even the centers of the most centralized European Empires, could effectively monopolize the representation of all these themes on different levels of social organization, and different collectivities—"ethnic," political, civic and religious—with relatively high levels of self-consciousness, each with different conceptions of time and space in relation to their collectivities.

Such continual opening up and potential reconstitution of conceptions of time and space in relation to the constitution of different collectivities was reinforced by the fact that with the institutionalization of Axial Civilizations, a new type of inter-societal and inter-civilizational world history emerged. Within all these civilizations there developed, in close connection with the tendencies to reconstruct the world, a certain propensity to expansion, in which ideological, religious impulses were combined with political and to some extent economic ones. Although often radically divergent in terms of their concrete institutionalization, the political formations which developed in these civilizations—which can be seen as "ecumenical"—comprised representations and ideologies of quasi-global empire, and some, at moments in their history, even the facts of such Empire.

To be sure, political and economic inter-connections have existed between different societies throughout human history. Some conceptions of a universal or world kingdom emerged in many pre-Axial civilizations, like that of Genghis Kahn, and many cultural inter-connections developed between them, but only with the institutionalization of Axial Civilizations did a more distinctive ideological and reflexive mode of expansion develop. This mode of expansion also gave rise to some awareness of creating possible "world histories" encompassing many different societies. The impact of "world histories" on the constitution of collective consciousness and identities of the different societies became more clearly visible.

## XIV

The tendencies to such reconstruction developed in several, often overlapping but never fully identical directions. One such direction was generated by the development, which was inherent in the civilization of heterodoxies and sectarian tendencies. Such development was for instance in the case of the crystallization of Jewish identity in the Second Temple and in exilic times,<sup>38</sup> in the case of the Iconoclasts in the Byzantine Empire,<sup>39</sup> and in the great divide between Suni and Shiite Islam;<sup>40</sup> and in Protestantism in Europe,<sup>41</sup> generate also strong tendencies to the redefinition of many of the components of the identities of their respective collectivities—and even to give rise to construction of new, distinct ones—civilizational, political and ethnic alike.

The other such direction of the reconstruction of collective identities that was inherent in the Axial civilizations was that generated by the development of autonomous political actors who attempted to redefine the scope of political communities in relation to the broader ecumenical ones. The third such direction, often connected with the former yet in principle distinct from it, was that to “vernacularization” which we shall discuss in greater detail below.

The directions of change and the concomitant construction of different types of collectivities and collective identities; and of different relations between them—especially between the different “local” “civic,” ethnic and the civilizational sacral ones with their strong universalistic orientations, and the concomitant modes of reconstruction of primordality developed in different ways in different Axial civilizations. These differences were shaped first by the basic premises and cultural programs of these civilizations, especially by the ways

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<sup>38</sup> Shay J.D. Cohen, “Religion, Ethnicity and ‘Hellenism’ in the Emergence of Jewish Identity in Maccabean Palestine,” in Per Bilde et al. (eds.), *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, 1990, op. cit., pp. 204–224; S.N. Eisenstadt and B. Giessen, 1995, “Construction of Collective Identities,” op. cit.

<sup>39</sup> For a preliminary comparative analysis of the Classes of Byzantine Empires and the references there, see S.N. Eisenstadt, Ch. 11: “Culture and Social Structure Revisited,” in idem, *Power, Trust and Meaning*, pp. 280–306.

<sup>40</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Sectarianism and the Dynamics of Islamic Civilization,” in Georg Stauth (ed.), *Islam—Motor or Challenge to Modernity*, Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam, 1998, pp. 15–33, and the references there.

<sup>41</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, 1968, *The Protestant Ethic and Modernization: A Comparative View*, New York, Basic Books.

in which the relations between attributes of the sacral, cosmic and social order and the basic attributes of the primordial ascriptive collectivities were perceived, in close relation to the distinct cultural programs that crystallized within them, by the hegemonic elite in different Axial civilizations. Here three typical constellations can be distinguished. One most fully illustrated by the Jewish case and in a different way in the Hindu one has been characterized by the vesting of the sacral attributes within some such ascriptive collectivities. The second one, most fully illustrated, in ideal typical way in Islam and Buddhism occurs when there is a total disjunction between the two. The third possibility, most fully developed in different parts of Christianity and in different ways in Confucianism, arises when these attributes of the “universalistic” and the primordial collectivities are conceived as mutually relevant and each serves as a referent of the other or a condition of being a member of the other without being totally embedded in it. Such a partial connection usually means that the attributes of the various ascriptive collectivities are seen as one component of the attributes of sacrality, and/or conversely, that the attributes of sacrality constitute one of the attributes of such collectivities.

Second, these directions of change were greatly influenced by the historical experiences and political ecological settings of these civilizations, especially if they were, as was the case in Europe and India, politically decentralized or as was the case of China, the Byzantine Empire and the especially later Islamic Empires—the Ottoman, Sefavid ones—more centralized.

## XV

Thus to give only a few very preliminary indications, in Europe and India, throughout the Middle Ages, up to the early modern period, there crystallized in Europe different patterns of pluralism, of dispersed centers and collectivities, yet bound together by orientations to the common civilizational framework.<sup>42</sup>

In India and Europe, major collectivities and central institutions were continually constituted in a variety of ways, all of which entailed different combinations of the basic terms and codes of collective iden-

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<sup>42</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, 1987, *European Civilization in Comparative Perspective*, Oslo, Norwegian University Press, and the references provided there.

tity: primordial attachments and traditions, and transcendental as well as traditional civic criteria. The continuous restructuring of centers and collectivities revolved in Europe around the oscillation and tension between the sacred, primordial, and civil dimensions. While, for instance, many collectivities were defined and legitimated mainly in primordial terms, they also attempted to arrogate sacred and civil symbols of legitimation and they all contained strong territorial and political orientations, and such orientations were also shared by many of the sectarian and heterodox groups that developed in Europe.

The relations between the broader civilizational and “local” primordial collectivities developed in a different way in India, in close relation to its distinct cultural program. The major difference being the weaker emphasis among them of territorial and political orientations. This was closely related to the fact that the political arena, the arena of rulership, did not constitute in “historical” India—as it did in monotheistic civilizations or in Confucianism—a major arena of the implementation of the transcendental visions predominant in this civilization. The conception of Indian civilization as closely related to these visions and as promulgated by its bearers, did not contain, as in Europe, or as in the other monotheistic religions, (Judaism and Islam) and even more so in China, a strong political component. It is only lately that there have developed strong tendencies among some political groups to promulgate a specific Hindu political identity and to define the Indian civilization in political terms.

Concomitantly the sectarian movements which developed in the framework of Indian civilization were not so strongly connected with reconstruction of the political realm as they were in Europe and, as we shall see later, the process of vernacularization developed in India in a different direction than in Europe.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt and Harriet Hartman, “Historical Experience, Cultural Traditions, State Formation and Political Dynamics in India and Europe,” in Martin Doornbos and Sudipta Kaviraj (eds.), *Dynamics of State Formations: India and Europe Compared*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 25–44; L. Dumont, 1970, *Homo Hierarchicus*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press; J.C. Heesterman, 1985, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition: Essays in Indian Ritual, Kingship and Society*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press; Gloria Goodwin-Raheja, 1988, “India: Caste, Kingship and Dominance Reconsidered,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 17, pp. 497–522.

## XVI

Different patterns of relations between primordial and sacral themes developed, albeit in different modes, in more centralized political systems which developed in Axial civilizations—in the different Empires that developed in different Axial Civilizations—such as the Roman, Chinese and in Byzantine ones<sup>44</sup>—in all of them strongly influenced by the respective cultural programs of these civilizations and their distinct historical experience.

In these Empires power was much more concentrated and centralized, and accordingly there developed in them, in contrast to the situation in India or Europe, a relatively strong tendency to the regulation by the center of the combination of different collective identities that developed in them. Such regulation did not usually entail—with the partial, but indeed only partial—exception of the Byzantine Empire, and of other Christian kingdoms (such as the Ethiopian one or the Armenian one), the appropriation by the center of all the major—sacral, civil and primordial themes on the macro-societal level—and certainly not on the local ones. Different “ethnic” civil, local and even religious communities were allowed to maintain and develop quite far-reaching distinctiveness and autonomy and self-consciousness which was indeed enhanced by the encounter with the broader civilizational ones in so far as their basic tenets did not, as was indeed in the Jewish case, in its relations to the Hellenistic and Roman Empire, negate the basic legitimacy of the Imperial order.<sup>45</sup>

But the ways in which these relations between the centralistic tendencies and those to local autonomous formations differed greatly between these Empires—very much in line with the basic cultural programs, the social imaginaire, promulgated within them and their distinct historical experience, (the detailed analysis of which would be beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Culture and Social Structure Revisited,” *op. cit.*

<sup>45</sup> Shay J.D. Cohen, “Religion, Ethnicity and ‘Hellenism’ in the Emergency of Jewish Identity in Maccabean Palestine,” pp. 204–224; S.N. Eisenstadt and B. Giessen, 1995, “Construction of Collective Identities.”

<sup>46</sup> Eisenstadt, Ch. 11, “Culture and Social Structure Revisited.”

THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY IN A NON-AXIAL  
CIVILIZATION—JAPAN THROUGH THE TOKUGAWA PERIOD

XVII

Japan provides a most instructive illustration of the crystallization and continuity of a distinct type of collective identity, of a non-Axial civilization, which was successful in maintaining its distinct collective identity, in a continual confrontation with two Axial Civilizations, Confucian and Buddhist, and later with the Western world's ideological, military, political and economic systems.<sup>47</sup>

Already early in Japanese history there developed a very distinct type of collective consciousness or identity—a political and ethnic identity or collective consciousness, couched in sacral-primordial terms.<sup>48</sup> Unlike the collective identities that developed in Europe—or China, Korea or Vietnam—Japan's collective consciousness did not develop within the framework of a universalistic civilization with strong transcendental orientations. Japan, to be sure, was greatly influenced by its encounter with Chinese Confucianism and Buddhist civilization. However, in contrast to what happened in the realm of the Axial civilizations, Japan resolved its confrontation with universalistic ideologies by apparently denying them rather than attempting to relate them to its primordial symbols.

This collective consciousness was constructed around the idea of a sacred liturgical community and the uniqueness of the Japanese collectivity or nation. This conception of a divine nation, or to follow Werblowski's felicitous expression—of sacred particularity—did not, however, entail its being uniquely "chosen" in terms of a transcendental and universalistic mission. It did not entail the conception of responsibility to God to pursue such a mission.

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<sup>47</sup> This analysis is based on S.N. Eisenstadt, 1996, *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative View*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>48</sup> In greater detail, see J.M. Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987; G. Rozman, *The East Asian Religion, Confucian Heritage and Its Modern Adoption*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991; M. Waida, "Buddhism and the National Community," in F.E. Reynolds and T.M. Ludwig, eds., *Transactions and Transformations in the History of Religions*, (London: E.J. Bailly, 1980); C. Blacker, "Two Shinto Myths: The Golden Age and the Chosen People," in C. Henny and J.-P. Lehman, eds., *Themes and Theories in Modern Japanese History*, Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Athlone Press, 1995; J.R. Werblowski, *Beyond Tradition and Modernity*, Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Athlone Press, 1976.

Japan's conception of sacred particularity usually held its own when confronted with successive waves of universalistic ideologies (Buddhist, Confucian, then liberal, constitutional, progressivist, or Marxist), all of which seemingly called for a redefinition of the symbols of collective identity. With the exception of small groups of intellectuals, redefinition in a universalist direction did not take hold in the Japanese collective consciousness. Instead the premises of these religions or ideologies were continually reconstructed in Japan and combined with sacral, primordial, and natural terms—indeed very often under the impact of the encounter with Buddhism and Confucianism, and later with western civilizations.

Reformulations of the Japanese collective identity entailed very intensive orientations to “others”—China, Asia, the West—and an awareness of other encompassing civilizations claiming some universal validity. But they did not entail the participation of the Japanese collectivity in such civilizations and its reconstruction according to these universalistic premises. The reformulations did not generate the perception of Japan becoming a part, whether central or peripheral, of such a universalistic system. In extreme form they asserted that the Japanese collectivity embodied the pristine values enunciated by the other civilizations and wrongfully appropriated by them. This yielded a very strong tendency—which played an important role in Japanese society from the Meiji up to the contemporary period—to define the Japanese collectivity in terms of “incomparability” very often couched in racial, genetic terms, or in terms of some special spirituality. Such definitions of the Japanese collectivity made it impossible to become Japanese by conversion. The Buddhist sects or Confucian schools—the most natural channels of conversion—could not perform this function in Japan.

The ability of Japanese elites to promulgate and “reproduce” such extreme denial of the universalistic components of the Axial-Age Civilizations which were continually impinging on them, was closely related to some of the basic characteristics of their elites, the most important of which from the point of view of our analysis is that these elites were not strong and autonomous. The common characteristic of these elites and their major coalitions was their embedment in groups and settings (contexts) that were mainly defined in primordial, ascriptive, sacral, and often hierarchical terms, and much less in terms of specialized functions or of universalistic criteria of social attributes.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> See on this Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative View*.

True, many cultural actors—priests, monks, scholars, and the like—participated in such coalitions. But with very few exceptions, their participation was based on primordial and social attributes and on criteria of achievement and social obligations issuing from the different particular contexts shaping these coalitions, and not on any autonomous criteria rooted in or related to the arenas in which they were active. These arenas—cultural, religious or literary—were themselves ultimately defined in primordial-sacral terms, notwithstanding the fact that many specialized activities developed within them.

Such construction of the overall Japanese collective identity in particularistic primordial sacral terms allowed, especially in the pre-modern period, the development of a wide scope for local and regional identities defined mostly also in particular into primordial terms with lesser emphasis on sacral components—the latter being mostly vested in the center, and thus enabling a relatively high degree of porousness of these respective boundaries.

Such porousness became already weaker to some extent in the Tokugawa period when the first attempts on such rigid boundaries of the overall Japanese collectivity emerges, to become even fuller versed with the crystallization of the Meiji state.<sup>50</sup>

## RECONSTRUCTION OF PRIMORDIALITY IN AXIAL CIVILIZATIONS— THE PROCESS OF VERNACULARIZATION

### XVIII

One of the most interesting cases of the continual reconstitution of primordialities in relation to the “broader” universal ecumenical frameworks attendant on the opening up of the spaces between the construction of different collectivities as bearers of different codes of collective identities, was the development, in the frameworks of Axial Civilizations, in conjunction with political and economic developments within them, of processes of “vernacularization.”<sup>51</sup>

“Vernacularization” signifies first of all the challenge to and eventually supersession of an ecumenical language through the upgrading

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<sup>50</sup> David L. Howell, 1988, “Territoriality and Collective Identity in Tokugawa Japan,” *Daedalus*, 127, 3, pp. 105–132.

<sup>51</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, Sheldon Pollock, Wolfgang Schluchter and Bjorn Wittrock, “Ecumenical Worlds, Regional Worlds, and the problem of Vernacularization,” Working Paper.



of a local idiom. Such vernacularization of ecumenical worlds occurred most visibly and richly, and perhaps earliest, in Southern Asia. Such as, for instance, exemplary here (with dates necessarily simplifying complex matters) are Kannada and Telugu (ninth-eleventh centuries) in South India, Sinhala (tenth-eleventh centuries) in Sri Lanka, Javanese (tenth century) and Tai (fourteenth-fifteenth century) in Southeast Asia. In all these cases, courtly elites—the Rashtrakutas of Karnataka, the Eastern Chalukyas of Andhra, the imperial Cholas in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, in the emergent polities of Kadiri, Singhasari, Majapahit in Java, and in Sukhotai and Ayudhya in Thailand—appropriated literary idioms and models from cosmopolitan Sanskrit for the creation of literatures in regional languages while visibly reordering their notions of political space and their practices of governance.

Vernacularization entails, on the most general level, a different way of being, articulated in language, from that made available in the great ecumenes of the Axial civilizations. It entails a reconstitution of the relations and tensions between “primordial” and broader civilizational ecumene from the pattern of such relations that developed in the “classic” ecumene of Axial Age. It entails the confrontation of local languages with historically determinate and self-consciously theorized ecumenical forms—Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, Persian, and, in a more complex way, Chinese—and the linkage of the new vernacular cultures thereby created with some political principles, the precise contours of which, it is crucial to realize, cannot be determined a priori. The bearers of vernacularization are cultural and political elites typically associated with the courtly sphere. “Vernacular” intellectuals define at once a literary and a political culture in conscious opposition to the larger ecumene; they speak locally and are fully aware that they are doing so, creating texts in local languages, languages that do not travel well, in conscious opposition to the ecumenical, well-traveled languages that had previously characterized text-production.

Vernacularization comprises in the first instance the communicative enhancement of a language perceived to be local, for purposes of new text production—primarily literary but also documentary—and eventually political governance. This enhancement (or call it upgrading, elaboration, *Ausbau*) will show variation in different cases, but it often proceeds by the appropriation of the symbolic capital of styles and genres from the superposed ecumenical language.

The choice to become vernacular entails usually far-reaching changes in various domains of life. Such vernacularization entailed redefinition of collective identities, and a concomitant transformation of political order; and in close relation to their changing modes of political self-understanding; of the production of territoriality; of the creation of new social collectivities.

In the political sphere, for example, the critical transformation appears to be a contraction of the domain of governance. This comprises a vision of a smaller world within which power is to be consolidated and exercised, a vision in some cases given shape by a new territorialization of political space and a new construction of that community that inhabits it. In the sphere of literary culture, especially the creation of new belletristic texts and their grammatical and philological appurtenances, we can perceive the vernacular choice with special clarity.

Vernacularization usually entails also some claims to a spatial reorganization of the relevant frame of reference for the cultural practices. Previously undefined spaces are to some extent turned into place specific to the newly crystallizing literary-language area. It entails a new component of "placed" culture conceive of itself in relation to the transareal culture of the cosmopolitan epoch, and to yet smaller zones incorporated in the new vernacular region.

The vernacularization of literary language (and, possibly, of polity) are also connected with different forms of collective identity-formation, with the construction of new genealogies, if any, and entailed a new relation between local identities in relationship to earlier cosmopolitan or universalistic visions, as well as between such conceptions and notions of cultural or political authority, although here also a very great variation developed between different societies.

Such tendencies to vernacularization with all their institutional implications, especially the growing emphasis on some combination between territoriality and primordial dimensions of collective identity and the concomitant appropriation by them of some of the orientations to universal "ecumene," hegemony developed in most Axial civilizations. But such parallel development did not necessarily mean, contrary to the assumption of many contemporary studies, that the pattern of relations between territorial boundaries and other components of collective identity (especially the primordial ones) and their relations to the centers of societies pointed in the same direction as in Europe. Indeed these tendencies developed in different

Axial civilizations very much in line with some of the differences between them briefly outlined above.

Thus, in Europe, there was a slow but constant growth in the use of vernacular languages and a concomitant shift from imperial types of political order towards more nationally conceived ones. Indologists report a similar growth, in this instance complementing rather than replacing the sacred languages of Sanskrit and Pali in various parts of the Indian subcontinent, but there was no emergence of clearly defined, territorially bound political orders, at least not in the European sense of the term. In East Asia, on the other hand, both classical Chinese language and the imperial order (and the partial parallels in Japan) were maintained in spite of great turmoils during these centuries—thus minimizing the possibility of development of autonomous vernacular traditions and cultural creativities as base of new territorial collectivities.

### PART III. THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES AND BOUNDARIES IN MODERN SOCIETIES: THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL PROGRAM OF MODERNITY

## XIX

With the emergence of modernity, of the modern civilization, in close relation to the distinct cultural program of modernity and to the specific historical context of the development of the institutional contours of modernity, there emerged a new pattern of construction of collective identities. Such construction was characterized by some very specific characteristics, which have greatly influenced the entire modern historical, social science and general discourse about collective identity, especially of nationalism and ethnicity—often presenting them as if they were the natural attributes or forms of collective identities, but which have to be analyzed in the broader comparative and analytical framework.

The modern project, the cultural and political program 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 shift in the conception of human agency, of its autonomy, and of its place in the flow of time. The core of this program has been that the premises and legitimation of the social, onto-

logical and political order were no longer taken for granted; and the concomitant development of a very intensive reflexivity about the basic ontological premises as well as around the bases of social and political order and authority—a reflexivity which was shared even by the most radical critics of this program, who in principle denied the legitimacy of such reflexivity, and of a concomitant development of continual struggles and contestations about the construction of the major dimensions of social order, including the political order and that of collectivities and collective identities.

The central core of this cultural program has been possibly most successfully formulated by Weber. To follow James D. Faubian'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 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. . . ." <sup>52</sup>

It is because of the fact that all such responses leave the problematic intact, the reflexivity which developed in the program of modernity went beyond that which crystallized in the Axial Civilizations. The reflexivity that developed in the modern program 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

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<sup>52</sup> James D. Faubion, 1993, *Modern Greek Lessons: A Primer in Historical Constructivism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, pp. 113–115.

to the awareness of the existence of multiplicity of such visions and patterns and of the possibility that such visions and conceptions can indeed be contested.<sup>53</sup> Concomitantly the program 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.

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 and modern—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 communications and messages which promulgate such open possibilities and visions. Second, there is the recognition of the possibility of belonging to wider trans-local, possibly also changing, orders and communities.<sup>54</sup>

Parallely, this program 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 centers.

Out of the conjunctions of these conceptions there developed the belief in the possibility of active formation of society by conscious human activity.

The modern cultural program also entailed a radical transformation of the conceptions and premises of the political order, of the constitution of the political arena, and of the characteristics of the political process and of the construction of collectivities—all of which became foci of contestation and of struggle.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics," op. cit.; idem, (ed.), *The Origins and Diversity of Axial-Age Civilizations*, op. cit.

<sup>54</sup> D. Lerner, 1958, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, Glencoe, Ill., Free Press; A. Inkeles and D.H. Smith, 1974, *Becoming Modern. Individual Change in Six Developing Countries*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

<sup>55</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, 1999, *Paradoxes of Democracy: Fragility, Continuity and Change*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press; S.N. Eisenstadt, 1999, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolution: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Ch. 2: "The Great Revolutions and the Transformation of Sectarian

The core of the new conceptions was the breakdown of traditional legitimation 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 constructed by human actors, combined orientations of rebellion and intellectual antinomianism, together with strong orientations to center-formation and institution-building, gave rise to social movements, movements of protest as a continual component of the political process.

## XX

This program entailed also a very distinctive mode of construction of the boundaries of collectivities and collective identities. In some even if certainly not total contrast to the situation in the Axial Civilizations, collective identities were not taken as given or as pre-ordained by some transcendental vision and authority, or by perennial customs.

At the same time the most distinct characteristic of the construction of modern collectivities, very much in line with the general core characteristics of modernity, was that such construction was continually problematized in reflexive ways, and constituted a focus of continual struggles and contestations.

Such continual contestations were borne by distinct social actors—be they political activists, politically active intellectuals, and distinct social movements, above all national or nationalistic movements—oriented to the construction of such new collectivities. It was indeed one of the most distinctive characteristics of the continual process of reconstruction of modern collective identities was the centrality in this process of special social and political activists, and above all organizations bearing distinct visions of collective identities and ideologies, and mobilizing wide sectors of the population, the best illustrations of which are of course distinct social movements, especially the national or nationalistic ones, as well as the closely related promulgation of distinct ideologies, above all national and also modern ethnic ones, of collective identity.

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Utopianism in the Cultural and Political Program of Modernity," especially pp. 51-75.

It was these activists and movements that were the bearers of contestations and struggles, often couched in highly ideological terms, around the far-reaching transformation in comparison with the preceding Axial periods, the codes of collective identity and of the relation between them.<sup>56</sup>

Among the most important such transformations of the codes of collective identity attendant on the development of modernity and which first emerged in Europe, was the development of new, mainly secular definitions, yet couched in highly ideological and absolutized terms, of each of the components of collective identity—the civil, primordial and universalistic and transcendental “sacred” ones; the growing importance of the civil and procedural components thereof; of a continual tension among these components; and a very strong emphasis, in the construction and institutionalization of the collective identities, on territorial boundaries.

Concomitantly there developed very strong tendencies to the establishment of a very strong connection between the construction of the political order and that of the major “encompassing” collectivities, a connection that later became epitomized in the model of the modern nation-state. The crystallization of the modern nation-state and its institutionalization entailed the emphasis on congruence between the cultural and political identities of the territorial population; strong tendencies to attribute to the newly constructed collectivities and centers charismatic characteristics; the promulgation, by the center, of strong symbolic and affective commitments of members of society to the center and the collectivity; and a close relationship between the center with the more primordial dimensions of human existence as well as social life, as well as the civil and sacred ones. Such relationships did not entail in most modern societies—with the partial exception as we shall see of Japan—the denial of the validity of the broader, civilizational orientations. Rather there developed strong tendencies of the new national collectivities to become also the repositories and regulators of these broader orientations—but at the same time there developed in them continual oscillation and tension between the national and the broader universalistic ones.

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<sup>56</sup> For a general analysis of the cultural and political program of modernity, see S.N. Eisenstadt, *Paradoxes of Democracy*; S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolution: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, Chapters 2 and 3.

The central characteristic of the model of the modern, especially nation state was the strong emphasis on cultural-political homogeneity of the population within the territorial boundaries. A central focus of such homogeneity, closely related to the basic premises of the cultural program of modernity was the image of the “civilized man” as analyzed by Norbert Elias and, if in a more highly exaggerated way, by Michel Foucault, and in a more systematic way by John Meyer, Ron Jepperson and others, and as presented above all both in the great works of modern literature, especially in the great novels, as well as in the more “popular” literature which thrived in this period, in all of which the mission civilisatrice of modernity, of the modern period were promulgated.<sup>57</sup>

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 program—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 program, and various “others.”

Concomitantly the images and attributes of such homogeneities and modernity have been promulgated as John Meyer, Ron Jepperson and others have shown through a series of very strong socializing agencies, such as schools, often the army, the major media and the like—all of them emphasizing very strongly the idea or ideal of a politically and culturally homogeneous entity.<sup>58</sup>

A central aspect of such homogeneity was the conception of citizenship which entailed a direct relation of members of the collectivity to the state, unmediated by membership in any other collectivities, and the tendency to relegate the identities of other collectivities—religious, ethnic, regional and the like—to the private spheres as against the unitary public sphere which was seen as constituting the major arena in which the relations of citizens to the state and to the national collectivity were played out. The centers of these states

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<sup>57</sup> John W. Meyer and Ronald L. Jepperson, 2000, “The ‘Actors’ of Modern Society: The Cultural Construction of Social Agency,” *Sociological Theory*, 18, pp. 100–120; John W. Meyer, John Boli and George M. Thomas, “Ontology and Rationalization in the Western Cultural Account,” in George M. Thomas, John W. Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez and John Boli (eds.), *Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society and the Individual*, Newbury Park, Sage, 1987, pp. 12–38; John W. Meyer, John Boli, George M. Thomas and Francisco O. Ramirez, 1997, “World Society and the Nation State,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 103, pp. 144–182.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*



become the regulators of the relations between the central identity and various and secondary ones, primordial or “sacred” universalistic ones—be they religious, ethnic, regional and the like.

Concomitantly the distinctive visions of the new modern collectivities above all indeed, of the nation-state, entailed the promulgation of distinctive collective memories in which the universal, often “sacred” components rooted in the universalistic components of the cultural program of modernity and the particularistic national ones emphasizing their territorial, historical and cultural specificities came together—albeit in different ways in different societies, but constituting in all of them one of the major and continual foci of tensions and contestations.<sup>59</sup>

These different orientations of overall collectivities were often symbolized or defined in distinctive gender terms—with the state with its civic components as well as with the organization of political force was often portrayed in masculine terms, and the nation, with strong primordial, nurturing and vitalistic components in feminine ones. Both these gendered symbols were brought usually together under the canopy of the overarching nation state, yet at the same time constituting a focus of continual tensions and of distinct, potentially competing identities.

Yet, despite the strong tendency to conflate, in the ideal model of the nation state, “state” and “nation” there developed within them strong tensions between on the one hand the “state” with its emphasis on territoriality and the seeming potentially universalistic notions of citizenship; and on the other hand “nation”—with its more “closed” definitions of membership with strong primordial components.

Thus paradoxically, one central aspect of the constitution of modern collective identities, closely related to the tension between the “citizenship” and the “membership” in a primordial community between state and nation, was also the construction of a growing tendency to a sharper more delineation of the boundaries thereof, of different ethnic, regional and even religious communities, transforming the relative porousness of former semi-ethnic territorial, linguistic or kin boundaries into more formalized ones and with strong political orientations. Although in principle such different primordial communities were to be brought together under the overall canopy of

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

the nation state, in fact there developed a potential for the continual development of a multiplicity of such distinct collectivities with strong potential political orientations—all of which needless to say varied greatly between different societies.

## XXI

The promulgation and constitution of the model of the nation-state entailed a very intensive construction of various commemorative artifacts such as monuments and special occasions in which collective memories were commemorated, such as national holidays, in which the sacral dimensions and the new electivity of “chosenness” of the new collectivities were promulgated in different mixtures in various societies of revolutionary universalism; republican or “romantic” primordial ways, and in which the centers of the nation states attempted to appropriate and monopolize all these themes, and at the same time to marginalize other—local, regional or ethnic—promulgations thereof.<sup>60</sup>

## XXII

The model of the nation state, closely related to some of the basic ontological premises of the cultural program of modernity, has become in many ways hegemonic in the modern international systems and frameworks that developed in conjunction with the crystallization of modern order.<sup>61</sup>

But despite its hegemonic standing, the model of the nation-state was never as homogeneous, internally within any single society or across different societies. Even in Europe there developed a great variety of nation states.

One of the most important aspects of such variety was the relative importance in them of the different codes or themes of collective identity, i.e. of the primordial and civil and sacral (religious or secular ones) and the different combinations thereof. The second aspect of such variety was the extent to which there developed totalistic as

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<sup>60</sup> Lyn Spillman, 1997, *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Sarah M. Corse, 1997, *Nationalism and Literature: The Politics of Culture in Canada and the United States*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>61</sup> See the references in footnote 56.

against multifaceted visions of those basic collective identities—i.e. the extent to which the basic codes and the ways in which primordial-national, civil and universalistic orientations were interwoven in them, and especially the extent to which in the historical experience of those societies none of these dimensions is totally absolutized or set up by their respective carriers against the other dimensions, or contrariwise the extent to which there developed rather multifaceted patterns of collective identity.

In all modern European societies there developed a continual tension or confrontation between the primordial components of such identity, reconstructed in such modern terms as nationalism and ethnicity, and the modern, as well as more traditional religious, universalistic and civil components, as well as among the latter ones. The mode of interweaving these different components of collective identity greatly influenced, varied greatly among different European societies shaping out so the tension between pluralistic and totalistic tendencies of the cultural and political programme of modernity that developed.

Such different modes of construction of modern collective identities were promulgated by the many political activists and intellectuals, especially the major social movements in modern societies. It is such movements of protest that continually developed which promulgated the different antinomies and contradictions of the cultural programs of modernity, selected and reinterpreted different themes thereof, and promulgated different programmes of modernity. Each of these movements promulgated a distinct interpretation of the cultural and political programme of modernity. The liberal and various reformist-socialist contemporaries of modernity constituted variants of the pluralistic renderings of the cultural and political programmes of modernity while the radical-socialist-communist and the fascist promulgated radical revision or reinterpretation.

Most of these movements were international even if their bases or roots were in specific countries and they constituted continual reference or mutual reference points. The more successful among such movements have continually crystallized in distinct ideological and institutional patterns which became often identified with specific countries but whose reach went far beyond them.

It was indeed one of the most distinct characteristics of the modern scene that the construction of collective boundaries and consciousness could also become a focus of distinct social movements—the

national or nationalistic ones. While in many modern societies, as for instance England, France, Sweden, the crystallization of new national collectivities and identities, of different types of nation states took place.

Without the national movements playing an important role, the potentiality of such movements existed in all modern societies. In some—in Central and Eastern Europe, some Asian and African, and to some extent Latin-American—they played a crucial role in the development of nation states.

### XXIII

It was within the framework of these tensions and above all those between pluralistic multifaceted and absolutizing totalizing visions that there crystallized the specific modes of the destructive potentialities inherent in the modern cultural program. These destructive potentialities became most fully manifest in the ideologization and sanctification of violence, terror and wars which became first apparent in the French Revolution and later in the Romantic movements and in the combination of such ideologization with the construction and institutionalization of the nation states; with the fact that the nation states which became the most important agent—and arena—of constitution of citizenship and of collective identity; with the crystallization of the modern European state system and of European expansion beyond Europe especially under the aegis of imperialism and of colonialism, which were very often legitimized in terms of some of the components of the cultural programs of modernity—all of which became reinforced by technologies of war and communication.

These destructive forces, the “traumas” of modernity which undermined great promises thereof, emerged clearly during and after the First World War in the Armenian genocide, became even more visible in the Second World War, above all in the Holocaust, all of them shaking the naive belief in the inevitability of progress and of the conflation of modernity with progress. These destructive forces of modernity were paradoxically ignored or bracketed out from the discourse of modernity in the first two or three decades after the Second World War. Lately they have reemerged again in a most frightening way on the contemporary scene, in the new “ethnic” conflicts in many of the former republics of Soviet Russia, in Sri Lanka, in Kosovo, and in a most terrible way in Cambodia and in

African countries, such as Rwanda. (Eisenstadt, *Barbarism and Modernity*).<sup>62</sup>

It was insofar as the primordial components were relatively “peacefully” interwoven in the construction of their respective collective identities with the civil and universalistic ones in multifaceted ways—that the kernels of modern barbarism and the exclusivist tendencies inherent in them were minimized. In England, Holland, Switzerland and in the Scandinavian countries, the crystallization of modern collective identity was characterized by a relatively close interweaving—even if never bereft of tensions—of the primordial and religious components with the civil and universalistic ones, without the former being denied, allowing a relatively wide scope for pluralistic arrangements. Concomitantly in these countries there developed also relatively weak confrontations between the secular orientations of the Enlightenment—which often contained strong deistic orientations—and the strong religious orientations of various Protestant sects.

As against situations in these societies, in those societies (as was the case in Central Europe, above all in Germany and in most countries of Southern and Central Europe) in which the construction of the collective identities of the modern nation-state was connected with continual confrontations between the primordial and the civil and universalistic, and as well as between “traditional” religious and modern universalistic components, there developed a stronger tendency to crises and breakdowns of different types of constitutional arrangements. In the more authoritarian regimes, such primordial components were promulgated in “traditional” authoritarian terms—in the more totalitarian fascist or national-socialist movements, in strong racist ones—while the absolutized universalistic orientations were promulgated by various “leftist” Jacobin movements.

France, especially modern Republican France from the third republic on, but with strong roots in the preceding periods, constitutes a very important—probably the most important—illustration of the problems arising out of continual confrontations between Jacobin and traditional components in the legitimation of modern regimes—even within the framework of relatively continuous polity and collective identity and boundaries. The case of France illustrates that under such conditions, pluralistic tendencies and arrangements do not develop

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<sup>62</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, 1996, “Barbarism and Modernity,” *Transactions*, 33, May-June, pp. 31 ff.

easily, giving rise to the consequent turbulence of the institutionalization of a continual constitutional democratic regime.<sup>63</sup>

## XXIV

The construction of different modes of collective identity has been connected in Europe—and beyond Europe—with specific institutional conditions; the most important among them being the flexibility of the centers, the mutual openness of elites, and their relations to broader social strata. There developed in Europe, and later in other societies, a close elective affinity between the absolutizing types of collective identity and various types of absolutist regimes and rigid centers, and between the multifaceted pattern of collective identity in which the primordial, civil, and sacred components were continually interwoven with the development of relatively open and flexible centers and of mutual openings between various strata. It was the concomitant development of relatively strong but flexible and open centers, multifaceted modes of collective identity, and autonomous access of major strata to the center that was of crucial importance in the development of a distinct type of civil society—a society that was to a large extent autonomous *from* the state but at the same time autonomous *in* the state and had an autonomous access to the state and participated in formulating the rules of the political game; and it was such conditions that made possible the minimization of the tendencies to barbarism and exclusion.<sup>64</sup>

## XXV

In Europe these variations in the construction of collective identity were set within the frameworks of some of the basic parameters of European historical experience and of civilizational premises thereof. The story was different in the countries beyond Europe, with the expansion of modernity beyond Europe. While the basic model of the nation state and its emphasis on the territorial boundaries and cultural-political homogeneity has indeed become the predominant one throughout most parts of the world, the variations within it, and

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<sup>63</sup> See the analysis in Chapter Eight of S.N. Eisenstadt, *Paradoxes of Democracy*, op. cit.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

their difference from the European models, became even more pronounced.

This could already be seen in the Americas, where there crystallized in different American civilizations—especially the North American especially the U.S. and the different Latin Americas—distinctive patterns of collective identity. Despite the fact that there developed far-reaching differences between these different American civilizations, which constitute in some ways mirror images of one another, they shared also some common characteristics rooted in the processes of European settlement and colonization and in the encounter with the various native populations and the populations of Black slaves translocated from Africa.

One of the most important differences which distinguish the American civilizations from both the European and later the Asian societies was the relative weakness of primordial criteria in the definition of their collective identities. In initial phases, the primordial attachments of the settlers were rooted in the European countries of origin and to a much lesser extent in the new environment. With the passing of time and the consolidation of the new colonies, strong attachments developed to the new territory, but these attachments were defined in different terms from those that had crystallized progressively in Europe. There developed a much weaker combination of territorial, historical and linguistic elements as components of collective identity. By sharing the respective languages with their countries of origin, the very definition of primordial distinctiveness was unrelated to it in both North American and Spanish Latin America (less so in Brazil and Paraguay). A relative shift to administrative criteria of territoriality was thus effected from the beginning of colonization with important implications for the later development of “natural” boundaries.<sup>65</sup>

The encounter with the native populations did also generate new possibilities and possible confrontations within “primordial” components—traditions, languages, communities—but these did create distinct problems of delimitation of the identity of the settlers in relation to the indigenous population, while at the same time there developed continual

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<sup>65</sup> See for instance Tamar Herzog, “‘A Stranger in a Strange Land’: The Conversion of Foreigners into Members in Colonial Latin America,” in Luis Roniger and Mario Sznajder (eds.), *Constructing Collective Identities and Shaping Public Spheres: Latin American Paths*, Brighton, Sussex Academic Press, 1998, pp. 46–64.

tensions between the English, French, Spanish or Portuguese born in the Americas and those who continued to “represent” the mother country or came to their representatives of the respective crowns.

One of the most important differences between the various American civilizations and the Asian ones from the middle and end of the nineteenth century was that the confrontation with modernity, with “the West,” did not entail, for the settlers in the Americas, a confrontation with an alien culture imposed from the outside—but rather with their own other origins. Such encounters became often combined with a search to find their own distinct place within the broader framework of European, or Western, civilization.

Concomitantly, the orientations to the “mother” country, to the centers of Western culture, later to cultural centers in Europe—constituted continual models and reference points, to an extent probably unprecedented in any other society, including the later Asian ones in their encounter with the West.<sup>66</sup> But beyond these common parameters of the construction of collective identity that developed on the American continent there developed great differences between the different Americas.

Although originally the Spanish (and Portuguese) Empires aspired to establish a unified homogeneous Hispanic (or Portuguese) collective identity focused on the motherland, in fact, in Latin America, a much more diversified situation developed. From relatively early on there developed multiple components of collective consciousness and identity—the overall Spanish, the overall Catholic, different local Creole, and “native” ones.

Side by side with the formal hierarchical principles, there developed multiple continuously changing social spaces structured according to different principles and identities, with relatively shifting boundaries and with the possibility of the incorporation of many of these identities into the central arena.

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<sup>66</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “The First Multiple Modernities: Collective Identity, Public spheres and Political Order in the Americas.” To be published in: Luis Roniger and Carlos H. Waisman (eds.), forthcoming, *Globality and Multiple Modernities: Comparative North American and Latin American Perspectives*, Brighton, Sussex Academic Press; Luis Roniger and Tamar Herzog (eds.), 2000, *The Collective and the Public in Latin America: Cultural Identities and Political Order*, Brighton, Sussex Academic Press.



To follow Herzog and Roniger:

The first theme is the malleability of collective identities in the region. Political and religious institutions introduced by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century were, by the eighteenth century, adopted by indigenous communities in order to forge a native identity. The characterization of people as belonging to a certain collectivity could be claimed if and when membership allowed access to resources and privileges. The nature of the community itself could change with changing circumstances and needs. Similarly, the emergence of states in Spanish America formed part of a greater liberal revolution. It embodied the will of social and political actors to assume the representation of the people, thus opening a process of multiple fragmentation. In this context, the creation of states and, once they existed, of nations is still an ongoing process, shaped by the international context—and to no less an extent by the experiences of mobilization during the independence wars, the civil wars and the political fighting that led to the state's consolidation. Although not analyzed in this volume, the contrasting experience of Brazil lends support to the importance of core centers and symbols of collective identity (primarily, the role of a legitimate imperial family and other factors, such as the shared education of regional elites) for maintaining the unity of a country of continental extension.

The second point on which the authors coincide is the prevalence of multiple patterns of identity construction at the communal levels, in ethnic terms, as local networks and coalitions and in terms of race and class. State formations in the region have been crucial for defining citizenship and establishing ground rules for participation in public spheres and access to institutional resources and recognition. However, state formations have been persistently contested. Different collective identities have developed that posed a serious challenge to the logic of the nation-state—for instance, the definition carried out by territorially concentrated minorities wishing to maintain a separate identity, such as the Miskitu Indians. Others have been submerged within the very institutional structures functioning at the level of state but also “betwixt and between” them, such as coalitions and networks, associations and congregations. Thus, their intertwined presence is crucial for understanding the gaps between the ideal images and practices of public life throughout the region; in parallel, it is also important for tracing the various processes of politicization of identities and mobilization that challenge existing patterns of exclusion and institutional control.<sup>67</sup>

But the concrete ways in which such constellation of identities crystallized varied greatly between different Latin-American societies. To

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<sup>67</sup> Tamar Herzog and Luis Roniger, “Conclusion: Collective Identities and Public Spheres in latin America,” in idem (eds.), *The Collective and the Public in Latin America: Cultural Identities and Political Order*, pp. 303–304.

give only a few tentative illustrations: the Mexical Revolution was important in seeking to construct a collective identity that would embrace the "creole"/Mexican-Spanish with the Indians; as against this, in South America the Indians were marginalized much like the Native American Indians. Brazil is a third type of collective identity, at least officially: native Indians were marginalized, but there crystallized a collective Brazilian identity allowing for racial intermixing between Europeans and Africans.\*

## XXVI

By contrast with Latin America, the pattern of collective identity that crystallized in the United States was eventually defined in inclusive ideological universalistic, non-primordial and non-historical terms. It entailed the delineation of very sharp boundaries of the collectivity, informed by the basic premises of the American civil religion. This collective identity grew in part out of the transformation of the "messianic" and millennial strands of the early American sociopolitical endeavor.

A crucial aspect of the new American civilization was the construction of a mould based on a political ideology strongly rooted in the Puritan religious conceptions, in a Lockean political orientation and in the Enlightenment. The Puritan conceptions entailed a strong emphasis on the special covenant between God and the chosen people, a covenant oriented to the creation of a deeply religious polity as it took shape in the late nineteenth century.<sup>68</sup>

The polity of the United States was characterized by a strongly egalitarian, achievement-oriented individualism; republican liberties, with the almost total denial of the symbolic validity of hierarchy; disestablishment of official religion beginning at the federal level;

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\* I owe these illustrations to E. Tiryakian.

<sup>68</sup> A. Heimart, 1966, *Religion and the American Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press); C. Beckler, 1958, *The Declaration of Independence*, New York: Vintage Press; G. Haskins, *Law and Authority in Early Massachusetts*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America; D. Little, 1969, *Religion, Order and Law*, New York: Harper and Row; Fielding and Campbell, *The United States: An Interpretative History*; Richard Hofstadter, 1972, *The United States*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall; see also A. Seligman, "The Failure of Socialism in the United States: A Reconsideration," in S.N. Eisenstadt, A. Seligman, and L. Roniger, *Centre Formation, Protest Movements and Class Structure in Europe and the United States*, London: Frances Printer, 1982, pp. 24-56.

basically anti-statist premises; and a quasi-sanctification of the economic sphere. Religious sentiment and religious values imparted a strong “messianic” and millennial dimension to the early American sociopolitical endeavor, made both solidarity and individualism central components of collective identity, and together with the anti-statist orientation gave rise to a distinct new civil religion.<sup>69</sup>

Primordial orientations or hierarchical principles could be permitted in secondary informal locations, but not as components of the central premises and symbols of the society. Thus, the U.S. civil religion could not easily accommodate the “native” Americans, with their overwhelming primordial identity, completely unrelated to the new ideological framework, and claiming a totality of its own. Hence Native Americans were virtually excluded from the new collectivity. While seemingly recognized as distinct nations, in reality they were at least until recently relegated, in a highly repressive way, to marginalized positions in the American collectivity.

At the same time a distinct attitude developed toward those—especially ethnic—immigrant groups which were willing to accept the basic terms of the American collective identity, and the basic premises of American civilization. Given the weakness of primordial components in the construction of American collective identity, there was scope for tolerance, much greater than in Europe, not only of religious diversity, but also of groups which defined their secondary place in terms of primordial components. Such tolerance, of course, was predicated on the acceptance of the basic ideological-political premises of American civilization. But the boundaries of the social spaces of such groups were clearly delineated as secondary, even if such boundaries changed in different periods.<sup>70</sup>

## XXVII

Yet another distinct pattern of modern statehood closely connected with the model of the nation state was that of revolutionary territorial state. Already in post-revolutionary France some components of such state—especially the very strong emphasis on the universal-

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<sup>69</sup> R.N. Bellah, 1970 *Beyond Belief*, New York: Harper and Row, especially chapter 9; idem, 1975, *The Broken Covenant*, New York: Seabury Press; Martin Marty, 1987, *Religion and Republic: The American Circumstance*, Boston, Beacon Press.

<sup>70</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “The First Multiple Modernities: Collective Identity, Public Spheres and Political Order in the Americas.”

istic mission thereof—embodied even to some extent in the Code-Napoleon—were present. The specific characteristics of such models of the modern state became fully crystallized with the establishment, after the Soviet and later Chinese Communist regimes. The basic legitimation of these regimes was radically transformed from a “traditional” to a modern totalitarian one, with an even stronger emphasis on the territorial and on the homogenizing tendencies thereof—with far-reaching impact on the construction of collective identities thereof.<sup>71</sup>

The ultimate legitimation of the Communist regimes and their elites was construed as being the bearer of their respective salvationist vision and mission, which were presented as the ultimate pinnacle of the universalistic vision of the modern program of the Enlightenment, with very strong revolutionary mobilizational themes and policies. The communist regimes appropriated the major themes of this program and presented their regime as the ultimate bearers of the pristine vision of such instrumental vision, of progress, of technology, and of mastery of nature and of the rational, emancipatory restructuring of society.

These cultural-political visions and programs promulgated in these revolutions and regimes—especially of the Soviet regime in Russia, and to a smaller extent in China—entailed also the construction of a specific pattern of cultural collective identity attendant on the encounter of non-Western European societies within the West and with modernity, and a very specific mode of selection, appropriation and reinterpretation of the major components of the cultural program of modernity and of the antinomies inherent in it. In this respect the Soviet—to a much greater extent than the Chinese Communist regime promulgated a very far-reaching denial of the claims by the Slavophiles or of their parallels in Asian countries which promulgated the total opposition to the Enlightenment and to instrumental reason, technology schemes and mastery of the environment, as against the authentic spirit or tradition of their respective societies.

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<sup>71</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Center and Periphery Relations in the Soviet Empire: Some Interpretative Observations,” in Alexander J. Motyl (ed.), *Thinking Theoretically about Soviet Nationalities*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1992, pp. 205–223; Johann P. Arnason, 1993, *The Future that Failed: Origins and Destinies of the Soviet Union*, London, Routledge.

The Soviet regime aimed at the total transformation of the symbols of collective identity and of the institutional structure of the society and at the establishment of a new social order, based on the revolutionary universalistic ideological tenets, in principle transcending any primordial, national or ethnic units—even if not denying their partial legitimacy.

The collective identity promulgated by the communist regimes were in principle universalistic themes allowing for national identities as secondary one; even if in fact the Russian (or the Han in China) components were predominant in the construction of their collective identities. On the one hand these regimes allowed for some expressions of distinct “ethnic” or national themes, but in principle these components were subsumed under the universalistic salvationist ones—although they were often indeed often conflated and especially in situations of crises with particularistic ones. Moreover, these particular orientations were highly controlled, being defined by the authorities in the official census, but at the same time by virtue of such control generating stronger collective consciousness among their members. Such particularistic identities continued to be very strong in a secondary or subterranean way, and they were to reacquire greater importance, in a highly restructured way with the dismemberment of the Soviet regimes but so long as the Soviet regime was intact but they were secondary. In China, in the post-Mao period, these components acquired greater importance.

## XXVIII

The patterns of modern collective identity that developed beyond the West and beyond the revolutionary states showed an ever greater variability, which it would be beyond the scope of this paper to analyze in any detail. To give one very preliminary illustration, that of Japan, the first non-Western but also non-Axial society to become fully “modernized.”<sup>72</sup> The collective identity and its institutional implications promulgated by the Meiji made Japan appear to be the most pristine nation-state. Yet the construction of the collective identity

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<sup>72</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, 1996, *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative View*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press; idem, “Japan: Non-Axial Modernity and the Multiplicity of Cultural and Institutional Programmes of Modernity,” in Joseph Kreiner (ed.), *Japan in Global Context*, Munich, Ludicium Verlag, 1994, pp. 63–95.

of the Meiji state differed greatly from the European one, the core of this difference being that it was not based on a continual confrontation with a universal civilization of which it considered itself to be a part. Unlike Europe, where the construction of national ideologies usually entailed strong tensions with universalistic religious orientations, no such tensions developed in principle in the ideology of *kokutai*. At most this ideology emphasized that the Japanese nation, by virtue of its primordial and sacral qualities, epitomized to a much higher degree than any other civilizations those very virtues which were extolled by these other civilizations, the Chinese one earlier on, and the Western one in the modern era. Thus in sharp contrast to almost all the other, especially European, cases, tensions between the universalistic and the different primordial components inherent in the construction of the collective identity of the modern nation state were in Japan very muted.

A very interesting illustration of the persistence of the “primordial” conceptions of the Japanese collectivity in modern times can be found in the attitude of some very distinguished Japanese leftist intellectuals in the twentieth century to Marxism. In common with many Chinese intellectuals of such disposition, these Japanese intellectuals, such as Kotoku or Kawakawi Hajime, attempted to de-emphasize the “materialistic” dimensions of Marxism and infuse them with “spiritual” values, with values of spiritualistic regeneration. But while most of the Chinese intellectuals tended to emphasize the transcendental and universalistic themes of “classical” Confucianism, the Japanese ones emphasized the specifically Japanese spiritual essence.<sup>73</sup>

Very interesting and significant in this context are the ways in which modern Japanese historians, following the major tenets of modern Western historiography, attempted to place Japan within the context of world history. As Stefan Tanaka has recently shown in his incisive analysis, most of these historians, who naturally refused to accept the Western characterization of the “Orient,” first redefined it as autonomous, equal to the West. Yet faced with the problem of their own relation to China and its disintegration, most of them ended by taking Japan out of the “Orient,” making its history

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<sup>73</sup> G. Hoston, 1989, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Pre-War Japan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Idem., “IKKOKU Shakai-shugi: Sano Manabu and the Limits of Marxism as Cultural Criticism,” in T. Rimer, ed., *Culture and Identity*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. 168–186.

distinct, separate and unique, and often portraying Japan as the bearer of the pristine values which other civilizations—Western or Chinese—claimed as their own<sup>74</sup> without on the whole attempting to proselytize the Japanese collective identity beyond its basic particularistic primordial bodies.

At the same time there developed in the Meiji state the appropriation by new centers of the major attributes of primordial solidary, combined with strong tendencies to national and civic homogenization of both the central and local levels, giving rise to a greater formalization of the defined initial collective identities and boundaries thereof.<sup>75</sup>

#### PART IV. THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE—BEYOND THE HEGEMONY OF THE NATION AND REVOLUTIONARY STATE MODEL

### XXIX

These multiple and divergent modernities of the “classical” age of modernity have crystallized during the nineteenth century and above all the first six or seven decades of the twentieth century in the different territorial nation- and revolutionary states and social movements that have 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

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<sup>74</sup> S. Tanaka, 1993, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Past into History*, Los Angeles: University of California Press.

<sup>75</sup> David L. Howell, 1988, “Territoriality and Collective Identity in Tokugawa Japan.”

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 nation states being able to control the continually recurring occurrences of such violence.<sup>76</sup>

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 program of modernity and of collective identity as the major regulator of the various secondary identities, 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 such as among women’s and the ecological movements all closely related to or rooted in the student and anti-Vietnam war movements of the late sixties and seventies, which 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 twentieth 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.

One of the most significant manifestations of such transformation of the model of the nation-state on the contemporary scene is the resurrection, or rather radical transformation (as it were) of hitherto “subdued” identities—ethnic, local, regional, and transnational—and their movement into the centers of their respective societies, as well as often also in the international arena. Concomitantly there have developed new types of social settings or sectors—important illustrations thereof being new Diasporas and minorities. The common denominator of many of these new movements and minorities is that

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<sup>76</sup> This analysis is based on S.N. Eisenstadt, 2000, “The Reconstruction of Religious Arenas in the Framework of ‘Multiple Modernities,’” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29, pp. 591–611.



they do not see themselves as bound by the strong homogenizing cultural premises of the classical model of nation state—especially by the places allotted to them in the public spheres of such states. It is not that they do not want to be “domiciled” in their respective countries. Indeed part of their struggle is to become so domiciled, but on new terms—as compared to classical models of assimilation. Moreover while the identities are often very local and particularistic, they tend also to be strongly transnational often rooted in the great religions—Islam, Buddhism, and different branches of Christianity, which are reconstructed in modern ways.<sup>77</sup> In a parallel manner, separatist, local or regional settings, develop direct connections with transnational frameworks and organizations such as the European Union.

Thus in these, and in many other settings, there crystallized new types of collective identities often promulgated by some of the movements mentioned above 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 centers of their respective societies and also often in the international arena. They contested the hegemony of the older homogenizing programs, claiming their own autonomous places in central institutional arenas—be it in educational programs, 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. In these settings local dimensions were often brought together in new ways beyond the model of the classical nation state, with transnational ones such as for instance the European Union; or with broad religious identities—many of them rooted in the great religions such as Islam, or Buddhism, or different branches of Christianity, but reformulated in new modern ways.

All these developments attest to the weakening of “traditional” nation-states, above all to the decoupling of its basic components—citizenship, collective identities, and the construction of public spaces

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<sup>77</sup> Dale F. Eickelman (ed.), 1993, *Russia's Muslim Frontiers: New Directions in Cross-Cultural Analysis*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press; James P. Piscatori, “Asian Islam: International Linkage and their Impact on International Relations,” in John Esposito (eds.), *Islam in Asia: Religion, Politics and Society*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1987, pp. 230–261.

and modes of political participation. In these spaces the older homogenizing forces promulgated by the different nation states were contested—especially by the various new movements and minorities which claimed their own autonomous place in central institutional arenas—in educational programs, public communications and media outlets. New claims are presented for the redefinition of citizenship and of rights and entitlements connected with it—as illustrated among others, for instance, in the recent debate about *laïcité* in France, both for the construction of new public spaces and for the reconstruction of the symbols of collective identity.<sup>78</sup>

Parallely there took place continuous shifts in the relative hegemony of different centers of modernity—first European and U.S. ones, moving to East Asian—shifts which became continually connected with concomitant growing contestations between such centers around their presumed hegemonic standing.<sup>79</sup>

The contours and impact of these changes differ between different societies—even between European ones. These differences are influenced, *inter alia*, by the extent of the homogeneity in particular European countries, from highly homogenous as in France, to more multifaceted as in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands; by the place of religious symbols and traditions in the construction of nations' identities; by different ways in which State-Church-religion relations have been worked out in these societies. These differences can be seen also in the ways in which such different minority groups are designated in different European societies, “strangers” in Germany, “racial minorities” in England, “immigrants” in France, “ethnic and cultural minorities” in the Netherlands, etc.

### XXX

One of the major bearers of such transformation of the discourse of modernity in relation to construction of collective identities have been the numerous fundamentalist movements and the communal religious movements which have been portrayed—and in many ways have also presented themselves—as *diametrically* opposed to the modern program. But a closer examination of these movements presents a

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<sup>78</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, 1999, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolution: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

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 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 of 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 programs 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 close relation to the construction of new ideals 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 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.<sup>80</sup>

Third, one can identify some very significant parallels between these various religious, including fundamentalist, movements with their seemingly extreme opposites—the different post-modern ones

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

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 has constituted indeed a basic component in the discourse of modernity from its beginning in Europe, namely the concern about the relations between their identities and the universal themes promulgated by the respective hegemonic programs 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 centers was also continuously connected with an ambivalence towards these centers giving rise to a continuous oscillation between this cosmopolitanism and various "particularistic" tendencies.

At the same time these movements have reconstituted the problematic of modernity in new historical contexts, in new arenas, in new ways. First among these new ways is the worldwide reach and diffusion (especially through the various media) of such movements and of the confrontations they entail; second their politicization, their continual interweaving with fierce contestations formulated in highly political ideologies and terms; and third, a crucial component of these reinterpretations and appropriations of modernity is the continual reconstruction of collective identities in reference to the new global context and contestations between them. Such contestations may indeed be couched in "civilizational" terms—but these very terms are already couched in terms of the discourse of modernity, defined in totalistic and absolutizing terms derived from the basic premises of the discourse of modernity, even if it can often draw on older religious animosities. When such clashes or contestations are combined with political, military or economic struggles and conflicts they can indeed become very violent.

Fourth, the reconstructions of the various political and cultural visions and such collective identities on the contemporary scene entail a very important shift in this discourse with respect to the confrontation between the Western and non-Western civilizations or religions or societies and the relations of these confrontations to the Western cultural program of modernity. As against the seeming, even

if highly ambivalent, acceptance of these premises combined with their continual reinterpretation that was characteristic of the earlier reformist religious and national movements, most of the contemporary religious movements—including the fundamentalist and most communal religious movements—as well as the more general discourse of modernity which developed within these societies, promulgate a seeming negation of at least some of these premises. They promulgate a markedly confrontational attitude to the West, to what is conceived as Western, and attempts to appropriate modernity and the global system on their own modern, but non-Western, often anti-Western, terms. The confrontation with the West does not take with them the form of searching to become incorporated into the new hegemonic civilization on its own terms, but rather to appropriate the new international global scene and the modernity for themselves, for their traditions or “civilizations”—as they were continually promulgated and reconstructed under the impact of their continual encounter with the West. These movements attempted to completely dissociate Westernization from modernity and they denied the monopoly or hegemony of Western modernity, and the acceptance of the Western cultural program as the epitome of modernity. Significantly enough many of these themes are espoused also, even if naturally in different idioms, by many of the “post-modern” movements.

All these developments and trends constitute aspects of the continual reinterpretation, reconstruction of the cultural program 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 and modern political programs and of modernity and of the construction of modern collective identities, from the arenas of the nation state to new areas in which different movements and societies continually interact and cross each other.

While the common starting point of many of these developments was indeed the cultural programme of modernity as it developed in the West, more recent developments gave rise to a multiplicity of cultural and social formations which go far beyond the very homogenizing and hegemonizing aspects of this original version. All these developments do indeed attest to continual development of multiple modernities, or of multiple interpretations of modernity—and above

all to the de-Westernization of the decoupling of modernity from its “Western” pattern, of depriving, as it were, the West from monopoly of modernity. It is in this broad context that European or Western modernity or modernities have to be seen not as *the* only real modernity but as one of multiple modernities—even if of course it has played a special role not only in the origins of modernity but also in the continual expansion and reinterpretation of modernities—becomes fully highlighted. But at the same time these developments constitute illustrations of the different potentialities inherent in the Axial, especially global Axialities as they unfold on the eve of the twenty-first century.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE DYNAMICS OF TRADITIONS\*

This paper is based on certain concepts about the nature of social and cultural order and traditions. We view social and cultural traditions, first, as the major ways of looking at the basic problems of social and cultural order, and of posing the major questions about them; second, as giving various possible answers to these problems; and, third, as the organization of institutional structures for implementing different types of solutions or answers to these problems.

We assume that the search for answers—symbolic and institutional alike—to some of the major problems about the nature of human destiny, of the nature of social, cosmic, and cultural orders, of the possibility of some ordered social life, is an important ingredient in man's universe of desiderata, although it is not necessarily the most important one. This entails a reformulation of certain of the basic assumptions of sociology regarding the nature of the individual's orientation to the social order. It also redefines the nature of institutional loci of this orientation and the relation of these loci to the political sphere. The focus of this reformation is the recognition of the fact that social order is not just given by certain external forces imposed in some way on individuals and on their own wishes. Nor is it just an outcome of rational premeditated selfish evaluation of their interests or of the exigencies of the social and economic division of labour engendered by these interests. Some quest for social order, not only in organizational but also in symbolic terms, is among people's basic egotistical wishes or orientations. In other words, the people seek the 'good society', they want to participate in such an order. Their quest is a basic component in the whole panorama of social and cultural activities, orientations and goals. But it calls for

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\* The author is indebted to Mrs. L. Aran for very detailed criticisms of a former draft of this paper; this version is abridged from the paper delivered at the innovation conference and served as a discussion paper at a conference on Tradition and Change, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation at Bellegia, Italy, July, 1968.

rather special types of response, which tend to be located in distinct parts or aspects of the social structure.

This quest for some adequate symbolic or social order and for participation in it is very closely related to the quest for some relation or attachment to the charismatic, 'the "vital", ultimately serious event of which divinity is one of many forms'.<sup>1</sup> The crucial role of the charismatic dimension and symbols in social order was, of course, first fully explored by Weber. Recently it has been taken up again by Shils, who had pointed out that the charismatic is not only, as it is usually represented in sociological literature, something extraordinary, but also has specific continuous, institutional location within any social order, and in macro-societal order in particular. He has attempted to specify at least one of the institutional foci of the charismatic—in what he designates as the center of the society.<sup>2</sup> This tendency towards the institutional convergence of the charismatic in the center or centers of society is rooted in the fact that both the charismatic and the center are concerned with the provision and maintenance of some meaningful symbolic and institutional order.

But this close relation between the charismatic dimension and the centers does not imply their identity. It raises many new questions and problems. What is the structure of such centers and what are their structural relations to the periphery? How many centers embodying charismatic orientation are there in a society? Does it occur in other centers besides the political, cultural, religious, or ideological? What is the relation between the 'ordering' and 'meaning-giving' (i.e., charismatic) functions of such centers, on the one hand, and their more organizational and administrative activities, on the other? How can we distinguish between different types of centers? What are the paradigmatic premises of the symbolic frameworks of different types of centers?

It would be out of place to attempt here any extensive classification of social and cultural orders and centers, although some dimensions of such a classification will come out during our discussion. At this

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<sup>1</sup> See E. Shils, 'Charisma, Order and Status', *American Sociological Review*, 30 (April, 1965), 199–213; and S.N. Eisenstadt, 'Charisma and Institution Building', in S.N. Eisenstadt, ed., *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Heritage of Sociology Series, 1968), pp. iv–lvi.

<sup>2</sup> See E. Shils, 'Centre and Periphery', in *The Logic of Personal Knowledge, Essays Presented to Michael Polanyi* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), pp. 117–31.

point it may only be worth while to point out one type of distinction—namely that between weak and strong centers.

A weak center is one which, while performing its own technical tasks (such as external political and administrative activities of the political center, or the ritual and theological activities of a religious center), has but few autonomous interrelationships with other centers or symbolic orders of social life, and little access to them or control over them. Such a center cannot derive strength and legitimation from the other centers or orders of social and cultural life, nor does it perform very adequately some of its potential charismatic ordering and legitimizing functions. Hence it also commands only minimal commitment beyond the limited sphere of these functions. Its relations with other centers or with broader social groups and strata are mostly either purely adaptive relations (as, for instance, in the case of many nomad conquerors in relation to the religious organizations of the conquered people) or it may symbolically and perhaps even organizationally totally submerge in them—as was the case, for instance, in some of the Southeast Asian religious centers, which were almost entirely submerged in the political ones.

In contrast to this a 'strong' center is one which enjoys such access to other centers and can derive its legitimation from them, either by monopolizing and controlling them or by some more autonomous interdependence with them, and which can accordingly command some commitment both within and beyond their own specific spheres.

As has already been stressed above, the preceding emphasis on the charismatic dimension of social order does not necessarily mean that this is its only relevant dimension. But it is out of these indications that some of the distinctions between the charismatic and the ordinary can be brought out. Non-charismatic or ordinary activity seems to comprise those types of activity which are oriented to various discrete, segregated goals directed mainly towards adaptation to any given natural or human (social) environment, to persistence and survival within it, and not connected together in any great pattern or 'grand design'. A very large part of the daily activities of human beings in society is probably organized in such a way and oriented to such goals. The implementation of such goals calls for many specific organizations and structures which tend to coalesce into varied institutional patterns. In a sense, it is they that constitute the crux of the institutional nexus within any society. And yet, very often all these goals and patterns tend also to become somehow

related to a broader, fundamental order, rooted in the charismatic and focused around the different situations and centers in which the charismatic is more fully embedded and symbolized. These interrelations between the non-charismatic and charismatic orientations of human activities, as well as the nature of these orientations and their structural implication, tend to vary greatly between one traditional society and another.

#### SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRADITIONAL SOCIETY AND PATTERNS AND PROBLEMS OF CHANGE IN TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES

However different they may be, traditional societies all share in common the acceptance of tradition, the givenness of some actual or symbolic past event, order, or figure as the major focus of their collective identity; as the delineator of the scope and nature of their social and cultural order, and as ultimate legitimator of change and of the limits of innovation. Tradition not only serves as a symbol of continuity, it delineates the legitimate limits of creativity and innovation and is the major criterion of their legitimacy. It is no matter that the symbol of tradition may originally have been a great innovative creation which destroyed some earlier major symbol of the legitimate past.

While the content and scope of these past events or symbols naturally varied greatly from one traditional society to another—and the most dramatic processes of change within them were indeed focused on changing this very content and scope—yet in traditional societies always some past event remained the focal point and symbol of the social, political, and cultural orders. The essence of traditionality is in the cultural acceptance of these cultural definitions of tradition as a basic criterion of social activity, as the basic referent of collective identity, and as defining the societal and cultural orders and the degrees of variability among them.

These connotations of traditionality are not, however, confined to purely cultural or symbolic spheres only; they have definite structural implications. The most important of these is, first, that parts of the social structure and groups are, or attempt to become, designated as the legitimate upholders, guardians, and manifestations of those collective symbols, as their legitimate bearers and interpreters, and hence also as the legitimizers of any innovation or change. In

the more differentiated traditional societies these functions tended to become crystallized into the central foci of the political and cultural orders as distinct from the periphery. It is in the symbolic and structural distinctiveness of the centers from the periphery that the basic structural and cultural implications of traditionality tend to meet together—and it is here that their implications for processes of change within traditional societies stand out most clearly.

The distinctiveness of the center in traditional societies is manifest in a threefold symbolic and institutional limitation: the content of these centers is limited by reference to some past event; access to positions as legitimate interpreters of the scope of the traditions is limited; and the right of broader groups to participate in the centers is limited.

Even the greatest and most far-reaching cultural and religious innovations in traditional societies—the rise of the Great Universal Religions, which greatly changed the general level of rationality of the basic cultural symbols, their contents, and scope—did not change the basic threefold structural limitations. This is true even though in their initial charismatic phases they sometimes attempted to reduce them. It does not follow, however, that these societies were stationary or changeless. On the contrary they were continuously changing, either from one form of traditional society to another or in the direction of modernity. All of these processes of change impinged on existing patterns of social life and cultural traditions, undermining them and threatening their members' social and psychological security. At the same time they opened up new social and cultural horizons, vistas of participation in new institutional and cultural orders. But the degree to which existing patterns of social life and of cultural traditions were undermined, as well as the scope and nature of the new vistas, naturally varied greatly in different situations of change in these societies, as did also the 'reactions' to these changes and the ways of solving the concomitant problems that the elites and the members of the society faced.

On the structural, institutional level we may roughly distinguish three degrees or types of change: small-scale or micro-societal changes; partial institutional changes; and over-all changes in the contours and frameworks of the society, especially in the structure and content of the centers. Small-scale changes concern only details of organization, roles, and membership in social groups and communities. Their effect is relatively slight even within the institutional field in

which they occur. Partial institutional changes occur only in a limited institutional sphere, such as the economic or administrative, but they create new opportunities and new frameworks for certain groups. They are either isolated from the central institutional core of a society or constitute accepted secondary variations within this central sphere. The incorporation of new urban groups, such as merchants or administrative groups in patrimonial or imperial systems, often through immigration or colonization, or of various sects within universal religions, are among the commonest examples of partial institutional change within the range of traditional societies. Changes in the central institutional core affect the total society. Important illustrations are the establishment of city-states out of tribal federations or of great imperial centers in the place of city-states or patrimonial states. This far-reaching type of change in traditional societies was usually connected with the creation of new and broader political or religious frameworks, with the development of new levels of differentiation and social complexity, with the establishment of new societal centers and of new relations between these centers and the periphery, the broader strata of society.

Propensities to all three types of change have been inherent in all traditional societies but have varied greatly in strength. There has also been great variation in the extent to which the more 'local' or partial processes and movements of change impinged on central institutional cores. Often such propensities to change were manifest mainly in momentary outbursts of protest, as for example in peasant rebellions, or were confined to religious sectarian movements that had few lasting or even short-time structural effects. Yet other movements of the kind could become foci of far-reaching structural changes creating new levels of differentiation or new political centers and centers of new Great Traditions. Change was more likely to be far-reaching when it was either initiated or taken over by secondary elites in fairly central positions. Successful far-reaching changes were also very often related to economic or political international forces. All such processes of structural change created possibilities of disorganization and for the elites and members of these groups posed the problem of how to organize new role-patterns, organizational structures, and institutional frameworks, and of how to find and to regulate access to new institutional links to the broader frameworks and centers.

These different structural aspects of change were usually very closely connected to patterns of change and of reaction to it in the

sphere of cultural tradition, symbols, usages, and ways of life. Such processes of change in traditional ways of life could be of at least two types. One has been gradual, piecemeal replacement of one custom by another, in an almost imperceptible but cumulative process of change which could result in crystallization of different patterns and symbols in what have been called 'Little Traditions'. These types of cultural change were probably usually connected with the 'small', and with some partial institutional structural changes, and much less with changes within the central institutional cores of a society. The other type was the more dramatic change of the central pattern of a society's cultural tradition. This usually entailed the creation of wider and more complex cultural units and of new cultural symbols. The result would be the elaboration of new symbols and centers of Great Traditions. Frequently these developments were connected with growing rationalization of the major traditional symbolic order. A primarily religious symbolic order would become more separate from the concrete details of daily life. Its relation to the secular society would cease to be unexamined and would become more and more distant and problematic, more logically coherent and abstract. All this tended to undermine many of the existing traditional usages, customs, ways of life, and symbols. Members of the society faced many problems on the cultural level that were similar to those they faced on the structural level, but were often more complex.

It is therefore worth while to analyze, in somewhat greater detail, some of the processes connected with the elaboration of such Great Traditions. Cultural traditions, symbols, artifacts, and organizations became, in the new situation, more elaborate and articulated, more rationally organized, more formalized, and different groups and individuals in a society acquired a greater awareness of them. Concomitantly there was a tendency for tradition to become differentiated in layers. Simple 'given' usages or patterns of behavior could become quite distinct from more articulate and formalized symbols of cultural order such as great ritual centers and offices, theological codices, or special architectural edifices. These layers of tradition tended to vary also in the degree and nature of their prescriptive validity and in their relevance to different spheres of life. As most of these changes in elaboration of Great Traditions were usually connected with growing structural differentiation between the various spheres of social life, these spheres, economic, administrative, or political, could be associated in different ways with both old and new traditions. To



put it the other way round, the old and new traditions and symbols could be perceived as more or less relevant to these spheres in terms of prescribing the proper modes of behavior within them, in defining their goals and in providing their over-all 'meaning'.

These processes were often related to a growing 'partialization' and privatization of various traditions, especially of the older existing traditions. Even if the given, existing 'old' customs and symbols did not become negated or 'thrown out' they underwent far-reaching changes. What had been the 'total' sanctioned pattern of life of any given community, society, or individual tended to become only a partial one, in several respects. It could persist as binding for only some members of a given society, or only in some spheres, and even the validity of its prescriptive power or of its use as the guiding symbolic templates in these spheres of life become greatly changed and differentiated.

Hence there always arose in such situations the problem, first, whether the old or the new traditions or symbols of traditions represented the true tradition of the new social political or religious community, and second, how far any given existing tradition could become incorporated into the new central patterns of culture and 'tradition'. In such situations, the validity of the traditional (existing) sanctions for the new symbols and organizations, of the scope and nature of the traditional sources of legitimacy of the new social, political or cultural order, and the extent to which it was possible to legitimize this order in terms of the existing traditions became uncertain.

In consequence, the several layers of tradition could differ in the extent to which they became foci of awareness and 'problems' for different parts of the society. Sometimes, in such situations the very traditionality of the given social and cultural order tended to become a 'problem', and in some cases these processes might give rise to the erosion of any traditional commitments and to concomitant tendencies of social and cultural disorganization. For people especially sensitive to such problems of symbolic templates, all these problems could become crucial from the point of view of their personal identity and its relation to the collective identity of their respective social and cultural orders. Both on the personal level and on the level of the more central symbols of tradition, there could arise, often as a reaction to the possibilities of erosion, the tendency known as traditionalism; there could then be a potential dichotomy between 'tradition' and 'traditionalism'. Traditionalism is not to be confused with

a 'simple' or 'natural' upkeep of a given tradition. It denotes an ideological mode and stance, a mode oriented against the new symbols, making some parts of the older tradition into the only legitimate symbols of the traditional order and upholding them as against 'new' trends. It is especially opposed to the potentially rationalizing tendencies in the new Great Traditions. Through opposing these trends the 'traditionalist' attitudes tend towards formalization, on both the symbolic and organizational levels.

#### THE MAJOR TYPES OF RESPONSE TO CHANGE AND THE MAJOR MODES OF PERSISTENCE, CHANGE, AND TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL SYMBOLS AND STRUCTURES

Given the ubiquity of change in traditional societies there arise least two major problems for analysis: which types of traditions tend to generate different types of change, and what are the directions of change inherent within such traditions; what are the different possible reactions to change that may develop within them? We shall deal mainly with the second question, touching only indirectly, in the latter part of the paper, on the first. In a sense we shall be taking for granted the existence of some change, without inquiring into its causes, but concentrating on the analysis of different reactions to change.

We may first distinguish between a generally positive as against a negative attitude to change, that is, between tendencies to accept or to resist it. A second question of great importance is whether or not a given society or sector thereof possesses the organizational and institutional capacity to deal with the problems created by changing situations.

A combination of these two major types of attitudes to change and of different levels of organizational capacity gives rise to various concrete types of response to change. Among these I would stress the following: (a) a totally passive, negative attitude often resulting in the disappearance or weakening of such resisting groups; (b) an active resistance to change through an organized 'traditionalistic' response aiming to impose some, at least, of the older values on the new setting; (c) different types of adaptability to change; (d) the appearance of what may be called transformative capacity. This last is the capacity not only to adapt to new conditions but also to forge

new general institutional frameworks and new centers. Transformative capacity may vary according to the extent of coercion which it evolves.

These various types of response to change become manifest in the ways in which different groups tend to retain, arrange, replace or transform existing traditional symbols and structures. The common denominator of all these processes of change in the pattern of tradition is, as we have seen above, the differentiation between layers of tradition, the privatization and particularization of various traditional symbols and usages and the tendency towards segregation between different symbols from the point of view of their relevance and validity for different spheres of life.

Hence the most general indicators for distinguishing between different types of response to change are first, the ways in which the people in question differentiate between layers of tradition and segregate various social spheres in their relevance for tradition; and second, the ways they attempt to find new common symbolic forms that may serve to link a given sphere with a given layer of tradition.

From these points of view it is possible to discern the most important differences in the mode of persistence of traditional symbols and frameworks between groups with high or low adaptability to change and those with high or low transformative capacities.

In groups or societies with a relatively high resistance to change (low adaptability) and/or with low transformative capacity, there may be a tendency to segregate 'traditional' (ritual, religious) and non-traditional spheres of life without, however, developing any appropriate connective symbolic and organizational bonds between the two. In other words, new precepts or symbolic orientations that might serve as guides to the ways in which these different layers of tradition could become connected in some meaningful patterns, especially in their relevance to different spheres of life, do not readily develop. At the same time, however, strong predisposition or demand for some clear unifying principle tends to persist, and there may be a relatively high degree of uneasiness and insecurity when it is lacking. A tendency toward 'ritualization' of symbols of traditional life, on personal and collective levels alike, may also appear. There may then be a continuous vacillation between withdrawal of these traditional symbols from the 'impure', new, secular world on the one hand, and increasing attempts to impose them on this world in a relatively rigid, militant way, on the other hand. This mode of per-

sistence of traditional patterns is usually connected with the strengthening of ritual status images and of intolerance of ambiguity on both personal and collective levels and with growing possibilities of apathy and of erosion of any normative commitments because of such apathy.

These orientations also may have distinct repercussions on interrelations between the personal identity of the individual participants in these groups and the new collective identity that emerges in the centers of new traditions. This interrelation tends to be either tenuous and ambivalent or very restricted and ritualistic. The new emerging symbols of the social or cultural order are perceived by the members of these groups as either negative or as external to their personal identity. They do not serve as their major collective referents, and they do not provide participation in the new social or cultural orders with adequate meaning; nor are they perceived by the members of those groups as able to regulate the new manifold organizational or institutional activities into which they are drawn.

A similar pattern tends to develop with regard to the relations between traditional symbols peculiar to 'partial' groups—regional groups, ethnic, and occupational groups, or status-groups—and the emerging new central symbols of Great Traditions. These groups do not normally incorporate their various 'primordial' symbols of local, ethnic caste or class groups into the new center of the society, and their reformulation on a new level of common identification does not take place. Rather, they constitute foci of separateness, of ritual traditionalism. A similar, but obverse, relation tends to develop between the more innovative groups or elites and a 'traditionalistic' center or setting. This has greater disruptive potential, and we shall analyze some of the structural implications later.

These modes of persistence of traditional symbols and attitudes are closely connected with certain specific patterns of structural changes that may grow up among groups with a negative reaction to change. Internally, these groups generally display little readiness to undertake new tasks or roles, to reorganize their internal division of labor and structure of authority, or to encourage their members to participate in other, new groups and spheres of action. In their relations to other groups they tend to evince, and even to intensify, a very high degree of social and cultural 'closeness' and self-centeredness, however great their dependence on other groups may have become. A purely external-instrumental attitude to the wider setting

will then predominate, with little active solidary orientation to it or identification with it. This attitude may take two seemingly opposed yet often coalescing forms. In one form it is a relatively passive attitude to the wider social setting. One may observe this in many 'traditional' rural and urban groups of lower and middle status. Closeness and passivity appear in the rigidity of their conception of the social order in general and of their own place within it in particular. There may be a clinging to very rigid, 'ritual' status images which allow little flexibility of orientations to the wider society. People may have few aspirations beyond the traditional scope of occupations and very little interest in participating in political or social leadership or organization.<sup>3</sup> The second major way in which this external-instrumental attitude to the wider social setting can be manifest is in what may be called exaggerated, unlimited 'openness' and 'flexibility' of aspiration and status image. Attempts to obtain benefits, emoluments, and positions may be quite unrealistic.

Such resistance to change and the concomitant development of the external-instrumental attitudes may sometimes bring about the disappearance and obliteration of the groups in question. However, total disappearance of these groups, or their relegation to a very marginal place in the society, probably happens only in relatively rare cases. When it occurs it is most likely due to poor leadership or organizational ability; the leadership may be almost totally dissociated from the membership of the groups. Insofar as some leadership exists, and shares the attitudes of resistance to change with the membership of the group, then these groups tend to survive, but with rather specific relations to the broader social setting. They may become more or less segregated from the wider social setting, turning into what have been called 'delinquent communities', that is, communities not oriented to the attainment of their manifest goals, economic, professional, or cultural, but simply to the maintenance of their members' vested status position within the existing setting. But more often they may restructure their relation to the new wider settings, on both organizational and symbolic levels, according to more traditional and less differentiated patterns and criteria of social

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<sup>3</sup> The great propensity for academic, professional, bureaucratic, white collar occupations as against more technical, business, occupations which is so widespread in many of the modernizing countries on all levels of the occupational scale is perhaps the clearest manifestation or indication of these trends.

action. Even more far-reaching may be the attempts of such groups to control the broader frameworks of the society, in order to bolster their own power and positions and to minimize the attempts of the new central institutions to construct viable solidarities at a higher level.

The patterns of transformation of tradition that are likely to develop among groups with a relatively positive orientation to change are markedly different. We might expect to observe a differentiation between various layers of tradition, segregation between traditional and non-traditional (religious and non-religious) spheres of life and of the relevance of different symbols and traditions for different spheres of life. But this segregation is of a rather different order from that found among groups or elites with relatively high resistance to change. It is less total and rigid. There tends to be more continuity between the different spheres, with greater overflow and overlapping between them, though this continuity does not ordinarily become fully formalized or ritualized. There is not usually any strong predisposition towards rigid unifying principles, and in this way greater tolerance of ambiguity and of cognitive dissonance is built up. Because of this, there is no oscillation between a total withdrawal of the more 'traditional' or 'religious' symbols from the new spheres of life, on the one hand, and attempts to impose various rigid religious principles on these spheres, on the other. Rather we find here a predisposition towards the growth of a more flexible or segregated new symbolic order, under which the various social spheres which have developed some degree of autonomy can be brought together and within which various previous symbols and traditions can be at least partially incorporated.

A predisposition toward a closer and more positive connection between the personal identity of the members of the group or society and symbols of the new political, social, and cultural order may develop. The members then accept the new symbols as the major collective referents of their personal identity. These symbols provide guiding templates for participation in the social and cultural order and lend meaning to many of the new types of institutional activity.

Closely related to those modes of persistence and transformation of traditional organizations and symbols are the characteristics of structural, organizational change which these groups often undergo. First, we find a much higher degree of internal differentiation and diversification of roles and tasks, a growing incorporation of such

new roles into these groups, a greater readiness by their members to undertake new tasks outside their groups and to participate in various new groups. Second, these new roles, tasks, and patterns of participation tend to become interwoven in a variety of ways, according to more highly differentiated principles of integration, with a greater degree of what may be called 'openness' towards new structural possibilities and towards new goals and symbols of collective identification. Third, a process of incorporation of symbols of both more traditional and more innovative groups in the new central symbols of social, political, or cultural order, with new organizational exigencies, may take place.

Elites with different orientations to change tend to develop organizational policies parallel to the structural consequences of different orientations to change formed in broader groups. Elites with a high resistance to change and with strong traditionalistic orientation were likely to develop, in the spheres of their influence, a ritualism, rigidity, and possible militancy parallel to that found among broader groups resisting change. The potential effects of this orientation among the elites were, however, much more far-reaching. In the more central institutional cores of a society such elites have tended to define the central symbols of their social, political, and cultural order, even though they may have been obliged to adapt to some changes at this level, in a way that de-emphasizes or negates innovation. They define them in a traditionalistic manner that minimizes the chance of integrating within them the new symbols or orientations favored by the more innovative groups. These ritualistic tendencies narrow the possibility of integrating central symbols as referents or ingredients in the personal identity of members of the more innovative groups. The less innovative groups themselves prefer a rather fixed, non-flexible relation between personal identity and the traditionalistic centers. In the organizational sphere these elites have preferred a strongly monolithic orientation. They attempt to control other groups and elites, to maintain them within traditional confines, to segregate them from one another, to minimize and control channels of mobility among them, and to limit their access to the cultural and political centers. Insofar as such elites have adapted to change, they have usually tried to segment the innovations, segregating them in fields they perceived as technical or 'external'. But they have not done so consistently. Rather, they have oscillated between repressive

policies and *ad-hoc* submission to group pressures of various groups. Although they have not been guided by any clear principle in this, they yield more readily to pressure from traditionalistic groups.

On a macro-societal level their responses can lean in two general, often overlapping 'ideal-typic' directions. One is that of a militant 'traditionalism' on the central levels of the new societies, characterized mainly by conservative ideologies, coercive orientations and policies, and by an active ideological or symbolic closure of the new centers, with a strong traditionalistic emphasis on older symbols. The other may be called pure patrimonialism. The aim is simply to establish, or to preserve, new political and administrative central frameworks. Such symbolic orientation of a cultural and religious nature as exists is weak and non-committal, concerned mostly with the maintenance of the existing régime and of its *modus vivendi* with the major sub-elites and groups in the society. We might describe this as an external traditionalism, lacking any deep commitment to the tradition it purports to symbolize. Elites with a fairly positive 'adaptive' orientation to change are those that have largely accepted new institutional goals and have favored participation in new cultural, social, and political orders. Elites of this kind, when they have appeared in the less central and more instrumental institutional spheres, such as the economic and the administrative spheres, have shown considerable ability in creating new *ad-hoc* organizations and new institutional patterns. Often, however, these are only at the same level of differentiation as existing structures, and the aim is mainly to optimize the position of the elites in the new situation.

In other cases, the new organizations may be more differentiated than the old and the new frameworks wider. Activity may be oriented to new socio-cultural goals. But the extent to which these tendencies come to be actualized throughout the whole symbolic and institutional organization of any social sphere, especially in any central institutional sphere, has depended on the extent to which the groups and elites concerned are able to develop transformative as well as adaptive capacities.

Truly enough, given certain favorable international and internal conditions, conditions that have probably existed many times in human history, a society or polity can adjust itself to various changing situations and maintain its boundaries with the help of adaptive elites quite weak in over-all transformative capacity. Centers built up



by such elites may be strong in coalition-building, but tend to be weak in producing any binding, common attributes of identity or in crystallizing collective goals.

Full realization of all the possibilities of developing new institutional frameworks and centers, of changing the patterns of participation in them, of incorporating new groups within them, of developing new symbolic orders and new efficient central institutions and symbols has been relatively rare in human history. It calls for a high level of transformative capacity within all the elites at the center, and among all that have access to and influence over it. The most dramatic examples of the creation of such new social and cultural orders, in the history of traditional, pre-modern society, are the Great Empires and the Great Religions.

A very important dimension of the activities of central elites seeking to alter the structure of society is that of coerciveness. This is apparent when central elites try to force their elites, and broader strata, into new social and political orders that are alien to them. Examples are found in the history of militant religious elites, whose methods in some cases resembled those of militant traditionalistic elites. More obvious examples are found among contemporary revolutionary elites, rationalistic or communistic. The basic orientations and the institutional implications have usually been a mixture of those of the 'traditionalist' and the 'transformative' elites. Coercive elites share the 'traditionalist' elites strong inclination to rigid control and regulation, their somewhat negative attitude to the possibility of allowing any degree of autonomy to groups whose symbols and traditions differ from their own, and their resistance to any independent innovation. These coercive orientations and policies have often led to the annihilation of other elites and of entire ethnic groups and social strata. Coercive elites resemble the flexible, non-alienated transformative elites in taking on the task of forging new goals, symbols, and centers, of attempting to establish new political and cultural orders with new ranges of institutional activities, and of widening at least symbolically, if not institutionally, the participation of broader strata in these orders.

Differences between the coercive and non-coercive innovative elites stand out most clearly in their attitudes with respect to regulating the relations between personal and collective identities. Coercive elites in ideological and educational fields attempt to submerge personal identities in the new collective identity. They minimize personal and

subgroup autonomy, making collective symbols and their bearers the major controllers of the personal superego.

The more transformative, non-coercive elites, on the other hand, prefer to encourage or at least permit the development of a type of personal identity which has reference, but not a too rigid one, to the new collective identity. This personal identity is not entirely bound up with any one political system, state, or community. It has flexible openings to a variety of collectivities and communities. Yet it tends to generate a strong emphasis on personal commitment to do something for the community. It also entails a very strong connection between personal commitment, personal identity and several types of institutional activities. We may sum up the differences in the impact of different orientations and patterns of response to situations of change by reviewing the several ways in which they utilize the reservoirs of tradition available to them, and the several ways in which different forms of traditional life and symbols persist within the new settings. The reservoirs of tradition consist of the major ways of looking at the basic problems of social and cultural order and of conceiving solutions to them. They also identify the available structures through which the various solutions may be implemented.

A high degree of resistance to change implies inability to define such problems in a new way. There is often a militant emphasis on the necessity of holding exclusively to the old, given answers to these problems. If the possibility of new answers is admitted, it is limited to very partial, discrete, new answers to segregated aspects of the social order. These discrete answers may be subsumed under some of the broader of the older answers. In all these answers there is stress on the importance of defending the exclusiveness of the old problems. The defense may thus become a new problem. Resistance to change is also usually characterized by attempts to maintain the internal structure and the existing level of differentiation of existing social units and to minimize the scope of new and more differentiated groups.

The highly adaptable groups and elites, on the other hand, are characteristically willing to use existing tradition for posing and solving new problems of social and cultural order. Hence they distinguish between different layers of traditional commitments and motivations and try to draw on them all and on existing organizations, so far as possible, in the new tasks and activities. There are clearly two major foci of continuity of tradition among such groups.

The first is the persistence, perhaps flexibly, of certain poles or basic modes of perception of the cosmic, cultural, and social order. The second lies in the persistence of autonomous symbols of the collective identities of major subgroups and collectivities, however great may be the concrete changes in their specific content.

Non-coercive transformative elites also utilize reservoirs of tradition, especially through differential use of the various layers of traditional commitments and motivation in new activities and organizations. They may also accept, or even encourage, continuity in the collective identities of many subgroups and strata. Yet there are several major differences between transformative and adaptive elites. The first, by their very nature, are obliged to redefine the major problems of social and cultural order and to enlarge the scope of available and permissible solutions. True, in doing so they usually stop short of rejecting the pre-existing symbols, preferring, as we have seen, to incorporate them in their own new symbolic order. Nevertheless, they do redefine the major problems of this order. Because of this, and especially because of their acceptance of a certain variety of answers to these problems, they tend also to facilitate or encourage the rise of new groups or collectivities, especially of more differentiated, specialized ones, committed to new institutional goals. Hence they may maintain continuity of tradition mostly on levels of commitment to central symbols of the social and cultural orders and of very general orientations to these orders. But they do not maintain commitment to the full content of these orders, which may continuously change.

With a coercive elite, the situation is more complex. On the one hand, if it is successful in attaining or seizing power, it is then in a position to destroy most of the concrete symbols and structures of existing traditions, strata, and organizations and to emphasize new content and new types of social organization. Yet at the same time it may preserve considerable continuity with regard to certain basic modes of symbolic and institutional orientations. Most coercive elites grow out of societies with a relatively low level of institutional and symbolic flexibility. They may as a result pose some of the basic problems of social and cultural order, and of their interrelations, in broad terms, for example, with emphasis on power, in much the same way as their predecessors did. However, the solutions and the manner in which they are worked out, for example, in the problem of how to establish a 'strong' autocratic absolutist society as against

a 'strong' industrial one, would differ greatly from those of the preceding order. Coercive elites attempt to utilize many of the traditional orientations, but shorn of much of their concrete content and of their identification with and connection to the older order or to any parts of it. In other words, the basic attempt is to unleash and to control, in a new way, the primary motivational orientations inherent in the older systems, while at the same time changing their content and basic identity. A similar process occurs with regard to the incorporation of symbols of partial groups or even of some of the older central symbols, especially 'patriotic' ones. On the one hand we find an almost total negation of these symbols; on the other hand, because the problems that have to be posed about the nature of the social order remain much the same, there may be parallel attempts to use or uphold these symbols, or similar general symbolic orientations, although in an altered context and with little or no autonomy.

#### SOME FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIFFERENT PATTERNS OF RESPONSE TO CHANGE

We may now briefly examine some of the conditions that influence types of orientation and patterns of response to change, with special reference to traditional societies. Anthropological, sociological, and psychological research point to several sets of variables and their interrelations as being of chief importance.

Certain of these variables, for example the extent of rigidity or differentiation, so closely resemble some of the characteristics of different patterns of response to change that there may well be some circularity in the argument. Yet the claim that the more 'flexible' social structures or traditions tend also to develop more 'flexible' or positive patterns of response to change seems to us to be indeed true or at least feasible. But the correlation only partially accounts for the patterns of response to change. They fail to account for differences within the range of positive attitudes to change between 'adaptive' and 'transformative' response, or for the emergence of coercive elites. Again, many variations in the patterns of response to change seem to be related to other variables, not just to the degree of flexibility of the social structure.

The first set of these other variables seems to be the extent of the internal solidarity and cohesion within a group. A second set includes

the rigidity and uniformity of the internal division of labor and of the social structure and cultural order, as evident especially in the degree of autonomy of their various components. It includes also the degree of openness of any given group towards other groups, towards the broader society, and towards the social and cultural orders in general.

Structural flexibility or rigidity can be measured first by the extent to which institutional tasks are differentiated and performed in specific situations, and second, by the extent to which each group, role, or situation, is governed by autonomous goals and values or is dominated by those of another such sphere.

The flexibility or rigidity of the symbolic orders of the cultural tradition of a society has to be measured first by the extent to which the content of the cosmic and cultural order, of the social collectivity and the social order, and of the socio-political centers, is closed, fixed, or relatively open. Second, it is to be measured by the degree to which participation in these orders is open to different groups, and third by the nature of their symbolic, organizational, and institutional interrelations and interdependence.

Here several possible constellations can be distinguished. Each such symbolic sphere may be seen as autonomous, but closely interrelated with the others, in the sense that participation in one gives access to another without, however, imposing its own criteria or orientations on it. Or each such order may be relatively closed, with purely 'external' or 'power' interrelations among them. Finally, one of these orders may predominate over the others, regulating access to them and imposing its own values and symbols on them.

The exact nature of such institutional and symbolic flexibility or rigidity necessarily differs greatly between different types of societies. Thus, in primitive societies rigidity is especially manifest in the close interdependence of units, such as clans and kinship groups, and in organizational and symbolic overlapping, or even identity, in the definition of these units. There is little differentiation between the symbols of belonging to one or another institutional sphere (political, economic, or ritual), and between the situations and roles in which they are enacted. In more complex societies with a much higher degree of organizational differentiation of institutional and symbolic spheres, flexibility or rigidity is especially evident in the institutional autonomy of the spheres, in terms of their specific goals, as against a relatively tight symbolic or institutional control of some central sphere over all the other spheres.

Beyond such interrelations, there is an additional set of variables in the content and organization of a cultural tradition. It is especially important to know the extent to which any given tradition entails active commitment to its values and symbols on the part of individuals and to know whether such commitment is relatively 'open' or ritualistically closed or prescribed. The distinction introduced above between weak or strong centers is closely related to this.

These major sets of variables—the extent of solidarity of a social group or system, the extent of autonomy of different institutional and symbolic systems, and the weakness or strength of different centers—tend to influence the different orientations and patterns of response to change. It seems that the general orientation to change is influenced by some combination of two of these sets of variables, namely, by the scope of solidarity of a system and by the degree of its institutional flexibility.

Most available data show that the lower the solidarity and cohesion of any given social system, the lower also is its members' adaptability to change. Social and psychological research show that the maintenance of the cohesion of primary groups, and to some extent of their solidarity links to wider social settings, is of crucial importance if their members are to be free to face new, or adverse, conditions. Destruction of solidarity may greatly impair this ability. Most of these studies, however, have dealt with primary groups within larger formal organizations, mainly in the framework of modern societies. There arises, therefore, the problem of how these variables are related to variables in more formal aspects of micro- or macro-societal structures. It is here that the importance of institutional autonomy appears. In general, the adaptability of a social system to situations of change increases with the extent of the autonomy of its social, cultural, and political institutions and of its major symbolic orders.

Comparative research on this problem, here only beginning to be systematic, suggests that the chances of a society's orientation to change becoming positive depends on the strength of autonomous interrelations among its various symbolic orders, and on the extent to which the precepts of its traditions are non-ritualistic. Conversely, the degree of resistance to change depends on such autonomy being absent or slight, and on the social, cultural, and political orders being closely identified with one another.

Obviously there are many more permutations among these various elements of cultural traditions. Their influence on processes of

change will have to be more fully and systematically analyzed in further research. Thus it may seem as if group cohesion and solidarity, on the one hand, and rigidity or flexibility of the social and cultural order, on the other hand, have a similar influence on adaptability and on transformative capacity, that they always tend to go together and seem to reinforce one another in their influence on processes of change. But closer examination of the data indicates that this need not always be the case. It may well be true that a very low degree of group solidarity and cohesiveness reduces adaptability and that high cohesiveness makes for positive orientations to change. But between the extremes the picture is not so simple. For example, a relatively high degree of group solidarity may be connected with a relatively rigid internal division of labour. In that case it need not denote lack of organizational adaptability to change; it may foster special kinds of adaptation.

In general, and in a very tentative way, one may say that the extent of the solidarity of a group or a structure tends to influence the degree to which individuals or groups with organizational ability will appear within it, and that the extent of flexibility in the social structure influences the nature of the general attitude to change within a society. What is important here is the relative focus of solidarity and cohesion of various groups and of their structural characteristics in relation to the social framework of the society. What matters above all is the possibility of carrying over this solidarity into new fields of instrumental activity, into patterns of participation in new social spheres. But neither of these sets of variables as yet explains the extent of a society's ability to crystallize new effective institutional frameworks of any given shape. The crucial variable seems to be the extent to which different types of entrepreneurial and/or charismatic elites and groups may emerge.

The process of social change or the undermining of existing patterns of life, social organization, and culture, accompanied as it often is by structural differentiation, gives rise, by its very impetus, to a great variety of new groups. These will display a new range of differences in basic organizational features. By their very nature most new occupational, religious, and political groups in new status categories or in elite groups undertake new tasks, new types of activities, and are oriented to new organizational settings. These tasks and activities vary greatly, of course, according to whether the emerging system is an empire with a predominantly agrarian base, or is some

system with mercantile and factorial bases, or is a system of industrialism, possibly democratic. But these groups of elites also differ greatly in general organizational ability, in their adaptive, innovative or transformative capacities in their own direct sphere of activities, and in their relationships to the broader groups and to the more central institutions of their society.

What are, then, the conditions that influence such elites? We referred above, to inherent tendencies, within patterns of tradition, to initiate certain kinds of change. Instead of dealing with this point directly, we shall concentrate on the third set of variables mentioned above, the set affecting the content of a cultural tradition and the strength or weakness of a center.

The strength or weakness of the major centers of any social or cultural order may have structural repercussions on the cohesion and orientations of its major elites in general and of the intellectual strata in particular. Weak centers tend to generate or to be connected with the emergence of new elites that are low in internal autonomy and cohesion, restricted in their social orientations, and inclined to be dissociated both from each other and from the broader strata of the society. Strong centers, on the other hand, generate, or are connected with, more cohesive elites and with intellectual strata that in general have fairly close interrelations. Whether these interrelations will be coercive, hierarchical, or autonomously interdependent and the nature of relations with broader groups and strata will depend largely on the exact structure and content of such centers, especially on their flexibility and on the openness of their symbolic content.

It is the interrelation among: (a) the degree of solidarity of different groups and strata, (b) the structural and symbolic autonomy of different social spheres, that is, the degree of rigidity or flexibility of these spheres, and (c) the strength or weakness of the major centers of the symbolic orders, that is, the social, political, and cultural (in case of traditional societies usually religious) centers, that can best explain, in a limited and preliminary way, the development within a given society of elites and groups with different degrees of organizational, innovative, and transformative capacities. In any society, but particularly in well differentiated societies, these relations are rather complex and heterogeneous. A complex society with a multiplicity of different traditions and groups, necessarily gives rise, in situations of change, to a great variety of elites and groups that differ in organizational, innovative, and transformative capacity. These often



compete strongly among themselves for relative predominance in the emerging social structure. It would be impossible here to go into all the possible variations; we shall present therefore only some general hypotheses in terms of very general tendencies. Further research will enable us to go beyond these very rough generalizations.

First, in a society, or parts thereof, that has high solidarity but low structural flexibility, new groups will be relatively traditionalistic but well organized. On the other hand, in a society, or parts thereof, that has a high level of flexibility but a relatively low level of solidarity, several new groups or strata may be fairly adaptable, but not very well organized. In a society that has high levels both in flexibility and in solidarity, we might expect groups or elites to appear that would be both fairly well organized and fairly adaptable.

But the extent to which such elite groups are able to influence broader institutional settings, and especially the more central institutional cores of the society, will mostly depend on the types of centers that exist, and on their relations to these centers. The capacity to affect the broader institutional settings will be smaller among elites that are relatively non-cohesive, that are alienated from other elites and from the broader groups and strata of the society, and that are either very distant from the existing center or succeed in monopolizing it, to the exclusion of other groups and elites. In terms of center-building such groups will probably emphasize the maintenance of some given attributes of collective identity, together with the regulation of internal and external force.

Still other societies, or parts thereof, are marked by high levels of rigidity in the social system and in the symbolic orders, displaying little symbolic distinction between their various social and cultural orders, and having relatively weak centers. This seems to have been the case in many Southeast Asian patrimonial régimes. Here the elites will be traditionalistic, and non-transformative. Yet they may show a certain organizational capacity and some predisposition for limited technical innovation. In the less cohesive sectors of such societies there may be a few other elites with some positive orientation to change. These will be new ideological, professional or political groups, capable of adapting to new ideologies or symbols but having little ability for continuous institutional activity, and therefore little transformative capacity. Both of these types of elite will tend to develop 'closeness' in social and status perception, and to place a ritual emphasis on certain specific and very limited types of status

orientations. They will then conceive their own legitimation in terms of maintaining these restricted ranges of status symbols.

Insofar as rigidity of the social and cultural orders and resistance to change coexist with a rather strong center, one might also expect to find militantly innovative elites with coercive orientations. They will be most likely to arise in groups not too distant from the center and enjoying some internal solidarity.

Where there is a high degree of structural and cultural autonomy and flexibility, and also high cohesion within social groups, elites may attain a relatively high level of adaptability to change, but without showing much transformative capacity.

Here, again, it is the symbolic and institutional structure of the centers and their strength or weakness that is of crucial importance. The combination of conditions of flexibility with strong centers, which would then almost by definition be open, seems to increase the likelihood that highly transformative elites will appear. Research in a number of micro- and macro-societal settings suggests that under these conditions transformative capacity occurs mainly among elites that are relatively cohesive and have a strong sense of self-identity. It is found mostly among secondary elites somewhat removed from the center. They may manage to function within relatively segregated institutional spheres. Or they may have positive solidary orientations to the center and maintain some relations with the older elites and with at least some of the broader groups of the society. Such elites tend also to develop simultaneous orientations to collective ideological transformation and to concrete tasks and problems in different 'practical' fields. They perceive their own legitimation in terms of wide changes, not solely in terms of providing immediate benefits or status symbols to other groups.

Where high flexibility coexists with weak centers, the development of transformative elites is usually much impeded. Instead, one may expect to find a very great variety of elites, some of them traditionalistic and some highly adaptable, but each one with distinctive orientations. Insofar as no balance of power develops among them, their very multiplicity may jeopardize the successful institutionalization of any viable new institutional structure.

The preceding analysis of the conditions of development of different types of elites and of their center-building activities may seem to have been put in a rather deterministic way. This was, however, by no means our intention. As has already been pointed out, in every

complex society there always exist rather heterogeneous conditions and a variety of sectors, each of which may produce different kinds of elites. Among such elites there usually develops a strong competition for predominance, and the emerging situation as well as the result of such competition are never fully predetermined.

The relative lack of predetermination emerges still more clearly if we bear in mind the importance of the international setting in the development of various elites, as has been stressed above. Throughout our discussion we have emphasized the crucial importance of various secondary elites or movements as potential bearers of socio-political transformation. But the structural location of these elites seems to differ greatly among the different types of political régimes, mainly according to the nature of the division of labor prevalent within a society on the one hand, and the relative placement of these elites within the internal system of the societies, or within the international settings of their respective societies, on the other.

In general, it seems that insofar as the division of labor within any given social system is either 'mechanical' and/or based on a center focused mostly on regulation of force and/or on the upholding of symbols of common identity, then change-oriented or transformative cultural or political elites would more probably arise within international enclaves around the society than *within* it. The probability of any such transformative elite effecting change within the society would depend, however, either on the breakdown of its center because of some external or internal forces and/or on finding secondary internal groups or elites that would be willing, for ideological or interest reasons, to become its allies. On the other hand, insofar as a social system is characterized by a high degree of organic solidarity, then it is probable that a change-oriented elite, although it might be closely related to broader international settings and enclaves, would to some extent develop within the society.

The probability of its becoming effective would then depend more on the character of its relations with that society's centers and with its other elites, and with its broader groups, as has been briefly discussed above.

It is natural at this stage of the discussion to inquire whether the development of these different types of elite depends only on the 'formal' structure of the social and cultural orders from within which they tend to develop, or also on its content, that is, on orientations and systems of beliefs.

It would be very important for our discussion to analyze how differences in the content of tradition influence the perception of change, adaptability to change, and the possibility of effecting cultural transformation, that is, to see how such content influences the basic paradigms of a cultural tradition. We cannot deal with this problem in detail here. However, it may be worth while to present some tentative conclusions derived from a re-examination of Weber's thesis regarding the Protestant Ethic.<sup>4</sup>

According to this analysis the central aspects of Protestant religious and value orientations, those that created, as it were, their transformative potential, were as follows. First of all was its strong combination of 'this-worldliness' and transcendentalism, a combination orienting the behavior of the individual to activities within this world, without ritually sanctifying any of them, through a mystic union or through any ritual act, as the final point of religious consummation or worthiness. Second, was the strong emphasis on individual activism and responsibility. Third was the unmediated, direct relation of the individual to the sacred and to the sacred tradition. This attitude, while strongly emphasizing the importance and the direct relevance of the sacred and of tradition, yet minimized the extent to which the individual's relation to the sacred, and his individual commitment, can be mediated by any institution, organization, or textual exegesis. Hence it opened up the possibility of continuous redefinition and reformulation of the nature and scope of such tradition. Further, it enhanced this possibility by a transcendentalism so strong as to minimize the sacredness of any 'here and now'.

These Protestant orientations, especially strong among Calvinists, were not, however, confined to the realm of the sacred. They were closely related to and manifest in two major orientations inherent in most Protestant groups' conception of social reality and of their own place in it, that is, in what may be called their status images and orientations. Their 'openness' towards the wider social structure was of crucial importance. It was rooted in their 'this-worldly' orientation in the economic sphere and in other social fields. Second, they

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<sup>4</sup> A fuller exposition of these points can be found in S.N. Eisenstadt, 'The Protestant Ethic Thesis in an Analytical and Comparative Framework', *The Protestant Ethic and Modernization, A Comparative View* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), pp. 3-46.

were characterized by a certain autonomy and self-sufficiency from the point of view of their status orientation. They displayed little dependence, from the point of view of the crystallization of their own status symbols and identity, on the existing political and religious centers.

A full comparative application of these insights to other religions is still to come, but some preliminary hypotheses can be offered. The effects of the transformative capacity of religious or ideological ideas and movements on the motivational level, that is, in producing strong motivation to undertake new types of non-religious roles, may be greater when the transcendental and this-worldly orientations of these religions or ideologies are strong and when they evince clear ideological autonomy with regard to any given social or communal order. Conversely, such transformative effects are reduced by the degree of strength of a this-worldly or an other-worldly orientation towards immanence, by the extent to which the religious groups are embedded in the existing political order and by the degree of apathy that negative attitudes to this order may entail.

The transformation of new central symbols and frameworks is, in its turn, greatly dependent on the extent to which the religious or ideological systems have shown a relatively high level of both ideological and organizational autonomy while at the same time being oriented to participation in the socio-political order. The more autonomous the religious organizations are, and the less they are identified with the existing political order, the more effective they can be in developing new types of central political and cultural symbols. Conversely, their ability in this direction is smaller when their autonomy is less and when their identification with the existing political order is great.

Again, the greater the extent to which a given polity and state constitute a basic referent of religious activity, the smaller is the extent to which internal movements and systems of reform oriented to the redefinition of the central spheres of the society can develop. Conversely, the stronger the universalistic and transcendental elements within these religious orientations the greater are the chances that such movements will arise.

Finally, the more the activist orientations within the religious value-system are other-worldly, the less likely it is that reform movements will direct themselves to recrystallization of the central spheres of the

society. Conversely, the more these orientations have emphasized involvement in the secular world, and the stronger the specific ideological formulations of these orientations, the more likely it is that they will have far-reaching transformative effects.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### COMPARATIVE LIMINALITY. LIMINALITY AND DYNAMICS OF CIVILIZATION

#### I

One of the major aims of the Jerusalem Seminar was to combine the analysis of liminality, as developed by Victor Turner, with the comparative study of societies and civilizations which has been, for a long time, a focus of research in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Therefore it was natural that we should choose, as the topic of this seminar, comparative liminality—the investigation, first, of the differences in the internal structure, symbolism and social placement of different liminal situations, of their impact on the central areas of society in general and on processes of change in particular, in different societies and civilizations; and second, of how these differences can be explained.

The first step in such an attempt is the explanation of the ubiquity of the major symbolic and structural characteristics—communitas, antistructure and the like—of liminality in human societies.

The starting point of our analysis is the recognition of the fact that this ubiquity of liminality—of liminal situations and symbols or categories which can indeed, in different connotations, be found in all human societies, and of the unruly behavior which is often connected with them—is not given in some “natural”, spontaneous tendencies, in a spontaneous outburst of natural tendencies against the Discontents of Civilization. Rather these symbols, situations and patterns of behavior are culturally and socially constructed, and the behavior that develops within them is also so constructed; even if it often seems spontaneous and “natural”, it is a socially and culturally regulated spontaneity and definition of “natural” behavior.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Axial Age—The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics,” *European Journal of Sociology (Archives Européennes de Sociologie)*, XXIII, 1982, pp. 294–314; and idem, “Cultural Traditions and Political Dynamics,” *The British Journal of Sociology*, XXXII, June 1981, pp. 155–181.



The ambivalence to social and cultural order and the strong emphasis on antistructure or *communitas*, which are built into many of these situations, are as much culturally constructed as the social structural and cultural order against which they rebel. This is similar to the situation with respect to the “biological” crises of life—birth, adolescence, death and so on—as was shown long ago by G. Homans in his analysis of B. Malinowski and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown’s theories,<sup>2</sup> where he has shown that, even if these crises are potentially indeed given in the biological givens of human existence, they are yet socially and culturally channelled.

Such ambivalence to social order is rooted in several basic characteristics of human existence, indeed in some aspects of human biological nature; however, not in some direct genetic givens, but rather more in psychological-emotional and cognitive, to a large degree conscious response of human beings to their perception of some central aspects of their biological nature.

It is rooted in the relatively open biological program which characterizes the human species;<sup>3</sup> in the consciousness of such openness; in what may be called a basic existential uncertainty or anxiety—most closely related to the consciousness of death, of human finality, and in attempts to overcome it<sup>4</sup>—a uniquely human trait manifest in the construction of the burial places; in certain basic structural traits of the human family, in the capacity of imagination that is, in the ability to conceive various possibilities beyond what is given here,<sup>5</sup> and in the consequent search to construct a cultural and social order which will assure, as it were, the overcoming of these uncertainties and anxieties generated by all these factors.

The capacity to envisage the possibilities of a different social order, and the consequent ambivalence to any given social order, are also given, as J.P. Wilson<sup>6</sup> has shown, in the necessity and capacity of

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<sup>2</sup> G. Homans, “Anxiety and Ritual—The Theories of Malinowski and Radcliffe Brown,” in idem, “Sentiments and Activities,” New York, The Free Press, 1962, pp. 192–202.

<sup>3</sup> E. Meyer, “Behavior Programs and Evolutionary Strategies,” *American Scientist*, vol. 62, November–December 1984, p. 651.

<sup>4</sup> See Th. Dobzhansky, “Genetic Diversity and Human Equality,” New York, Basic Books, 1973, ch. 3; M. Bloch and J. Parry (eds.), “Death and the Regeneration of Life,” Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982.

<sup>5</sup> J.P. Sartre, “L’Imagination,” Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1956.

<sup>6</sup> J.P. Wilson, “The Promising Primate,” *Man*, vol. 10, No. 1, 1975, pp. 5–20.

man, rooted in some aspects of his biological endowment, to establish "meta-relations" and to think about them. In his own words:

... among those primates that we call human beings the primary bond extends over a longer period of time among other primates; and the pair relation, possibly correlated with a different pattern of sexual receptivity, is also more extended and possibly more intense. While each relationship is biologically determined and displays adaptive advantages, their co-existence results in an unforeseen and non-biological factor—the relation between the two relations, which I call the meta-relation, or the relational design. Bonding relations simply confirm the continuity of man with other primates and reiterate his biological nature in general, for bonding is to be found in numerous non-primate species. The extension of human bonding, an apparently minor difference of degree, may be seen to raise a new possibility in man... (that of meta-relations) ...

... His existence in meta-relation gives a man the knowledge of his own being by subjecting and conditioning his being to the being of others. This applies equally to man the individual and to man as society or community. Man's knowledge of the meta-relation is embodied by him, and for him, in the forms of the imperative we now call the promise and the taboo. These are the objective knowledge or representation of the meta-relational design. They constitute the "minimum shared presupposition" that allows isolated, individual, instinctive men to understand one another and this is how synthetic a priori judgments are possible. From the possibility that arose by accident out of his evolution, man had to develop his reason and then to face the danger of losing his reason. With his reason he has a sense of being; without his reason he suffers from an absence of a sense of being. It is in this sense, surely that we understand Hobbesian man to have been living in a state of nature, a state to which we fear a return. For there is no suggestion that Hobbesian man was biologically unsound, only that he is socially unsound; no suggestion that his emotions are invalid, only that he has no reason. ...

## II

The attempts to construct such a social and cultural order, to maintain a set of meta-relations, to overcome the uncertainties given in the factors listed above, is manifest in all societies and cultures, in the attempt to construct symbolic boundaries of personal and collective identity, of membership in different collectivities in terms of universal biological "primordial" categories—age, generation, sex and the like—or in terms of territorial attachment; as well as in terms

of answers of certain perennial problems of death and of immortality; to the closely related search to overcome the distinction between the given world and another world beyond it; as well as that—recognized long ago by Durkheim<sup>7</sup>—between the profane and the sacred.

And yet the very construction of such boundaries and of their institutional derivatives and consequences, adds yet another element or component to the human situation which exacerbates the uncertainties listed above and which generates a basic ambivalence to social order—namely the consciousness of the arbitrariness of any such construction; the consciousness that any given order is only one of several, perhaps many, alternatives—including also the imaginary alternative of living beyond any social order whatsoever; or, in other words, the awareness of the fact that the very construction of any social order, while constituting one of the major manifestations of human creativity, does also necessarily impose severe limitations on such creativity.

The awareness of such arbitrariness and limitation, and the attempt, as it were, to ‘convince’ the institutional order in general and any concrete given order in which one lives in particular, are the “correct”, “right” ones, are fully portrayed and depicted in the myths, replenish with tales about worlds and creatures beyond the boundaries of the given order. These tales depict the combination of attraction and anxiety to step out of such boundaries; the stress on the purity of the world inside and the danger of the world outside,<sup>8</sup> and on the need to remain within such boundaries, without, however, being able to do away with the consciousness of possibilities beyond these boundaries, and hence also of certain arbitrariness of any such order in general and of any given order in particular.

### III

The consciousness of the arbitrariness of any cultural and social order is, of course, exacerbated by the exigencies of the construction and reproduction of social order, of societal institutions in the more specific sense of this term.

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<sup>7</sup> E. Durkheim, “The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (1912),” 1954, New York, MacMillan.

<sup>8</sup> M. Douglas, “Purity and Danger,” London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966.

Of crucial importance here is the recognition of the fact which constitutes the cornerstone of modern sociological analysis, namely the inadequacy of the organization of social division of labor, which is inherent in the biological endowment of man, and of the various mechanisms which organize such division of labor—such as, for instance, the mechanism of labor—so strongly stressed by the economists to explain the construction and maintenance of social order.<sup>9</sup>

The Founding Fathers of sociology—Marx,<sup>10</sup> Durkheim,<sup>11</sup> Weber<sup>12</sup>—did not deny the importance of market as such a mechanism (indeed, in many ways, they elaborated some aspects of analysis of the market as well as of other processes and mechanisms of social division of labor) as well as the impact of different aspects of the structure of social division of labor on the behavior of individuals and on the crystallization of forms of social life. But they all questioned the sufficiency of such mechanisms to explain the working of any concrete social division of labor, of any concrete social order. In different ways they all showed how such mechanisms in general and the market in particular cannot assure such working.

They stressed several crucial aspects of social order which, according to them, are not explained by the various mechanisms of social division of labor in general and of market in particular.

These aspects of social order have been, first, the construction of trust and solidarity—stressed above all by Durkheim and to some degree by Tonnies;<sup>13</sup> second, the regulation of power and the overcoming of the feelings of exploitation attendant on them and stressed above all by Marx and Max Weber; and third, stressed in different ways by all of them has been that of the provision of meaning and of legitimation to the different social activities.

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<sup>9</sup> For general analysis of these controversies see S.N. Eisenstadt and M. Curelaru, "The Form of Sociology, Paradigms and Crises," New York, John Wiley, 1976; S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Schools of Sociology," *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 24, No. 3, 1981, pp. 329–344.

<sup>10</sup> K. Marx, "Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy," New York, McGraw-Hill, 1965.

<sup>11</sup> E. Durkheim, "The Division of Labor in Society," New York, Free Press, 1964; idem, "The Rules of Sociological Method," New York, Free Press, 1964.

<sup>12</sup> M. Weber, "Ancient Judaism" (translated and edited by H.H. Geertz and D. Martindale), New York, Free Press, 1952; idem, "The Religion of China" (translated and edited by H.H. Geertz and D. Martindale), New York, Free Press, 1952; idem, "The Religion of China" (translated and edited by H.H. Geertz), New York, Free Press, 1951.

<sup>13</sup> F. Tonnies, "Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft" (translated into English as Community and Society), East Lansing, Michigan, Michigan University Press, 1957.

They all stressed that the very construction of social division of labor generates uncertainties with respect to each of these dimensions of social order—that is, with respect to trust, regulation of power, the process of meaning and legitimation—but at the same time, and because of this, no concrete social division of labor can be maintained without these dimensions of problems being taken care of. Therefore they all stressed the construction of these dimensions as a crucial aspect of the organization of social order; that the construction and maintenance of social order is conditioned on the development of some combination between the organizational structure of division of labor, the regulation of power and the construction of trust, meaning and legitimation.

But the development of any such combination is not given—it is being constructed throughout various social processes. In such processes the element of struggle and uncertainty, as well as the tension between different dimensions of social labor, are continuously present, thus exacerbating the consciousness of the arbitrariness in the construction of any concrete social order and ambivalence to any social order.

#### IV

The consciousness of the arbitrariness of any cultural and social order, the fact that such consciousness exacerbates the uncertainties and anxiety rooted in the consciousness of the openness of biological program, of awareness of death and in the capacity of imagination, and the concomitant ambivalence to the social order—are fully manifest in, or tantamount to, the encounter of the charismatic dimension of human life, in its purest pristine form with institutional life, in the process of “routinization” of charisma,<sup>14</sup> and above all in the limitations of human creativity and the various conflicts and tensions that such institutionalization entails.

The construction of cultural and social order in terms of some combination between primordial symbols and transcendental symbols, in terms of relation to some conception of the sacred, is indeed

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<sup>14</sup> See Max Weber, “On Charisma and Institution Building,” selected pages edited by S.N. Eisenstadt, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968; and S.N. Eisenstadt, “Introduction,” in *idem*, pp. ix–lv.

one of the fullest manifestations of the charismatic dimension of life, of human creativity.

This charismatic dimension is focused, in the social realm, in the construction of the boundaries of personal and collective identity; the construction of societal centers, the centers of society and of its major symbols of prestige.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, however, the very institutionalization of such charismatic dimension generates also very severe limitations on such creativity and, in connection with the tendencies analysed above, also an awareness or consciousness of such limitations.

The basic root of the limitations on human activity inherent in the institutionalization of the charismatic dimension of the construction of social and cultural order lies first of all in the fact that the process of the institutionalization of any concrete social setting entails the selection from a variety of—potentially always existing or imagined—possibilities and hence it does also entail a concomitant closure; second in the fact of the routinization of the creative act which is inherent in any such institutionalization; third in the close relation between such closure and elements of power and fourth in the tensions that develop in such process between the basic components of the construction of social order—namely regulation of power, construction of trust and provision of meaning.

Thus, first of all, the construction of social and cultural order implies the posing of certain types of questions about the basic problems of human existence in the social and cultural context, as well as a range of permissible answers to them, and excludes other possible questions and answers.

Thus, to give only a few cursory illustrations, any such social construction of reality usually emphasizes some dimensions of human existence—be it the aesthetic, the political or the ritual one—of different symbolic modes of activities and accordingly sets up limits on parameters of experience which are seen as permissible and meaningful in any concrete setting. Any such construction of the social order selects certain conceptions of the relation between the cosmic and social order, of man's fate and of the degree to which he can influence it and the different symbolic orientations to the social order

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<sup>15</sup> E. Shils, "Center and Periphery," in "Center and Periphery, Essays in Macro-Sociology," Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1975, pp. 3-7; and idem, "Charisma, Order and Status," in idem, pp. 256-276.

and in the very nature of this process it necessarily suppresses other dimensions of human activity or other conceptions of the social order, or delegates them to secondary or subterranean levels.

Second, the limitation on creativity inherent in the institutionalization of any charismatic dimension is rooted in the fact that when an innovation is accepted it may as a result become routine, 'defined', more and more removed from its original impetus. Those who participate in its perpetuation—its originators and their initial close collaborators—tend to become less interested in it; indeed, their whole relation to these mainsprings may also be rooted in the fact that the originators of cultural innovations—of great religions, of new political systems, or of new economic enterprises—may become afraid of the further spread of the spirit of such free creativity, and may attempt to impose limitations on such spread, on the attempts of other people or groups to participate in such creativity or to extend its scope. In this way the innovators may engender among such groups hostility and alienation or apathy toward the very acts of creativity and may generate tendencies towards the destruction of institutions.

Third, the restrictions and exclusions entailed by institutionalization of any charismatic vision become necessarily closely associated with, although not necessarily identical with, maintenance of the distribution of power and wealth, with the limitation of the scope of participation of various groups in the central symbolic spheres of a society, and with access to meaningful participation in the social and cultural order, and becomes closely related to the control over resources.

Fourth, such limitations on human creativity are inherent in the institutionalization of the charismatic dimension of human life; such limitations are also evident in several tensions that are inherent in the ways in which the basic components of social order—namely construction of trust (solidarity), meaning, power and social division of labor—are related to one another in the process of such institutionalization, of concrete institution-building.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, "Macro-Sociology, Background, Development and New Directions," Verhagen Lectures, Erasmus, University of Rotterdam, forthcoming.

## V

The crucial tension or contradiction here is that between the conditions which generate the construction of trust between different members of a group or society on the one hand, and those which assure the availability of resources and institutional entrepreneurs for the formation of broader institutional complexes on the other hand, and the articulation of symbols which legitimize them in terms of some broader meaning is greater, other conditions being equal (such as for instance the extent of coercion employed in such situations), insofar as in any situation ascriptive criteria in general and of particularistic ascriptive criteria in particular, that specify first the belongingness to solidary communities in general, and which assure some degree of unconditional relations between its members and clear criteria of mutual obligation of its members in particular, are predominant.

Thus, almost by definition, the conditions which make for maintenance of trust are best assured in relatively limited ranges of social activities or interaction. Such limited ranges of interaction seem to constitute the necessary minimal conditions for at least the initial development of such trust, even if they may not be enough to assure its continuity. At the same time, however, these very conditions which assure such continuity of trust are inimical to the development of resources and activities needed for broader institutional creativity, for the construction of broader institutional complexes based on more variegated broader orientations.

Indeed the very conditions which generate resources which may be available for broader complex, institution-building tend also to undermine the simple or "primitive" settings of potential trust; in such conditions there arises the problem of how to institutionalize such activities in some stable long-range patterns beyond those embedded in relatively narrow units or sets of social relations.

The possibility of such institutionalization is above all dependent on the effective extension of the range of symbolism of trust beyond the narrow minimal scope of primordial units, and of connecting such extended trust with the organization of broader scopes of activities and with the construction of broader ranges of meaning.

But any such extension necessarily brings out in relatively sharp ways the confrontation of such extended trust with the distribution of power and of resources created through social division of labor



and with the legitimation of such activities in terms of broader meanings—thus creating many “fuzzy” and problematic situations.

## VI

Accordingly, in such situations the awareness of arbitrariness of any social order in particular and the given constructed social order becomes sharpened, intensifying the feelings of ambivalence to it, bringing out strong antinomian orientations and the potentially destructive aspects of the charismatic dimension of human action. These destructive aspects are—because of the charismatic predisposition or fervor—rooted, as we have seen above, in the attempt to come into contact with the very essence of being, to go to the very roots of existence, of cosmic, social, and cultural order, to what is given as sacred and fundamental, as inherent in this dimension as the constructive ones. But just because of this, such fervor may also contain a strong predisposition to sacrilege, to the denial of the validity of the sacred, and of what is accepted in any given society as sacred. The very attempt to reestablish direct contact with these roots of cosmic and of socio-political order may breed both opposition to more attenuated and formalized forms of this order, as well as fear and hence opposition to the sacred itself.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, on the personal level, charismatic predispositions may be the epitome of the darkest recesses and excesses of the human soul, of its utter depravity and irresponsibility, of its more intensive antinomian tendencies, while on the other hand, it is in its charismatic roots that the human personality can attain its fullest creative power and internal responsibility.

Just because of this combination of the constructive, restrictive, and destructive aspects it is indeed in the charismatic act that the problematics of potential human creativity become most clearly manifest. These problematics are manifest not only in the fact that this creativity may perhaps in some cases be deranged or evil, but also that it is not only the potential derangement but this very creativity—by its very nature and orientation—which tends to undermine and destroy existing institutions, to burst the limits set by them, and

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<sup>17</sup> Max Weber, “Charisma and Institution Building,” *op. cit.*; and S.N. Eisenstadt, “Introduction,” in *idem*, *op. cit.*

that both these constructive and destructive aspects of charisma focus, in the realm of construction of the social order, on the overcoming of the contradictions generated by the very processes inherent in the institutionalization of the charismatic activity, by the process of the routinization of charisma.

These destructive aspects of the charismatic orientation are often, in their most extreme manifestations, evident in attempts to deny not only the concrete restrictions inherent in any concrete process of institutionalization, but the very fact of institutionalization and of construction of social order and of the restrictions it entail. But even these extreme orientations, the seemingly total negation of the social order, the potentially destructive behavior related to it, the attempts to overcome them, are not just natural givens, expressing some basic presocial natural human predispositions, but are part and parcel of the construction of cultural and social order.

They are indeed rooted in the fact analysed above that the construction of social order involves far-reaching restrictions on human creativity, that such construction excludes many other possibilities of creativity—but not the ability to conceive them.

Hence, however destructive and seemingly spontaneous are many of the manifestations of such ambivalence to social order, yet most of them are also structured around several basic orientations and themes, around the major themes of protest that develop in all human societies and around various culturally and socially structured situations—among them various liminal situations and symbols of liminality.

## VII

The orientations and symbols of protest contain two basic components, out of which the more concrete theme of protest, to be found in all societies, develop. The first such component is the attempt to overcome the basic predicaments and limitations of human existence in general—those of death in particular. The second component of these orientations of protest is the attempt to overcome the tension and predicaments inherent in the process of institutionalization of the social order—the tension between equality and hierarchy; between social division of labor and the regulation of power, construction of trust and provision of meaning, and the tension between the quest for the scope of meaningful participation of various groups in the society in central symbolic and institutional spheres.

Out of the combination and development of these two basic components there develop some of the concrete themes of protest which can be found in all societies.

Thus, first among the themes of protest is the search to overcome the tension between the complexity and fragmentation of human relations inherent in any institutional division of labor and the possibility of some total unconditional, unmediated participation in social and cultural order. Second is the search to overcome the tensions inherent in the temporal dimension of the human and social condition, especially the search for immortality, the tension between the deferment of gratification in the present as against the possibility of its attainment in the future, the tension between productivity and distribution and the accompanying stress on visions of unlimited good—all often played out in various myths in the relations between Time of Origin and Time of End—“Uhrzeit” and “Endzeit”.<sup>18</sup>

A third basic perennial theme of protest in human societies is focused around the quest to suspend the tension between the model of the ideal society, the principles of distributive justice upheld within it on the one hand, and the reality of institutional life on the other, between the actual distribution of power and the demand for equality. Fourth is the quest to suspend the tension between the personal and the autonomous self and the social role; between the possibility of finding full expression of the internal self in social and cultural life as against the retreat from it.

The fifth theme of protest is that of suspension or negation of the structural and organizational division of labor in general, and the emphasis on the ideal of “*communitas*”, i.e., of direct, unmediated participation in the social and cultural orders.

Thus indeed the themes of *communitas*, of antistructure, constitute, in every society, part of the map of such antinomian symbols, becoming connected in various ways with various other symbols of protest, rebellion and antinomianism.

Indeed the very concept of liminality, in its emphasis on the going out of boundaries and structuring a space seemingly outside of given boundaries, is closely related to these themes of ambivalence, antinomy and protest.

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<sup>18</sup> See G. Van der Lieuw, “Primordial Time and Final Time,” in J. Campbell (ed.), “Man and Time, Papers for the Eranos Yearbooks,” New York, Bollinger Foundation, 1957, pp. 324–353.

These themes—with the strong ambivalence to social order and the consciousness of its arbitrariness—became in every society focused around specific aspects and foci of the institutional order—on the very construction of boundaries, of personality and of the collectivity; on the symbols and systems of authority; on symbols and systems of stratification in which the symbolic dimensions of hierarchy are combined with structural aspects of division of labor and distribution of resources; on the sphere of the family as the primary locus of authority and socialization and of the consequent, even if necessary, limitation imposed in an individual's life on his impulses and activities, and as the locus in which those restrictions are closely related to the basic primordial data of human experience, especially to differences in age and sex.

## VIII

In all societies, these orientations of protest are not just marginal to the central symbols of a tradition of a society, destined to erupt only in periods of social disorganization and change. They introduce also the element of potential dissent, as well as of heterodoxy as an inherent and continuous component of every social order.

Such potentialities of dissent and heterodoxy become manifest in the development, within any society or tradition, first of all of a potential great variety of more fully articulated counter and secondary orientations.<sup>19</sup> Thus, in almost any Great Tradition, in almost any cultural and social order, there tend to develop, at its very central core, some ideals and orientations which, while antithetical to some of the predominant basic orientations and ideals of the tradition, are yet derived from its basic respective parameters. Each point to different and seemingly opposing directions, although they may also tend to reinforce one another. The interrelation between the Brahmanic ideal and that of the renouncer in Indian civilization, between the active Church engaged in the world and the monastic ideal in Western Christianity, between the power orientation and the monastic ideal in the Eastern Church, are all illustrations of such contradictory orientations contained within a single tradition.

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<sup>19</sup> See in greater detail S.N. Eisenstadt, "Tradition, Change and Modernity," New York, John Wiley, 1976; and Robert Krieger, Malabar, Florida, 1983, pp. 119-151.

These potentially antinomian tendencies often become connected with the upholding of those dimensions of human existence which are not institutionalized in the given tradition; with the more extreme expressions of subjectivism and privatization, as well as with the emphasis, even if in intellectual terms, on the symbols of primordial attachment. These tendencies may often emphasize human ideals which are strongly opposed to, or different from, those upheld at the center; the group which upholds them may claim that it is only within its own confines that the pure, pristine or primordial qualities emphasized in the ideals of the center can be fully realized. Similarly the ideals of equality and communal solidarity may be emphasized as against those of hierarchy, power and unequal distribution of wealth which are seen as being upheld by the center.

Second, they become articulated in the image of the society's "double", the "contradiction" or "other-side" of a society's institutionalized image.<sup>20</sup>

Third, they become manifest in the development of images of the pristine ideals of the existing society, uncontaminated by the process of its concrete institutionalization.

Fourth, they become manifest in the images of a social and cultural order, totally different from the existing one—or even uncontaminated at all by any institutionalization.

## IX

These various orientations and themes of protest, these "heterodox" and antinomian and potentially rebellious orientations, the attempts to overcome the limitations, contradictions and tensions inherent in the construction of social order and in its reproduction, the images of the society's "double", are carried and articulated by various different groups or individuals—in a great variety of social situations. Given the importance in all these situations of the playing out of the various ambivalences towards the social order, almost every such situation contains some potentially antinomian and rebellious orientations, even if in some such situations the potential antinomian ten-

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<sup>20</sup> A. Deconflé, "Sociologie des Révolutions," Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968.

dencies inherent in these orientations of protest are checked or regulated by full legitimation and institutionalization.

Thus first of all these double images of the society are articulated and played out in most of the major ritual and communicative situations in which the models of social order are presented.<sup>21</sup>

Second, paradoxically and significantly the consciousness and portrayal of such arbitrariness is most fully evident in the rituals of the center. In these rituals, and in other major communicative situations of the ambivalence to the cultural order, the themes of its arbitrariness, of other possibilities and of their danger, are fully played out, attesting to the fact that the consciousness of such arbitrariness is never fully obliterated; that it is, at least, only transposed to another level of symbolism and consciousness.

Third, these themes are also articulated, as in many primitive societies, in special rituals of rebellion, in which the existing power, hierarchy, and often intersexual relations are momentarily, symbolically and ritually reversed—but in which the potential antinomian tendencies inherent in all these orientations of power are checked or regulated by full legitimation and institutionalization of the rituals.

Fourth, these themes are also played out in the fully structural liminal situations—the various rites de passage in which the symbolic space between the strict boundaries of various institutional spheres is being—symbolically—constructed. Last they are also played out in a very great variety of more loosely structured situations, such as for instance those of pilgrimage, of play and the like.<sup>22</sup>

These themes and images may also become “stored” as it were in some social group such as for instance the monks in many Buddhist societies—who serve as the carriers of the symbolic attributes of membership in a collectivity and of its symbols in their primordial pre-institutional level.<sup>23</sup> These themes and images may also become articulated in different manifestations of the esoteric—in private and

<sup>21</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Communication and Reference Group Behavior,” in idem, *Essays in Comparative Institutions*, New York, John Wiley, 1963, pp. 309–343.

<sup>22</sup> See, for instance, J.S. Brunner, A. Jolly, K. Sylva (eds), “Play, Its Role in Development and Evolution,” Penguin Books, 1976, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1976, esp. part One B, pp. 119–156, and Part One B, pp. 174–222; V. Turner, “The Center Out There, Pilgrim’s Goal,” *History of Religions*, vol. 12, 1973, pp. 191–230.

<sup>23</sup> A good illustration can be found in P. Mus, “Traditions asiennes et bouddhisme moderne,” *Eranos Jahrbuch* 32, 1968, pp. 161–275; idem, “La Sociologie de George Gurevitch et l’Asie,” *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, 43, 1967, pp. 1–21.

public life alike—and in the definition of the private as against the public spheres in the definition of purely personal relations, such as, above all, friendship,<sup>24</sup> or they may be articulated in eruptions of chiliastic, millenian messianic outbursts or also become connected with more organized movements of heterodoxy or protest.

In most of these situations some liminal space is created, in which different orientations and themes of protest are played out, aiming, in one way or another, at the reconstruction of the relations between trust, power, social division of labor and broader meaning, and at reconstituting, reaffirming or changing the boundaries of personal and collective identity; the symbols of the center and delineation of pure, as against dangerous, space.

All such situations become through the symbolic transposition of these symbolic orientations, of the awareness of arbitrariness of social order and orientations of protest which take place in them a part both of the ways of maintenance of the social order, but at the same time and for the same reasons starting points for potential social change.

In every society there exists not just one liminal situation or even one type of such situations, but rather there exist a multiplicity of such types of liminality, as well as of such concrete situations—related to the various placement of the tensions and contradictions between the major components of social order—division of labor, trust, power and search for broader meaning.

The distinction between liminal and liminoid situations, proposed lately by V. Turner, is but only one of such possible distinctions. Additional different combinations of liminality, *communitas*, anti-structure, of different orientations to the center and to symbols of collective identity, as well as to movements of protest and possible change, can be found in most societies—not only in modern ones, but also in tribal and in various “great”, pre-modern civilizations, to which most of our seminar was devoted.

Thus it would not be correct to say that in so-called “primitive” or tribal societies there tend to develop only highly structured limi-

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<sup>24</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Friendship and the Structure of Trust and Solidarity in Society*, in E. Leyton (ed.), *The Compact, Selected Dimensions of Friendship*, Memorial University of New Foundland, 1974, pp. 138–146; and S.N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, *Clients, Patrons and Friends*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Forthcoming.

nal situations. As U. Almagor's paper in this volume shows—and as can be found also through a careful examination of many ethnographic materials—even in tribal societies there may exist different types of such liminal situations and while the more structured are naturally much more visible, they have not been the only ones.

Similarly such studies, as that by Shils and Young on the Coronation in Great Britain,<sup>25</sup> those of Edward Muir on civic ritual in Renaissance Venice,<sup>26</sup> the recent quite numerous studies of Soviet rituals,<sup>27</sup> do indicate that more fully structured liminal or semi-liminal situations can be found in modern societies.

But the relative spread and importance of such different societies does indeed differ between various societies, and it is the systemic analysis of such variations—perhaps with the central emphasis on their relations to different directions of change—that should constitute the major focus of comparative study of liminality.

## X

The differences in the structuring of the symbolism of liminality and of liminal situations in different societies are greatly influenced by the different constellations, in different societies, of those components of construction of social order, the relations between which are at the very roots of development of tendencies to liminality, i.e. the relations or confrontation between division of labor, construction of trust and power, and the search for broader meaning.

It is not only differences in the division of labor, in the levels of social differentiation—i.e. differences between mechanical and organic solidarity, between “non-literate”, primitive or tribal societies on the one hand, and modern ones on the other—that shape different types of liminal situations in different societies.

Such differences are of course very important in shaping some of the aspects of such situations in any society. There can be no doubt that in the less differentiated societies, many of the situations of

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<sup>25</sup> E. Shils and M. Young, “The Meaning of the Coronation,” in E. Shils, “Center and Periphery,” *op. cit.*, pp. 135–153.

<sup>26</sup> E. Muir, “Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice,” Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981.

<sup>27</sup> C. Lane, “The Rites of Rulers—Ritual in an Industrial Society, The Soviet Case,” Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981.



liminality are more structured, more fully ritualized and that within them different themes of liminality, of protest, antistructure are more fully articulated and in fact also highly regulated.

Max Gluckman's classical analysis of *Rituals of Rebellion*<sup>28</sup> does indeed portray exactly this type of situation in which protest, liminality, antistructure are very closely interrelated, fully structured and placed in the center of the society. His analysis does also show that the very structuring, articulation and regulation of such situation in the center seem to minimize also the disruptive potentialities of these activities, their potential for "change" and "real rebellion".

At the same time, however, as Beidelman's critique of Gluckman has shown,<sup>29</sup> the very definition of the conflicts and ambivalences articulated in *Rituals of Rebellion* are rooted not only in the conflicts inherent in social organization, but are inherent in the very nature of symbolic construction of social and cultural life which, in many ways, shape and provide an overall meaning to the symbols of collective identity and of the centers.

Thus indeed it is the structure and symbols of collective identity and of the center, their symbols and ideology, which often articulate the relations between trust, power and social division of labor, and their relation to broader meaning in terms of primordial and transcendental orientations that are of crucial importance in the structuring of different types of liminal situations and their symbolism.

Even within societies with relatively similar degree of social differentiation there do develop different types of centers and of symbolism of the center—and hence also of different types of liminal situations. Thus the case of the Desanett presented here by Uri Almagor points to some of the very important differences in contrast with the situation among the Zulu depicted by Max Gluckman—and indeed a much greater variety of centers and concomitant different types of liminal situations can be identified in various African societies and naturally even more beyond them.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, even in such societies, there do exist, as Uri Almagor's analysis indicates, a multiplicity of such liminal situations and many

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<sup>28</sup> Max Gluckman, "Rituals of Rebellion in S.E. Africa," in idem, "Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa," New York, The Free Press, pp. 110–137.

<sup>29</sup> O. Beidelman, "The Swazi Royal Ritual," *Africa*, vol. 36, 1966, pp. 373–405.

<sup>30</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, M. Abitboul and N. Chazan, "Les Origines de l'Etat, une nouvelle approche," *Annales*, 1983, No. 6, pp. 1–20.

of them constitute indeed very important nuclei of extension of trust and hence may also indeed seem as starting points for change. These changes mean not necessarily changes in the centers of society—they may take place in such dimensions as the structuring of the symbolic boundaries of collectivities or in the definition of various roles—thus indeed pointing to the importance of such situations for the analysis of different modes of change, of changes in different components of the social order.

## XI

The variability of centers in societies not dissimilar from the point of view of division of labor can be seen in those papers included here which deal with the “premodern” Great Civilizations which constitute a sort of inbetween case, as it were, between the ideal type of mechanic and organic solidarity.

All these civilizations belong to the so-called Axial Age Civilizations,<sup>31</sup> i.e. those civilizations which crystallized out of the revolutions or transformations connected with what Karl Jaspers designated as the Axial Age when, in the first millenium before the Christian era—namely Ancient Israel, later on Christianity in its great variety, Ancient Greece, partially Iran with the development of Zoroastrianism, China early Imperial period, Hinduism and Buddhism, and, much later, beyond the Axial Age proper, Islam.<sup>32</sup> Common to all the civilizations was the development and institutionalization of a basic tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders.

The institutionalization of such conception was not just an intellectual exercise—it connoted a far-reaching change in man’s active orientation to the world—a change with basic institutional implications and it was the combination of these new conceptions with their institutional implications that generated the symbolic intellectual and institutional possibilities of the development of sects and heterodoxies as potential agents of civilizational change.

On the symbolic or ideological level the development of these conceptions created a problem in the rational, abstract articulation of

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<sup>31</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Axial Age,” *op. cit.*

<sup>32</sup> K. Jaspers, “Vom Urspruch und Ziel der Geschichte,” Zurich, 1949; E. Voegelin, “Order and Periphery,” vols. I-IV, Baton Rouge, University of Louisiane Press, 1954-1974.

the givens of human and social existence and of the cosmic order. The root of the problem lies in the fact that the development of such conceptions necessarily poses the question of the ways in which the chasm between the transcendental and the mundane orders can be bridged. This gives rise—to use Weber's terminology—to the problem of salvation which is usually seen in terms of the reconstruction of human behavior and personality. This reconstruction would be based on the precepts of the higher moral or metaphysical order through which the chasm between the transcendental and mundane orders is bridged, and, as Gananath Obeyesekere has put it, rebirth eschatology becomes ethicized.<sup>33</sup> But the very attempt at such reconstruction was always torn by many internal tensions. It is these tensions—which we shall explicate in greater detail later on—and their institutional repercussions that ushered in a new type of social and civilizational dynamics in the history of mankind.

On the institutional level the development and institutionalization of such a conception of a basic tension, a chasm between the transcendental and the mundane order, gave rise, in all these civilizations, to attempts to reconstruct the mundane world according to the appropriate transcendental vision, to the principles of the higher metaphysical or ethical order.

The given, mundane, order was perceived in these civilizations as incomplete, inferior, often as bad as in need of being—at least in some of its parts—reconstructed according to the conception of bridging over the chasm between the transcendental and the mundane orders of salvation, i.e., according to the precepts of the higher ethical or metaphysical order, giving accordingly rise to far concrete institutional implications of these tensions. The most general and common of these has been the high degree of symbolic orientation and ideologization of the major aspects of the institutional structure, especially of the structure of collectivities, social centers, social hierarchies and processes of political struggle.

Thus first of all there developed in these civilizations the tendency to the construction of distinct civilizational frameworks and of the development of the conceptions of accountability of rulers.

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<sup>33</sup> G. Obeyesekere, "The rebirth eschatology and its transformations, a contribution to the sociology of early Buddhism," in W. Doniger O'Flaherty (ed.), "Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Tradition," Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1983, pp. 137–165.

Some collectivities and institutional spheres were singled out as the most appropriate carriers of the attributes of the required resolution. As a result new types of collectivities were created or seemingly natural and "primordial" groups were endowed with special meaning couched in terms of the perception of this tension and its resolution. The most important innovation in this context was the development of "cultural" or "religious" collectivities as distinct from ethnic or political ones. Some embryonic elements of this development existed in some of those societies in which no conception of tension between the transcendental and the mundane order was institutionalized. However, it was only with the development and institutionalization of this conception that those elements became transformed into new, potentially full-fledged collectivities with autonomous criteria of membership and loci of authority. The membership in these collectivities and frameworks tended to become imbued with a strong ideological dimension and to become a focus of ideological struggle—with a strong insistence on the exclusiveness and closure of such collectivities and on the distinction between inner and outer social and cultural space defined by them. This tendency became connected with attempts to structure the different cultural, political and ethnic collectivities in some hierarchical order, and the very construction of such an order usually became a focus of ideological and political conflict.

Closely related to this mode of structuring of special civilizational frameworks, there took place, in all these civilizations, a far-reaching restructuring of the relation between the political and the higher, transcendental order.

The political order as the central locus of the mundane order has usually been conceived as lower than the transcendental one and accordingly had to be restructured according to the precepts of the latter and above all according to the perception of the proper mode of overcoming the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order, of "salvation". It was the rulers who were usually held to be responsible for organizing the political order.

At the same time the nature of the rulers became greatly transformed. The King-God, the embodiment of the cosmic and earthly order alike, disappeared, and a secular ruler, in principle accountable to some higher order, appeared. There emerged the conception of the accountability of the rulers and of the community to a higher authority, God, Divine Law and the like. Accordingly, the

possibility of calling a ruler to judgement emerged. The first most dramatic appearance of this conception appeared in Ancient Israel, in the priestly and prophetic pronouncements. A different conception of such accountability, an accountability to the community and its laws, appeared in the northern shores of the Eastern Mediterranean, in Ancient Greece. In different forms this conception appeared in all these civilizations.<sup>34</sup>

## XII

In connection with all these specific symbolic and institutional characteristics of the Axial Age Civilizations there have taken place, in these civilizations, far-reaching changes in the map of liminal situations and symbols, of movements and symbolism of protest. Many new such types—as compared with tribal societies—have developed, while at the same time the structure of symbols of ‘older’ types of situations has greatly changed.

First of all, in these civilizations, the “central”, fully structured regulated rituals tend to become more and more limited to fully elaborated rituals of the center, with the periphery playing a much more passive role, mostly as spectators, or at most as rather passive recipients of the regnant vision. In these rituals the anti-structural and protest components and symbols are on the whole weakened and minimized, although there may indeed develop a very strong articulation of the ambivalences toward the arbitrariness of the cultural order—yet with a strong, “orthodox” emphasis on the danger of diverting from it.

At the same time there tend to develop, within these societies and civilizations, relatively autonomous spheres and situations of what lately has been denoted as popular culture, with different degrees of connection to more central rituals. These range from diffuse local festivals, various leisure type activities, to more elaborate carnivals, in which many of the ambivalences and themes of protest are played out. These situations may become connected in different ways to more official regional rituals linking the center and periphery,<sup>35</sup> com-

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<sup>34</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Cultural Traditions and Political Dynamics,” *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> One major classic of such analysis is M. Granet, “Festivals and Songs in Ancient China,” London, Routledge, 1932; *idem*—“La Pensée Chinoise,” Paris,

binning different mixtures of antinomianism and acceptance of the existing order.

Third there takes place in these civilizations the development of an entirely new type of liminality and protest—namely the symbolically and organizationally fully fledged heterodoxies, sects and sectarianism, a phenomenon closely related to the basic characteristics of the Axial Age Civilizations.<sup>36</sup>

Closely connected with the development of such heterodoxies and sectarianism is the development of carriers of the “pristine” religious vision, the holy men of antiquity, such as the Indian or Buddhist renouncers, Christian monks and religious virtuosi—of the type discussed in this volume in Ilana F. Silber’s paper.<sup>37</sup>

### XIII

Beyond these various types of liminal situations and protest which can be found in all the Axial Age Civilizations and which are closely connected, not just with the degree of social differentiation, but to the combination of such differentiation above all with new modes of symbolic structuring of the world inherent in these civilizations, there do, however, exist far-reaching differences in the different Axial Age Civilizations in the exact structure and symbolism of these liminal situations, in their organizational and symbolic maps, in their connection to movements of protest, and in their impact on the macro-social order in general and processes of change in these societies in particular.

These differences are related to the combination of the mode of social division of labor predominant within the basic cultural orientations—especially with the nature of the concepts of salvation predominant in them—whether they are this or other-worldly; to the structure of power in them and perhaps, above all, the structure and autonomy of the religious in relation to the political institutions.<sup>38</sup>

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Micel, 1950; and A.S. Wolf (ed.)—“Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society,” Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1974.

<sup>36</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Heterodoxy, Sectarianism and Dynamics of Civilization,” *Diogenes*, 1983, 120, pp. 1–21.

<sup>37</sup> See also I.F. Silber, “Dissent Through Holiness, The Case of the Radical Renouncer, in Theravada Buddhist Countries,” *Numen*, XXVIII, 2, 1981, pp. 164–193.

<sup>38</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, “Religious Organizations and Political Process in Centralized Empires,” in idem, “Tradition, Change and Modernity,” op. cit., pp. 169–201.

It is these aspects of the Axial Age Civilizations that shape the respective map of liminal symbols and situations and of movements of protest and heterodoxy within the potential impact on structuring of the boundaries of collectives and the symbols of the centers on processes of change in these societies—as the papers of Ilana F. Silber, Steve Kaplan, Michael Heyd, and the discussion on the Sabbatean movement—which was held in the seminar but which is not reported here—attest to.

Thus, to point out just very briefly, the papers presented here indicate in the other-worldly civilizations, such as Buddhism (and in a different mode also Hinduism) that the major impact of some at least of the types of liminal situations and protest movements is not on the reconstruction of the political centers of the respective societies; these centers are often seen as irrelevant to the major concept of salvation.

This does not mean that the Buddhist or Hindu sects did not have far-reaching impacts on the dynamics of their respective civilizations. First of all, they extended the scope of the different national and political communities and imbued them with new symbolic dimensions.<sup>39</sup> They could also second change some of the bases and criteria of participation in the civilizational communities—as was the case in Jainism, in the Bhakti movement and, of course, above all, in Buddhism when an entirely new civilizational framework was reconstructed.

Buddhism introduced also new elements into the political scene—above all that special way in which the Sangha, usually politically a

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<sup>39</sup> On some of the dynamics of Buddhist civilization, from the point of view of our analysis, see J. Bunnag, "Buddhist Monk, Buddhist Layman: A Study of Urban Monastic Organization in Central Thailand," *Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology*, No. 6, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1973; M. Nash et al., "Anthropological Studies Theravada Buddhism," Yale University, Southeast Asian Cultural Report Series, No. 3, New Haven, 1966; Harper, *Religion in South Asia*; S.J. Tambiah, "World Conqueror and World Renouncer," Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976; H. Bechert, "Buddhismus Staat und Gesellschaft in der Laudan des Theravada Buddhismus," 4 vols., Frankfurt am Main, Alfred Metzner, 1966–68; E. Sarkisyanz, "The Buddhist Background of the Burmese Revolution," The Hague, M. Nijhoff, 1965; P.E. Reynolds, "Civic Religion and National Community in Thailand," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 36, No. 4, 1977, pp. 267–282; C.F. Keyes, "Millennialism, Theravada Buddhism and Thai Society," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 36, No. 4, 1977, pp. 297–327; and W.H. Rassers, "Panji, the Culture Hero: A Structural Study of Religion in Java," The Hague, M. Nijhoff, 1959.

very compliant group, could in some cases, as Paul Mus<sup>40</sup> has shown, become a sort of moral conscience of the community, calling the rulers to some accountability.

But this impact was of a different nature from that of the struggles between the reigning orthodoxies and the numerous heterodoxies that developed within the monotheistic civilizations.

Thus indeed, in those civilizations in which a very strong combination of this and other-worldly orientations is predominant, above all in the monotheistic civilizations in which the political centers are indeed seen as an arena of salvation, the impact of such movements on the structuring of centers is much more powerful.

Of crucial importance has been the fact that in these latter cases a central aspect of such struggles was the attempt to reconstruct the very political and cultural centers of their respective societies and that, because of this, these struggles became a central part of the histories of these civilizations, shaping the major contours of their development.<sup>41</sup>

From all those points of view Confucian China constitutes a rather mixed case, paradoxically somewhat nearer to the monotheistic than to the Asian civilizations.

But even in these civilizations such impact may be limited, as Steve Kaplan's paper on Ethiopia indicated, by the strength of the center, by its distance from the centers of Christianity, by the position of the Church *vis-à-vis* the Church and by the degree of monopolization of the symbols of the sacred by the rulers. Here it would be indeed very interesting to compare these developments with Eastern Christianity in general and the Byzantine and Russian Empires in particular.

The full impact of the different symbols and movements of liminality and protest on the symbols of the center, as derived from the combination of this and other-worldly orientations, can be found in conjunction with special geopolitical situations, in Western Europe, in the transition to modernity, in the Great Revolutions,<sup>42</sup> as discussed in the paper of M. Heyd and was also to some degree in the Jewish case in the Sabbatean movement.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Paul Mus, *op. cit.*

<sup>41</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, "Cultural Traditions and Political Dynamics," *op. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, "Revolutions and The Transformation of Societies," New York, The Free Press, 1978.

<sup>43</sup> The classical analysis on this movement is to be found in G. Scholem, "Major



At the same time, however, this strong impact of these movements on the center should not obliterate the importance of the other types of liminal situations, of popular culture that tend to develop in such societies and which become even more pronounced—and transformed—with the development of modernity.

#### XIV

Indeed with the development of modernity, the whole map of liminality and protest has developed in new directions which are connected both with the growing social differentiation, development of market economy, industrialization and capitalism, as well as with far-reaching transformations in the symbolic field.

In this latter field two central, closely interconnected trends, are here of crucial importance. One is the growing incorporation of symbols and modes of protest into the centers of the post-revolutionary societies and into their symbols; the consequent legitimation of such symbols, making paradoxically more difficult the direct confrontation between the center and the movements of protest and weakening the impact of the latter on the former.<sup>44</sup>

Second is the development of *Entzauberung*, of disenchantment, thus seemingly, as Erik Cohen's paper shows, weakening the contact, the connection between the centers of society, as well as other spheres of life, including those of daily life, with any transcendental vision.

Third was the development of mass-culture in general and of mass-media in particular. This last development has, as is well known, given rise to a far-reaching controversy in the social sciences—closely related also to the controversy about the end of ideology—and of direct bearing on our concern here. One view, expounded already by the "critical" sociology of the thirties, best articulated in the work of Adorno and his followers, and extending—in the contemporary sciences—to the work of Habermas and many others—saw in contemporary mass-culture an escapist (and often vulgar) flight from the real 'ideological' struggle, from attempts at active, potentially revo-

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Trends in Jewish Mysticism," New York, Schocken Books, 1941; and idem, Shabetai Zwi, "The Mystical Messiah," Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1973.

<sup>44</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, "Revolutions and the Transformation of Societies," op. cit., ch. 10.

lutionary participation in a society dominated by various economic and political groups; as well as—as most succinctly articulated by T.S. Eliot—a travesty of and flight from a genuine traditional culture of the lower class.<sup>45</sup>

Another view, most fully expounded by Edward Shils, saw in such mass-culture—despite many of its vulgar aspects—a result of continuously opening up of centers of the modern society to participation of broader strata, and at the same time giving rise, by such growing participation and incorporation, to a weakening of ideological orientations and growth of orientation to civility.<sup>46</sup>

These controversies are of course of crucial importance for our discussion and while it would be impossible to do justice here to the complexity of the topic, it might yet be worthwhile to present some preliminary indications.

There can, of course, be no doubt that the combination of these three trends—of the incorporation of themes of protest into the central symbols of society; the process of disenchantment and the development of mass culture and mass-media—have indeed given rise to very far-reaching changes, in modern societies, in the structure of liminality, in the maps of symbols and situations of liminality and protest in the relations between liminality, *communitas*, antistructure and processes of social change.

It is however doubtful whether all these developments have indeed ruptured the orientations to the transcendental, not only beyond the centers which have indeed to no small degree lost their place as loci of charismatic vision—but also in other spheres of mundane life, transposing such orientations only to “centers out there”, and whether it is liminoid situations which are the most prevalent in modern, democratic societies.

Indeed, as is very well known, many movements of protest with very strong elements of anti-structure or *communitas* and strong transcendental visions, have indeed developed in late modern societies—and with orientations to the centers. Perhaps the best known of these

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<sup>45</sup> A good survey of the mass culture debate, even if from a rather special point of view, can be found in A. Swingewood, “The Myth of Mass-Culture,” London, MacMillan, 1977; also S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Low and P. Willis (eds), “Culture Media Language,” London, Hutchinson, 1980.

<sup>46</sup> E. Shils, “The Theory of Mass Society,” in *idem*, “Center and Periphery,” *op. cit.*, pp. 81–111.

has been the student movements of the sixties. Truly enough, this movement—or rather these movements—were often seen as failures when compared to the great classical revolutions as they have not succeeded, despite their declared goals, to have strong direct impact on the centers of their societies; to reconstruct these centers in the mode of the Great Revolutions. And yet these movements—as well as such movements as the ethnic and the women's one—had great and varied impact on many central dimensions of the social order, such as the meaning of institution—as for instance the weakening of the centrality—derived to no small degree from the Protestant ethic—of the economic and work situations to new definitions of roles—such as gender roles, economic roles and of the role of citizens.

Such changes have been often connected with the creation of new types of liminal situations—one of the most interesting of which have been various structural enclaves within which new cultural orientations, new modes of search for meaning, often couched in transcendental terms, tend to be developed and upheld—partially as counter-cultures, partially as components of new culture.

These enclaves in which some people may participate fully, others in a more transitory fashion, may serve in some situations as reservoirs of extreme revolutionary activities and groups, as loci or starting points of various new social movements, or they may become connected in different ways with the more “routine” post-industrial coalitions.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, the development of mass-media have created—as Elihu Katz's paper indicates—new possibilities of contact in the framework of daily life with public, charismatic events.

These are necessarily only very preliminary remarks and orientations about the different directions of recrystallization of symbols and situations of liminality in modern societies—but even they indicate the importance of continuous, systematic research and analysis in this field.

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<sup>47</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, “Changing Patterns of Modern Political Protest and Centers,” in *Science et Conscience de la Société, Mélanges présentée à Raymond Aron*, Paris, Caiman Levy, 1971, t.II, pp. 475–497.

PART TWO  
AXIAL CIVILIZATIONS

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## INTRODUCTION TO SECTION II-A OF AXIAL CIVILIZATIONS: GENERAL ANALYSIS

The papers collected in this section describe some general aspects of the Axial civilizations—to the analysis of which constitutes the first part of the substantive analyses presented in this volume.

The Axial Civilizations, what in Weber's nomenclature were called World Religions, constitute some of the major civilizations which have shaped the contours of human history in the last two to three millennia—the monotheistic civilizations, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Hinduism, Confucianism and Buddhism.

The papers collected in this section present some aspects of the general analysis of these civilizations. The first article, "The Axial Age," published in 1982, opened up the contemporary dimension of these civilizations and presents the basic characteristics and problematiques thereof. The second article follows up this analysis with a special emphasis on the political dimension thereof. The third article elaborates in greater detail the central role of intellectuals in the constitution and dynamics of Axial Civilizations.

The last article analyzes—following the general observations on this topic in the article on liminality in the first section of this collection—the central role of utopias and sectarian activities in the dynamics of these civilizations, a topic which will be taken up in greater detail in the chapters in the next section in which it will be illustrated through the analysis of several Axial Civilizations. All these topics, as well as the general analysis of these civilizations, constitute a focus of continual research and revision some of which especially the concept of secondary breakthroughs have been discussed in great detail in a recent workshop and which will be published in 2003.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

# THE AXIAL AGE: THE EMERGENCE OF TRANSCENDENTAL VISIONS AND THE RISE OF CLERICS

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### 1. *The axial age and the emergence of transcendental visions*

In the first millennium before the Christian era a revolution took place in the realm of ideas and their institutional base which had irreversible effects on several major civilizations and on human history in general. The revolution or series of revolutions, which are related to Karl Jaspers' 'Axial Age', have to do with the emergence, conceptualization and institutionalization of a basic tension between the transcendental and mundane orders. This revolutionary process took place in several major civilizations including Ancient Israel, Ancient Greece, early Christianity, Zoroastrian Iran, early Imperial China and in the Hindu and Buddhist civilizations. Although beyond the axial age proper, it also took place in Islam.<sup>1</sup>

These conceptions were developed and articulated by a relatively new social element. A new type of intellectual elite became aware of the necessity to actively construct the world according to some transcendental vision. The successful institutionalization of such conceptions and visions gave rise to extensive re-ordering of the internal contours of societies as well as their internal relations. This changed the dynamics of history and introduced the possibility of world history or histories.

The importance of these revolutionary changes has been recognized to some degree in sociological and historical literature. The recognition of their importance was in the background of Weber's monumental comparative study of world religions which focused on the rationalization of these world religions.<sup>2</sup> Jasper's original insight

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<sup>1</sup> K. Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (Zurich, 1949), pp. 15–106.

<sup>2</sup> See Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religion-soziologie* (Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1922 [1978]) and the English translation: *Ancient Judaism* (New York, The Free Press, 1952); *The Religion of India* (ibid. 1958); *The Religion of China* (ibid. 1951, 1964).



into the axial age, concisely presented in his *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*, was taken up in a conference organized on the initiative of Benjamin Schwartz and published in 1975 as a *Daedalus* volume.<sup>3</sup> A rather parallel trend of thought and analysis, focusing mainly on Ancient Israel and Greece, has been developed by Eric Voegelin in his volume on *Order and History*.<sup>4</sup>

But all these works notwithstanding, no full systematic analysis of the impact of this series of revolutions on the structuring of human societies and history is available. Starting from the insights of these scholars, we shall attempt such a systematic analysis of the ways in which this series of revolutions has transformed the shape of human societies and history in what seems to be an irreversible manner.

## 2. *The nature of axial revolutions*

What then is the nature if these Axial Age revolutions? We may quote here Benjamin Schwartz:

If there is nevertheless some common underlying impulse in all these 'axial' movements, it might be called the strain towards transcendence [ . . . ] What I refer to here is something close to the etymological meaning of the word—a kind of standing back and looking beyond—a kind of critical, reflective questioning of the actual and a new vision of what lies beyond [ . . . ] In concentrating our attention on those transcendental breakthroughs we are of course stressing the significance of changes in man's conscious life. What is more, we are stressing the consciousness of small groups of prophets, philosophers and wise men who may have had a very small impact on their immediate environment.<sup>5</sup>

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On Weber's thematic and vision see: W. Schluchter, *The Paradox of Rationalization*, in G. Roth and W. Schluchter, *Max Weber's Vision of History, Ethics and Methods* (Berkeley-Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 1979), pp. 11–64; and see also P. Bourdieu, *Une interprétation de la théorie de la religion selon Max Weber*, *European Journal of Sociology*, XII (1971), 1–24; R. Lennert, *Die Religions-theorie Max Webers, Versuch einer Analyse seines religionsgeschichtlichen Verstands*, Inaugural Dissertation (Stuttgart, 1955); F.H. Tennbruck, *The Problem of thematic unity in the works of Max Weber*, *The British Journal of Sociology*, XXI (1980), 316–351; and Stephen Kalberg, *The search for thematic orientations in a fragmented oeuvre; the discussion of Max Weber in recent German literature*, *Sociology* (1979) 13, 127–39.

<sup>3</sup> *Wisdom, Revelation and Doubt: perspectives on the First Millenium B.C.*, edited by B. Schwartz, *Daedalus* (Spring 1975).

<sup>4</sup> E. Voegelin, *Order and History*, vols. I–IV (Baton Rouge, University of Louisiana Press, 1954–1974).

<sup>5</sup> B.I. Schwartz, *The age of transcendence in wisdom, doubt and uncertainty*, *Daedalus* (Spring 1975), 3–4.

These conceptions of a basic tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders differed greatly from the 'homologous' perceptions of the relation between these two orders which were prevalent in so-called pagan religions in those very societies and civilizations from which these post-axial-age civilizations emerged.

Certainly, the transmundane order has, in all human societies, been perceived as somewhat different, usually higher and stronger, than the mundane one. But in the pre-axial-age 'pagan' civilizations this higher world has been symbolically structured according to principles very similar to those of the mundane or lower one. Relatively similar symbolic terms were used for the definition of God(s) and man; of the mundane and transmundane orders—even if there always was a continuous stress on the difference between them. In most such societies the transmundane world was usually equated with a concrete setting, 'the other world', which was the abode of the dead, the world of spirits, and not entirely unlike the mundane world in detail.<sup>6</sup>

These pagan societies, of course, always recognized the moral frailty of man; the failure of people to live up to the prevalent social and moral ideals. However, a conception of an autonomous, distinct moral order which is qualitatively different from both this world and 'the other world' developed only to a minimal degree.

Such homologous conceptions of the transmundane and mundane worlds were very often closely connected with some mythical and cyclical conception of time in which the differences between the major time dimensions—past, present and future—are only mildly articulated.

By contrast, in the axial-age civilizations, the perception of a sharp disjunction between the mundane and transmundane worlds developed. There was a concomitant stress on the existence of a higher transcendental moral or metaphysical order which is beyond any given this- or other-worldly reality.

The development of these conceptions created a problem in the rational, abstract articulation of the givens of human and social existence

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<sup>6</sup> For some of the many analyses of these premises of pagan religions see for instance: M. Fortes & G. Dieterlen (eds.), *African Systems of Thought* (London, Oxford University Press, 1965), esp. pp. 7–49; the analysis in E. Voegelin, *Order and History*, op. cit., vol. I, *Israel and Revelation*; the papers by Oppenheimer and Garelli in *Wisdom, Revelation and Doubt*, op. cit.; H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1948). For a case of individual transcendental vision which was not institutionalized see: G. Wiley, *Mesoamerica Civilization and the Idea of Transcendence*, *Antiquity*, L (1976), 205–215.

and of the cosmic order. The root of the problem lies in the fact that the development of such conceptions necessarily poses the question of the ways in which the chasm between the transcendental and the mundane orders can be bridged. This gives rise to the problem of salvation—to use Weber's terminology. The roots of the quest for salvation are given in the consciousness of death and the arbitrariness of human actions and social arrangements. The search for some type of immortality and a way to overcome such arbitrariness are universal to all human societies. In societies in which the mundane and transmundane worlds are defined in relatively homologous terms this search for immortality is on the whole envisaged in terms of some physical continuity. It is usually seen as conditional to the fulfillment of one's concrete obligation to one's group.

This no longer holds true in civilizations in which there is an emphasis on the chasm between the transcendental and the mundane order and a conception of a higher moral or metaphysical order. While the concept of immortality in these civilizations may or may not still be tied to bodily images and to ideas of physical resurrection, the very possibility of some continuity beyond this world is usually seen in terms of the reconstruction of human behavior and personality. This reconstruction would be based on the precepts of the higher moral or metaphysical order through which the chasm between the transcendental and mundane orders is bridged,<sup>7</sup> and, as Gananath Obeyesekere has put it, rebirth eschatology becomes ethnicized.<sup>8</sup> But the very attempt at such reconstruction was always torn by many internal tensions. It is these tensions—which we shall explicate in greater detail later on—and their institutional repercussions that ushered in a new type of social and civilizational dynamics in the history of mankind.

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<sup>7</sup> See Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religion-soziologie*, op. cit., and G. Roth & W. Schluchter, *Max Weber's Vision of History*, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> G. Obeyesekere, The rebirth eschatology and its transformations: a contribution to the sociology of early Buddhism in W. Doniger O'Flaherty (ed.), *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1980), pp. 137–165.

## II. THE EMERGENCE OF INTELLECTUALS AND CLERICS AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE WORLD

### 3. *The emergence of intellectuals and the transformation of elites*

In order to understand these dynamics we have first of all to analyze the social actors who were most active in giving these civilizations their form.

The development and institutionalization of the perception of basic tension between the transcendental and the mundane order was closely connected with the emergence of a new social element. Generally speaking it was a new type of elite which was cited as the carrier of models of cultural and social order. Examples would include the Jewish prophets and priests, the Greek philosophers and sophists, the Chinese Literati, the Hindu Brahmins, the Buddhist Sangha and the Islamic Ulema.

It was the initial small nuclei of such groups of intellectuals that developed these new 'transcendental' conceptions. In all these axial-age civilizations these conceptions ultimately became institutionalized. That is, they became the predominant orientations of both the ruling as well as of many secondary elites, fully embodied in their respective centers or subcenters.

Once such a conception of a tension between the transcendental and the mundane order became institutionalized, it was associated with the transformation of political elites, and turned the new scholar class into relatively autonomous partners in the major ruling coalitions and protest movements. The new type of elites which resulted from this process of institutionalization were entirely different in nature from the elites which had been ritual, magical and sacral specialist in the pre-axial-age civilizations. The new elites, intellectuals and clerics were recruited and legitimized according to distinct, autonomous criteria, and were organized in autonomous settings, distinct from those of the basic ascriptive units. They acquired a potential country-wide status-consciousness of their own. They also tended to become potentially independent of other categories of elites and social groups. But, at the same time, they competed strongly with them, especially over the production and control of symbols and media of communication.

Such competition now became very intensive because, with the institutionalization of such transcendental conceptions, a parallel

transformation had taken place in the structure of other elites. All these elites tended to develop claims for an autonomous place in the construction of the cultural and social order. They saw themselves not only as performing specific technical, functional activities, but also as potentially autonomous carriers of a distinct cultural and social order related to the transcendental vision prevalent in their respective societies.

The non-political cultural elites and the political elites each saw themselves as the autonomous articulators of the new order, with the other type potentially inferior and accountable to themselves.

Moreover, each of these groups of elites were not, in these societies, homogeneous. There developed a multiplicity of secondary cultural, political or educational elites, each very often carrying a different conception of the cultural and social order.

With these new types of elites, above all the political and cultural ones, the intellectuals became the major partners in the formulative ruling coalitions as well as of movements of protest. It is these elites that were the most active in the reconstruction of the world and the institutional creativity that developed in these societies.

#### 4. *Institutionalization of the transcendental vision and the re-ordering of the world*

The attempts at re-ordering of the world developed in most spheres of human existence and activity. Such reorganization of the world has far-reaching implications for the formation of the human personality and of personal identity in terms of the model of the ideal man. In the societies in which the perception of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders has been institutionalized, this personal identity and the definition of man was taken beyond the primordial givens of human existence, and beyond the various technical needs of daily activities. Purely personal virtues, such as courage, or interpersonal one such as solidarity, have been taken out of their primordial framework and are combined, in different dialectical modes, with the attributes of resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders. In this way a new level of internal tensions in the formation of personality is generated.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, E.H. Erikson (ed.), *Adulthood* (New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1978).

Similarly the institutionalization of the perceived tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders tends to create the corresponding definition of different worlds of knowledge—be they philosophy, religions, metaphysics, ‘science’ or the like. Such definitions transformed different types of *ad hoc* moral reflection and classificatory schematization into second-order worlds of knowledge. This step constitutes the starting point for what has usually been called the intellectual history of mankind.<sup>10</sup>

5. *The structuring of legitimation of social centers, traditions and political authority*

If the legitimation of the social order in most of the great pre-axial-age civilizations<sup>11</sup> was based on some fusion of sacred and primordial criteria and traditional charismatic modes of legitimation, the picture became more complicated with the institutionalization of the perception of tension between the transcendental and mundane order.<sup>12</sup>

In these post-axial-age civilizations, there developed first a strong tendency to a continuous oscillation between primordial criteria on the one hand and sacred or ideological ones—defined in terms of the attributes of salvation—on the other; and the concomitant tendency to ideologize or ‘sacralize’ the primordial attributes or to vest the sacred with primordial attributes. Second, there tended to develop a tension between ‘traditional’ modes of legitimation and more ‘open’ (rational, legal or charismatic) ones. Both these tensions were present in the very stress on the basic quest to resolve the chasm between the transcendental and the mundane orders. These tensions were not purely ‘academic’, they constituted a continuous focus of actual political struggle. There are far-reaching concrete institutional implications

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<sup>10</sup> The relations between the eschatological premises of civilizations and the construction of worlds of knowledge is one of the neglected—but also perhaps one of the most promising—arenas of the sociology of knowledge. They are now being worked out in an inter-disciplinary seminar at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Some interesting material can be found in B. Nelson, *Der Ursprung der Moderne Vergleichende Studien zum Zivilisations-prozess* (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1977).

<sup>11</sup> On Egypt, see H. Kees, *Ägypten—Die Kulturgeschichte des Orients* (Munich, 1933); and J. Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951). On Japan see J.W. Hall, *Japan from History to Modern Times* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1970).

<sup>12</sup> These terms are derived from E. Shils, Primordial, personal, sacred and civil ties, in Shils, *Center and Periphery, essays in macro-sociology* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 111–126.

in those tensions. The most general and common has been the high degree of symbolic orientation and ideologization of the major aspects of the institutional structure. This applies in particular to the structure of collectivities, social centers, social hierarchies and processes of political struggle. Some collectivities and institutional spheres were singled out as the most appropriate carriers of the attributes of the required resolution. As a result, new types of collectivities were created or seemingly natural and 'primordial' groups were endowed with special meaning couched in terms of the perception of this tension and its resolution. The most important innovation in this context was the development of 'cultural' or 'religious' collectivities as distinct from ethnic or political ones. Some embryonic elements of this development existed in some of those societies in which no conception of tension between the transcendental and the mundane order was institutionalized. However, it was only with the development and institutionalization of this conception that those elements became transformed into new, potentially fully-fledged collectivities with autonomous criteria of membership and loci of authority. The membership in these collectivities and frameworks tended to become imbued with a strong ideological dimension and to become a focus of ideological struggle.

An aspect of this ideological struggle was the insistence on the exclusiveness and closure of such collectivities and on the distinction between inner and outer social and cultural space defined by them. This aspect became connected with attempts to structure the different cultural, political and ethnic collectivities in some hierarchical order, and the very construction of such an order usually became a focus of ideological and political conflict.

#### 6. *The autonomy and distinctiveness of the Great and Little Traditions*

Related to the ordering of the major collectivities was the developing tendency towards the autonomous organization of the social centers,<sup>13</sup> and a relatively strong emphasis on the symbolic distinctiveness of the centers from the periphery. Such centers have been conceived

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<sup>13</sup> These terms are derived from E. Shils, Center and periphery, and society and societies—The macrosociological view, in Shils, *Center and Periphery*, op. cit. pp. 3–11 and 34–38; and see also their elaboration and application in S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Political Sociology* (New York, Basic Books, 1971); and S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies* (New York, The Free Press, 1978).

as the major loci of the charismatic attributes of the resolution of the transcendental tension, and hence also of the construction of cultural and societal orders. These attributes of centrality became 'naturally' related to those institutional spheres which show the closest affinity to the focus of resolution of the transcendental tension, and it is the centers most closely related to these spheres that became autonomous and distinct from the periphery.

At the same time the development of such distinctiveness and symbolic differentiation of the center gave rise to the tendency of the center to permeate the periphery and to reorganize it according to the autonomous criteria of the center.

These processes of center-formation and of reconstruction of collectivities were related to the transformation and construction of Great Traditions<sup>14</sup> as autonomous, distinct, symbolical frameworks. Such construction of centers and of Great Traditions may be evident in the 'external' artifacts such as great works of architecture, or in the writing and sanctification of scholarly books and codices. The structure of the Great Traditions in those societies in which the perception of tension between the transcendental and the mundane order has been institutionalized goes, however, beyond such external manifestations. It has above all been characterized by their symbolic and organizational distinctiveness from the Little Traditions of the periphery. Such distinctiveness and autonomy could be clearly identified, even in those cases, as among the ancient Israeli tribes, in which the carriers of such centers and Traditions were not organized in distinct, specific frameworks. It becomes organizationally more fully visible in imperial societies such as China, the Byzantine Empire, or in Theravada Buddhist societies.<sup>15</sup>

The relations between the Great and Little Traditions were transformed by processes of ideological differentiation. They gave rise to attempts by the carriers of the Great Traditions to permeate the periphery and to pull the Little Traditions into the orbit of the Great ones; as well as to attempts by the carriers of the Little Traditions to dissociate themselves from the Great Traditions, to profane them, and, paradoxically enough, also to generate a distinct ideology of the Little Traditions and of the periphery.

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<sup>14</sup> The concept of Great Tradition is derived from R. Redfield, *Human Nature and The Study of Society* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962), *passim*.

<sup>15</sup> This point is more fully elaborated in S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies*, *op. cit.*, esp. chs. iii & iv.



### 7. *The ordering of political order*

In all these civilizations there also took place a far-reaching re-ordering rooted in the conception of the relation between the political and the higher transcendental order. The political order as the central locus of the mundane order has usually been conceived as lower than the transcendental one and accordingly had to be restructured according to the precepts of the latter and, above all, according to the perception of the proper mode of overcoming the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order, of 'salvation'. It was the rulers who were usually held to be responsible for organizing the political order.

At the same time the nature of the rulers became greatly transformed. The King-God, the embodiment of the cosmic and earthly order alike, disappeared, and a secular ruler, in principle accountable to some higher order, appeared. Thus there emerged the conception of the accountability of the rulers and of the community to a higher authority, God, Divine Law and the like. Accordingly, the possibility of calling a ruler to judgement emerged. The first most dramatic appearance of this conception appeared in Ancient Israel, in the priestly and prophetic pronouncements. A different conception of such accountability, an accountability to the community and its laws, appeared in the northern shores of the Eastern Mediterranean, in Ancient Greece. In different forms this conception appeared in all these civilizations.<sup>16</sup>

Concomitant with the emergence of conceptions of accountability there began to develop autonomous spheres of law and conceptions of rights. These tended to be somewhat distinct from ascriptively-bound custom and purely customary law. The scope of these spheres of law and rights varied greatly from society to society but they were all established according to some distinct and autonomous criteria.

### 8. *The ordering of social hierarchies*

Social hierarchies are another aspect of the axial-age civilizations which were reorganized as a result of the institutionalization of the transcendental vision.<sup>17</sup> This is evident first of all in the organization

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<sup>16</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, Cultural traditions and political dynamics, the origins and modes of ideological politics, *The British Journal of Sociology*, XXXII (1981), 155-181.

<sup>17</sup> See this also in greater detail in S.N. Eisenstadt, *Social Differentiation and Stratification*

of the group basis of stratification and in the tendency to stress groups which can be defined in wide, potentially universalistic terms.

Second, there has been a marked shift in the construction of the basic criteria of stratification. The social positions which are closest to the resolution of tension became endowed with a special autonomous symbolic aura. Thus, these positions acquired a relatively high status as the criteria of evaluation became broader and dissociated from the narrow-primordial or ascriptive criteria.

Third, the holders of these positions tend to develop a relatively autonomous, distinct and broad society (or sector) wide-status consciousness as opposed to a more local, primordial or sectoral one.

Fourth, there develops a tendency to dissociate ownership from local use of resources; while the latter may remain with the local groups the control over the macro-social use and conversion of such resources, which tends to become vested in the holders of these 'upper' positions in the social hierarchy.

### 9. *New levels of social conflict*

These modes of organizing the major institutional spheres in civilizations in which a conception of tension between transcendental and mundane civilizations has become institutionalized have affected the scope, intensity and definition of social conflict in general. Insofar as the political sphere is perceived as relevant to 'salvation', political conflict in particular has been affected as well. New dimensions have been added to the processes of conflict that develop in these societies beyond those which can be identified in the pre-axial-age societies. The most important has been the possible development of new levels of conflicts beyond those of specific 'narrow' interests of different groups and elites, and the definition of such conflicts in broader symbolical or ideological terms. The issues of struggle tended to become highly ideologized, generalized and sometimes even universalized. The struggle itself tends to become organized in relatively autonomous settings. Similarly, there develop linkages between different levels of issues ranging potentially up to the very principle of legitimation of the social and political order. These new levels of conflict generated new processes of change and continuous reconstruction of the social order.

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(Glenview, Scott Foresman & Co., 1971), vi; and S.N. Eisenstadt, Convergence and divergence of modern and modernizing societies, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, VIII (1977), 1-18.

## III. THE PATTERN OF NEW CIVILIZATIONAL DYNAMICS

10. *The multiplicity of visions and the growth of reflexivity*

These new modes of continuous re-ordering of societies and entire civilizations, and of social and cultural change, can only be understood in connection with the tension inherent in the symbolic and ideological premises of these civilizations.

The root of such tensions lies in the very institutionalization of the perception of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order and of the quest to overcome it. This generates an awareness of a great range of possibilities or visions of the very definition of such tensions; of the proper mode of their resolution as well as an awareness of the partiality or incompleteness of any given institutionalization of such vision. Historically the growth of this awareness was never a simple peaceful process. It has usually been connected with a continuous struggle and competition between many groups and between their respective visions.

Once the conception of a basic tension between the transcendental and the mundane order was fully recognized and institutionalized in a society, or at least within its center, any definition and resolution of this tension became in itself very problematic. It usually contained strong heterogeneous and even contradictory elements, and its elaboration in fully articulated terms generated the possibility of different emphases, directions and interpretations, all of which have been reinforced by the historical existence of multiple visions carried by different groups. Because of this multiplicity of visions, no single one could be taken as given or complete.

The content of such alternative visions tended to develop in several directions, and these could also be combined in different ways. One such direction was the reformulation of the nature of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders. Examples of this are the cases of the Buddhist reformulation of the premises of Hinduism and the Christian reformulation of the premises of Judaism.

Second was the ideological denial of the very stress on the tension between transcendental and mundane orders and a 'return' to a conception which upholds the parallelism between the transcendental and the mundane orders, reflecting a pre-transcendental stage.

The third direction of such alternative visions was the denial of the locally predominant conception of the resolution of such tension

and of its institutional derivatives. This took the form of stress on other-worldly orientations in this-worldly orientations, or stress on learning as against military or political virtue.

Fourth was the elaboration of a great variety of religious and intellectual orientations, especially mystical and esoteric ones which went beyond the established, routinized, orthodox version of the resolution of the transcendental tension.

Fifth was the upholding of the prevalent conceptions and ideals in their pure, pristine form, as against their necessarily compromised concretization in any institutional setting. All these alternative visions usually became combined with the perennial themes of social protest, such as the emphasis on equality and solidarity, or the suspension of social division of labor.<sup>18</sup>

It is this very multiplicity of alternative visions that gave rise in all these civilizations to an awareness of the uncertainty of different roads to salvation, of alternative conceptions of social and cultural order, and of the seeming arbitrariness of any single solution. Such awareness has become a constituent element of the consciousness of these civilizations, especially among the carriers of their Great Traditions. This was closely related to the development of a high degree of 'second order' thinking which is a reflexivity turning on the basic premises of the social and cultural order.<sup>19</sup>

This reflexivity has also been closely related to the new perception of the time-dimensions providing the background for the tension between the transcendental and mundane orders. Such a revision is evident in the greater stress on the possible discontinuities between the major dimensions of time—past, present and future—and the consequent necessity to find ways to bridge them. While the nature of this bridge, whether it is cyclical, historical or apocalyptic, varies greatly between different civilizations, the stress on some discontinuity is common to all of them.

Utopian visions were another common element which emerged in these civilizations. These were visions of an alternative cultural and social order beyond any given place or time. Such visions contain many of the millennialist and revivalist elements which can also be found in pagan religions, but they go beyond them by combining

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<sup>18</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change and Modernity* (New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1973), pp. 140–151.

<sup>19</sup> See on this the various discussions in *Wisdom, Revelation and Doubt*, op. cit.

these elements with a stress on the necessity to construct the mundane order according to the precepts of the higher one.<sup>20</sup>

### 11. *The emergence of organic solidarity*

All these visions became closely interwoven with different social groups and constituted a basic component of these civilizations, generating their specific dynamics. One of the characteristics of these dynamics was the social integration. Our preceding analysis has shown that the social recognition of the basic tension between the transcendental order, and the associated attempts to re-order the world, influences the entire pattern of social interaction, and gives rise to new modes of institutional creativity. It influences these patterns in two directions particularly: first towards growing symbolic articulation and ideologization of the meaning of social activities, collectivities and institutions; and second towards the growing diversification of the ranges of social activities and frameworks.

These tendencies generated problems of social integration related to Durkheim's idea of mechanical and organic solidarity. This called for the establishment of much more flexible and differentiated frameworks of integration than that prevalent in pre-axial-age societies or civilizations.<sup>21</sup>

The construction of a new level of integration was necessarily difficult, fragile and fraught with contradictions. For example, in these civilizations there emerged, even if in varying degrees of intensity, proselytizing zeal, evident in the attempt to impose any given elite vision of the construction of the world on many societies. There has also been the closely connected tendency to rather principled intolerance concerning the basic (doctrinal and/or ritual) premises and institutional results of any given definition of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order and its resolution. This intolerance is rooted in the uncertainties generated by the construction of this tension. It stems from the awareness that any resolution

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<sup>20</sup> The literature on Utopia is, of course, immense. For a good survey, see G. Kaleb, *Utopias and Utopianism*, *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (New York, MacMillan & Free Press, 1968), XVI, pp. 267–270; and for a fascinating collection of essays, *Vom Sinn der Utopie*, *Eranos Jahrbuch* (1963) (Zurich, Rhein Verlag, 1964).

<sup>21</sup> E. Durkheim, *De la division du travail social* (Paris, Alcan, 1893), English translation, *The Division of Labor in Society* (Glencoe, The Free Press, 1960). See also R. Aron, *Les étapes de la pensée sociologique* (Paris, Gallimard, 1967), pp. 319–330.

of the tension cannot be taken as given and natural, but rather that it is constructed out of different possibilities rooted in the very problems of human existence and in the consciousness of alternatives. This intolerance contrasts strongly with the relative tolerance of those societies or cultures in which the perception of tension between the transcendental and the mundane order does not exist. The very intolerance gives rise to the establishment of official orthodoxies, upheld by the ruling coalitions of political and religious authorities, but it also contains strong elements of ambivalence. Paradoxically, it generates potential challenges to itself, although challengers may be as intolerant as those whom they challenge.

The problem of resolving the tension between the mundane and transcendental orders is inherently irresolvable. But the persistent quest for a resolution results in reorganized institutions, new levels of conflict, new processes of social change, as well as a transformation of the relations between societies and civilizations.

*12. Intellectuals and clerics as members of ruling coalitions and of movements of protest; and as carriers of conflicts and change*

A central feature of the new dynamics of civilizations was that the intellectual and clerical elites were active in both the ruling coalitions and the protest movements that developed in these societies.

As members of the ruling coalitions, these elites sought to regulate institutional attempts to reconstruct the world according to some transcendental vision. They pursued this regulation through control over three increasingly differentiated aspects of the flow of resources in the society. First they attempted to control access to the major institutional markets, i.e., the economic, political and cultural and religious ones. Second, and most important, they controlled the scope of these markets and the conversion of resources between them. This applies particularly to the conversion of economic resources into political and status resources. Third, they attempted to control the definition of the more complex, problematic social groups and cultural worlds.

At the same time, such elites also constituted the most active elements in the movements of protest and processes of change that developed in these societies. The participation of these elites greatly influenced the post-axial-age character of such movements at both the symbolic and organizational levels.

First, there was a growing symbolic articulation and ideologization of the perennial themes of protest which are found in any human society, such as rebellion against the constraints of division of labor, authority and hierarchy, and of the structuring of time dimension; the quest for solidarity and equality and for overcoming human mortality.

Second, Utopian orientations were incorporated into the rituals of rebellion and the double image of society.<sup>22</sup> It was this incorporation that generated alternative conceptions of social order and new ways of bridging the distance between the existing and the 'true' resolution of the transcendental tension.

Third, new types of protest movements appeared. The most important were intellectual heterodoxies, sects or movements which upheld the different conceptions of the resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order, and of the proper way to institutionalize such concepts.

The transformation of such alternative conceptions into heterodoxies resulted, of course, from their confrontation with some institutionalized orthodoxy. Since then, continuous confrontation between orthodoxy on the one hand, and schism and heterodoxy on the other, and the accompanying development of strong antinomian tendencies, has been a crucial component in the history of mankind.

Fourth, and closely related to the former, was the possibility of the development of autonomous political movements and ideologies usually oriented against an existing political center with its elaborated symbolism and ideology.

Among these new elites, it was the intellectuals in particular<sup>23</sup> who were most active in the ideological development of the different types of protest. They were also especially responsible for articulating the antithesis between 'rational' and 'anti-rational' protest orientations. In these movements they tended to foster the antinomian tendency by focusing on the aesthetic, ritual and mystical dimensions of human existence. Out of this orientation came the most extreme expression of subjectivism and privatization. Closely related to these changes in

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<sup>22</sup> Max Gluckman, *Rituals of rebellion in South-East Africa*, in Gluckman, *Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa* (New York, The Free Press, 1963), pp. 110–137; A. Decoufflé, *Sociologie des révolutions* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1966).

<sup>23</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, *Intellectuals and tradition*, in S.N. Eisenstadt & S.R. Graubard (eds.), *Intellectuals and Tradition* (New York, Humanities Press, 1973), pp. 1–21; and E. Shils, *Intellectuals, traditions and the tradition of intellectuals*, *ibid.*, pp. 21–35.

the symbolic dimension of protest movements were important organizational changes. The most general change was the growing possibility of structural and ideological links between different protest movements and the foci of conflict. These links could be effected by different coalitions of different secondary elites, above all by coalition between 'secondary' articulators of models of cultural order and political elites.

Thus, first, any single protest movement, either in the center or on the periphery, was exposed to possible links with other movements and to more central religious and political struggles.

Second, such movements could become connected with the opening up of a relatively wide range of institutional choices which resulted from the institutionalization of transcendental tension and the quest for its resolution. Hence, they could focus not only on the specific applications of social premises, but also on the very premises themselves, and on the very bases of legitimation of the social and political order. In this way new levels of conflict were generated.

Third, a strong ideological articulation of the tension between center and periphery, between the Great and the Little Traditions became available to these movements. Hence, the possibility of these movements impinging on the center or centers of the society increased.

### 13. *New ideological attitudes to change*

New ways of generating, organizing and perceiving change came out of these social conflicts, protest movements and the awareness of a variety of choices.

While the concrete attitude toward change, negative or positive, adaptive or transformative, varied according to the society and period, all of these post-axial-age civilizations had a common tendency toward a highly articulated symbolical and ideological attitude toward change.<sup>24</sup> They shared a certain totalistic view of change which attempted to mold the changes according to the prevalent transcendental vision. Specific changes were associated with broader concepts and in this way the possibility of the society simply absorbing piece-meal change was diminished. Instead, there developed a continuous tension between an extreme generation of change and a very principled intolerance

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<sup>24</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, *Some Observations on the Dynamics of Traditions, Comparative Studies in Society and History*, II (1969), 451-475.



toward the absorption of change into the symbolic and institutional framework.

These new developments ushered into the arena of human history the possibility of consciously ordering society, and also the continuous tension that this possibility caused. The new dynamics of civilization transformed group conflicts into potential class and ideological conflicts, cult conflicts into struggles between the orthodox and the heterodox. Conflicts between tribes and societies became missionary crusades for the transformation of civilizations. The zeal for reorganization informed by each society's concept of salvation made the whole world at least potentially subject to cultural-political reconstruction.

#### IV. INDICATIONS FOR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

##### 14. *The multiplicity of world histories*

The general tendency to reconstruct the world with all its symbolic-ideological and institutional repercussions was common to all the post-axial-age civilizations. But their concrete implementation, of course, varied greatly. No one homogeneous world history emerged nor were the different types of civilizations similar or convergent. Rather, there emerged a multiplicity of different, divergent, yet continuously mutually impinging world civilizations, each attempting to reconstruct the world in its own mode, according to its basic premises, and attempting either to absorb the others or consciously to segregate themselves from them.

It would be beyond the scope of this paper either to analyze these differences or to attempt to explain them—all this has to be left to further publications. It might, however, be worthwhile to point out that some of the most important sets of conditions which provide the clues to the understanding of these different modes of institutional creativity are given in the way the premises of these civilizations are crystallized and institutionalized in concrete social settings. Two such sets of conditions can be distinguished. One refers to variations in the basic cultural orientations, in the basic 'ideas' or visions concerning civilization with their institutional implications. The other set of conditions refers to different concrete social arenas in which these institutional tendencies can be played out.

First of all, among the different cultural orientations there are crucial differences in the very definition of the tension between the transcendental and mundane orders and the modes of resolving this tension. There is the distinction between those cases in which the tension was couched in relatively secular terms (as in Confucianism and classical Chinese belief systems and, in a somewhat different way, in the Greek and Roman worlds), and those cases in which the tension was conceived in terms of a religious hiatus (as in the great monotheistic religions and Hinduism and Buddhism).

A second distinction, within the latter cases, is that between the monotheistic religions in which there was a concept of God standing outside the Universe and potentially guiding it, and those systems, like the Hinduism and Buddhism, in which the transcendental, cosmic system was conceived in impersonal, almost metaphysical terms, and in a state of continuous existential tension with the mundane system.

Another major distinction lies in the focus of the resolution of the transcendental tensions which, in Weberian terms, is salvation. Here the distinction is between purely this-worldly, purely other-worldly and mixed this- and other-worldly conceptions of salvation. It is probably no accident that the 'secular' conception of this tension was connected, as in China and to some degree in the ancient world, with an almost wholly this-worldly conception of salvation, or that the metaphysical non-deistic conception of this tension, as in Hinduism and Buddhism, tended towards an other-worldly conception of salvation, while the great monotheistic religions tended to stress combinations of this- and other-worldly conceptions of salvation.

Another set of cultural orientations which are of special importance, the ordering of the broader ranges of solidarity, and connecting them with the broader meanings generated by the transcendental visions can be distinguished.

First, of central importance here is the degree to which access to the central attributes of cosmic and/or social order is given directly to the members of any social category or sub-category which enables them to act as mediators between these attributes and the broader groups.

Second is the nature of relations between the attributes of cosmic and social order and salvation and the basic attributes of the major primordial ascriptive collectivities. Here three possibilities can be

distinguished. One is when the access to these broader attitudes is entirely vested within some such ascriptive collectivity. The second one occurs when there is a total disjunction between the two. The third possibility arises when these respective attributes are mutually relevant and each serves as a referent of the other or a condition of being member of the other without being totally embedded in one another. Such a partial connection usually means that the attributes of the ascriptive collectivities are seen as one component of the attributes of salvation, and/or conversely, that the attributes of salvation constitute one of the attributes of such collectivities. It is the different combinations of these two sets of cultural orientations that have been most important in shaping the broad institutional contours and dynamics of the different post-axial age-civilizations.

Above all, these cultural orientations have formed the degree of the symbolic autonomy and the degree of unitary homogeneous organizations experienced by the new types of elites and ruling coalitions which characterized the post-axial-age civilizations. That is, they shaped the relations between them; their place in the ruling coalitions; the modes of control of the major institutional spheres effected by them; and the degree to which there developed different types of links between the different ruling and secondary elites and processes of change, links which could give rise to different modes of societal transformation.

But the concrete working out of all such tendencies depends on the second set of conditions—the arenas for the concretization of these broad institutional tendencies. These conditions included, first, the economic structure of these civilizations (although they all belonged to economically relatively developed agrarian or combined agrarian and commercial societies).

Second, they varied greatly according to their respective political-ecological settings, whether they were small or great societies, whether they were societies with continuous compact boundaries, or with cross-cutting and flexible boundaries.

Third was their specific historical experience, especially in terms of encounters with other societies, especially in terms of mutual penetration, conquest or colonization. It is the interplay between the different constellations of the cultural orientations analyzed above, their carriers and their respective visions of restructuring the world and the concrete arenas and historical conditions in which such

visions could be concretized, that have shaped the institutional contours and dynamics of the different axial-age civilizations. The subsequent courses of world history, and their systematic exploration, should constitute the object of further systematic analysis.<sup>25,\*</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> For some preliminary attempts in such a direction see: S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies*, op. cit.; id. Cultural traditions and political dynamics, *loc. cit.*; id. Max Weber's Antike Judentum und der Charakter der Jüdisch Zivilisation, in W. Schluchter (ed.), *Max Webers Studies über das antike Judentum* (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 134–185; and This Worldly Transcendentalism and the Structuring of the World—Max Weber's *Religion of China and the format of Chinese history and civilization* (forthcoming).

\* The analysis presented here, which constitutes part of a larger work on a sociological analysis of comparative civilizations, has been developed in lectures and seminars over the years at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Harvard University and in seminars in the summer 1980 at the Universities of Vienna and Berne. I am indebted to my colleagues and students in these institutions for continuous discussions. The research on which it has been based has been partially supported by a grant from the Volkswagen Foundation.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

# CULTURAL TRADITIONS AND POLITICAL DYNAMICS: THE ORIGINS AND MODES OF IDEOLOGICAL POLITICS\*

### I

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to be able to address you today here at the London School of Economics. The remarks which I shall present to you today deal with some problems in comparative analysis and a large part of what I know about comparative analysis I have learned here in 1947–8 and through continuous contacts thereafter. When I came here in 1947 for what today would have been called a post-doctoral British Council Scholarship, I was greatly interested—under the influence of my teachers in Jerusalem, Martin Buber and Richard Koebner—a social philosopher and an historian—to combine historical and sociological study and especially to engage in some type of comparative analysis. And I was very lucky to be here at that period when old and new were interacting in a great intellectual ferment. Morris Ginsberg and T.H. Marshall were continuing their vigorous teachings of the comparative approach so strongly influenced by Hobhouse and Edward Shils and others were also teaching here at that period bringing in the Weberian and Durkheimian tradition. Ginsberg's seminar was a place in which many lively discussions, in which sociologist, anthropologists and historians—many of whom became leaders of their disciplines, among whom I would like to mention specially the late Maurice Freedman—participated, and to me, who still cherishes my copy of Ginsberg's *Home University Sociology* (which I acquired as a high school student in 1940) it was a great, unusual, intellectual treat. In anthropology

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\* Preliminary and partial versions of this lecture were presented at the Joint Harvard-M.I.T. Seminar on Political Development in September, 1978, and as a Nef Colloquium of the Committee on Social Thought in the University of Chicago in October, 1979.

Part of the research on which this lecture is based has been helped by a grant from the Volkswagen Foundation.

a similar experience could be found in Raymond Firth's seminars, where it was possible to exchange views with Aurey Richards, Lucy Mair, Edmund Leach, the late S.F. Nadel, and with many others, and through them further with other anthropologists, especially with Meyer Fortes and the late Max Gluckman.

It was a very great intellectual stimulus, and my own interests focussed mostly on the continued interweaving of sociological theory and comparative analysis—an area to which the subject on which I shall talk today belongs.

## II

In this lecture I would like to trace the relations between cultural traditions and some central aspects of the dynamics of political systems, especially but not only, in so-called historical or pre-modern societies. This is a subject which has been, paradoxically enough, both very central as well as very neglected in sociological discussions and analysis. It has been at least implicitly very central in many of the evolutionary schools and approaches and can indeed be fully illustrated by Hobhouse's own concern about the relations between moral and political evolution.

But it has also been a relatively neglected subject. Beyond the general correlations between moral and political development—correlations which, as is well known, have often been seriously criticized as have been other central assumptions of the evolutionary approaches—there have been but few systematic comparative analyses of the relations between different cultural traditions and political dynamics. There has been no systematic analysis of the kind that Weber attempted with respect to the relations between cultural traditions and economic life—although his own corpus contains many powerful insights about these problems. In what follows I shall attempt to give some preliminary indications about some of them.

I shall concentrate here on one central problem—on what may be called the origins and modes of ideological politics—I would be almost tempted to call it the birth of ideology. We have been sometimes told—somewhat, as has been often pointed out, prematurely—about the death of ideology. In order to understand the persistence of ideological politics—albeit in different guises and modes, some of which have indeed disappeared—it might be worthwhile to analyse

the historical origins of ideological politics. I shall attempt to do this here today—focussing on two areas of political life—namely the structuring of collectivities and the accountability of rulers.

### III

The origins of ideological politics can be found, in different places on our globe, in that rather long-stretching period which the Swiss-German philosopher Karl Jaspers has termed as the Axial Age, i.e., the period of the first millennium B.C.E., when there emerged and became institutionalized in some of the major civilizations—namely in Ancient Israel, later on in Christianity; in Ancient Greece; China in the early Imperial period; Hinduism and Buddhism, and last of all and later on in Islam—a conception of a basic tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders—a conception which differed greatly from that of a close parallelism between these two orders or their mutual embedment which was prevalent in so-called pagan religions, in those very societies and religions from which these post-Axial Age civilizations emerged.<sup>1</sup>

Before proceeding to the analysis of the impact of the post-Axial Age breakthrough on political dynamics, I shall address myself—and because of shortness of time, very briefly—to two of the most interesting civilizations of pre-Axial Age which may serve us as good comparative cases—namely Ancient Egypt and Japan. Although far away from one another and different in many crucial ways, these two civilizations—as well as many others which have not gone through the transformation of cultural traditions or connected with the Axial Age—share some basic premises which had several repercussions on the structuring of collectivities and the accountability of rulers.

In both these civilizations—as in many others—the major types of human collectivities—the political, local, ethnic or linguistic—were perceived as given and as rather natural; they were defined in primordial and ascriptive terms—in terms almost entirely lacking any independent ideological elaboration. And although some distinctions between the different types of collectivities—such as linguistic, political

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<sup>1</sup> See K. Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*, Zurich 1949, pp. 15–106 and also *Wisdom, Revelation and Doubt: Perspectives on the First Millennium B.C.*, Daedalus, Spring 1975 and E. Voegelin, *Order and History* vols. 1–4 Baton Rouge 1954–6.



and the like—were not absent, yet these distinctions were but rarely defined in principled, ideological terms. Obviously in fact these collectivities were created through some historical processes of which conquest was probably the most visible one. In so far as contacts with other societies became intensified through such processes they gave rise to a growing awareness of the existence of such different collectivities.

But all these distinctions were on the whole seen as natural divisions and the construction of such collectivities and the relations between them, however much influenced by conquest and migration, became but rarely a focus of ideological political struggle.<sup>2</sup> It is very difficult to speak here about the wars of religion as they developed later on, above all in the Christian and Muslim realms.

A rather parallel situation can be identified with respects to the accountability of rulers. In Egypt the Pharaoh was God-King, in Japan the Emperor of divine origin and often seen as a divine being. Each of them was seen as the embodiment of the cosmic and social order, epitomizing it and as such not accountable to anybody. He could not even be held responsible to uphold, as was the case in some tribal societies, the customs of the community and be *de facto* deposed by the elders or other representatives of the community. The Egyptian King of the Japanese Emperor could, of course, be killed or become, through the vicissitudes of political struggle, deprived of any actual power, to become even a beggar in the streets of Kyoto—but neither of them could be called accountable to anybody or deposed through any customary process.<sup>3</sup>

Both such structuring of collectivities as well as patterns of accountability of rulers can be seen as manifestations of the almost total lack or at least weakness, in these civilizations, of any highly principled or ideological level of politics. This weakness was manifest in the fact that first, the main participants in the political struggle in these societies were the direct representatives of the basic groups in the centre and in the periphery (kinship, territorial, religious, personal or family groups); they tended to be organized in cliques, competing for access to the royal household, creating continuously shifting and cross-cutting allegiances and coalitions with each other. Second, this lack or weakness of an ideological dimension of politics could

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<sup>2</sup> On Egypt see H. Kees, *Ägypten—Die Kulturgeschichte des Orients*, Munich 1933 and J. Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt*, Chicago 1951. Japan see J.W. Hall, *Japan from History to Modern Times*, London 1970.

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit.

be seen in the fact that the major issues and mechanisms of political struggle on part of 'higher' (central and aristocratic) as well as 'lower' (peripheral) groups alike were petitions and pressures on the centre to co-opt new elements into the central cliques and/or change their composition: to change the details of the distribution by the centre of various resources to the major groups; as well as to extend the lines of clientele and patronage, and that these issues were usually formulated in *ad hoc* and dispersed manner—with but relatively low level of principled or ideological formulation, of subsumption of some more general principles.<sup>4</sup>

#### IV

The picture changes in many crucial respects in a most extreme way in the Axial Age, with the emergence and institutionalization of the conception of a chasm, tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders—an institutionalization which has in a sense created the 'Great Civilizations' mentioned above. While the concrete expressions of this conception varied greatly between these civilizations—and we shall yet address ourselves to some of these differences—the very emergence and institutionalization of such conception had far-reaching implications on the institutional structure of these civilizations in general and the political process in particular.<sup>5</sup>

It was the institutionalization of this conception that ushered in the age or ages of ideological politics—which had far-reaching repercussions on all areas of political life and among them on the structuring of collectivities and accountability of rulers. The institutionalization of such perception of tension, of the chasm between the transcendental and the mundane orders, has created a strong tendency to define some collectivities and institutional spheres as the most appropriate carriers of the attributes of overcoming this tension, of 'salvation'—a term derived from the Christian tradition but which applied to other civilizations—thus endowing seemingly natural and 'primordial'

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<sup>4</sup> This aspect of the political struggle in these types of societies is analyzed in greater detail in S.N. Eisenstadt, *Political Sociology*, New York 1970, parts 1–4, and *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies*, New York, 1978, esp. chs. 3 and 4.

<sup>5</sup> See K. Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*, op. cit.; *Daedalus*, Spring 1975, op. cit. and S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies*, op. cit., esp. ch. 5.

groups with special meaning couched in terms of the very perception of such tension and of its resolution.

The most important innovation or transformation in this context has been the construction of 'cultural' or 'religious' collectivities—as distinct from ethnic or political ones. While some embryonic elements of such construction might have existed in those societies in which no conception of tension between the transcendental and the mundane order was institutionalized, it was only with the development and institutionalization of such conception that these elements became transformed into new, potentially full-fledged civilizational collectivities or frameworks—with autonomous criteria of membership and loci of authority.

The membership of these collectivities and frameworks became imbued with a strong ideological dimension as well as a focus of ideological contention and struggle. The same applies to the other collectives which were perceived as relevant from the point of view of this cultural conception. Thus, for instance, in so far as the political sphere was defined as a focus of resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order, of salvation, there tends to develop a very high level of ideological politics, of the definition of the issues of political struggle and of their organization in highly principled and ideological terms and the same applies to the military and educational spheres. Naturally there arises also in such situations the tendency to organize these different collectivities—the civilizational (religious), political or ethnic ones in some hierarchical order—and the very construction of such an order usually becomes a focus of political and ideological conflict.

## V

No less far-reaching repercussions have developed in all these civilizations with respect to the conception of the relations between the political and the higher, transcendental order in general and the accountability of rulers in particular. The political order was conceived as lower than the transcendental one and as one which had to be structured according to the precepts of the latter and above all according to the perceptions of the proper mode of overcoming of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order of 'salvation'.

There emerged the conception of a higher authority—God, Divine

Law and the like. The King-God—the embodiment of the cosmic and earthly order alike—disappeared, and a secular ruler, in principle accountable to a higher order, appeared, and accordingly there appeared also the possibility of calling a ruler to judgment. The first most dramatic appearance of this conception appeared in Ancient Israel, in the priestly and above all prophetic pronouncements. A different conception of such accountability—of an accountability to the community and its laws—appeared in the northern shores of the Eastern Mediterranean—in Ancient Greece. But in different veins this conception appeared in all these civilizations.

Even the most despotic rulers could not do away with this conception—they could at most attempt to represent themselves as the proper carriers of this higher Law or order. But such attempts of theirs could never be fully successful, mainly because this conception of the accountability of rulers—as that of the ideological structuring of collectivities—was not a purely academic, intellectual exercise. It was connected with the emergence of a new social element, of a new type of elites in general and of carriers of models of cultural and social order—be they Jewish prophets and priests, the Greek philosophers, the Chinese Literati, the Hindu Brahmins, the Buddhist Sangha or the Islamic Ulema—in particular.

It was these groups that formulated and articulated, and carried the perception of tension between the transcendental and the mundane order and the relatively successful institutionalization of the derivatives of such perception tended to reinforce the autonomy of these elites. The institutionalization of these perceptions transformed the various technical, ritual, magical and sacral activities of the former priests into aspects or dimensions of relatively autonomous construction of the cultural and social order, and their carriers into potentially autonomous ‘intellectuals’ who tend to acquire a high degree of autonomy and—potentially country-wide—status consciousness of their own. They become potentially independent of other elites and social groups and categories—but, necessarily, in strong competition with them.

Such competition becomes here very intensive because a parallel transformation also takes place in the structure of other elites—especially those whose activities are also closely related to the focus of the resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order—be they political, military, educational or, in some cases, the economic ones.

All these elites—with variations which we shall yet analyse in

greater detail later on—tend to develop claims for an autonomous place in the construction of the cultural and social order. They see themselves as performing not only specific technical, functional activities, but also as potentially autonomous carriers of the models of cultural and social order—very often of different, alternate conceptions of such order. Accordingly, the non-political elites tended often to view themselves as being on a par with, if not superior to, the political authorities. They tended to be very active participants in the social (and political) spheres, and see themselves as carriers and representatives of the major ideological attributes of these spheres, and they very often view the political authorities as potentially accountable to themselves. On a parallel, however, the political (and other) elites very often viewed themselves also as autonomous articulators of the models of cultural order—potentially superior to the cultural elites.

The political activities of these different elites could often manifest themselves in the establishment of close relations and linkages with movements of protests, rebellion and heterodoxy—linkages which often activated such different alternative conceptions of social and cultural order.

## VI

All these developments affect the scope and intensity of societal struggle and conflict in general—and, in so far as the political sphere is perceived as relevant from the point of view of 'salvation', of political struggle. The issues of such struggle tend to become highly generalized and ideologized, and the struggle tends to become organized in relatively distinct settings. Concomitantly there develop growing linkages between different levels of issues of such struggle—from the discrete to the general, from the local to the central, reaching potentially up to the very principles of legitimation of the political order. If the legitimation of most of the great pre-Axial Age civilization was based on some fused, traditional, sacred and primordial criteria, the picture would have become much more complicated with the institutionalization of the perception of tension between the transcendental and mundane order.<sup>6</sup>

In these post-Axial Age civilizations, there developed first a strong

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<sup>6</sup> These terms are derived from E. Shils, *Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties*, in idem, *Center and Periphery, Essays in Macro-Sociology*, Chicago, 1975, pp. 111–26.

tendency to an oscillation or tension between primordial criteria on the one hand and sacred or ideological ones—defined in terms of the attributes of salvation—on the other; and the concomitant tendency to ideologize or ‘sacrilize’ the primordial attributes. Second, there tends to develop here a tension between ‘traditional’ criteria of legitimation and more ‘open’ (rational or charismatic) both given in the very stress on the necessity to find some resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders.

All these tensions were not purely ‘academic’—they constituted a continuous focus of actual political struggle in general, and of the construction of collectivities and of the relations between the rulers and other elites who wanted to make the rulers accountable to themselves in particular.

## VII

Thus, we see that the very emergence and institutionalization of the conception of a basic tension and chasm between the transcendental and the mundane order has transformed the nature of the political process in general and of the structuring of collectivities and of accountability of rulers in particular. On the symbolic level it has added the ideological dimension to these processes, it has ‘problematized’ them—they were no longer perceived as given. On the institutional level it has added a new element—that of the new, autonomous elites, especially the autonomous carriers of models of cultural and social order—be they cultural and religious and even secondary political elites who perceived themselves and were perceived by others as the carriers of a higher, non-mundane authority.

It was the combination of these two elements—of principled conceptions of the nature of social and political order, and of new types of elites—which has given rise, in the major civilizations analysed here, to the emergence of ideological politics, and to the consequent intensification of political struggle. These developments can perhaps be seen in the clearest way in the first great breakthrough to such transcendental conception in Ancient Judaism—but obviously they developed in all the civilizations analysed here. But while the ingredients of such politics could be found in all these civilizations, their concrete expressions, their concrete modes, varied greatly between them and within them, in different historical periods and in different territorial divisions.

The fully orderly, routine institutionalization of such accountability has been very rare—it developed only in the West, building on the triple base of tribal, Greek, Roman and Judaic traditions; yet it would be wrong to think that in other such post-Axial Age civilizations there was no such development at all. Rather, there developed different modes of ideological political in general and of accountability of rulers and these different degrees of ideological definition of the structure of collectivities, that developed in all of them.

There were of course many factors—geopolitical or internal-political that influenced the development of such different modes of ideological politics. Here, however, we shall concentrate on the impact on such developments, first of all of different cultural conceptions, especially of the different conceptions of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders and of salvation, and of the concomitant structure of the major elites that were predominant in these civilizations. We shall not however assume that the impact of different cultural traditions or orientations is effected through some process of emanation. Rather we shall emphasize that it is effected but mainly through the activities of different elites who are both the carriers of such traditions and orientations as well as major partners in ruling coalitions who control the access to power and the flow of resources in society.

These elites exercised control over the two crucial aspects of the flow of resources in the society; first they controlled the access to the major institutional markets, i.e., the economic, political and cultural ones; second they controlled the scope of such markets and the conversion of resources between them—especially the conversion of economic resources into political and status (prestige) ones; and third they controlled the construction of the definition of social and cultural worlds, of the reference orientation of the major social groups.

But the modes in which these elites exercised their control varied greatly according to the major cultural orientations they carried and the combination of these two has influenced in each of them patterns of ideological political in general and of the structuring of collectivities and of accountability of rulers that developed in these civilizations. In the following pages we shall attempt a systematic analysis of these variations, starting with some of the distinctions between the cultural orientations that developed in the different post Axial-Age Civilizations.

## VIII

The first distinction relates to the concrete cultural definitions of this tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders which has greatly varied in the various orientations mentioned here. The two most important differences here are first between on the one hand those cases—as in Confucianism and in the classical Chinese belief systems and in a somewhat different way in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds—in which this tension was couched in relatively secular terms, i.e., in terms of a secular—metaphysical and/or ethical—distinction between the transcendental and the mundane orders (usually connected with the maintenance of more ‘primitive’ religious traditions on the more popular level) and on the other hand, the great monotheistic religions and Hinduism and Buddhism in which there did develop a conception of a *religious* hiatus and tension between these orders.

Second, within the latter cases, there developed an important divide between the monotheistic religions in which there developed a conception of God standing outside the Universe and potentially guiding it, and those systems, like the Hinduist and Buddhist ones, in which the transcendental, cosmic system was conceived in impersonal, metaphysical non-deistic terms.

Last is the distinction between the major focus of the resolution of the tensions between the transcendental and the mundane order or of salvation. Here the major distinction is between purely this wordly, purely other-wordly and closely interconnected or interwoven this- and other-wordly conceptions of salvation.

It is probably no pure accident that the ‘secular’ conception of such tension has been connected with a tendency to an almost wholly this-worldly conception of salvation; that the conception of such tension in metaphysical, non-deistic terms, tends more towards an other-wordly conception of salvation, while the great monotheistic religions tended to stress a loose combination and interweaving of this- and the-worldly conceptions of salvation.

Each of these modes of definition of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order and of salvation, as it becomes predominant in a society or civilization, was, as indicated above, connected with a distinct structure of the major elites and with distinct modes of their control over the flow of resources in society.



The combination of these three factors—cultural orientations, structure of elites and the modes of their control—has influenced the modes of ideological politics in general and of the structuring of collectivities and of mode of accountability of rulers in particular developed in these civilizations. In the following pages we shall attempt a systematic analysis of these variations.

## IX

The most articulated ‘this-worldly’ conception of the tension between the mundane and the transcendental order has become most fully institutionalized—and for the longest period in the history of mankind—in *China* with some interesting parallels into which we shall not be able to go in detail here, but some aspects of which, of great importance for our analysis, have been studied by Professor Humphreys—in Ancient Greece.<sup>7</sup>

China’s Confucian—Taoist—Buddhist—Legalist tradition,<sup>8</sup> as compared to monotheistic religions, was characterized by a visibly weak stress—as compared to other post-Axial Age Civilizations—on the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order; a strong this-worldly focus of overcoming this tension; a very weak conception of an historical-transcendental time dimension; a cyclical time dimension; and a relative openness in its formulation as well as accessibility of the broader strata to the social and cultural orders as indicated by the Confucian literati.

The thrust of the official Confucian-Legalist framework was the cultivation of the socio-political and cultural orders as the major focus of cosmic harmony. It emphasized this-worldly duties and activities within the existing social frameworks—the family, broader kin groups and Imperial service—and stressed the proper performance of these duties as the ultimate criteria of individual responsibility.

<sup>7</sup> S.C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks*, London, Boston, 1978.

<sup>8</sup> On the Chinese tradition see E.O. Reischauer and J.K. Fairbank, *A History of East Asian Civilization*, vol. I, *East Asia: The Great Tradition*, Boston 1960; M. Weber, *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*, transl. by H. Gerth, New York 1964; C.K. Yang, ‘The Functional Relationship between Confucian Thought and Chinese Religion’, in J.K. Fairbank (ed.), *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, Chicago 1957, pp. 269–91; A.F. Wright (ed.), *The Confucian Persuasion*, Stanford 1960; D.S. Nivison and A.F. Wright (eds.), *Confucianism in Action*, Stanford, 1959; and A.F. Wright (ed.), *Studies in Chinese Thought*, Chicago, 1953.

This ideology was very closely tied to the political framework of the Chinese Empire. The Empire was legitimized by the Confucian and legalist premises, and the Confucian ethical orientation found their natural place and framework, their major referent, within the Empire.

The Chinese tradition stressed also a basic affinity between the symbols of the centre and the status identification of the broader social strata. Orientation to the centre and to participation in it constituted an essential component of the collective identity of many local and occupational groups.

Such this-worldly orientation generated a very strong emphasis on civility as the central criterion of the legitimation of the socio-political order, while the sacred or primordial criteria of legitimation have been here secondary or tended to disappear. The tension between them tended to become relatively weak, being funnelled as it were into secondary areas which have been either dominated by central ones or segregated from it.

This mode of legitimation was very closely connected with a specific way of structuring of different collectivities. It was above all manifest in the ideological centrality and institutional predominance of the political collectivity, as against the civilization ones—in so far as they were not institutionally interwoven with the political ones; as well as with the secondary standing and relative autonomy of 'ethnic', regional or kinship collectivities.

Accordingly, in contrast to the situation in the 'other-worldly' civilizations, to which we shall soon turn, here the civilizational collectivities were, in terms of definition of autonomous membership, and above all in terms of institutional carriers, bases and frameworks—relatively weak.

A close corollary of this situation has been the weakness, up to total non-existence, of any distinct cultural or religious centre or centre which could compete with the political one in terms of power and authority and of the definition of the central attributes and boundaries of the society.

At the same time other collectivities—ethnic, religious, social-religious—were, in these societies, ordered in a loose hierarchical order in relation to the political ones with the latter at the apex of the hierarchy, controlling the access to the political centre—while at the same time permitting quite far-reaching autonomy of the lower or peripheral groups or sectors.

## X

Such structuring of the major collectivities was closely related to the mode of articulation of the accountability of rulers. This accountability was less institutionalized in China than in any other of the Great Civilizations referred to here. Truly enough the Emperor ruled under the Mandate of Heaven, and in principle he could lose this Mandate—but on the whole it was only after a dynasty fell through some combination of internal disintegration, rebellions and external conquest, that the Mandate of Heaven was invoked against the preceding dynasty by the new rulers and their officials.

And yet it would be wrong to assume that the concept and premise of Mandate of Heaven, with its basic implications about the existence of a higher authority to which the ruler is accountable, had no impact on Chinese politics.

Thus, first of all, there existed some institutional roles—like some parts of censorship, or the astrologer—or even some special individuals in the bureaucracy, such as the Great Reformers, which could sometimes try—often at the risk of their life—to indicate to the Emperor that he may be losing the Mandate of Heaven.<sup>9</sup>

But even beyond this, it is enough to compare the patterns of Chinese politics—with its high level of ideological tension in the political discussion, the continuous emergence of reformers, the potentialities—truly enough but rarely realized—of heterodoxy and rebellion becoming combined and effecting some institutional transformations—with the Japanese or ancient Egyptian ones—to see the important impact of this basic premise on these politics<sup>10</sup>—a premise which became fully activated in the modern revolutionary movements.

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<sup>9</sup> See Nivison and Wright, *op. cit.*, A.F. Wright, *op. cit.*, J.K. Fairbank *op. cit.* and specially W. Eberhard, *The Political Function of Astronomy and Astronomers in Han China*, in J.K. Fairbank, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–70.

<sup>10</sup> On some of the ideological aspects of political struggle in China see Nivison and Wright, *Confucianism in Action*; H.R. Williamson, *Wang An-shih: A Chinese Statesman and Educationalist of the Sung Dynasty*, London, 1937; F.H. Michael, 'From the Fall of T'ang to the Fall of Ch'inj', in H.F. McNair (ed.), *China*, Berkeley, 1946, pp. 89–110; O. Franke, 'Der Bericht Wang An-shih's von 1058 über Reform des Beamtentums', *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Berlin, 1931–3, pp. 264–312; J.T.C. Liu, 'An Early Sung Reformer: Fan Chung-yen', in Fairbank, *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, pp. 105–32; idem, *Reform in Sung China: Wang An-shih, 1021–1086, and His New Policies*, Cambridge 1959; P.A. Cohen and J.E. Schrecker (eds.), *Reform in Nineteenth Century China*, Cambridge, 1976; J.T.C. Liu, 'Eleventh Century Chinese Bureaucrats: Some Historical Classifications and Behavioral Types', *Administrative*

Yet all this notwithstanding, from all the post-Axial civilizations, the conception of accountability of rulers as it developed in the realm of the Chinese civilization, was most muted, least ideologically and especially institutionally developed. This institutional weakness, both of distinct civilizational frameworks and of accountability of rulers, cannot be understood except in terms of analysis of the structure of the major carriers of these this-worldly conceptions—namely, of the famous Confucian literati.

## XI

These literati and bureaucrats<sup>11</sup> were on the one hand the major carriers of the Confucian (or Confucian-legal) world order and orientations briefly depicted above, i.e., the articulators of the models of cultural and social order. As such they were, especially symbolically, autonomous—*vis-à-vis* both the broader strata as well as from the political centre—even if rather closely related to them. They were recruited and organized according to criteria which were directly related to—or derived from—the basic precepts of Confucian-legalistic canon, and were not mediated or set-up by either the broader strata of the society or even by the Emperor himself.

These literati were not, however, just intellectuals performing some academic functions. This stratum of literati constituted a source of recruitment to the bureaucracy. They exercised an almost virtual monopoly over venues of access to the centre. Thus, they constituted a central power elite which exercised control over the two crucial aspects of the flow of resources in the society mentioned above;

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*Science Quarterly*, 4, no. 2, 1959, pp. 207–26; A.F. Wright, 'The Formation of Sui Ideology, 581–604', in J.K. Fairbank (ed.), *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, pp. 71–106; L.C. Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition of Ch'ien-Lung*, Baltimore, 1953; W. de Bary, 'Some Common Tendencies in Neo-Confucianism', in Nivision and Wright, *Confucianism in Action*, pp. 25–49; and H.H. Dubs, 'Wang Mang and His Economic Reforms', *T'oung pao*, 35, no. 4, Leiden, 1939, pp. 263–5.

<sup>11</sup> On the literati see Balazs, *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy*; Chang Chung-li, *The Chinese Gentry: Studies on Their Role in Nineteenth Century Society*, Seattle, 1955; B.O. van der Sprenkel, *The Chinese Civil Service: the Nineteenth Century*, Canberra, 1958; M. Weber, 'The Chinese Literati', in H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills (eds.), *Essays in Sociology*, New York, 1958, pp. 416–44; C.K. Yang, 'Some Characteristics of Chinese Bureaucratic Behavior', in Nivision and Wright, *Confucianism in Action*, pp. 134–65; E.A. Kracke, *Civil Service in Early Sung China, 960–1067*, Cambridge, 1953; and idem, 'Sung Society: Change within Tradition', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 14, no. 4, 1955, pp. 479–89.

i.e., they controlled the access to the major institutional markets, and conversion of resources over the construction of the definition of social and cultural worlds. But the mode in which they exercised this control was greatly influenced by their predominant this-worldly orientation and their concomitant structure.

Unlike the parallel European or Byzantine elites—and in close relation to the very strong this-worldly orientations they represented—they combined at the same time both cultural ('religious') and administrative-political functions. Among them there developed only a relatively small degree of organizational and even symbolic distinction between these two types of activities. Their organizational framework was almost totally identical with that of the state bureaucracy (which recruited ten to twenty per cent of all the literati), and except for some schools and academies they had no organization of their own. Consequently the different elite activities were usually carried out in one institutional framework which usually meant the submergence of the cultural under the political activities. Accordingly, there did not develop among them separate political, administrative or religious organizations and hierarchies, within independent resources and bases of power. All this gave rise to a concomitant weakness of the autonomous bases of power and resources of the more central (especially administrative) as well as cultural elites alike, as against the Emperors and their entourage. It was only in one institutional sphere—the educational one—and in Rome in the legal and legal—educational sphere—that there did develop some autonomous intellectual organizations and structures—but even here the more specific roles into which such activities crystallized were usually very closely interwoven with the political-administrative setting and oriented towards it, and rather segregated from activities of secondary elites of the periphery.

Accordingly, these intellectuals could not, because of their basic acceptance of the interlinked political and cultural realm as the major focus of salvation and the concomitant lack of any independent resources or power bases, develop radical orientations beyond the private realm. They could not become a point of linkage with movements of protest and rebellion in the periphery, or even with central political power, and accordingly, they did not evince a high level of symbolical or organizational transformative capacities.

There was no way in which they could call the rulers effectively and regularly to account. But the latent premises of such accountability have always existed in China—to become very visible and

powerful in the various revolutionary movements which developed from the downfall of the Empire on.

## XII

The pattern of ideological politics in general and of accountability of rulers in particular that developed in the other-worldly civilizations—most fully represented by Theravada Buddhist societies<sup>12</sup>—of course different. In these societies there did developed a relatively autonomous religious group—the Sangha, who represented the higher pristine order and who had a relatively clear conception of the proper cultural and social order which was concomitant with this higher, transcendental one. They have created new civilizational frameworks, different from primordial ethnic or national collectivities, and were seemingly able to willing to call the rulers to account, especially for their upholding of the proper moral order of the community.

But the mode of the ideological politics in general and of construction of collectivities in particular that developed in these societies was greatly influenced by the other-worldly orientations prevalent in them and by the concomitant structure of the religious elite.<sup>13</sup> These elites evinced—in so far as their cultural or religious activities were concerned, a relatively large degree of symbolic and to varying degrees also organizational autonomy from both the major ascriptive groups as well as from the political rulers. (Even the Indian Brahmins, although they seemingly constituted such an ascriptive group—in fact their ascriptive identity was an ideological construction going much beyond local ascriptive kinship units.)

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<sup>12</sup> On Buddhist societies from the point of view of this discussion, see P.A. Pardue, *Buddhism: An Historic Introduction*, New York, 1958; W.T. de Bary (ed.), *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China, and Japan*, New York, 1972; P. Levy, *Buddhism: A 'Mystery Religion'?*, New York, 1968; H. Bechert, *Buddhismus: Staat und Gesellschaft in den Ländern des Theravada-Buddhismus*, 4 vols., Frankfurt am Main, 1966–68; S.J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer*, Cambridge, 1976; E.M. Mendelson, *Sangha and State in Burma: A Study of Monastic Sectarianism*, J.P. Ferguson (ed.), Ithaca, 1975; R.F. Gombrich, *Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon*, Oxford, 1971; M. Nash, G. Obeyesekere, H.M. Ames, J. Ingersoll, D.E. Pfanner, J.C. Nash, M. Moerman, M. Ebihara, and N. Yalman, *Anthropological Studies in Theravada Buddhism*, New Haven, 1966; and E.B. Harper (ed.), *Religion in South Asia*, Seattle, 1964.

<sup>13</sup> On the Sangha see H. Bechert op. cit.; J. Bunnag, *Buddhist Monk, Buddhist Layman: A Study of Urban Monastic Organization in Central Thailand*, Cambridge, 1973; Gombrich, *Precept and Practice*.

But this autonomy as well as the critical activities of these elites were on the whole confined to the cultural or religious sphere. In the more mundane sphere they attained at most some—usually limited—organizational autonomy—but in these spheres they were both symbolically and organizationally much more dependent on the political authorities. Their organizational autonomy was contingent on the acceptance of the basic rules of the political game established by the political elites. Thus, although they were called upon to legitimize the political order and took part in the formation of new political regimes or in the restructuring of the scope of ascriptive communities—they evinced but very little autonomous, potentially critical participation in the political realm. Indeed they tended to legitimize any victorious ruler.

Their intellectual activities were not oriented to such participation. In so far as they developed alternative conceptions of a social or cultural order, these have been either oriented almost entirely to the 'other-worldly' spheres, or to the moral improvement of the community without, however, generating very high potential restructuring of the political, social or economic spheres of activities.

But with all these limitations, the very activities and orientations of these elites, had yet far-reaching—even if very specific—impacts on the structuring of collectivities and on the pattern of legitimation of rulers and their accountability. The very upholding of the criteria of salvation as bearing also on the political realm added here several additional dimensions to the structuring of the political realm, its legitimation in general and accountability of rulers in particular.

First of all there developed here a basically secular conception of kingship. The King was desacralized and his role defined largely—even if perhaps not entirely—in secular terms with a strong emphasis on the necessity to accept it in terms of the maintenance of social order. At the same time however demands were made on him to support the higher cosmic order and the concomitant moral order of the community to which in principle he is subordinate. Thus in principle Royalty was legitimized in terms of the predominant 'other-worldly' religious symbols.

At the same time the relatively autonomous religious elites tended to become the carriers of the 'moral conscience' of the society. Truly enough this moral conscience did not imply a distinct new socio-political vision. Rather, it implied the more stringent, elaborate and articulate upholding of the given order and of its religious (and moral)

precepts. Accordingly the complaints and demands articulated by these elites were not usually conceived in terms of new principles of political action, but rather in terms of further articulation of the premises of legitimation inherent in the existing principles. However, at the same time, such religious groups could become the standard bearers of outcries against the failure of the authorities to uphold their duties, as well as important factors in the fermenting of popular rebellions or upheaval. They could help in the spread of different 'populistic' demands, of demands to change the concrete application of existing rules as well as policies of rulers, thus generating a new dimension of political activity.<sup>14</sup>

It is also through these orientations and activities of theirs that these elites provided a new dimension in the construction and definition of the basic collectivities. First of all, given the strong religious orientations it was the 'civilizational' collectivities and frameworks that developed here as distinct and symbolically autonomous highly articulated framework. Secondly, these orientations certainly effected important changes in the construction and the definition of the 'local', 'national' or political communities. They added to the 'usual' primordial or territorial components of such definition a certain broader orientation which provided the basis and frameworks for the crystallization of new symbols and boundaries of political collective identity, of national political communities, first of all in the fact that the political realm was conceived as a reflection or representation of basic conceptions of the cosmic order—giving rise to what S.J. Tambiah has called the galactic polity.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> On the participation of the Sangha in political life, rebellions, and change in Buddhist societies see Tambiah, *World Conqueror*; Bechert, *Buddhismus* op. cit.; Mendelson, *Sangha and State in Burma*; G. Obeyesekere, F. Reynolds, and B.L. Smith (eds.), *The Two Wheels of Dhamma: Essays on the Theravade Tradition in India and Ceylon*, American Academy of Religion; Studies in Religion, no. 3, 1972, esp. chs. 1, 2 and 3; P. Mus, "Traditions asiennes et bouddhisme moderne", *Eranos Jahrbuch*, 32, 1968, pp. 161–275; and idem, 'La Sociologie de Georges Gurvitch et l'Asie', *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie*, 43, December 1967, pp. 1–21.

<sup>15</sup> Tambiah, *World Conqueror*; Bechert, *Buddhismus*; E. Sarkisyanz, *The Buddhist Background of the Burmese Revolution*, The Hague, 1965; idem, *Rusland und der Messianismus des Orients*, Tübingen, 1955, pp. 327–68; F.E. Reynolds, 'Civic Religion and National Community in Thailand', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 36, no. 4, 1977, pp. 267–82; C.F. Keyes, 'Millennialism, Theravada Buddhism and Thai Society', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 36, no. 4, 1977, pp. 283–303; T. Stern 'Ariya and the Golden Book: A Millenarian Buddhist Sect among the Karen', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 27, no. 2, 1968, pp. 297–327; and W.H. Rassers, *Panji, the Culture Hero: A Structural Study of Religion in Java*, The Hague, 1959.



Second, it was evident in a very strong tendency, which developed especially in the (Theravada) Buddhist societies, to define the local-national communities—and the nature of such definition could become foci of continuing socio-political struggle.<sup>16</sup>

### XIII

Thus both within this- and other-worldly civilizations there developed special modes of ideological politics in general and of construction of collectivities and accountability of rulers in particular. The fact that they differed greatly from what we have been accustomed to in the West should not belittle their importance and interest—in many ways they have shaped the political dynamics of their respective societies till this very day.

But there is no doubt that the fullest ideological and institutional articulation of the political process in general and of the structuring of collectivities and institutionalization of accountability of rulers in particular developed within the three great monotheistic civilizations—Judaism, Christianity and Islam.<sup>17</sup> Truly enough even here there developed many crucial variations and, as is well known, it was only in the Western-European (and North American) parts of Christian civilization that the more embryonic elements of such institutionalization that existed in Ancient Judaism and in a different mode in the Greek tradition, became fully—and routinely—organized. But the ideological and institutional possibilities of such developments existed in all these civilizations.

This was due both to the basic ideological-symbolic premises of these civilizations as well as to closely connected institutional factors.

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<sup>16</sup> Mus, *Traditions asiennes et bouddhisme moderne*, op. cit.; Bechert, *Buddhism*, op. cit.; Mendelson, *Sangha and State*, op. cit.

<sup>17</sup> On Judaism see any of the standard works on the history of Israel and of Jewish religion in the ancient times, such as for instance H.H. Ben-Sasson (ed.), *A History of the Jewish People*, Cambridge, Mass., 1976, Parts 1 and 2; S. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, second edition, New York 1952, Parts 1–6; J. Kaufman, *The Religion of Israel from the Beginning to the Babylonian Exile* (translated and abridged by M. Greenberg), Chicago, 1960; E.E. Urbach *The Sages, Their Concepts and Beliefs*, Jerusalem, 1975; and also S.N. Eisenstadt, *Max Weber's Ancient Judaism and the Formation of Jewish Civilization*, forthcoming in German in W. Schluchter (ed.), *Max Weber Das Antike Judentum*, Frankfurt, 1981, and also in English in the *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*.

On Christianity and Islam see the references in the following footnotes.

The relevant basic ideological premises that developed in these civilizations were a strong emphasis on a very high level of tension between the transcendent and the mundane orders; on a multiplicity and complexity of the ways of resolving such tension and of holding the rulers at least partially responsible for such resolution. Such resolution was always seen as being attainable through activities in this-worldly, political, military or economic spheres which had to be reconstructed according to other-worldly orientations. Closely related was also an emphasis on a high level of activism and commitment of groups and strata and individuals to the cultural and social orders, and on relatively autonomous access to these orders of such groups and strata—to some degree countered by, and in constant tension with, the strong emphasis on the mediation of such access by such bodies as the Church or the political powers. All these generated also in these civilizations the development of many alternative conceptions of the social and cultural order.

These basic ideological premises gave rise in all these civilizations first of all to strong tendencies to the concomitant development of a multiplicity of mutually relevant—above all religious, cultural and civilizational and political—frameworks or collectivities; each relatively autonomous, yet all of them impinging on one another and conditioning the access to each other, and to a high level of symbolic articulation and ideologization of the criteria of membership of these collectivities and of their boundaries. Second, and in close relation with the former, these basic ideological and institutional tendencies gave rise in these civilizations—as the stories of wars of religions, of the combination of these wars with that of construction of boundaries of political collectivities fully attest to—to a continuous ideological articulation of the structuring of the basic political, religious, national or ethnic—collectivities.

The same in principle holds about the accountability of rulers. In all these civilizations there developed very articulate conceptions of a higher order to which the rulers and the community are responsible. The basic tenets of these civilizations in this respect are too well known to need in the short time available to us any further elaboration or illustration. While the ideological tenets of accountability of rulers have been closely related to the basic religious conceptions, especially to the conception of salvation that developed in these civilizations, the possibility of their institutionalization—as well as that of the structuring of the boundaries of the major

collectivities—has been related here, as in other civilizations, to the structure of the elites that developed within them. The crucial fact here has been that in conjunction with these cultural orientations there developed in these civilizations a very great multiplicity of elites at different levels of social life—both central as well as what may be called secondary elites. These elites had, unlike the Buddhist Sangha, a very strong orientation to social, political and sometimes economic spheres, and were usually imbued with very strong ambitions to restructure these mundane spheres. At the same time, unlike the Chinese literati, these elites, because of the variety of their conceptions and their organizational diversity, have always potentially had bases of power and resources independent of the political centre—as well as independent, symbolic and organizational linkages with the major social groups and strata in the periphery, and with movements of rebellion, protest and heterodoxy.

These tendencies to the development of multiple autonomous elites, often carrying alternative conceptions of the social order—most of them oriented to the socio-political realm and with relatively independent 'bases and resources'—generated the conditions for the fullest development of the 'independent' autonomous religious and secular intellectuals, who strive to participate in the construction of cultural and political order—as well as of autonomous political elites.

Needless to say in all these civilizations and societies many of the religious and intellectual groups become co-opted, as were the Chinese literati, in the central bureaucracies, and their own organizations were often supervised by the political powers or even co-opted into the political frameworks. Yet, because of all the conditions specified above, there developed in these civilizations potentially independent stratum of religious or secular intellectuals as well as of political elites, and a continuous tension between them, and between their attempts to attain autonomy from the authorities and from each other on the one hand and the quest to participate in the construction of the socio-political order on the other hand. It was these different elites and sub-elites which were active in the structuring of the major collectivities and which portrayed themselves as the carriers of that higher order or Law to which the rulers and the community were deemed to be accountable. Needless to say the political rulers always tried on their part to portray themselves as such carriers, but because of the actual or potential activity of all these other elites, it was only under very special circumstances that the rulers could be successful in these attempts of theirs.

In close relation to these tendencies there developed also in these societies or civilizations much stronger tendencies to the development of multiplicity of movements of heterodoxy and of movements of protests, both of which articulated conceptions of alternative social order and of different principles of accountability of rulers; to linkages among these movements and between them and different levels of political struggle in general and attempts to reconstruct the centre of these societies according to different bases of legitimation of the social order in particular.

In all of these civilizations there developed continuous tension between different principles of legitimation—be they primordial, sacred or civil. All these principles—as well as the struggle between them—were formulated in highly ideological terms; they became central foci of political struggle—and in the name of each of which different principles of structuring of collectivities and of accountability of rulers were announced.<sup>18</sup>

#### XIV

One of the most interesting developments in these civilizations which bears directly on the institutionalization of the process of accountability of rulers is a tendency for the development of the legal sphere as an autonomous socio-political realm which tends to become distinct—although never entirely separated—both from the sphere of custom as well as from being just an instrument of political regulation. The fullest development of such systems can be, of course, found in Western Europe and later on in the US—although very significant developments in this direction took place in Judaism and in Islam and in the Byzantine and in the Russian Empires.<sup>19</sup>

The most crucial development here is not just the elaboration and codification of different customs and laws, the growing organizational and intellectual complexity of legal systems or the relatively specialized educational 'formation' of legal cadres. All these could, in varying degrees, be found also in other, especially in this-worldly, civilizations. In addition to all these characteristics, in the monotheistic civilizations we find that the legal frameworks and activities

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<sup>18</sup> On these aspects of the monotheistic religions see S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies*, op. cit., esp. ch. V.

<sup>19</sup> See on this: R.M. Unger, *Law in Modern Society*, New York 1976, ch. 2, a good comparative study of Chinese laws.

became here one of the most central and distinct arenas of the articulation of the basic premises of the political and social order and of its grounding in the basic cultural orientations. Concepts of rights and of duties became very closely related to the basic conceptions of political identity and of legitimation of the socio-political order. To some degree they become also—as in the Jewish and Islamic cases—the most important frameworks of definition of membership of the civilizational and cultural communities, and of the basic components of collective identity. Above all the autonomous spheres of law and its carriers became also one of the major—if not the major—arena which attempted to become invested with the responsibility of defining the accountability of rulers, and thus became caught up in the ideological articulation of the most central levels of political struggle.

## XV

And yet with all these characteristics common to all the monotheistic civilizations the mode of ideological politics in general and the concrete institutionalization of the structuring of collectivities and above all of the accountability of rulers in particular differed greatly between them and within each of them. These concrete differences were influenced by a whole gamut of concrete historical conditions, by the vicissitudes of internal and external power struggles into the details of which we cannot enter here. But however varied these historical processes their impact on the structuring of collectivities and above all on the institutionalization of accountability of rulers was mediated by their effect on the relations between the basic cultural premises and orientations on the one hand and the structure of the major elites on the other. Of special importance in this context was the degree to which such historical process influenced first the interweaving of this—and other-worldly conceptions of salvation, and second the organizational differentiation of the major elites, their internal autonomy, mutual access to one another and the relative strength of secondary elites. The fuller development of the institutionalization of accountability of the rulers, as it was first worked out in the Western Europe—however precarious it was even here—was due to a set of historical processes which have assured, within these countries, first a continuous interweaving of this- and other-worldly conception of salvation and of their application to multiple institutional

spheres—be they political, economic or educational; second the continuous development of multiple autonomous elites and groups. These developments gave rise to several crucial characteristics of (Western) European society, the most important of which have been (1) multiplicity of centres; (2) a high degree of permeation of the periphery by the centres and of impingement of the periphery on the centres; (3) a multiplicity of cultural and functional (economic or professional) elites enjoying a relatively high degree of autonomy with close relationships with the broader strata, continuously impinging on each other, carrying different variations of combined this- and other-worldly orientations—with a high degree of mutual cross-cutting, autonomous access to the centre, without any group to monopolize the centre.<sup>20</sup>

## XVI

In other parts of the Christian civilization these processes did not work in the same way. Thus, to mention briefly, in Russia<sup>21</sup> the monolithic Imperial system was characterized by a high degree of principled interweaving of this- and other-worldly conceptions of salvation (which in the more modern setting were couched in secular metaphysical terms) but unlike in Western Europe also by a high degree of segregation between them. The other-worldly orientation was relegated to the private or 'religious' sphere while the combination of this- and other-worldly as applied to the socio-political field was vested in the rulers, giving rise to the subordination of the cultural (religious) to the political order. The Russian state was also characterized by a relatively low degree of autonomous access of the major strata to the principal attributes of the social and political orders. The political sphere became the monopoly of the rulers; the economic sphere became less central, and economic activities were

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<sup>20</sup> On the Christian background in general and Europe in particular see T. O'Dea, J. O'Dea and C. Adams, *Religion and Man: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*. New York: 1975; or, Kerr, C., et al.; or F. Herr, *The Intellectual History of Europe, vol. 1: From the Beginnings of Western Thought to Luther*, Garden City, New York, 1968; O. Hintze, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*, F. Gilbert (ed.), New York, 1975; O. Brunner, *Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte*, Gottingen, 1968; J.O. Lindsay, *New Cambridge Modern history, vol. 7*, Cambridge, 1957; E. Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, New York, 1931.

<sup>21</sup> R. Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, London 1975; H. Seton-Watson, *The Decline of the Imperial Russia 1855-1914*, London, 1952.

left, in so far as they did not impinge directly on the centre, to their own autonomous development. To this end, the centre vigorously segregated access to the attributes of the cosmic order (salvation) which was given to all groups of the society with comparatively weak mediation by the Church from access to the attributes of the political and social orders, which were after the post-Mongol period almost totally monopolized by the political centre.

Hence, as is well known, accountability of rulers was never successfully institutionalized in Russia—but at the same time it constituted a basic ideological ingredient in its political culture. It is impossible to understand the revolutionary—and paradoxically enough—even the totalitarian tendencies in Russia without reference to the high level of ideological articulation of politics in general and the idea of the accountability of the rulers to a higher authority or ideal in particular.

## XVII

These various historical processes have worked out in a different way in Judaism<sup>22</sup> and in Islam and let's finish by pointing out some of the aspects of Islamic history which bear most closely on our analysis.<sup>23</sup>

The most important cultural orientations that crystalized in Islamic realm were the distinction, chasm, between the 'cosmic' transcendental realm and the mundane one and the stress on the overcoming the tension inherent in this chasm by total submission to God and by this-worldly above all, political and military—activity; the strong universalistic element in the definition of the Islamic community; the principled autonomous access of all members of the community to the attributes of the transcendental order, to salvation, through submission to God; the ideals of the *Ummah*—the political-religious com-

<sup>22</sup> See the references in Footnote 17.

<sup>23</sup> On the basic tenets of Islam see, cited, G.E. Von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam: A Study in Cultural Orientation*, Chicago, 1946, idem (ed.), *Studies in Islamic Cultural History, American Anthropologist Memoir No. 6*, Menaska, Wisc., 1954; B. Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, London, 1937; M.G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 3 vols., Chicago, 1974; B. Lewis, 'The Concept of an Islamic Republic', *Die Welt des Islams*, 4, no. 1, 1955, pp. 1–10; idem, *Islam in History: Ideas, Men and Events in the Middle East*, London, 1973; G.E. von Grunebaum, 'The Sources of Islamic Civilization', in Holt et al., *Cambridge History of Islam*, 2, pp. 469–510; and C.J. Adams, 'The Islamic Religious Tradition' in J. O'Dea, T. O'Dea, and C.J. Adams, *Religion and Man: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, New York, 1972, pp. 159–221.

munity of all believers distinct from any ascriptive, primordial collectivity, and that of the ruler as the upholder of the purity of the *Ummah* and of the religious and moral life of the community.

Of special importance from the point of view of our analysis is the fact that in the Islamic realm the original vision of the *Ummah* assumed complete convergence between the sociopolitical and the religious community. Political problems were central in the theology of Islam.

At the same time, however, because of the historical patterns of spread of Islam, this ideal of the *Ummah* was never realized and there developed, at least during 'quiet' routine periods of different Islamic regimes, a relatively strong segregation between this-worldly and other-worldly activities with a generally stronger emphasis on the latter; and a concomitant segregation between the political and the religious elites.

Thus the historical spread of Islam gave rise to the very high degree of symbolic and organizational autonomy of the political elites; to the relatively high symbolic autonomy—but only a minimal organizational one—of the religious elite; and to a growing separation of the two. The religious leadership was greatly dependent on the rulers and did not develop into a broad, independent and cohesive organization. Religious groups and functionaries were not organized as a separate entity; nor did they constitute a tightly organized body—except when, as in the Ottoman Empire, organized by the State.<sup>24</sup> Thus in fact there developed a strong dissociation between the political and the religious elites as well as—because of the strong ideological dissociation of the universal Islam community and the various primordial ones—between these elites and the local communities. But a strong latent religious-ideological orientation toward unification of these spheres was always prevalent in Islam.

The combination of religious orientations, structure of elites, and the relations between elites and local ascriptive communities gave rise—in Imperial and patrimonial Islamic systems alike—to some unique types of ruling groups.

The most distinctive of such ruling elites were the military-religious rulers who emerged from tribal and sectarian elements, and the system of military-slavery which created special channels of mobility such as the *qulam* system in general and the Mameluke system

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<sup>24</sup> Gibb and Bowen, *op. cit.*, ch. 8; Itzkowitz, 1972, *op. cit.*



and Ottoman devshime in particular, through which the ruling group could be recruited from alien elements.<sup>25</sup>

All these have greatly affected the pattern of accountability of rulers that developed in the realm of Islam. On the purely symbolic level, the rulers were supposed to uphold the ideal of the *Ummah* and to be accountable to it; but this ideal was given up quite early in the history of Islam and instead there developed theological acceptance of any rulers as better than anarchy. Accordingly there did not develop in Islam, as Bernard Lewis has shown, a concept of revolution.<sup>26</sup> But the older ideal continuously persisted in the realm of Islam. It is the combination of the persistence and non-realizability of the ideal that explains several crucial aspects of political dynamics in Islamic countries. On the one hand there developed in stable Islamic societies but little effective routine checks—religious or otherwise—on the authority of rulers. At the same time it was the religious leaders, the *ulema* and the sufi-Sheiks who were usually the keepers of the religious law and through it of the boundaries of the community—thus not only being an indispensable partner of any ruling coalition, but also a potentially very potent one in possible confrontation with the rulers.<sup>27</sup> Truly enough such confrontations were very rare, but their possibility was always there.

Many of the later (such as the Abbasides and Fatimides) caliphs who came to power on the crest of religious movements which upheld this ideal, legitimized themselves in such religious-political terms, and sought to retain popular support by stressing the religious aspect of their authority and by courting the religious leaders and religious sentiments of the community.

Because of this there developed in Islam, as Professor Gellner in his interpretation of the Ibn Khaldun has indicated, a less direct yet very forceful pattern of accountability of rulers—a pattern viable to this very day—manifest in the possibility of rulers being deposed by

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<sup>25</sup> D. Ayalon, *L'Esclavage du Mamelouk*, Jerusalem, Israel Oriental Society, 1951; N. Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition*, New York, 1972; P. Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*, London, 1938; and B. Miller, *The Palace School of Muhammad the Conqueror*, Cambridge, 1941.

<sup>26</sup> See Lewis, *Islamic Concepts of Revolution*, in *idem*, *Islam and History*, op. cit., pp. 253–267.

<sup>27</sup> On sectarian tendencies in Islam see H. Laoust, *Les Schismes dans l'Islam: Introduction à une étude de la religion musulmane*, Paris, 1965; Lewis, *Islam in History*, pp. 217–66; C. Cahen, 'La Changeante portée sociale de quelques doctrines religieuses', in *L'Elaboration de l'Islam, Colloque de Strasbourg, 12–14 June, 1959*, Paris, 1961, pp. 5–22; and M.S. Stern, *Isma'ilis and Qarmantians*, in *ibid.*, pp. 99–108.

the combination of sectarian groups with the resurgence of tribal revival or popular upheavals against 'corrupt' or weak regimes.<sup>28</sup>

## XVIII

We have come, at least for the time being, to an end of our exploration. We have explored the origins and different modes of ideological politics and have found them not in the present or in the modern era but in the distant past, in some very formative periods of human history.

We have analysed the origins of ideological patterns in general and of construction of collectivities and accountability of rulers in particular, and we have above all stressed the impact of several crucial aspects of cultural orientations on these aspects of political dynamics. But we have stressed that such impact of cultural traditions is effected not through some process of emanation, but mainly through the activities of different elites who are both the carriers of such traditions and orientations, as well as the central partners in the ruling coalitions and who control the flow of resources in society and the construction of social reality. The concrete features of these modes of control and the consequent structuring of collectivities and of patterns of accountability of rulers are shaped by the continuous interaction between the cultural orientations they represent, their own structure, and the concrete historical setting within which they act.

We have shown how such different patterns of interaction have shaped different modes of ideological politics as they developed in some of the civilizations analysed here. We have concentrated—though even here necessarily very briefly and inadequately—on the way these developments took place in historical times—but this is not irrelevant for the understanding of the contemporary scene. Indeed it seems to be crucial for such an understanding.

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<sup>28</sup> See E. Gellner, 'A Pendulum Swing Theory of Islam', in R. Robertson (ed.), *Sociology of Religion*, Baltimore, 1969, pp. 127–41. On the constellations in the Maghreb, for instance, see E. Gellner and C. Micaud (eds.), *Arabs and Berbers: From Tribe to Nation in North Africa*, London, 1973; and C.C. Stewart, *Islam and Social Order in Mauritania: A Case Study from the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford, 1973. On more recent developments see A.S. Ahmed, *Millennium and Charisma among the Pathans: A Critical Essay in Social Anthropology*, London, 1976. For a more recent formulation see E. Gellner, 'State and Revolution in Islam', *Journal of International Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 187–99.

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## CHAPTER NINE

# TRANSCENDENTAL VISION, CENTER FORMATION, AND THE ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS

### CHARISMA, CENTERS, AND INTELLECTUALS: THE AXIAL AGE OF CIVILIZATIONS

#### I

Among the many seminal contributions of Edward Shils to sociological analysis I would like to address myself here to the analysis of intellectuals in general and of their relations with the powers in particular,<sup>1</sup> to his reinterpretation of Weber's concept of charisma, the development of the concept of the "center," and of the analysis of center-periphery relations.<sup>2</sup>

These three analyses or themes are indeed very closely interrelated, and it is the interrelation between them—focused above all on the analysis of the nature of the charismatic dimension of social action and structure—that seems to me to be of crucial importance to the development of sociological analysis.

Shils reinterpreted Weber's conception of charisma as the search for the construction and attainment of meaningful social order which is closely related—in Durkheim's terms—to the realm of the sacred. Institutionally, according to him, such search is located above all in the center or centers of a society.

At the same time it is in the nature of the characteristics of intellectuals that some very crucial aspects of their activities are very closely related to this charismatic dimension of human life and to its articulation in the social order.

Given that the construction of meaningful order constitutes a central aspect of the charismatic dimension of human life, obviously the contents—or at least some aspects of the contents—of the visions of

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<sup>1</sup> See Edward Shils, *The Intellectuals and the Powers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

<sup>2</sup> See Edwards Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

such order which are articulated by various intellectuals should also influence the structure of the centers of societies and their dynamics. Moreover, they might also—sometimes as we shall see rather paradoxically—influence the basic frameworks of the relations between intellectuals and powers.

## II

In the following pages we shall attempt to explore the nature of this interrelation by the analysis of the frameworks of construction of the centers and of the closely related activities of intellectuals in the so-called Axial Age civilizations with their common characteristics and with the differences between them.<sup>3</sup>

The “Axial Age civilizations” was a term used by Karl Jaspers to describe those (Great) civilizations that developed in the first millennium before the period between circa 500 B.C.E. and the Christian era—namely, in Ancient Israel, later on in Christianity and, verily, in Ancient Greece, in Ancient China in the early Imperial period, Hinduism and Buddhism, and much later, beyond the Axial Age proper, in Islam. The specific, distinctive characteristic of these civilizations was the development and institutionalization within them in general, and within their centers in particular, of basic conceptions of tension, of a chasm between the transcendental and mundane order.

These conceptions of a basic tension between the transcendental and the mundane order have developed above all among small groups by a new social element, a new type of elites in general, and of intellectual carriers of models of cultural and social order in particular. But ultimately these conceptions were, in all these Axial Age civilizations, institutionalized, that is, became the predominant orientation of both the ruling as well as of many secondary elites, fully embodied in their respective centers or subcenters, transforming the nature of the political elites, making the autonomous intellectuals relatively autonomous partners in the central coalitions. Thus the various dispersed groups of intellectuals became transformed into more fully crystallized and institutionalized ones, often into clerics—for example, the Jewish Prophets and Priests, the Great Greek Philosophers, the Chinese Literati, the Hindu Brahmins, the Buddhist Sangha or

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<sup>3</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics,” *European Journal of Sociology* 23, no. 2 (1982).

the Islamic Ulama. The most important repercussions of such institutionalization has been the development of the ideological and structural attempts to reconstruct the mundane world according to the basic conception of the resolution of this tension. The given, mundane order was perceived in these civilizations as incomplete, often as faulty and in need of being—at least in some of its parts—reconstructed according to the conception of the resolution of this basic tension, or, to use Weberian nomenclature, according to the premises of salvation—basically a Christian term the equivalents of which, however, can be found in other civilizations.

As part of this process, in all these civilizations a far-reaching restructuring of the conception of the relation between the political and the higher, transcendental order took place. The political order—as the central focus or framework of the mundane order—has been in these civilizations usually conceived as lower than the transcendental one and accordingly had to be restructured according to the premises of the latter. And it was the rulers who were usually held to be responsible for assuming such structuring of the political order; and accordingly there appeared the possibility of calling a ruler to judgment in the name of some higher order, to which the rulers are accountable.

At the same time the nature of the rulers became greatly transformed. The King-God, the embodiment of the cosmic and earthly order alike, disappeared, and a secular ruler, in principle accountable to some higher order, appeared. Thus, there emerged the conception of the accountability of the rulers and of the community to a higher authority: God, Divine Law, and the like. Accordingly, the possibility of calling a ruler to judgment emerged. The first most dramatic appearance of this conception took place in Ancient Israel in the priestly and prophetic pronouncements. A different conception of such accountability, an accountability of the community and its laws, appeared on the northern shores of the Eastern Mediterranean, in Ancient Greece. In different forms this conception appeared in all these civilizations.

Concomitant to the emergence of conceptions of accountability there began to develop autonomous spheres of law and conceptions of rights, distinct from ascriptively bound customs. Closely related to these changes in the basic political conceptions that have developed in these civilizations have been also far-reaching transformations of the conceptions of human personality. The interpersonal virtues such as one's solidarity, mutual help, or the like have been

taken out of their primordial framework and combined, in different dialectical modes, with the attributes of resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders. In this way, they generate a new level of internal tensions in the structuring of personality, and it is through the appropriate reconstruction of personality that the bridging of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order, the chasm between them, that is, salvation, can be attained.

This was closely connected with the development of conceptions of individual as independent autonomous entity, very often out of tune with the political order and as an independent actor. It is the combination of the idea of accountability of rulers with some such conception of individual personality that indicated an affinity to various concepts of liberalism.

But the very attempt at such reconstruction was always torn by many internal tensions—given in the very nature of the basic ideological or symbolic premises of such conceptions; in the awareness of a greater range of possibilities of visions of the proper mode of the resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order and of the partiality or incompleteness of any given institutionalization of such vision. It is these tensions—which we shall explicate in greater detail further on—and their institutional repercussions that ushered in a new type of social and civilizational dynamics in the history of mankind.

### III

The institutionalization of these tensions often transformed the nature of the political elites and converted the new intellectual elites into relatively autonomous partners in the major ruling coalitions and movements of protest. The process of such institutionalization has entirely changed the nature of the intellectuals in comparison with the specialists in various ritual, magical, and sacral activities of the pre-Axial civilizations. It transformed such specialized technical activities into components of relatively autonomous construction of the cultural and social order, and their carriers into special elites—intellectuals and clerics—which were recruited and legitimized according to distinct, autonomous criteria and organized in autonomous settings, distinct from those of the basic ascriptive units. The intellectuals and clerics accordingly tended to become potentially independent of other elites and social groups and categories; at the same time

they were necessarily in strong competition with them, above all over the monopoly of the production and spread of symbols and media of communication.

Such competition became very intense because, with the institutionalization of such transcendental conceptions, a parallel transformation has taken place in the structure of other elites, especially those whose activities were also closely related to the resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order, whether they were political, military, or educational elites, and in some cases also the economic ones. All these elites tended to develop claims for an autonomous place in the construction of the cultural and social order. They saw themselves as performing not only specific technical, functional activities but also as potentially autonomous carriers of the models of a distinct cultural and social order closely related to the transcendent vision prevalent in their respective societies.

Accordingly, the nonpolitical elites, the various intellectuals or clerics, often tended to view themselves—insofar as the political realm was defined as relevant to the process of salvation—as being on a par with, if not superior to, the political authorities in the political realm. They tended to be very active participants in the social (and political) spheres, to see themselves as carriers and representatives of the major ideological attributes of these spheres; and they very often viewed the political authorities as potentially accountable to themselves. In parallel fashion, however, the political (and other) elites also quite often viewed themselves as autonomous articulators of the models of cultural order—potentially superior to the cultural elites. Moreover, these groups of elites were not, in these societies, homogeneous; there developed a multiplicity of secondary elites—cultural, political, or educational—each often carrying a different conception of the cultural or social order.

## TWO MODES OF TENSIONS IN THE ACTIVITIES OF INTELLECTUALS

### I

Thus already the general, common characteristics of the Axial Age civilizations—especially when compared to pre-Axial Age ones, such as Ancient Egypt and Japan—attest to the very close relations among some characteristics or aspects of the charismatic visions as articulated by various groups of intellectuals, the structure of the centers which have been crystallized by the activities of such intellectuals in



conjunction with other elites, and the characteristics of the intellectual elites predominant in them.

At the same time, the preceding analysis does also indicate the double aspect of the place of intellectuals within such societies and to the closely related rather paradoxical relations between two types of activities of intellectuals—namely, the specialized, distinct, autonomous intellectual activities, whether the creation of work, of arts, of literature, or of philosophy, and those activities of the intellectuals that constitute part of the construction of the basic premises of their respective societies.

These two different types of intellectual activities of intellectuals are naturally connected with different structural positions and organizations of intellectuals and of intellectual activities—often sometimes of the same persons. It is naturally the latter that are most closely involved with the process of power, division of labor, regulation of power, and construction of trust, which are inherent in the very construction of the social order. They also constitute the major link between such construction and the structuring and organization of the different symbolic domains and domains of knowledge and their interrelations.

The distinction between these different types of intellectuals, or rather of intellectual activities, is mostly analytical, and very often different intellectual activities are undertaken by the same people and even in the same organizational settings or institutions (e.g., schools, universities). Significantly enough, however, even when this occurs, their activities are structured in different ways according to their major analytical and structural characteristics.

In more differentiated societies there naturally develop greater degrees of structural specialization of the different intellectual roles and organizations. In the flow of daily life such articulators resemble opinion leaders (as designated in communication research), who may indeed orient themselves to the articulation of different aspects of the social order, the construction of trust and symbols of solidarity, the articulation of models of cultural and social order and provision of meaning to the different spheres of activities, and the regulation of power and authority. Lately, some of these activities have become more fully channeled through the mass media, but, needless to say, all these do not exhaust the multitude of opinion-leadership roles.

## II

In close relation to the place of such intellectuals in the construction of these civilizations, there developed two modes of tensions between them and different elites—the political one and the intellectuals as ruling coalitions. The first such tension, which has indeed been abundantly studied, was that between the intellectuals of various kinds and the powers that be. The focus of such tension is usually the scope of the relative autonomy of the intellectuals in their specialized activity.

The second type of tension in activities of intellectuals focuses on the attempts of those intellectuals, especially the articulators of models of the social order, to impose their own distinct conceptions of the cultural and social order on other elites and on broader groups and strata; and also on the possible contradiction between the attempts to exercise such power and influence, on the one hand, and maintaining the conditions that assure maximum autonomy in the different areas of intellectual specialization and creativity, on the other.

## III

The full implications of the distinction between these two types of intellectual activity or of activity of intellectuals—and of the different modes of relations between them—can be more fully understood through an analysis of the most salient differences in the structure of centers and the activities of intellectuals in some of the major Axial Age civilizations—the major monotheistic civilizations, China and the Hinduist or Buddhist civilizations.

The starting point of such comparative analysis is indeed the basic fact that the charismatic visions of cosmic and social order which became institutionalized in these civilizations have been connected with different mode or modes of construction of centers and of the different types of activities of intellectuals.

For reasons of space we shall have to simplify here and shall distinguish, following Weber, between “this-worldly” visions of salvation, most fully evident in the Chinese case (as well as, even if in a different mode, in ancient Greece), and “otherworldly” visions of salvation, most fully manifest, albet in different ways, in Hinduism and Buddhist civilizations, and the different modes of interweaving of this- and otherworldly visions which have developed in three major monotheistic civilizations.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND CULTURAL AUTONOMY OF  
INTELLECTUALS IN AXIAL AGE CIVILIZATIONS

## I

The way in which these basic visions have become transformed into the basic premises of these civilizations has also greatly affected the nature, organization, and range of the activities of intellectuals, both in their political activities as well as in their more autonomous spheres and in the relations between the two.

In each of these civilizations different modes have developed: first, of involvement of intellectuals in general—and of religious or religious-like (like the Confucians) groups—who were predominant in most of these civilizations; and, second, of patterns of cultural creativity.

In all these political regimes there has developed a continuous, mutual interdependence and competition between the political and the intellectual or religious elites—an interdependence and competition that greatly influenced the involvement of the religious groups and organizations in the political struggle, the extent to which they were able and willing to provide the rulers with basic legitimation, continuous support, and various resources.

It was within this basic framework that the various *modi vivendi* between the religious and the political regimes were worked out. But it was also within this basic framework that there developed the possibility that the various religions would not support but undermine—either through open opposition and active promotion of change or through encouragement of political passivity and deflection of political support from the rulers—the political systems of the respective regimes.

This possibility was rooted in the partial differentiation of the political and religious systems, which made these two systems very closely interwoven and even identical at the local level and highly interdependent and sensitive to one another in the central political sphere. On the other hand, this possibility was also rooted in the nature of the relative autonomy of the religious sphere as compared with that of the political one—in the fact that the relation and mutual interdependence between these two spheres was to some extent asymmetrical. This asymmetrical relation was rooted in the historical fact that most of the religions had origins that were independent from those of the polities and that their chances of surviving any such regime were not negligible.

The rulers of these societies were dependent on the religious elites both for the maintenance of their traditional legitimation and for some measure of support of the provision of the more flexible resources. In the short run, the rulers could destroy any given religious organization, but beyond this they were continuously dependent on some religious organizations. The basic autonomy of the religious organizations and their transcendental orientations, in contrast, made them relatively, even if only relatively, more independent of any particular polity. It was only when a given polity constituted a very important and central referent of the orientation of a given religion—as was the case in Confucianism and to a smaller extent in the Maxidean Church—that the dependence of the religion on this polity was relatively great and its fate closely bound to that of the polity.

## II

The scope and extent of the political participation of the religious groups were, of course, greatly influenced by the basic characteristics of the social structure of these societies (e.g., by the extent of their differentiation, types of economy, etc.), by the policies of the rulers, and by the political orientations of the major groups. Throughout the history of these societies many changes in the political activities of the religious groups were affected by changes in these “external” forces. And yet the general potentialities for political orientations of the religious groups were rooted in their internal structure and orientations, even if the actualization of these potentialities was greatly dependent on the historical concrete forces. Each of these characteristics influence the political activities of the religious groups in a somewhat different direction.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the extent to which the religious institutions were organizationally autonomous greatly influenced the degree to which they could participate in the central political struggle of a given society. In general, the smaller the extent of their distinct organization, the smaller also was their ability to participate in the central political struggle. The more closely the organization was identified with that of the state organs and institutions, the more was its political participation

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<sup>4</sup> This analysis follows S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (New York: Free Press, 1963, 1969); and *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies* (New York: Free Press, 1978).

confined to the accepted, legitimate level of political activity. On the contrary, religious organizations that were not highly identified with the political institutions could develop more articulated political activities, which could go beyond the existing institutional framework.

On the other hand, strong universalistic and transcendental elements within these religious orientations allowed greater possibilities for their developing various intensive political orientations and activities which went beyond the existing institutional framework. At the same time, however, the greater the extent to which a given polity and state constituted a basic referent of religious activity, the greater was the extent to which the political activities—sometimes very important and intensive—of the religious groups were contained within the framework of existing political institutions and the smaller the possibility of their undermining this framework.

As against this, the more otherworldly oriented the predominant religious orientations, the smaller was the extent to which there developed within these religions articulated political activities, and the greater was the extent to which they engendered a passive attitude toward political activity and could deflect active forces from participation in the central political arena. And as the extent to which these orientations emphasized involvement in the mundane world and the specific ideological formulations of these orientations grew, so did the active political involvement of the respective religions grow.

The combination of these elements and the vicissitudes of the political struggles shaped the level of the political participation and orientation of these religious organizations in each case—even if there existed great variations within each of them.

Thus in China, within which a very strong this-worldly orientation was predominant, the major cultural-political elites have indeed evinced some very specific characteristics.

The most important and distinctive such elites in China were of course the famous Confucian literati and bureaucracy. These literati and bureaucrats were on the one hand the major carriers of the Confucian (or Confucian-Legal) world order and orientations briefly depicted above. As such they were, especially symbolically, relatively autonomous—vis-à-vis both the broader strata as well as from the political center even if rather closely related to them. They were recruited, legitimized, and organized according to criteria which were directly related to—or derived from—the basic precepts of Confucian-legalistic canon, and were not mediated or controlled by either the

broader strata of the society or in principle (although of course not always in practice) by the emperor himself.

These literati were not, however, just learned men performing intellectual functions. The stratum or category of literati constituted a source of recruitment to the bureaucracy, and they exercised at least a partial monopoly over venues of access to the center.

They constituted together with the emperors and their entourage, as well as sometimes the major warlords, the major partners in the ruling coalitions—to the almost total exclusion of other groups or social elements.

Their structure and organization were influenced by their predominant this-worldly orientation. Unlike the parallel European, Byzantine, or Islamic elites, the literati combined at the same time both cultural (“religious”) and administrative-political functions. Among them there developed only a relatively small degree of organizational and even symbolic distinction between these two types of elite activities. Their organizational framework was almost identical with that of the state bureaucracy (which recruited 10–20 percent of all the literati), and except for some schools and academies they had no organization of their own. Accordingly, there did not develop among them separate political, administrative, and religious organizations and hierarchies.

At the same time, and in close relation with the preceding developments, more central administrative as well as cultural elites had but few autonomous bases of power and resources, as against the emperors and their entourage. It was only in one institutional sphere—the educational one—that there did develop some autonomous organizations and structures. But even here the more specific roles into which such activities crystallized were usually very closely interwoven with the political-administrative setting and oriented toward it, and rather segregated from activities of secondary elites of the periphery.

### III

In the otherworldly civilizations—the Hindu and the Buddhist—a rather different pattern emerged. First of all there developed here a basically secular conception of kingship. The king has become desacralized and his role defined largely—even if perhaps not entirely—in secular terms with a strong emphasis on the necessity to accept kingship in terms of the maintenance of the social order. At the same

time, however, demands were made on him to support the cosmic order defined in transcendental otherworldly terms and the concomitant moral order of the community to which in principle he was seen as being subordinate. Thus, in principle, royalty was legitimized in terms of the predominant "otherworldly" religious symbols, but at the same time its mundane role was quite widely accepted and even defined in religious terms.

Concomitantly there developed in these civilizations a very distinct pattern of institutional dynamics which differed greatly from those of other Axial Age civilizations in which (as in China) this-worldly orientations were predominant, or in those—like the monotheistic ones—in which such this-worldly orientations were closely interwoven with otherworldly ones.

The major thrust of these dynamics generated very much by the major intellectual elites in coalitions with the rulers was focused around the continuous restructuring of the criteria of membership in ascriptive-primordial and religious communities, the redefinition of the boundaries of these communities and of access to them—together with periodic attempts at imbuing them with strong emphasis on equality. Here indeed the most dramatic innovation within these civilizations was the rise of Buddhism itself from within the Indian civilization and beyond it.

The restructuring of the new collectivities—the civilizational, political, and religious frameworks—facilitated the continuous expansion of different social organizations. Such expansion became connected with the restructuring of these collectivities, subsuming the former under the latter.

Thus all these developments often gave rise to new organizational settings, to continuous redefinition of scope of political and economic units, to changes in patterns of politics as well as to continuous changes in the religious sphere as manifest above all in the development of new movements and sects.

But these dynamics did indeed evince several crucial differences or limits—especially as compared with other civilizations; the limits of such dynamics can be seen in the fact that whatever reorganization of mundane, institutional spheres has taken place here in them, it took place mostly on the organizational plane or level, with but very weak restructuring of the levels of symbolic articulation of these spheres, without imbuing them with new autonomous meanings. Thus, for instance, they have not given rise to an autonomous sym-

bolic evaluation of this sphere and to the construction—as in China or in monotheistic civilizations—of autonomous centers, distinct from the periphery, with strong Imperial orientations.

The very high level of continuous involvement of religious elites and sects in political life in these three monotheistic civilizations is too well known to need—especially given the limitations of space—elaboration on their many variations.

#### IV

The variables analyzed above have also greatly affected the degrees and modes of autonomy in their respective intellectual field of creativity. Here we find a rather paradoxical situation. The greatest range of such autonomy tended to develop in general in those fields or areas that seemingly were not far away from the central foci of the premises of a civilization.

Thus in Japan, for instance, which has not undergone an Axial Age transformation, the great efflorescence of different forms of literary activities has been attributed by scholars to the lack of a very strong transcendental vision in Japan—a vision that could serve as a focus of regulating cultural creativity.<sup>5</sup>

In general, however, especially in the Axial Age civilizations, the possibility of the transformation of some aspects of their works into premises of civilizations often constituted a very crucial motivation or push to creativity in cultural areas. At the same time, paradoxically, such transformation could also generate new limitations on such creativity or at least tensions with it.

In purely this-worldly civilizations, a very wide range of areas of cultural creativity has been relevant from the point of view of the premises of these civilizations, but at the same time there tends to develop, due to the close interweaving of the political and cultural elites, the strong tendency to control such activities and their autonomous expressions. Thus, in the Chinese case and to some degree in Ancient Greece, there developed far-reaching attempts to repudiate cultural creativity and its impingement on central political areas. At the same time, the possibility of such impingement constituted a very important impetus to many such activities—philosophical, artistic, and the like.

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<sup>5</sup> A. Kato, *A History of Japanese Literature, the First Thousand Years—Tokyo* (New York and San Francisco: Kodansha International, 1979), esp. pp. 1–27.



As against this in the otherworldly civilizations, many areas of “mundane” cultural creativity—such as mathematics or poetry—have at least partially developed in an autonomous way, with seemingly little direct interference from the predominant cultural institutions—even if, of course, not uninfluenced by them.

At the same time, however, just because of not being related to the basic focus or premises of their respective civilizations, many such autonomous activities were limited in the scope of their creativity.

It is within the monotheistic civilizations in which the interweaving between this- and otherworldly orientations was most pronounced, that there developed a continuous dynamic between the two modes or types of tensions in the activities of intellectuals. It has been in these civilizations that paradoxes and dichotomies inherent in the interrelations between these two modes of tensions—and their impact on the construction of social and political order—have become most fully apparent.<sup>6</sup> These paradoxes and dichotomies have become intensified with the transition to modernity and in modern societies.

#### THE PLACE OF INTELLECTUALS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN CIVILIZATIONS: THE REVOLUTIONARY ORIGINS OF MODERNITY

The crucial fact here was, of course, the central role of religious and secular intellectuals in the Great Rebellion, the American and the French Revolutions which have ushered in modernity.

In all the Great Revolutions that lay at the origins of modernity, religious and secular intellectuals promoted the basic cultural and ideological visions which were promulgated in the crystallization of these revolutions and in their impact on the crystallization of the basic premises of modern societies.<sup>7</sup> Hence, indeed, all these tensions and problems have been intensified with the crystallization of modern civilization in the work of the Great Revolutions.

The crystallization of modernity has indeed greatly changed or transformed the basic characteristics of political centers and dynamisms. From the point of view of the contents of these centers, the major

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<sup>6</sup> Some comparative indications can be found in S.N. Eisenstadt and I.F. Silber, eds., *Cultural Traditions and Worlds of Knowledge: Explorations in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Philadelphia: JAI Press, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> See for greater detail S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolutions and the Transformation of Societies* (New York: Free Press, 1978).

transformation which has occurred concomitantly with modernity has been the growing secularization of the centers, and the nonacceptance of the givenness of their contents and symbols can indeed be reexamined anew. This change was closely connected with the growing autonomy of the political, cultural, and societal centers, and above all with changes in the relations between the centers and the periphery; with the growing impingement of the periphery on the center and by facilitation of the access to the center by the periphery, by the permeation of the periphery by the center, often culminating in the concomitant tendency toward the obliteration of the differences between center and periphery, thus making membership in the collectivity tantamount to participation in the center.

These processes were also closely related to the changes in the basic orientations to tradition and to the bases of legitimation of authority. The sanctity and givenness of the past—of any past—as the major symbolic regulator of social, political, and cultural change and innovation have given way to the acceptance of innovation and orientations to the future as a basic dimension of cultural orientation.

One of the most important transformations—effected above all by the Great Revolutions in the construction of centers—was the incorporation of symbols and premises of protest into the very centers of societies. Thus protest and the possibility of the transformation of some aspects of a society's institutional premises are no longer considered to be illegitimate. Symbols and movements of protest, of equality and participation, of social justice have become legitimate components of the political process; and the history of modern politics has become, in many ways, the history of the incorporation of the symbols and demands of such movements into the centers, the concomitant transformation of these centers—in some cases in relatively peaceful ways, in others in more confrontational terms.

These revolutionary origins of modernity and the place of intellectuals within them had, of course, many repercussions on the relation between intellectuals and political elites. In a most extreme and exaggerated form, the basic symbolic—as opposed to organizational—distinction between intellectuals and political elites becomes even more blurred than before. Hence, paradoxically, the tensions between them could become exacerbated, at the same time greatly influencing the development of some basic problems inherent in the establishment and working of democratic regimes. Among the most important of

these problems were the tensions between totalistic utopias and populist and technocratic tendencies on the one hand, and on the other hand the extension of participation in the centers of the society and the concomitant ability of the centers to incorporate these tendencies without giving in to them—an ability necessarily related to continuous restructuring of enlightened public opinion and analyzed by Edward Shils in many of his classical articles.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, this fundamental tension involves a conflict between the Jacobin or messianic element of modernity, and the possibility of a relatively noncrisis transformation of society (which, in a sense, is the hope of liberal democracies). None of the modern liberal democracies has entirely done away—or possibly even can do away—with this Jacobin element; it manifests itself in a variety of ways in different societies, one of them being the intellectual pilgrimage to other societies in an attempt to find the full flowering of the revolutionary ideal in another society. Another manifestation of this Jacobin element is the attempt by intellectuals to impose a totalistic solution, whether of the right or of the left, to society's ills.

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<sup>8</sup> Edward Shils, *The Intellectuals and the Powers*.

## CHAPTER TEN

### UTOPIAS AND DYNAMICS OF CIVILIZATIONS: SOME CONCLUDING COMPARATIVE OBSERVATIONS\*

#### I

The papers presented in this collection illustrate abundantly the central thesis presented by Adam Seligman in the introductory essay, namely, that the development of utopian visions is inherent in the very constitution of Axial civilizations. It is above all inherent in the perception of a double break or tension that is characteristic of these civilizations—namely, first the tension inherent in the very conception of a chasm between the transcendental and the mundane orders, and second, and more important, the tension between the conception of salvation or of the soteriological bridge through which such a chasm may be bridged that develops in such civilizations, and the concrete definition and institutionalization of such a concept (Eisenstadt, 1982).

It was the development of such a double break or tension that transformed millenarian conceptions or visions which can be found in pre-Axial civilizations into the utopian visions of the Axial civilizations, although such vision incorporated—albeit in a transformed way—many millenarian orientations. Sarit Helman's paper on Indonesian millenarism forcefully illustrates the strength of such millenarian orientations in a non-Axial conception of social order, as well as the almost total absence of any utopian components within them.

The development of full-fledged utopian orientations was connected with the fact that the tensions inherent in the premises of Axial Age civilizations and in their institutionalization generated an awareness of a great range of possible visions of the cultural and social order. Historically this awareness was related to the fact that the institutionalization of any such conception was never a simple and peaceful process. It was usually connected with a continuous struggle and competition among many groups and their respective visions. Moreover, even after one of these visions emerged as hegemonic and was fully

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\* The papers referred to in this chapter have been published in the volume of which this is the concluding chapter.

institutionalized in the orders of social life, competing visions remained, if often in changed forms.

But this historical fact only reinforced a basic characteristic of the cultural premises attendant on the institutionalization of any such conception, namely, that any articulation and institutionalization of such a conception contained strong heterogeneous elements and orientations, so that its elaboration in fully articulated and abstract terms made different emphases, directions, and interpretations possible. All of these were reinforced by the historical existence of multiple visions carried by different groups.

Hence, all of these civilizations developed an awareness of a greater range in the possible definitions of such tension, and, above all, of alternative modes of overcoming this tension, of alternative ways of salvation and of the possibility of constructing alternative social and cultural orders. No single definition or resolution could be taken any longer simply as given.

It is this very multiplicity of alternative visions that led to an awareness, in all civilizations, of the potential uncertainty of different roads to salvation, of the existence of alternative conceptions of social and cultural order, and of the seeming arbitrariness of any single solution. The consciousness of such alternatives became a constituent element of the structuring of selfawareness in these civilizations, especially among the carriers of their Great Traditions. It was closely related to the development of a high degree of "second order" thinking, of reflexivity. This focused around the basic premises of the social and cultural order, and not only, as in most pre-Axial Age civilizations, around individual adherence to the given social and moral order.

## II

From the point of view of their contents or orientations, such alternative visions tended to develop in several directions and combinations. One such direction was to reformulate the nature of the tension between the transcendental and mundane orders—for example, in the Buddhist reformulation of the premises of Hinduism or in the Christian reformulation of the premises of Judaism.

Another direction was to deny—either in highly ideological terms with strong transcendental orientations or in more simple terms of little traditions—the stress on the tension between transcendental and mundane orders. This could lead to a "return", usually among small

groups of intellectuals, to a highly sophisticated conception of parallelism between the transcendental and mundane orders, and to concomitant attempts to go back to a pre-transcendental state, and in the periphery—as Bernardo Arévalo de León's paper in this collection shows—to a de-axialization of the predominant orientations.

The third direction taken by these alternative visions was to deny the predominant conception of the resolution of such tension and of its institutional derivatives, i.e., a stress on other-worldly orientations over this-worldly orientations, or vice versa, a stress on learning as against military or political virtues and the like.

A fourth direction was to elaborate a great variety of religious and intellectual orientations—above all the mystical and esoteric ones—which go beyond any given, established, routinized, and orthodox version of the resolution of the transcendental tension.

Such elaborations may be related to the development of strongly antinomian tendencies negating ideologically the tendencies to rationalization inherent in most such official resolutions of the conception of the chasm between the transcendental and mundane orders.

A fifth direction was to uphold the prevalent conceptions and ideals in their pristine form as against their necessarily compromised concretization in any institutional setting. All these alternative visions were usually combined with the perennial themes of social protest—themes such as the emphasis on equality and solidarity, on the suspension of social division of labor, and the like.

A restructuring of the conception of time also took place. There was a new awareness of many possible discontinuities or disjunctions between the major dimensions of time—past, present, and future—and of the consequent necessity to find ways to bridge between them. While the nature of this bridge—cyclical, historical, apocalyptic—varied greatly from civilization to civilization, the stress on some discontinuity and on the concomitant definition of the societies' past and future is common to all of them.

### III

Out of the combination of the conception of possible alternative roads to salvation, of alternative cultural and social orders, and the structuring of the time dimensions, there emerged utopian visions of an alternative cultural and social order beyond any given place or time. Such visions contained many of the millenarian and revivalist

elements that can be found in pre-Axial Age civilizations as well: but they go beyond them by combining them with the search for an alternative “better” order beyond the given one, a new social and cultural order that will be constructed according to the precepts of the higher transcendental order and which will negate and transcend the given one.

These alternative visions usually contained a high potential for reconstruction of both the basic conceptions of ontological reality, of the conception of the transcendental order and of its relations to the basic institutional conceptions and of the relations between them, which were institutionalized in these civilizations. Some such visions often denied the validity of the very definitions of ontological reality upheld in the respective civilizations. Most of them, however, were oriented above all against the specific concrete relationship between such definitions and institutional premises (the ground rules that regulated the different arenas of social life) i.e., against the concrete institutionalization of such definitions of their institutional spheres.

These visions were usually articulated by special actors who presented themselves as carriers of the pristine religious and/or civilizational visions of these civilizations—carriers such as the holy men of antiquity, the Indian or Buddhist renouncers, Christian monks, and the like—in other words, religious virtuosi, who often stood in some dialectic relationships to the existing ways of institutionalizing the transcendental visions, often acting from within liminal situations. These actors often attempted to combine such visions with wider movements of protest (Eisenstadt, 1985a).

#### IV

Different themes, counter-themes, and the tendencies to the development of utopian visions were found in all the Axial Age civilizations sometimes developing out of the mutual encounter between these civilizations. But their relative importance, the composition of the movements carrying them, as well as the specific characteristics of such visions and movements, differed greatly between different Axial civilizations. These differences were shaped first of all by those very conditions which generated them. First, by the different definitions of the chasm or tension between the transcendental and the mundane order, especially whether the basic chasm between the transcendental and the mundane order was couched in relatively secular terms (as

in Confucianism and classical Chinese belief systems, in a somewhat different way, in the Greek and Roman worlds) and those where the tension was conceived in terms of a religious hiatus (as in the great monotheistic religions, and in Hinduism and Buddhism). Within the latter cases, an important distinction is the one between the monotheistic religions, in which there was a concept of God standing outside the Universe and potentially guiding it, and those systems, like Hinduism and Buddhism, in which the transcendental cosmic system was conceived in impersonal, almost metaphysical terms, in a state of continuous existential tension with the mundane system.

Second, such differences were influenced by the conception of salvation, of the soteriological bridge prevalent in the respective civilizations. Here, following Weber, the primary distinction is between purely this-worldly, purely other-worldly, and mixed this- and other-worldly conceptions of salvation. It is probably no accident that the "secular" conception of this tension was connected, as in China, Greece, and Rome, with an almost wholly this-worldly conception of salvation, or that the metaphysical non-deistic conception of this tension, as in Hinduism and Buddhism, tended towards an other-worldly conception of salvation. The great monotheistic religions, by contrast, tended to stress combinations of this- and other-worldly conceptions of salvation.

The concrete working out of all such tendencies in institutional arenas depends, however, on other conditions. These conditions included, first, the economic structure of these civilizations (although they all belonged to relatively economically developed agrarian or combined agrarian and commercial societies, often with a strong combination of tribal elements). Second, they varied greatly according to their respective political-ecological settings, i.e., whether they were small or great societies, whether they were societies with continuous compact boundaries, or with cross-cutting and flexible boundaries—politically independent or dispersed societies.

Third, they varied in their specific historical experience, especially in terms of their encounters with other societies and their mutual penetration, conquest, or colonization.

## V

It is the different concrete constellations of these factors that influenced not only the contents of the various utopian visions, but also their impact on the societies and civilizations in which they developed.



Such differences can be discerned among the civilizations discussed above—first of all in the comparison between Jewish and Christian (especially Catholic but also Protestant) orientations and utopian visions.

Christianity's basic differences from Judaism—whether it occurred in early Pauline Christianity or somewhat later (it must in any case have gone on for much longer than has been usually supposed)—focused not only on the role of law versus faith, but also, and perhaps above all, on three basic changes with regard to the Jewish faith and religion. The first of these was the removal of the political and primordial elements of religious belief and collective identity from their connection with a specific people and their transformation into more universal, less specifically national or ethnic frameworks. This dissociated the religious from the “ethnic” components, although without necessarily negating them totally, as was later the case in Islam.

Second was the emphasis on mediation through the person of Christ, a mediation expressed in many rituals, combining an emphasis on the bodily image of God with a strong other-worldly transcendental orientation in opposition to the Jewish emphasis on an incorporeal God, on law, and on primordial ties to the land and to a distinct people constituted as a holy community.

Third was a growing difference between Judaism—especially rabbinic Judaism—and Christianity, which crystallized in a somewhat later period, with respect to the mode of access to the realm of the sacred. Halakhic Judaism emphasized the word, the God-created text, while the central doctrine of the Church—Incarnation—emphasized the conversion into the flesh.

In Halakhic Judaism this special emphasis on the continuous interpretation of the text was very closely related to the weakening of any mediation of access to the sacred—in contrast to the reinstallation of mediation in Christianity by the emphasis on incarnation. It was only much later, in Protestant Christianity, that some of these tendencies weakened significantly, with a return to Old Testament symbolism. Needless to say, however, Protestant Christianity also retained the central mediating figure of Christ and did not share with Judaism the strong emphasis on access to the sacred through textual exegesis. In Christianity, common with Judaism, a very strong this-worldly orientation developed from the very beginning. But in Christianity such this-worldly orientations were part of the attempt to crystallize a new transcendental vision that included from the outset a very strong other-worldly orientation (see Dumont, 1982). But

such other-worldly orientations did not negate, in Christianity, the this-worldly ones.

Historical circumstances—the initial lowly status and persecution of Christianity—submerged but did not obliterate these concerns in the earlier period of Christianity. More propitious historical circumstances—the conversion of Constantine—brought out these this-worldly ideological orientations in full force. While the conversion of Constantine was indeed a turning point in the emergence of medieval Christian civilization, these orientations were built on potentialities that already existed in the initial stages of Christianity. The tension between the this-worldly and the pure other-worldly orientation has since become a permanent part of the history of Christianity.

These potentialities developed in different ways in different parts of Christian civilization—Catholic, Eastern, Byzantine, and later Russian Christianity—depending on the specific combination of this-worldly and other-worldly orientations that emerged in their respective centers, and on the geopolitical circumstances and structure of political power and elites that developed in each of these settings.

## VI

It is these differences in the basic orientations and historical experiences of the Jewish and Christian civilizations that explain some of the major differences in the various secondary orientations and utopian movements that developed within them, as well as their respective impacts on these societies.

Thus Jewish secondary orientations and utopias were focused around the differential emphasis on different arenas of life—political, economic—and different types of religious activities—ritual, learning, philosophical, or mystical—as the major soteriological bridge; on the relations between the individual as against collective redemption; and on the different dimensions of the time of such redemption—especially on the present as against the future as arenas of such redemption—a problem which developed in connection with the experience of exile and of dispersion. This experience started to be crucial already after the destruction of the First Temple and has become even more acute after the destruction of the Second Temple (Neusner, 1987).

Such multiple orientations have been abundant in the period of the Second Temple and probably beyond, but they became very subdued and regulated during the long period of dispersion in Medieval

times. During this entire period, secondary orientations—philosophical, mystical, elitist, and populist—have continuously developed, reinforced by the very multiplicity of elites within the Jewish communities. Yet, given the special conditions of Jewish existence in the (medieval) Diaspora, those orientations were hemmed in within the predominant symbolic and institutional world of the Halakha (Eisenstadt, 1985b, pp. 30–55).

It was only at the beginning of the crystallization of the hegemony of the Rabbinic mould, and towards its end—in the Karaite movement and in the great Messianic movement of Shabbetai Zvi—that, as Shlomo Fischer has shown, the basic combinations of the primacy of the Halakha and of the emphasis on a future collective redemption, were undermined, thus shaking the very foundations of Rabbinical Judaism. The Karaites ultimately broke away, or were pushed out of this mould, while the Sabbatean movement signalled the beginnings of the decomposition of this mould.

The unique characteristic of the Hassidic movement as analyzed by Shlomo Fischer has been that it managed, in the new historical circumstances which emerged after the failure of the Sabbatean messianic movement and the beginnings of new historical relations with the host civilizations, to change the bases of legitimation of Jewish civilization into the direction of individual redemption in the contemporary world with strong pantheistic components, without however challenging the *formal* preponderance of the Halakha and of the stress of the future as the proper time for collective, as distinct from individual, redemption.

## VII

The development of utopias within Christian civilization or civilizations was connected with the tensions involved in the institutionalization of basic orientations and of the institutional premises of the Christian civilizations analyzed above.

From its very beginning, there have developed within Christianity several such basic tensions, namely, and above all, the tensions between hierarchy and equality in the religious sphere with respect to the symbolic and institutional access to the great mediatory figure of Christ and between the relative emphasis on this-worldly and other-worldly orientations (Dumont, 1982; Eisenstadt, 1983, 1985a).

These tensions in the basic premises and orientations have been common to all parts of Christianity, as were also the basic institutional arenas in which these tensions were played out, namely, state-Church relations, monastic organizations, community, and the like.

The concrete way in which these basic tensions were played out naturally varied greatly, however, in different parts of Christianity—the Eastern, Byzantine, Russian, in such far-away parts as Ethiopia, and of course in Western (and Central) Europe, in different periods of their history—even if in each of them some relatively predominant pattern (yet always with variations) has developed relatively early in their history. Within such frameworks different types of millenarian and utopian movements became predominant, although they all shared some common characteristics rooted in the tensions common to all parts of Christianity.

The focus of Catholic Christian soteriology lay—as has been shown by Adam Seligman—in the mediation of the Church through the sacraments and in the continuous ideological predominance of the religious orientations, albeit with strong other-worldly components over the political worldly frameworks, without, however, denying the importance of the latter.

Within this basic framework, there could—and did—develop within the Catholic Christianity a variety of ways in which the tensions inherent in Christianity could be expressed. All, or at least most of such orientations, however radical, as for instance those that developed in the medieval popular movements and in monastic and mendicant orders, or more recently in the theology of liberation could be—as long as they did not touch on the central focus of the mediation of the Church and its sacraments and the principled priority of other-worldly orientations and even if after prolonged struggles—incorporated into the basic framework of Catholic Christianity, while at the same time changing many of its concrete contours.

The same was true at the other end of the spectrum—as Bernardo Arévalo de León has shown—where the various movements in the peripheries tended to de-axialize the many basic Christian orientations.

The major breakaway for Catholic Christianity took place, of course, in Protestantism which challenged the two basic premises of Catholicism and which, consequently, gave rise, as Adam Seligman has shown, to an entirely new type of utopian millenarian dynamic.

It is, however, of crucial importance for our analysis that Protestantism, especially radical Protestantism (Ozmet, 1982; Kolakowski,

1969), developed as a sectarian movement with very strong millenarian and utopian components from within Catholicism, and that, once institutionalized, it has generated new types of millenarian and utopian visions, based on a recombination and reduction of all tensions inherent in Christian civilization.

## VIII

Common to Jewish and Christian utopias—as well as to some Islamic ones which are not discussed here in any great detail—and rooted in their basic orientations, have been strong tendencies to combine the reconstruction of the basic definitions of ontological reality with those of societal and political centers based on a vision of a new social political order.

These conceptions and their institutional derivatives were also closely related to the structure and orientations of the major elites in these civilizations, namely, both to the multiplicity of autonomous cultural elites—a characteristic they shared with all Axial civilizations—as well as to the fact that most of the orientations of most of these elites were focused on the political and, in the Jewish exilic experiences, on the communal) arenas, and evinced a strong tendency to become interwoven with various social movements.

It is because of the combination of all these elements and the working out in the historical experience of Western civilization (Eisenstadt, 1987), that the term utopia, with all its connotations, first developed within the Western civilizations and can be most appropriately applied to some of the movements that have developed within them. The justification to apply this term beyond these civilizations lies in the fact that they also contain some conceptions of alternative social and cultural order—conceptions rooted in the repercussion of the Axial “break”—even if the concrete contexts and impact of such visions vary greatly between them.

Thus, in the other-worldly civilizations in which the political arena was not viewed as a major soteriological arena, the major utopias were oriented against these institutional solutions which, in a way, compromised such negation of the mundane world, i.e., in the direction of renunciation or, as in the case of Bhakti movements, in the direction of reconstruction of inner experience.

While such orientations also developed in the context of the monotheistic civilizations, they did not play—as Harriet Hartman

has shown in her comparison of the qualandars with the Kanpatha Path sect—a major role in their institutional, as distinct from intellectual, dynamics.

## IX

From all these points of view, the combination of basic cultural orientations, the definitions of the nature of ontological reality and their relations to the definition and regulation of the major arenas of social life, in conjunction with political and ecological formations in China, constitute an interesting mixed case between this-worldly and other-worldly civilizations. In many ways, it came—perhaps paradoxically—nearer to the monotheistic than to the other-worldly Axial Age civilizations, and yet also significantly differed from them.

As Sarit Helman has shown, powerful utopian visions and orientations did develop in China, especially among the neo-Confucian from the time of the Sung on. These visions were also oriented—as was the case in other Axial civilizations—against specific aspects of the institutionalization of what was conceived as the major metaphysical message and visions.

And yet in China, unlike in the monotheistic civilizations in which the political arenas also constituted, as we have seen, an important soteriological arena, utopias and utopian movements did not lead—especially on the institutional level—to a recombination of the basic cultural conceptions with the basic institutional premises of the society.

The Confucian *literati* did generate far-reaching intellectual and ideological developments, the most important being the development of so-called Neo-Confucianism under the Sung. Neo-Confucianism heightened the degree to which groups of *literati* became reflexive with respect to the premises of the socio-cultural order, and critical of them. Neo-Confucianism was accordingly closely connected to a critical evaluation of the political order, as well as with the promulgation of important policies—especially with respect to the land holdings of small and middle-range peasants. These policies, however, remained—consciously—within the framework of the basic premises of the system, or were at least so presented. The critical and reflexive dimension developed by them, with its strong emphasis on the moral responsibility of the individual, did not change the basic rules of the political arena or modes of political participation.

Thus, attempts at reform, grounded in Confucian and Neo-Confucian visions, abound in China especially in the period of Sung, and later, yet in none of these attempts do we find those tendencies to the reconstruction of the premises of the regime that can be found in the monotheistic civilizations. The strong emphasis on individual responsibility and the moral cultivation of the individual that developed among them was oriented either towards perfecting the philosophical premises of their respective systems or towards the development of private intellectual or even mystic religious tendencies and reflexivity. These could become connected with other-worldly tendencies, but mostly on the private level. Thus this emphasis could not link changes in the central political arena to protest movements and rebellion in the periphery.

Few linkages developed between the secondary Confucian elites—even the carriers of potential heterodoxies within Confucian and the more popular movements, even if some of the secondary (usually unemployed) *literati* did participate in such movements. In parallel, whatever the connection between the “secondary” religions or heterodoxies like Buddhism and Taoism and the political struggle at the center, these different movements did not exert—except during the T’ang period when the Buddhists were finally pushed out of the center—a farreaching influence on the basic premises and regulative principles of the Chinese social and political order, although they did effect many changes in the different institutional spheres.

Or, in other words, the transformative potentials in the institutional arena of these “heterodox” tendencies, as well as the utopian vision generated by them, were of a different order, giving rise to different historical dynamics than those of other Axial civilizations.

The basic characteristics and directions of the major secondary orientations and utopias in China were first of all related to the fact that in China the mundane arena was conceived as the only “arena of salvation”, the only locus for bridging between the transcendental and mundane orders, and to the closely related fact of the absence in China of any separation of Church and State (except for Buddhist and Taoist organizations). Second, these characteristics of Chinese utopias were closely related to the major characteristics and orientations of the *literati* as an elite, especially to the fact that they constituted a combined intellectual, political, and administrative elite, and rooted in the definition of their intellectual activities in participation in the political order. Accordingly, they were not able to

develop strong orientations towards political action and organization beyond this order, nor any independent resources or power bases and contacts with broader groups, sects, or movements.

## X

The preceding comparative observations on utopias and dynamics of civilizations—preliminary as they have been—present a rather paradoxical picture.

The various utopias and the movements imbued by them, which in many ways epitomized the ultimate attempts at changes in social and political order—attempts which sometimes, as in the great revolutions, culminated in far-reaching transformations—were yet in many ways bound by the very frameworks within which they developed. The antitheses developed by them cannot be understood, except in terms of the thesis against which they were oriented. They often did effect extensive changes in their respective societies, but such changes were not limitless. It was not only that the concrete institutional framework, within which they developed, provided structural limitations on the possibilities of action. But beyond this, their very basic directions were greatly influenced by the premises of the frameworks within which they developed and against which they rebelled.

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## INTRODUCTION TO SECTION II-B: ANALYSIS OF SELECTED AXIAL CIVILIZATIONS AND OF JAPAN

The chapters collected in this section provide illustrations of the analysis of some central aspects of several Axial civilizations—namely the monotheistic ones—Jewish civilization, Christianity and Islam; the Chinese Confucian; the Hindu and the Buddhist ones.

Although the details of the analysis of each of these civilizations as presented in the chapters presented here vary, yet some common threads or themes go through all of them. One such theme is the analysis of the basic civilizational orientations or cultural visions and ontological conceptions—with the Weberian distinction between “this-worldly” and “other-worldly”—orientations playing an important role in such analyses. Second are the patterns of structuring of the basic institutional formations of these civilizations, especially the structure of their centers, political dynamics and collective identities.

Third is the specific political ecological settings in the framework of which these institutional contours crystallized. Here the major distinction is between compact territorial units—usually Empires—as in China (and in the Byzantine Empire which is not discussed here) and to some extent in the realm of Islam; as against the more decentralized settings characteristic of India and Europe. At the same time the comparison of state formation between India and Europe provides an illustration of the importance of different visions or cultural orientations in shaping the differences between institutional frameworks and dynamics in relatively similar political ecological settings.

The case of the Jewish civilization characterized by a great dispersion after the destruction of the Second Temple provides yet an additional type of ecological setting of an Axial civilization.

The last common—and very central—aspect of these civilizations strongly emphasized in these chapters is that of the crucial role of heterodoxies and sectarianism in their dynamics. This point follows Weber’s lead about the crucial role of Protestantism in the development of Western modernity—a lead examined in greater detail in the chapter on the Origins of the West republished in the section

on the Historical and Civilizational Framework of Western Civilizations. The chapters in this section show the great difference in the orientations of the heterodoxies and sectarian elements and their impact on the dynamics of these civilizations—a point which will be of great importance in the analysis in the section on multiple modernities.

This analysis is to some extent in contrast to the usual interpretation of Weber, which underlies his emphasis on the distinctiveness of the West; but in line with a different reading of Weber—a reading of the *Gesamelte Aufsätze für Religions Soziologie*, as studies of the internal dynamics of the various Great Civilizations, in their own terms, in terms of their distinctive rationalities, with a special emphasis on the role of heterodoxies and sectarian movements on these dynamics.\*

The chapter on Japan is devoted to the analysis of one of the most paradoxical—from the comparative point of view—case, of non-Axial civilizations in which yet at the same time there developed institutional dynamics seemingly characteristic especially of some Axial Civilizations, especially of Europe, ultimately leading to the paradoxical fact that the first non-Western—Asian—modernity crystallized in a non-Axial civilization.

At the end of this section a new chapter presents a brief comparative analysis of some of the most distinct differences in the dynamics of these civilizations.

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\* See on this S.N. Eisenstadt—*Die Vielfalt des Moderne, Velbrüch eisenschaft*, Weilerswart 2000 ch. 1.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THIS-WORLDLY TRANSCENDENTALISM AND THE STRUCTURING OF THE WORLD: *WEBER'S "RELIGION OF CHINA" AND THE FORMAT OF CHINESE HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION\**

#### WEBER'S "KONFUZIANISMUS UND TAOISMUS" (THE RELIGION OF CHINA)—THE SETTING AND THE PROBLEMS

In this paper we shall attempt to indicate that a critical analysis of Weber's famous *Konfuzianismus und Taoismus*<sup>1</sup> (or in the English translation: *The Religion of China*) can shed, even today, and almost seven decades after its original publication, very important light on some of the basic characteristics and dynamics of Chinese civilization—especially in the framework of a comparative analysis of world civilizations. At the same time, this discussion will indicate both the strong as well as the weak points of Weber's analysis of Asian civilizations in general and the Chinese one in particular.

Weber's *The Religion of China* is part of a broad, two-fold analysis which constitutes the focus of his study of Comparative Religions. It is an inquiry into the processes of rationalization of the major world religions and an inquiry into the characteristics of those processes in different religions which distinguish them from the evolution of Protestantism, which gave rise, according to Weber, to the development of modern capitalist (and bureaucratic and scientific) civilization.

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\* While Weber contended that Confucianism lacks transcendental tension and therefore leads to adjustment to the world, Eisenstadt tries to show that there was no lack of a transcendental vision or tension in China, but that there existed a secular definition of this tension and a this-worldly mode of its resolution. This reformulation of Weber's thesis in his essay on China can explain both the forcefulness and the weakness of the essay and, at the same time, can lead to an understanding of why in China the encounter with modernity gave rise to a revolutionary transformation.

<sup>1</sup> Max Weber—Konfuzianismus und Taoismus in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, vol. 1, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1922, pp. 276–536; translated into English as M. Weber, *The Religion of China*, transl. and edited by H.H. Gerth, New York, The Free Press, 1951 and 1964.

The crucial elements common to all processes of rationalization have been the negation of or overcoming of *simple* magical and ritual forms as the major modes by which man related to the “other” world, and the consequent increased problematization of basic premises, of the givens of human experience in general, and of man’s relation to the transcendental order in particular.

However, beyond this common core, which is connected by a series of major breakthroughs in the history of mankind which Karl Jaspers later on defined as the Axial Age,<sup>2</sup> the mode of rationalization developed in the major world religions, as Wolfgang Schluchter<sup>3</sup> has succinctly analyzed, in different, unique, ways in each of them.

The Religion of China constitutes an exploration into the nature of such rationalization in the realm of Chinese civilization.<sup>4</sup> As well, it constitutes a very powerful interpretation of Chinese culture and history—stressing above all its great institutional complexity, almost unique historical continuity, as well as the weakness of its internal transformative capacities, i.e., the relatively small number of basic institutional changes that have taken place in it until at least modern times.

This combination of complexity, continuity and lack or weakness of transformative capacities is explained by Weber by the social and status orientations of the major carriers of this orientation—the Confucian literati and the major sects. According to Weber this orientation did not contain—as was, in his analysis, the case of Christianity, in general, and of Protestantism, in particular—the dialectical combination of rejection of the world and of an attempt at a reconstruction of it, but rather an adjustment (*Anpassung*) to it. The root of this adjustive mode lay, according to Weber’s interpretation, in the fact that Confucianism basically lacks any strong transcendental tension and distance from the world; that it is a “relentless canonisa-

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<sup>2</sup> K. Jaspers—*The Origin and Goal of History*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1st part; and also *Wisdom, Revelation and Doubt: Perspectives on the First Millennium B.C.*, *Daedalus*, Spring 1975 and E. Voegelin, *Order and History*, vols. 1–4, Baton Rouge, University of Louisiana Press, 1954–1974.

<sup>3</sup> W. Schluchter, *The Paradox of Rationalization*, in G. Roth and W. Schluchter; *Max Weber’s Vision of History, Ethics and Methods*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, University of California Press, 1979, pp. 11–64.

<sup>4</sup> This point has been especially emphasized by S. Malloy, *Max Weber and the Religion of China; any way out of the maze*, *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 31, no. 2, 1980, pp. 377–400.

tion of tradition"; or, as in De Bary's words, a "completely secularized tradition, devoid of prophetic zeal and moral dynamism".<sup>5</sup>

Weber's analysis of China was subject to several critical analyses most of which stressed both its forcefulness as well as some basic weaknesses.<sup>6</sup> The general praise of Weber's analysis was based above all on the recognition that he was successful in taking Chinese studies beyond the field of philology and folklore and in putting them, in Herbert Franke's words,<sup>7</sup> into the framework of (comparative) world history.

The underlying theme of the criticisms of Weber's work was that he was wrong in interpreting some of the crucial aspects of Chinese society and civilization in a way which is more appropriate to purely patrimonial settings like Ancient Egypt (to which some references are indeed made quite often by Weber) or to South East Asia Kingdoms, than to an imperial civilization and political order. It appears that it is only—or mainly—with respect to the analysis of the Chinese city—its lack of communal identity as well as of autonomy—that Weber's analysis is, despite some recent Japanese criticisms, borne out.<sup>8</sup>

#### TRANSCENDENTAL TENSION AND THIS-WORLDLY TRANSCENDENTALISM

This combination of high praise and criticism of Weber's work on China points to a basic contradiction in Weber's analysis, of which

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<sup>5</sup> Theodore de Bary, Introduction, in: Wm. Theodore de Bary and the Conference on 17th Century Chinese Thought: The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism, New York, Columbia University Press, 1970, pp. 1–3.

<sup>6</sup> The most important among these are C.K. Yang, Introduction to Max Weber *The Religion of China*, New York, The Free Press, 1964, pp. xiii–xiv; Otto B. Van der Sprenkel: *Max Weber on China*. In: George H. Nadel (ed.), *Studies in the Philosophy of History*, New York, Harper & Row, 1965, pp. 198–220; Herbert Franke, *Max Weber's Soziologie der Ostasiatischen Religionen*. In: Karl Engisch, Bernard Pfister and Johannes Winckelmann (eds.), *Max Weber*, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1966, pp. 115–130; and Arnold Zingerle, *Max Weber und China*, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1972; and see also the analysis by A. von Rosthorn, *Religion und Wirtschaft in China* in M. Polanyi (ed.), *Hauptprobleme der Soziologie, Erinnerungssausgabe für Max Weber*, vol. 2, München u. Leipzig, 1923, pp. 221–33; and of course also the analysis in T. Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*, New York, Free Press, 1968, vol. 2, pp. 542–552 (first published 1937); and R. Bendix, *Max Weber, An Intellectual Portrait*, London, Methuen University Press, 1966, pp. 98–141.

<sup>7</sup> H. Franke, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

<sup>8</sup> I am indebted to B. Schwartz for this information.

he does not seem to have been aware, namely, the contradiction between on the one hand, the inclusion of China in those civilizations within which there took place the process of rationalization of religious orientations and, on the other hand, the seeming negation, in the details of his analyses, of the existence in China of strong transcendental tensions or orientations which are, according to him, at the root of such rationalization.

This contradiction is, of course, connected to Weber's emphasis on the differences in China's development from that of Christian (above all Protestant) Europe and on the relative immobility of Chinese civilization. Yet, although, as the various criticisms mentioned above do indeed indicate, the Chinese civilization was less immobile than—for example—the ancient Egyptian one, the fact remains that once the Imperial Confucian system was institutionalized, it did not evince, within the scope of its basic institutional framework, high levels of institutional transformability in general (a transformability which can be identified in some of the other civilizations studied by Weber), and did not give rise from within itself to the push to modernity, in particular.

Thus, we have here a picture which differs greatly from Weber's concrete interpretation of Chinese history—and yet still has to take account of the basic problem which inspired his analysis.

The starting point for the analysis of this problem lies in the recognition of what is probably the major principled error in Weber's interpretation of Chinese civilization, namely, as Metzger's, De Bary's and Tu Wei-Ming's criticisms of his work have shown, the denial of the existence, within Confucian China, of any transcendental tension.<sup>9</sup>

Contrary to what may seem to be the Weberian view, the Chinese—above all Confucian “tradition”—did not deny the existence of this tension, and accordingly there did develop within it a very high level of rationalization of the cultural (or religious) orientations connected with the very elaboration and definition of such tension.

In Benjamin Schwartz's words . . . “in the Analects we find considerable emphasis on his (. . . Confucius') relationship to “heaven” which is treated not simply as the immanent Tao of nature and soci-

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<sup>9</sup> W.T. de Bary, *op. cit.*, and T.A. Metzger, *Escape from Predicament—Neo-Confucianism and China's Evolving Political Culture*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1977, esp. pp. 3–4, 18–19, 198–204, 209, 234–35. Tu Wei-Ming, oral presentation at the Bad-Homburg Conference and written communication with the author.

ety but as a transcendental will interested in Confucius' redeeming mission . . . Beyond this it is already clear that the word Tao in Confucius refers not only to the objective structure of society and cosmos but also to the inner way of man of *Jen* . . .".<sup>10</sup>

There did, however, develop in China a special mode of definition of this tension, as well as a special conception of its resolution. In the classical Chinese belief systems this tension between the transcendental and mundane order was couched in relatively secular terms, i.e., in terms of a metaphysical and/or ethical—and not a religious—distinction between these two orders. Concomitantly there did develop here a basically cyclical secular, and not historical or eschatological, time conception.

This "secular" definition of such tension and the rationalizing tendencies involved became here connected with a tendency to an almost wholly this-worldly conception of the resolution of such tension. The thrust of the official Confucian civilizational orientations was that the resolution of this tension was attained through the cultivation of the social, political and cultural orders, as the major way of maintaining the cosmic harmony.<sup>11</sup> Thus it focused around the elaboration of what Herbert Fingarette has defined as the cultivation of the "secular as sacred" and of "The Human Community as a Holy

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<sup>10</sup> Benjamin I. Schwartz, *Transcendence in Ancient China*, *Daedalus*, op. cit., pp. 57–69.

<sup>11</sup> The literature on Confucianism and its place in Chinese Civilization is of course almost limitless. Among others see: F.W. Mote—*Intellectual Foundations of China*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1971; E.O. Reischauer and J.K. Fairbanks, *A History of East Asian Civilization*, vol. I, East Asia; The Great Tradition, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1960; C.K. Yang, "The Functional Relationship between Confucian Thought and Chinese Religion," in J.K. Fairbank (ed.), *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1967, pp. 269–291; A.F. Wright (ed.), *The Confucian Persuasion*, Stanford, 1960; D.S. Nivison and E.F. Wright (eds.), *Confucianism in Action*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1969; and A.F. Wright (ed.), *Studies in Chinese Thought*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1953; as well as the more recent expositions of Donald J. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1969; Tu Wei-Ming, I. *The Classical Confucian Ideas*; and idem, *Neo-Confucian Modes of Thinking*, in: Idem, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation, Essays in Confucian Thought*, Berkeley, Asian Humanities Press, 1979, pp. 5–63 and 71–215 respectively. On Neo-Confucianism see: Wm. Theodore de Bary and the Conference on Ming Thought: *Self and Society*, in *Ming Thought*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1970; Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, *Principle and Practicality, Essays in Neo-Confucianism and Practical Learning*, New York, Columbia University Press, pp. 1–36; and Wm. Th. de Bary and the Conference on the Seventh-Century Chinese Thought—*The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, op. cit.



Rite".<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, the Confucian orientation did stress the proper performance of worldly duties and activities within the existing social framework—the family, broader kin groups and Imperial service—as the ultimate measure of the resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order and of individual responsibility. Seemingly such stress could be seen as simple, traditional and ritual upholding of the existing social arrangements and, in practice, this might have been the case for many Confucians. Yet, in principle, this was not the case. The major thrust of the Confucian orientations was the conscious taking out of these social relations from their seemingly natural context and their ideologization in terms of the higher transcendental orientations, the proper attitude to which could be acquired only through a largely demysticized and demagical ritual, learning and contemplation. This learning and contemplation, paradoxically enough, not only allowed but—as can be seen especially in neo-Confucianism, the roots of which exist already in the earlier, classical Confucianism—emphasized very strongly a non-traditionalistic, reflexive definition of the nature of the cosmic order and of human existence. This definition contained within itself a continuous principled awareness of the tension between the cosmic ideal and any given reality of the imperfectibility of the mundane order in general and the political one in particular; of its only partial legitimation in terms of the basic cosmic harmony, and the great personal tensions involved both in the attempts to maintain such harmony through proper conduct and attitude, both of which necessitate a very stringent and reflexive self discipline, as well as in the development of a critical attitude to the existing mundane world in general and the political order in particular—all of which did of course develop in China among the many Confucian schools.

This emphasis generated many intellectual and personal tensions—tensions which gave rise to a variety of ascetic, “religious” and philosophical modes and attitudes in many ways—reminiscent of those which developed in other post Axial Age civilizations.<sup>13</sup> Such empha-

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<sup>12</sup> Herbert Fingarette. *Human Community as Holy Rite, An Interpretation of Confucius' Analects*, in: *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 59, 1968. no. 1, pp. 53–67; idem, *Confucius, The Secular as Sacred*, New York, Harper & Row, 1972; and J.G.A. Pocock, *Ritual, Language, Power: An Essay on the Apparent Political Meanings of Ancient Chinese Philosophy*, in idem, *Politics, Language and Time, Essays on Political Thought and History*, New York. Atheneum, 1973, pp. 42–80.

<sup>13</sup> These tensions are discussed in great detail among others in the three Symposia

sis and the tensions it entailed included the possibility of highly transformative orientations, which have—as is evident among the great Sung and Ming reformers and philosophers—focused on the attempt to reconstruct the social order according to the premises and precepts of the ideal moral order of old, the pure order of social and cosmic harmony.

But indeed, as has been already alluded to above and as we shall see in greater detail later, all these orientations and attempts had, in comparison with those which developed in other post-Axial Age civilizations, and especially in the great monotheistic civilizations, relatively limited institutional effects. The clue to the understanding of this central problem of our analysis lies in the recognition of the fact that what was characteristic of China was not the lack of such transcendental vision or tension, but rather a “secular” definition of this tension and a this-worldly mode for its resolution.

It was the predominance of this specific mode that explains—as some of the discussions of Metzger’s book,<sup>14</sup> as well as those in the conferences convened by Ted De Bary, have pointed out,—why the tensions connected with a transcendental vision did not have in China those institutional, as against personal and intellectual, implications that could be found in at least some of the monotheistic civilizations.

It is the recognition of the fact that Chinese civilization was characterized by a combination of such a basic transcendental tension and a this-worldly resolution of this tension, that provides the clue not only to the understanding of both the forcefulness as well as the weakness of Weber’s work in China—but also to the importance of both of these for the analysis, even today—within a broad comparative setting—of the basic characteristics, contours and dynamics of Chinese

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edited by T.W. de Bary, op. cit.: Tu Wei-Ming, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation*, op. cit.; Th. A. Metzger, *The Escape from Predicament*, op. cit.; and the symposium on this book in *The Journal of Asian-Studies*, 1980, op. cit.

Some of these problems of individual responsibility are discussed in Nivison and Wright, *Confucianism in Action*, chaps. 4 and 5; and in idem. *The Confucian Persuasion*, chaps. 4, 7, 8. The problem of transcendence in ancient China is discussed in B.I. Schwartz, “Transcendence in Ancient China,” *Daedalus*, Spring 1975, pp. 57–68.

<sup>14</sup> Review Symposium: Thomas A. Metzger’s “Escape from Predicament” in: *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 39, no. 2, 1980; Guy S. Alido, Introduction, pp. 237–243; H.D. Harootunian, Metzger’s Predicament, pp. 245–254; E.T. Ch’ien, The Transformation of Neo-Confucianism as Transformative Leverage, pp. 255–258; Hao Chang, Neo-Confucian Moral Thought and its Modern Legacy, pp. 259–272; T.A. Metzger, Author’s Reply, pp. 273–290.

civilization and which can make possible a Weberian—comparative and analytical—interpretation of Chinese civilization and history. Such an interpretation should also be able to explain why in China—in contrast with Hinduist or Buddhist civilizations—the encounter with modernity, which came from the outside, gave rise to a revolutionary transformation—a fact which was seen by some interpreters as lying beyond the possibility of Weber's analysis of China.<sup>15</sup> In the following discussion we shall attempt such an interpretation.

THE AXIAL AGE CIVILIZATIONS; THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE PERCEPTION OF TENSION BETWEEN THE TRANSCENDENTAL AND THE MUNDANE ORDERS AND THE STRUCTURING OF THE WORLD

An attempt at such an interpretation of Chinese history and civilization must identify the specific ideological and institutional repercussions of a this-worldly resolution of the transcendental tension which differentiates them from those common to all the civilizations in which there developed a perception of such tension—those civilizations which have crystallized in what the German-Swiss philosopher Karl Jaspers designated as the Axial Age in the first millenium before the Christian era, namely, in Ancient Israel, later on in Christianity with its great variety, in Ancient Greece, in China in the early period, in Hinduism and Buddhism and much later, beyond the Axial Age, in Islam. The most basic and important repercussion of the institutionalization of the perception of a basic tension, reflecting as chasm between the transcendental and the mundane order, has been the development of ideological and structural attempts to reconstruct the mundane world according to the basic conception of the resolution of the tension. The given, mundane, order was perceived in these civilizations as incomplete, often as faulty, and as in need of being—at least in some of its parts—reconstructed according to the conception of the resolution of the basic tension, or, to use Weberian nomenclature, according to the premises of salvation—basically a Christian term the equivalents of which can, however, be found in other civilizations. These attempts at the reconstruction of the world had far-reaching institutional implications, the most general of which has been the tendency towards a high degree of sym-

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<sup>15</sup> See A. Zingerle, *op. cit.*

bolic orientation and ideologization of some central aspects of the institutional structure and above all of the structure of collectivities, of societal centers, and of the processes of political struggle.

Closely related to such structuring of the major collectivities there has developed in these civilizations a tendency towards the construction of the societal center or centers<sup>16</sup> as the (charismatic) attributes of the resolution of this tension to the transformation and construction of Great Traditions<sup>17</sup> as autonomous, distinct, symbolical frameworks, and to transformation of the relations between the Great and the Little Traditions.

In parallel there took place, in all these civilizations, a far-reaching restructuring of the conception of the relation between the political and the higher, transcendental order. The political order—as the central locus or framework of the mundane order—in these civilizations has usually been conceived of as lower than the transcendental one and accordingly had to be restructured according to the premises of the latter. And it was the rulers who were usually held to be responsible for assuming such structuring of the political order. Accordingly, there appeared the possibility of calling a ruler to judgement in the name of some higher order to which the rulers are accountable.

Such redefinition of the conception of the political realm became naturally connected with far-reaching changes in the scope and intensity of societal and political conflicts and struggle. The issues of such struggle tended to become relatively highly ideologized, generalized and sometimes even universalized, and the struggle itself tended to become organized in relatively autonomous settings, thus generating new potentialities and processes of change, of continuous reconstruction of the social order.

## REFLEXIVITY AND PROTEST IN AXIAL AGE CIVILIZATIONS

These new modes of change, of continuous reconstruction of the social and civilizational order cannot be understood except in connection

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<sup>16</sup> These terms are derived from E. Shils, *Center and Periphery*; and *Society and Societies—The Macrosociological View*, in *idem*, *Center and Periphery*, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–11 and 34–48; and see also their elaboration and application in S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Political Sociology*, New York, Basic Books, 1971; and S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies*; *op. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> The concept of Great Tradition is derived from R. Redfield, *Human Nature and the Study of Society*, Chicago, Un. of Chicago Press, 1962, *passim*.

with the tensions inherent in the very premises of these civilizations and in their institutionalization—tensions which generate, unlike in the pre-Axial Age civilizations, an awareness of a great range of possibilities for or visions of a different cultural and social order.

The very multiplicity of such visions and the consciousness of such alternatives gave rise within these civilizations to a high degree of “second order thinking”, of reflexivity which became here focused around the basic premises of the social and cultural order—and not only, as in most pre-Axial Age civilizations, around adherence of individuals to the given social and moral order.

These visions were not purely “intellectual” or “academic”. They often became closely connected with movements of protest and with political struggle. There tended also to develop in these societies new types of movements of protest or of change—above all, religious or intellectual heterodoxies, sects or movements with very strong antinomian tendencies. The transformation of such alternative conceptions into heterodoxies was effected, of course, by their confrontation with some institutionalized orthodoxy and since then the continuous confrontation between orthodoxy on the one hand, and schism and heterodoxy on the other, has become a crucial component in the history of mankind.<sup>18</sup>

It was this combination, on the one hand, the opening up of the perception of different choices in the structuring of the premises of the cultural visions and of the social order, of the concomitant reflexivity about these premises and, on the other hand, the necessity to institutionalize some such choices, the concomitant tensions and conflicts, that provides the clue to the understanding of the dynamics of these civilizations—dynamics which have shaped the history of the world and which have created the potentialities of world history.

#### AUTONOMOUS ELITES AND CIVILIZATIONAL DYNAMICS IN AXIAL AGE CIVILIZATIONS

These dynamics were activated by a new social element which developed within these civilizations—a new type of elites in general and of carriers of models of the cultural and social order of the intellectuals,<sup>19</sup> be they Jewish prophets and priests, the Greek philoso-

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<sup>18</sup> For some preliminary analysis of these problems see: S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies*, New York, The Free Press, 1976.

<sup>19</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, *Intellectuals & Tradition* in S.N. Eisenstadt and

phers and sophists, the Chinese literati, the Hindu Brahmins, the Buddhist Sangha or the Islamic Ulema. These elites transformed the preceding specialists in various technical ritual, magical and sacral activities, of the pre-Axial Age civilizations—but also incumbents of political roles—into autonomous elites which were recruited and legitimized in terms of distinct, autonomous criteria and organized themselves in ways distinct from those of the basic ascriptive units.

But between these different elites there developed intensive competitions over their place in the construction of the social or political order. The non-political elites tended to view themselves as being on a par with and even superior to the political authorities in the political realm, and they very often viewed the political authorities as potentially accountable to themselves. In like fashion, the political (and other) elites very often viewed themselves as autonomous articulators of the models of cultural order—potentially superior to the cultural elites.

Moreover, in these societies, each of these elites was not homogeneous and as a result there developed a multiplicity of secondary elites—cultural, political or educational—each very often carrying a different conception of the cultural and social order.

These different elites constituted first of all the major element in the ruling coalitions in those societies who attempted to direct and regulate the institutional creativity that has been inherent in the attempts to reconstruct the world according to the respective transcendental visions which developed in these societies.

And, as well, it was these elites which were the carriers of the alternative visions that developed in these societies and they constituted also the most active elements in the movements of protest and processes of change that developed in them. It was this double role of these elites that explains the special types of social and cultural dynamics that developed in these civilizations.

Chinese society and civilization shared with other post-Axial Age civilizations the crucial characteristics analyzed above, but it differed from other such civilizations in the concrete working out of these characteristics, and many of these differences have been related to the specific, this-worldly mode employed in the resolution of the transcendental tension that became predominant in China.

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S.R. Graubard (eds.), *Intellectuals and Tradition*, New York, Humanities Press, 1973, pp. 1–21; and E. Shils—*Intellectuals, Traditions and the Tradition of Intellectuals*, op. cit., pp. 21–35.

THIS-WORLDLY TRANSCENDENTALISM AND THE  
CHINESE MODE OF STRUCTURING OF THE WORLD

The this-worldly orientations which developed in Chinese civilization entailed a very specific mode of structuring of the world. They certainly did not envisage a passive adaptation to it—although indeed this mode of structuring the world could, once institutionalized, easily generate very strong adaptive attitudes to such a reconstructed world.

Thus first of all there developed in China a very strong emphasis on civility or a mixture of civility and sacredness as the central criterion of the legitimation of the socio-political order,<sup>20</sup> while the purely sacred or primordial criteria of legitimation remained relatively secondary or tended to disappear. The tension between them—unlike in other Axial Age civilizations—tended to be relatively weak, being funnelled into secondary areas which have been also dominated by the central order or segregated from it. Such civility tended to be formulated in a mixture of traditional and legal terms with relatively weak charismatic elements focused mostly around the office of the Emperor.

This pattern of legitimation had some very crucial repercussions on some basic institutional formats of Chinese society and civilization. Thus, it was, first of all, the political-cultural center and sphere which were seen in Confucian-legalist China as the major focus of the resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order. This distinctive, autonomous, absolutist political-cultural center, which constituted the major locus of the attempts to maintain the cosmic harmony, tended, through mobilization and communication, to mould—but only partially—the periphery, according to its own precepts and premises. This center shared, in principle, with the periphery, a common cultural framework—but the full access to the sacred charismatic attributes of the center, although in principle open to all, was largely mediated by the center.

This structure of the center was very closely related to the structuring of the major collectivities and sub-centres, creating a situation that in China, among the great civilizations we find the closest interweaving of cultural and political collectivities and centers and

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<sup>20</sup> These terms are derived from E. Shils, *Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties*, in *idem*, *Center and Periphery, Essays in Macro-Sociology*, Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975, pp. 111–126.

the concomitant weakness of any distinct cultural or religious center or centers which could compete with the political one for the definition of the major central attributes and boundaries of the society. Center-Periphery and Political Struggle in China.

As a close corollary of this structure of the center, there developed in China a very special type of linkage between the center and the major peripheral spheres—the realm of economic and social life and of peripheral cults. This linkage was characterized by attempts by the center to restructure these latter spheres according to the basic premises of the center—but only in a relatively limited way—while, at the same time, giving them a comparatively large degree of autonomy, so long as their potential impingement on the center could be controlled by the latter.

The mode of structuring center-periphery relations prevalent in China had its impact, too, on the ideological dimensions of the center itself as manifest, above all, in the patterns of political struggle and in the system of law that developed there.

The pattern of political struggle that tended to develop in Chinese society or civilization has been characterized by a higher degree of ideological articulation as compared with the pre-Axial Age civilizations—such as, for instance, Ancient Egypt. But, at the same time, this tendency was usually curbed from two directions. First of all it was usually limited to the center and special attempts were made—as we shall yet see in greater detail—to limit the possible linkage of this tendency to parallel ones that might have developed in the periphery. Second, even in the center, there tended to develop a principled denial of political struggle and contention as such and a tendency to define differences of opinion in terms either of broader ideological consideration, or of technicalities, but not as foci of political contention. No wider autonomous forms of political organization were allowed to develop. Instead, factionalism was indeed very ripe and probably constituted the most important type of political organization—even if its existence was officially denied.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> On some of the ideological aspects of political struggle in China see: Nivison and Wright, *Confucianism in Action*, op. cit.; H.R. Williamson, *Wang An-shih, A Chinese Statesman and Educationalist of the Sung Dynasty*, London, 1937; F.H. Michael, "From the Fall of T'ang to the Fall of Ch'ing," in H.F. McNair (ed.), *China*, Berkeley, Univ. of California Press, 1946, pp. 89–110; O. Franke, "Der Bericht Wang An-shih's von 1058 über Reform des Beamtentums," *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Berlin, 1931–1933, pp. 264–312; J.T.C. Liu,



These tendencies are also visible in a number of ways: in the nature of the system of law as it developed in China,<sup>22</sup> and, above all, in the very far-reaching codification coupled with the lack of definition of an autonomous sphere of law in general and of public and civil law in particular; in the non-development of autonomous legal roles and in the concentration of all legal affairs in the hands of officials or of representatives of lineage groups; in the non-existence of concepts of rights; in the predominance of disciplinary law based on or related to ethical considerations; and in the strong emphasis on criminal as against the weakness of civil law.

### ECONOMY, SOCIAL HIERARCHIES AND CITIES IN CHINA

This general mode of relations between center and periphery has also had several basic repercussions on the structuring of all the major institutional spheres—above all on the structuring of the modes of production and of social hierarchies. The most crucial aspects of the structuring of modes of production<sup>23</sup> in China were the relative limitation of autonomous “economic” considerations (which potentially could develop both with the urban groups and the higher echelons of the peasantry and gentry); the heavy emphasis on mobilizatory and regulatory policies and the weakening of the importance of redistributive ones; and the predominance of political and political-cultural considerations in the regulation of the macro-societal flow of resources

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“An Early Sung Reformer, Fan Chung-yen,” in Fairbank, *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, pp. 105–132; in idem, *Reform in Sung China*, Wang-an-shih, 1021–1086, and *His New Policies*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1959; P.A. Cohen and J.E. Schrecker (eds.), *Reform in Nineteenth Century China*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Univ. Press, 1976; A.F. Wright, “The Formation of Sui Ideology, 581–605,” in J.K. Fairbank (ed.), *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, pp. 71–106; L.C. Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition of Ch’ien-Lung*, Baltimore, John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1953; W. de Bary, “Some Common Tendencies in Neo-Confucianism,” in Navison and Wright, *Confucianism in Action*, pp. 25–49; and H.H. Dubs, “Wang Mang and His Economic Reforms,” *T’oung pao*, 35, no. 4, Leiden, 1939, pp. 263–265.

<sup>22</sup> K. Büniger, *Entstehen und Wandel des Rechts in China*, in: Wolfgang Fikentscher, Herbert Franke and Oskar Köhler (eds.), *Entstehung und Wandel Rechtlicher Traditionen*, Freiburg, München, Verlag Karl Alber, 1980, pp. 439–472; as well as Thomas A. Metzger, *The Internal Organization of Chinese Bureaucracy, Legal, Normative, and Communication Aspects*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

<sup>23</sup> On the structure of Chinese economy see M. Elvin, *The Pattern of Chinese Past*, London, Eyre & Methuen, 1973; and W.E. Willmott (ed.), *Economic Organization in Chinese Society*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1972.

and their conversion and use and in the concomitant setting of the major public goods.

Some of the central aspects of the structuring of social hierarchies in China<sup>24</sup>—the existence of a highly ideological evaluation of different occupations based on their ideological proximity to the tenets of the Confucian ideology; the tendency to limit the development of countryside status or strata consciousness to the higher echelons (the literati and the bureaucracy) but even among these to minimize the tendencies to the autonomous political expression of such consciousness; the tendency to the development in the periphery of more local and clientelistic status-sets; and the prevalence of a “sponsored” type of mobility, directed at the attainment of positions within a fixed institutional framework—are also very closely related to the structure of the center and the center-periphery relations that developed in China.

The structure of Chinese cities—a central theme in Weber’s analysis, and one in which he was on the whole quite correct—and of urban hierarchies is also closely related to the specific mode of center-periphery relations analyzed above. The Chinese cities and commercial entrepreneurs and urban networks were, of course, quite outstanding in their scope and wealth and organization.<sup>25</sup> But in several crucial ways—most of them either analyzed or alluded to by Weber—they were distinct from the much smaller European cities. The common denominator of this distinction was the almost total lack of any aspect of communal, civic, organized collective identity, self-government and autonomy.

Most of the internal organizations and communal activities of Chinese cities were supervised by the center. While obviously these often exerted a powerful influence on the development and application of policies, and while they had access to officials, they did not in any way participate autonomously in the center or have an autonomous access to it.

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<sup>24</sup> This analysis is based on Eisenstadt, *Social Differentiation and Stratification*, pp. 101–106; and idem, *Political Systems of Empires*, esp. chap. 12; see also I.M. Lapidus, “Hierarchies and Networks: A Comparison of Chinese and Islamic Societies,” in E. Wakeman (ed.), *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975, pp. 28–42.

<sup>25</sup> On Chinese cities see Mark Elvin, *Chinese Cities since the Sung Dynasty*, in: Philip Abrams and E.D. Wrigley, *Towns in Societies*, pp. 79–90, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976; William Skinner (ed.), *The City in Late Imperial China*, Stanford, Stanford Univ. Press, 1977.

A similar pattern can be found in the structure of urban hierarchies that developed in China, the major characteristic of which—as William Skinner and his associates have shown<sup>26</sup>—has been the development of very extensive urban hierarchies in which economic forces were quite important but whose major loci were controlled by the political or administrative aspects of such hierarchies, thus in many ways fusing these two hierarchies. Significantly enough there did not develop—in partial contrast to other Imperial Systems, like the Byzantine or Russian ones—separate religious hierarchies or even semi-distinct economic or military ones.

### THE MAJOR ELITES AND COALITIONS AND MODES OF CONTROL IN CHINA

All of the following characteristics of the institutional features of Chinese society and civilization, namely, the development of the tendency to concentration of the institutional derivatives of the perception of tension between the transcendental and the mundane order (i.e., symbolic articulation and structural differentiation and autonomy) above all in the political sphere and in the center, as against other institutional spheres and the periphery; the concomitant weakness of autonomous civilizational frameworks; the relative segregation between center and periphery, and the control of such segregation by the center; the relatively low level of autonomous ideological-political struggle—were what constituted the major institutional manifestation of the Chinese mode of structuring of the world—and were very closely related to the specific Chinese (above all the Confucian-Legal) this-worldly orientation. This specific mode of structuring the world was effected in China—as was the case in all other Axial Age civilizations—by the elites predominant in it. The most important and distinct of the elites in China were, of course, the famous Confucian literati and bureaucracy.<sup>27</sup> These literati and bureaucrats were the major carriers of the

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*; and Gilbert Rozman, *Urban Networks in Ch'ing China and Togukawa Japan*, Princeton, Princeton Univ. Press, 1973, esp. part II.

<sup>27</sup> On the literati see Balazs, *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy*, *op. cit.*; Chang Chung-li, *The Chinese Gentry: Studies on Their Role in Nineteenth Century Chinese Society*, Seattle, 1955; B.O. van der Sprenkel, *The Chinese Civil Service: the Nineteenth Century*, Canberra, 1956; M. Weber. "The Chinese Literati," in H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills (ed.), *Essays in Sociology*, New York, 1956, pp. 416-444; C.K. Yang, "Some Characteristics of Chinese Bureaucratic Behavior," in Nivison

Confucian (or Confucian-Legal) world order and orientations briefly depicted above. As such, they were, especially symbolically, relatively autonomous vis-à-vis the broader strata as well as from the political center even if rather closely related to it. They were recruited, legitimized and organized according to criteria which were directly related to—or deriving from—the basic precepts of the Confucian-legalistic canon, and were not mediated or controlled by either the broader strata of society or in principle (although, of course, not always in practice) by the Emperor himself.

These literati were not, however, just learned men performing intellectual functions. The stratum or category of literati constituted a source of recruitment for the bureaucracy and they exercised at least a partial monopoly over venues of access to the center.

They constituted together with the Emperors and their entourage, as well as at times the major warlords, the principal partners in the ruling coalitions to the almost total exclusion of other groups or social elements.

Their structure and organization were influenced by their predominant this-worldly orientation. Unlike the parallel European, Byzantine or Islamic elites, the literati combined at the same time both cultural (“religious”) and administrative-political functions. Among them there developed only a relatively small degree of organizational and even symbolic distinction between these two types of elite activities. Their organizational framework was almost identical with that of the state bureaucracy (which recruited ten to twenty percent of all the literati), and except for some schools and academies they had no organization of their own. Accordingly, there did not develop among them separate political, administrative and religious organizations and hierarchies.

At the same time, and in close relation with the preceding developments the more central administrative as well as cultural elites alike had but few autonomous bases of power and resources, as against the Emperors and their entourage. It was only in one institutional sphere—the educational one—that there did develop some autonomous organizations and structures, but even here the more specific roles into which such activities crystallized were usually very

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and Wright, *Confucianism in Action*, pp. 134–165; E.A. Kracke, *Civil Service in Early Sung China, 960–1067*, Cambridge, 1953; and idem, “Sung Society: Change within Tradition,” *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 14, no. 4, 1955, pp. 479–489.

closely interwoven with the political-administrative setting, were oriented towards it, and were somewhat segregated from activities of the secondary elites of the periphery.

The Chinese mode of structuring the world according to its specific transcendental vision was effected through the development of ruling coalitions of which the literati or bureaucracy were, as indicated, a continuous and most distinct element, producing very complex mechanisms of control.

The first aspect of these mechanisms of control has been the tendency to structure the flow of resources between the center and periphery and the strong control of this flow—as well as of the flow within the periphery—by the center; and the concomitant tendency to make it easier to convert the setting up by the political (and cultural) center of the rates (except on the local interpersonal level) of conversion between these spheres and the conversion of political resources into economic ones rather than vice-versa.

Second, there developed in China continuous attempts by the center to minimize the development of autonomous linkages between different institutional spheres and to limit the possibility of them becoming mutually restructured.

Third, the central elites controlled and partly monopolized the major channels of communication through which the perception of central social order, its key symbols and reference orientations, were developed.

It was the successful implementation by the major ruling coalitions of these mechanisms of control that shaped the basic characteristics of the major institutional spheres as they crystallized in China. It was also such successful implementation that gave rise in China to a very specific pattern, as compared to other Axial Age civilizations, of the absorption within the basic Chinese institutional framework of the major types of processes and movements of change that developed there—i.e., to a specific type of civilizational dynamics.

#### CHINA—PATTERNS OF CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

The picture here is indeed much more complicated than the one envisaged by Weber. Thus, as is by now well-known, there developed in China far-reaching changes in all institutional spheres—not only dynastic changes and divisions of the Empire, but also growing differentiation in the structure of the economy, both in the agrarian

and in the urban sectors; in the relative importance of cities; in the development of the relative standing of different cultural and social (such as the aristocracy) groups; and in the relative predominance of the Emperors (as under the Ming) as against the bureaucracy.<sup>28</sup>

The same is true with respect to some of the major movements of protest and change—rebellions, warlords and especially different sectarian movements and secret societies.<sup>29</sup> Weber did, of course, recognize the importance of sectarian movements in China—as the very title of his essay on Confucianism and Taoism indicates. What he did not recognize fully was that these movements, the more popular rebellions and the various sects, as well as the various processes of change mentioned above had the potential for a very strong impact on the center and often had very strong incipient transformative potentialities—a fact of which the center was not unaware.

True enough, and in agreement with the major thrust of Weber's analysis, all these movements and processes did not, during the Imperial period, succeed in undermining the basic ideological and institutional premises of the Confucian-Legalist civilization and political order.

But the reason for this was not the presumed “traditionally” of these movements and processes of change, or lack within them of any incipient transformative potential or the traditionality of the center, but rather the very sophisticated and complex mechanisms of control (analyzed above) which were developed by the ruling coalitions and which attest to the high level of non-traditionality, of reflexivity of Chinese civilization and political order.

The most important result of these various mechanisms of control, from the point of view of the structuring aspect of the processes of change in Chinese society, was the minimization, as compared with other post-Axial civilizations, of ideological and structural linkages between the different sects, secret societies and the like and their leadership in general, and between the central and peripheral

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<sup>28</sup> These changes are discussed in most of the historical analyses such as those quoted in footnotes 11 and 23; and see also Thomas A. Metzger, *On the Historical Roots of Economic Modernization in China*; The increasing differentiation of the economy from the polity during late Ming and early Ch'ing times, in: *Conference on Modern Chinese Economic History*, The Institute of Economics, Academia Sinica, pp. 33-44.

<sup>29</sup> For a fuller discussion see S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolutions and the Transformation of Societies*, op. cit., pp. 128-134 and the bibliography given there.

ones and different central and peripheral primary and secondary, institutional elites in particular.

The numerous movements of protest, as well as the religious movements that arose in the peripheries or secondary institutional spheres of these societies, evinced—despite some broader orientations and incipient tendencies in this direction which are especially visible when compared with the developments within the various patrimonial pre-Axial Age Civilization—very little capacity to be linked with the central political struggle and to develop common ideologies and frameworks of action would restructure the major premises of the Chinese institutional system.

Moreover, there developed relatively few continuous connections between the more central heterodoxies, different ideologies and policies in the center and the more popular movements. Similarly the relations between the “secondary” religions or heterodoxies like Buddhism and Taoism and the central political struggle did not exert—except in the period of the Tang when ultimately the Buddhists were pushed out from the center—far-reaching transformative influences on the Chinese social and political order,<sup>30</sup> although needless to say they effected many concrete changes in the different institutional spheres. The roots of this low level of interaction between the different movements and the processes of change is explainable in terms of some aspects of the orientations, structure and activities of the literati which were analyzed above—especially because they were at the same time political and culture elites and because of their strong orientation to the political center as the major arena for the implementation of the specific transcendental vision they carried and their lack of almost any independent bases of resources.

Accordingly, however strong the ascetic or religious-like attitudes and internal tensions developed by them, these were limited to the private realm.

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<sup>30</sup> On the impact of Buddhism and Taoism on Chinese society see: Reischauer and Fairbank, *East Asia*, op. cit., passim; M. Kaltenmark, *Lao Tzo and Taoism*, Stanford, Stanford Univ. Press. 1963; A.E. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History*, Stanford, Stanford Univ. Press. 1959; C.Y. Chiu, “The Church-State Conflict in the Tang Dynasty,” in E.T. Zen and J. de Francis (eds.), *Chinese Social History*, Washington, D.C., American Council of Learned Societies, 1956, pp. 197–207; and for a more general discussion see A.P. Wolf (ed.), *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, op. cit.

Symbolically, the literati were mostly oriented with to the perfecting of the philosophical premises of their respective systems or to private intellectual or even mystic religious orientations and reflexivity. These might become connected with some other-worldly tendencies—but only on the private level. Thus, their very intellectual orientations, internal structure and the institutional locations of their activities greatly limited their internal organizational strength as well as their impact on the broader societal settings.

It is all of these characteristics of the literati which explain the relatively low predilection or ability on the part of central and sub-central elites—those very elements which in other Axial Age civilizations were usually most active in such processes—to effect far-reaching and continuous linkages between the different movements and processes of change.

It was the relative success of these mechanisms of control, rooted above all in the basic characteristics of the literati analyzed above, which assured that, despite the fact that within these movements and processes of change some broader, potentially transformative orientations did develop, there did not take place, in China, either a high level of coalescence between different types of protest and political struggle or their mutual restructuring, and/or relatively high level of ideological articulation of the orientation to protest which could generate broader political activities and processes of political struggle beyond the premises of the Confucian system. These mechanisms of control were among the most important stabilizing influences on the Imperial system, helping it to regulate and absorb changes throughout its long history and inhibiting the development of far-reaching transformative capacities in China's culturally and politically most articulate groups and giving rise to a relatively—but only relatively—low level of internal institutional transformability of the Confucian system—all of which constituted, as we have seen, the central problem of Weber's analysis.

#### THE CHINESE RESPONSES TO MODERNITY— PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS

All of these characteristics do also, paradoxically enough, explain both the initial Chinese reaction to modernity as well as the great transformation of Chinese civilization—namely the Communist revolution—



the explanation of which was sometimes seen, especially by Zingerle,<sup>31</sup> as going beyond the premises of Weber's analysis.

The tentative—and here necessarily very brief—explanation of the first relatively halting and basically neo-traditional reaction to modernity that developed in China is relatively easily explainable as a sort of continuation, in an entirely changed international and internal situation, of the older limited tendencies to reform—albeit without the existence of a strong center, which constitutes a focus of commitment, and seemingly without the ability to recreate such a center.<sup>32</sup>

The crucial event here was the abolition of the major link between the center and the periphery and the focal point of the identity of the literati—the examination system with its basic reference to a strong and strongly legitimized center. The weakening and the abolition of such a center and of the link between it and the periphery brought out all the major weaknesses of the Chinese reformatory tendencies—emphasizing as it were their adjustive mode to the world—but here already in the context of a relatively weak and not fully legitimized center.

Thus, in a sense, the first Chinese reaction to the impingement of modernity could reinforce Weber's interpretation of this civilization as basically a stagnant one. But this is not, of course, true of the later phase of the Communist takeover which heralded the construction of a new revolutionary sociopolitical order—singling out China from all the other non-European great civilizations in general and those studied by Weber in particular and which stress a basically active attitude to the world.<sup>33</sup>

The explanation of this singular development cannot, however, be made without reference to some central aspects of the Chinese tradition—analyzed above—namely its strong transcendental orientation and a center which is the focus of such a transcendental vision.

But the existence of these potentialities does not, of course, explain their actualization. This actualization was facilitated by the creation of a very peculiar type of linkage between the different threads of

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<sup>31</sup> A. Zingerle, *Max Weber and China*, op. cit., pp. 137 ff.

<sup>32</sup> See from among the many studies on this subject Ping-ti Ho and Tang Tsou (eds.), *China in Crisis: China's Heritage and the Communist Political System*, vol. I, books I & II, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1968; and S.N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change and Modernity—Reflections on the Chinese Experience*, in idem, vol. I, work 2, pp. 753–775.

<sup>33</sup> Ping Ti Ho & Tang Tsou, op. cit., esp. passim.

Chinese “reformist” and “rebellious” traditions—between the more “transformative” secondary tendencies of literati and gentry groups on the one hand and those of secret societies and peasant rebellions on the other.<sup>34</sup>

It was probably this linkage, unusual for the reasons analyzed above, in Chinese history, that enabled some gentry groups sustained on traditions of secondary intellectual interpretations of Confucianism, secret societies, warlords and peasant rebels, to go beyond their own restricted social orientations, to become closely interlinked and to find a wider social basis from which to forge out new, broader orientations. But the very possibility of such emergence cannot be understood without reference to the strong transformative tendencies rooted in the strong transcendental orientation. In this respect, Metzger seems to be correct in claiming that Mao’s basic vision constituted perhaps the fullest manifestation—even if obviously couched in many new forms and contents—of the transformative potentials of the classical Chinese world order and world view.<sup>35</sup>

Thus these revolutionary processes were not something, as seems to be implied by Zingerle and to some degree by Grimm, *entirely* discontinuous with the Chinese tradition.<sup>36</sup> They have rather to be seen as a new way of working—a transformation—of enduring elements or components of this tradition—a transformation made possible by the new type of linkage analyzed above, a linkage which was made possible by the new international situation. Thus, paradoxically enough, it was this new international situation—with its impact on the internal situation—that made possible the full-fledged attempt in the history of China—after the institutionalization of the original Confucian premises—to reconstruct the world according to a strong transcendental, this-worldly vision.

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<sup>34</sup> See from among the enormous literature: John Wilson Lewis (ed.), *Peasant Rebellion and Communist Revolution in Asia*, Stanford, Stanford Univ. Press, 1974; Roy Hofheinz, Jr., *The Broken Wave, The Chinese Communist Peasant Movement, 1922–1928*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Univ. Press, 1977.

<sup>35</sup> See Thomas A. Metzger, Foreword to a forthcoming book on Moral Behavior in China edited by Prichard W. Wilson (mimeo.), 1980; and also Frederick Wakeman, Jr., *History and Will*, Beverly & Los Angeles, Univ. of California Press, 1973; and Benjamin I. Schwartz, *Communism and China, Ideology in Flux*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Univ., Press, 1968.

<sup>36</sup> See A. Zingerle, *op. cit.*, T. Grimm, *Tradition and Revolution in China*, in: *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 204, 1967, pp. 79–103.

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## CHAPTER TWELVE

### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF CONFUCIANISM (AND BUDDHISM) IN JAPAN

In this essay I explore some aspects of the specific mode of expansion and institutionalization of Confucianism and Buddhism in Japan in contrast to the modes of their expansion and institutionalization in mainland Asia. This exploration is based on the assumption that there is, indeed, a sharp difference between the impact of the expansion of Confucianism on the respective institutional and ideological formats of Korea and Vietnam on the one hand and Japan on the other. The institutionalization of Confucianism, first of all in China itself, and then in Korea and Vietnam, transformed the basic premises of the social and political order in these societies, and in the structure of their centers and their ruling strata, in comparison with those of preceding regimes.<sup>1</sup>

In both Korea and North Vietnam there have developed as a result of the expansion or adoption of Confucianism new regimes—more imperial than the older patrimonial or feudal-patrimonial regimes—and of centers, even if there were not as fully articulated as in China, the like of which persisted in South Vietnam, as well as new structures of the ruling elites and systems of stratification.<sup>2</sup> This change was effected by the transformation of feudal, or rather feudal-patrimonial, ruling groups into something similar to the class of Chinese literati, that is, to an autonomous bureaucratic-cultural

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<sup>1</sup> See three works by Max Weber: *The Religion of China* (New York: Free Press, 1951); *Ancient Judaism* (New York: Free Press, 1952); and *The Religion of India* (New York: Free Press, 1956); also S.N. Eisenstadt, "Innerweltliche Transzendenz und die Strukturierung der Welt. Max Webers Studie ueber China und die Gestalt der chinesischen Zivilization," in *Max Webers Studie ueber Konfuzianismus und Taoismus. Interpretation und Kritik*, ed. Wolfgang Schluchter (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), pp. 363–412.

<sup>2</sup> See James B. Palais, *Politics and Policy in Traditional Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975); André Schonberg, *Social Structure and Political Order in Traditional Vietnam* (London: Sage Publications, 1970); Alexander Woodside, "History, Structure, and Revolution in Vietnam," *International Political Science Review*, 10, no. 2 (April 1989): 143–159, and Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

elite, recruited according to distinct, independent criteria and organized in relatively autonomous frameworks.

In Korea, by partial contrast, Confucian elites have never achieved the kind of autonomy and independence that characterized the Chinese empire. Aristocratic and patrimonial tendencies remained very strong. The Confucians encountered strong Buddhist opposition, in alliance with large sectors of the older aristocracy and some of the rulers.<sup>3</sup> Once the Confucian institutions and elites became predominant, however, even the aristocracy was “Confucianized.” True enough, aristocratic families and lineages continued to be much more important in Korea than in post-T’ang China. But their importance was manifest in their success in monopolizing, at least in part, the Confucian bureaucratic literati positions—but not in abolishing these positions—and in reverting to a distinct “semifeudal” aristocratic type of polity. In other words, they were already at play on the Confucian playing fields, according to Confucian rules, even if they manipulated those rules to their advantage. In North Vietnam the Confucian state was even more coercive than in Korea and in some ways more truly “imperial” in its permeation of the periphery than it was in China.<sup>4</sup>

The story of Confucianism—as well as of Buddhism—in Japan is radically different. True, both Confucianism and Buddhism have greatly influenced the entire cultural and social ambience of Japanese society. Their influence was indeed far-reaching, and it is, as is well known, impossible to understand the history of Japanese society and culture without taking this influence into account. Confucianism and Buddhism were also instrumental in generating many areas of cultural creativity, as well as in establishing the realm of private meaning in many sectors of Japanese society. They have contributed greatly to religious-cultic life in Japan and have deeply influenced the pattern of creativity in these areas, and they were also of considerable importance in transforming the general cultural ambience and climate.<sup>5</sup>

Under the impact of Confucianism and Buddhism, and contrary to many non-Axial civilizations (e.g., ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Mesoamerica)—which, unlike Japan, were also pre-Axial civiliza-

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<sup>3</sup> See Palais, *Politics and Policy in Traditional Korea*.

<sup>4</sup> See Woodside, “History, Structure, and Revolution in Vietnam”; and Ngoc Huy Nguyen and Ta Van Tai, *The Le Code: Law in Traditional Vietnam* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> See Edwin O. Reischauer and John King Fairbank, *A History of East Asian Civilization*, vol. 1, *The Great Tradition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960); and H.P. Varley, *Japanese Culture: A Short History* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1973).

tions—there developed in Japan sophisticated intellectual, philosophical, ideological, and religious discourses, as manifest, for instance, in the development of the intensive debates between various Neo-Confucian schools and schools expounding the so-called nativistic learning of the Tokugawa period.<sup>6</sup> But the nature of the influence and impact of Confucianism and Buddhism in Japan was different from that of Confucianism in China, Korea, and Vietnam or of Buddhism in, above all, the countries of Southeast Asia.

Institutionally, in Japan neither Confucianism nor Buddhism has changed the structure of the center or of the ruling elites. The “importation” of Confucianism did not develop in Japan those central institutional forces that shaped the Confucian regimes in China, Korea, and Vietnam—namely, the examination system and its crystallization of the stratum of the literati and the imperial bureaucracy. Thus, whereas the famous Confucian saying that one should have educated rulers implied in China (and to a lesser degree in Korea and North Vietnam) the crystallization of entirely new types of autonomous ruling classes, in Japan it led to attempts to educate those that already existed—mostly various types of aristocratic rulers. This fact also had, as we shall see, a far-reaching impact on the political behavior of Confucian groups in these different settings.

Buddhism in Japan developed some distinct characteristics that distinguished it from Buddhist communities in India, China, and Southeast Asia. The most important of these characteristics was the development of very strong worldly orientations and of a highly sectarian familistic organizational structure among Buddhist groups or sects. On the organizational level, Buddhist sects developed in extremely personalized and familistic directions. Buddhist sectarianism in Japan was rooted not in strong transcendental orientations but in its having become embedded in the emphasis on personal “enlightenment” on the one hand, and on concrete social nexus or “groupism,” with tendencies toward hereditary transmission of leadership roles, on the other.<sup>7</sup> As Shigeru Matsumoto puts it:

This particularistic tendency also dominated various aspects of culture having their root in more ancient times. Hereditary families and school artists with their secret traditions appear on a large scale during the

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<sup>6</sup> See Peter Nosco, ed., *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> See Joseph Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

Heian period, and many of them continued to thrive in the following period. The same pattern came to affect even the Pure Land Shin sect of Buddhism soon after the time of its great founder, Shinran. Shinran represented a radical break from the particularistic, continuous, hereditary tradition by emphasizing the absolute trust of each individual person in the universal-saving power of Amida Buddha. The penetration of Pure Land Shin Buddhism into the villages certainly helped to break their closed traditional structure and brought the possibility of a more universalistic religious organization extending beyond the villages. Yet, from the very beginning, the headship of the sect has been inherited in the line of its founder, Shinran, generation after generation. The priesthood in each temple has also been largely hereditary. Moreover, the relationship between main temples and branch temples, and between a temple and its member-followers [*danka*], came to be conceived in terms of family relationship or the *oya-ko* symbolism.<sup>8</sup>

All in all, from these observations one may argue that Norinaga, through his stress on lineage or hereditary continuity, points to an important aspect of the traditional Japanese value system.

In close relation to such far-reaching institutional changes, some of the major premises or concepts of Confucianism and Buddhism were also transformed in Japan. We have seen how Buddhist orientations become transformed in a this-worldly direction. The ontological conceptions that stressed (as in all Axial civilizations) the chasm between the transcendental and mundane orders, between “nature” and “culture,” were shifted in a more “immanentist” direction.<sup>9</sup> This led to a much stronger emphasis on the mutual embeddedness of the cultural and natural orders and a very heavy emphasis on nature as given rather than as constructed according to transcendental principles.

It is, however, probably with respect to the conception of the national collectivity and its relation to the broader Confucian and Buddhist civilizations, as well as with respect to conceptions of authority, especially imperial authority, that the ideological transformation of Buddhism and Confucianism was most fully manifest. The crux of this transformation was the redirection of the universalistic orientations of Buddhism and Confucianism in a more particularistic,

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<sup>8</sup> Shigeru Matsumoto, *Motoori Norinaga, 1730–1801*, Harvard East Asian Series, no. 44 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 180.

<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, Takeshi Umehara, “Shinto and Buddhism in Japanese Culture,” *Japanese Foundation Newsletter*, 15, no. 1 (1987): 1–7; and Hajime Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India, China, Tibet, Japan* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1964), pp. 345–588.

primordial direction. Buddhism, as well as Confucianism, had a powerful impact indeed on the definition of the overall “national” Japanese community and on the basic concept or premises of authority in Japan—the heavy emphasis on commitment to center, on hierarchy, and on group solidarity. Confucianism and Buddhism imbued these definitions with a very strong moral or metaphysical dimension.

But the impact of Buddhism and Confucianism did not change the basic institutional premises of these definitions. Above all, they did not change the sacral, particularistic components of Japanese collective self-definition and of the system of legitimation of authority within it—unlike in Vietnam and Korea, not to mention China itself. If anything, it has strengthened these definitions and the legitimation of the social and political order in such sacral-primordial ties by combining them with a strong ethical dimension.<sup>10</sup> True enough, the encounter with Confucianism and Buddhism did give rise to continuous reformulations and reconstructions of the definitions and symbols of the Japanese collectivity. But such reformulations have never basically changed the ontological and social import of these symbols. Japan’s first encounter with Buddhism had transformed the concept of sacred kingship into a sacred liturgical particularistic community, rooted in the older Shinto concept, and all the subsequent formulations of the nature of this community have only strengthened this conception. As M. Wahida writes:

This liturgical community was believed to have its exemplary model in the mythical sacred history as it was to be delineated in Japanese mythology. Moreover, it was believed that the state, as a liturgical community, could be renewed whenever the Enthronement Festival was celebrated. The Enthronement Festival was indeed the supremely important occasion, when the ideal national community on the level of mythical sacred history could be translated into reality and represented on the dimension of profane history. Among the families taking part in the celebration of the festival were those who had long served the ruler’s personal household in the performance of their magico-religious, economic, and military functions. When the structure of the *ritsu-ryō* state was completed in the eighth century, the families charged with the magico-religious functions were integrated into the *Shingi-kan*, while those with economic functions were mostly systematized into the Ministry of the Imperial Household of the *Dajō-kan*. In addition, the military families and groupings who had served as Imperial

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<sup>10</sup> See Joseph Kitagawa, “The Japanese Kokutai (National Community): History and Myth,” *History of Religions*, 13, no. 3 (1974): 214–225.



guards were incorporated into a special system of bodyguards and palace guards. In short, the state at the beginning of the eighth century constituted a perfect cosmos as a liturgical community.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, the strong universalistic orientations inherent in Buddhism and more latent in Confucianism were subdued and “nativized” in Japan.<sup>12</sup> When Japan was defined as a divine nation, this meant a nation protected by the gods, a chosen people in a sense, but not a nation carrying out God’s universal mission.<sup>13</sup> Parallel developments took place with respect to the basic conception of political authority and of accountability of rulers. These concepts were also greatly transformed from the original Chinese-Confucian concepts prevalent in China, Korea, and Vietnam. Unlike in China (as well as Korea and Vietnam),<sup>14</sup> where, in principle, the emperor, even if a sacral figure, was “under” the Mandate of Heaven, in Japan he was sacred and seen as the embodiment of the gods, and could not be held accountable to anybody. Only the shoguns and other officials could be held accountable, and even then in ways not clearly specified, and only in periods of crisis, as for instance at the end of the Tokugawa regime.

The differences between the modes of expansion of Confucianism and the impact of such expansion on the institutional structure in China, Korea, and Vietnam and of Buddhism in the various countries of mainland Asia, on the one hand, and of both Confucianism and Buddhism in Japan, on the other, are closely related to differences in the structure and composition of their respective elites, as well as of the orientations and activities of their respective sects. These differences are very close to those that can be identified in the case of Islam, that is, differences in the structure of the cultural elites (especially their relative autonomy), their relation to the ruling elites, and their place in the ruling coalition.

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<sup>11</sup> M. Wahida, “Sacred Kingship in Early Japan: A Historical Introduction,” *History of Religions*, 4, no. 4 (May 1976): 335–340.

<sup>12</sup> Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, pp. ii–iv.

<sup>13</sup> See Minoru Sonoda, “The Religious Situation in Japan in Relation to Shinto,” *Acta Asiatica*, 51 (1987): 1–21; Shoji Okada, “The Development of State Ritual in Ancient Japan,” *Acta Asiatica*, 51 (1987): 22–41; and C. Blacker, “Two Shinto Myths: The Golden Age and the Chosen People,” in *Themes and Theories in Japanese History: Essays in Memory of Richard Storry*, ed. Sue Henny and Jean-Pierre Lehmann (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Athlone Press, 1988), pp. 64–78.

<sup>14</sup> See Ryūsaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore de Bary, and Donald Keene, comps., *Sources of the Japanese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).

In mainland Asia the Confucian and Buddhist elites were highly autonomous. The Confucian elites constituted a new, distinct, autonomous political-cultural stratum recruited in principle—if not always in practice—through the examination system, the basic contents of which were set up and promulgated by them.<sup>15</sup> The Buddhists, at least in the area of religion, were also highly autonomous—and not totally embedded in the existing structures of power and family.

In Japan, by contrast, both the Confucian scholars and the Buddhist sects were deeply embedded in the existing power, kinship, and family settings. Although the Confucian academies in Japan were often relatively independent institutions, they were highly dependent on the rulers for public offices.<sup>16</sup> The Confucian scholars served in Japan at the courts of the rulers according to the criteria set up by the rulers, and they served at the rulers' pleasure. The Buddhist sects thus became strongly embedded in the familistic settings that predominated in most sectors of Japanese society.

The different modes of expansion of Confucianism had some very important repercussions on the nature of the sectarian activities that developed within them. From the very beginning, the development of sectarianism in Confucianism and Buddhism differed greatly from that in the major monotheistic civilizations. Given the strong otherworldly orientation, Buddhist sects were not oriented—as was the case in the monotheistic civilizations—toward reconstructing the political centers of their respective societies.<sup>17</sup>

The various Hindu sects, as well as Buddhism itself, did indeed have a far-reaching impact on the structure of the secular spheres of their respective civilizations.<sup>18</sup> First, they extended the scope of the different national and political communities and imbued them with new symbolic dimensions.<sup>19</sup> Second, they could also change

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<sup>15</sup> See David S. Nivison and Arthur Wright, eds., *Confucianism in Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959); and Arthur Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959).

<sup>16</sup> See Nosco, *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, especially the introduction, "Neo-Confucianism and Tokugawa Discourse," pp. 3–26.

<sup>17</sup> See I.F. Silber, "Opting Out in Theravada Buddhism and in Medieval Christianity: A Comparative Study of Monasticism as Alternative Structure," *Religion*, 15, no. 3 (1985): 251–278.

<sup>18</sup> See S.C. Malik, ed., *Dissent, Protest, and Reform in Indian Civilization* (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1977); and M.S.A. Rao, ed., *Social Movements in India* (New Delhi: Mahonar, 1978–79).

<sup>19</sup> See S.J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

some of the bases and criteria for participation in the cultural communities—as was the case in Jainism, in the Bhakti movement, and, of course, above all, in Buddhism, where an entirely new civilizational framework was constructed.<sup>20</sup>

Buddhism also introduced new elements onto the political scene—above all that special way in which the Sangha, usually politically a very compliant group, were able, in some instances, as Paul Mus has shown, to become a sort of moral conscience of the community, calling the rulers to a degree of accountability.<sup>21</sup> This impact was of a different nature from that of the struggles between the reigning orthodoxies and the numerous heterodoxies that developed within the monotheistic civilizations—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Although the reconstruction of political centers was not the major orientation of Buddhist sects, even in these societies there did develop a mode of involvement in the political arena that posed potentially subversive challenges to the authorities.

The mode of involvement of the Confucian elites in the political centers in China, Korea, and Vietnam developed in a rather different direction from that of the Buddhist Sangha, and was in many ways closer to the sectarian activities in the monotheistic civilizations. Confucianism was indeed very strongly oriented toward the political centers. But, given the strong (in contrast to the monotheistic traditions), almost exclusively this-worldly orientation of Confucianism, the potentially heterodox groups of literati rarely challenged the political center and order. They were, however, very active politically, and often engaged in intensive discourse about and moral criticism of the rulers.<sup>22</sup>

As in all other Axial age civilizations, there developed in China numerous secondary religions, such as Buddhism and Taoism, as well as numerous schools within the central Confucian fold with strong other-worldly orientations. As the official Confucian “orthodoxy” was not greatly concerned with this other-worldly orientation or with pure speculation, these sects never developed into hetero-

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<sup>20</sup> See C. Gaillat, “Jainism,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1987), 7:507–514; John B. Carman and Frederique A. Marglin, eds., *Purity and Auspiciousness in Indian Society* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985); John B. Carman, “Bhakti,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2:130–134; and Jayant Lele, ed., *Tradition and Modernity in Bhakti Movements* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981).

<sup>21</sup> See Paul Mus, “La Sociologie de George Gurvitch et l’Asie,” *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie*, 43 (1967): 1–21; and Paul Mus, “Traditions anciennes et bouddhisme moderne,” *Eranos Jahrbuch*, 32 (1968): 161–275.

<sup>22</sup> See Thomas A. Metzger, *Escape from Predicament: Neo-Confucianism and China’s Evolving Political Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

doxy in the doctrinal sense; and so long as they did not impinge on the basic institutional implications of the imperial order, with the political-cultural predominance of the literati and bureaucracy, they were more or less left alone. But once some of these sects did attempt—as was the case with the Buddhists under the T'ang—to impinge on the basic institutional framework of the Confucian order, to construct the world according to their own premises, the Confucian literati and bureaucracy behaved like any other “monotheistic” orthodoxy, engaging in fierce political struggle and wide-ranging persecutions.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, throughout the various periods of Chinese history there have been continuous attempts by the ruling literati to define the limits of Confucian orthodoxy.<sup>24</sup>

At the same time, there were many noteworthy attempts at reform in China grounded in the Confucian and Neo-Confucian visions, especially from the Sung period onward. Neo-Confucian groups were much concerned with the reconstruction of the imperial order in accordance with the metaphysical and moral visions they articulated, and these had a far-reaching impact on certain aspects of policy, such as land allotment and taxation, and to some extent the details of the examination system itself.<sup>25</sup> They were continually politically active, and often critically engaged in the political discourse. Unlike the sects and heterodoxies of monotheistic civilizations, however, the Confucians have but rarely challenged the basic political premises of the regimes, the very foundation of the imperial order. This was probably to no small extent due to the fact that they conceived the political or political-cultural arena as the main, possibly the only, institutional ground (as distinct from the more private contemplative one) for implementing the Confucian transcendental vision.

Thus, both Buddhist sects and groups of Confucian (especially Neo-Confucian) literati in mainland Asia participated in the political arena, thus constituting, at least potentially, a challenge to the existing political regimes—even if in ways that differed greatly from those prevalent in the monotheistic civilizations.

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<sup>23</sup> See Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959); and Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History*.

<sup>24</sup> See Kwang-ching Liu, ed., *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

<sup>25</sup> See Metzger, *Escape from Predicament*; and Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind-and-Heart* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

It was, indeed, this strong, relatively autonomous, and often critical political involvement, posing political challenges to the regime, which almost entirely disappeared in Japan. Here most Buddhist sects and Confucian schools became either supporters of the existing political order—performing religious or cultural functions for the existing powers, imbuing the political process with proper Buddhist (or Confucian) ethical values and orientations—or politically passive.

The major new sectarian orientations that developed in Japanese Buddhism, most clearly manifest in the Pure Land sect, were in principle inclined toward the perfection of the individual, seemingly without any direct political charge—certainly without any effort to change the premises on which the political realm was based. They were also very strongly inclined toward strengthening the national community; but this could, contrary to Confucian teaching, lead to a certain political passivity or withdrawal.<sup>26</sup> It was only in Nichiren's case that some more active political overtures—beyond the “simple” struggle for power—could be identified with Japanese Buddhism, but even these were basically entirely embedded within the framework of premises prevalent within the Japanese political order. There did not develop among these groups in Japan—unlike in at least some of the Neo-Confucian groups in China and, in a different way, in Theravada countries—a specifically sectarian political dynamic.

Of course, the various Buddhist sects and monasteries in Japan, especially in late medieval times, developed into very powerful political and economic forces, and many of them enjoyed great autonomy and power vis-à-vis the shoguns. They engaged in intensive struggles among themselves and with the feudal lords or the shogun. But most of these battles were fought over economic resources and political power. The religious dimension was quite weak.

Some Neo-Confucian scholars, such as Hayashi Razan, attempted to present themselves as the bearers of the official ideology, hoping to have their schools certified by the authorities and declared orthodoxies. Sometimes their attempts succeeded, but only to a limited extent, especially in periods of turmoil during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the status of orthodoxy was in fact bestowed on them. Yet, given the basic premises of the Japanese political order and its legitimation in some combination of sacred

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<sup>26</sup> See Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, esp. chaps. 12, 13, and 15.

primordial terms, the rulers were not as interested in the promulgation and imposition of uniform orthodoxies as was the case in China, at least to some degree. Accordingly, they tended to supervise the intellectual or religious activities of these academies—and of the Buddhist monasteries—to a much lesser extent than in China. On the whole, these academies and religious institutions did perform useful functions for the regimes, but the entire dynamics differed from those prevalent in China, Korea, and Vietnam. It is also because of the basic characteristics of Japanese Buddhism, especially its “groupism” or group loyalties, which were continuously reinforced over individual autonomy, that, contrary to some assertions, Kamakura Buddhism understandably did not develop in the direction of a “reformation.”<sup>27</sup>

A rather similar picture developed with respect to the Confucian groups in Japan. Some of the Neo-Confucian scholars hoped to initiate fully established orthodoxies, but they were not on the whole successful, for the rulers did not generally encourage this tendency. The mode of participation of the Buddhist and Confucian groups in the political process in Japan was very much influenced by the fact that neither Japanese Buddhism nor Confucianism ever became a fully autonomous orthodoxy—and hence never gave rise to far-reaching heterodoxies. The shoguns were mostly concerned with what may be called the civilizing features of their cultural activities.<sup>28</sup> But, given the basic non-Axial premises of the Japanese political system, the shoguns were not interested in establishing orthodoxies in the full sense of the word.

One of the paradoxical results of the fact that Confucianism did not become in Japan—in contrast to China, Korea, and Vietnam—the main channel for recruitment of the ruling group was that it had a wide-ranging impact, pointed out by the Confucian scholars, on the development of a well-educated public in Tokugawa Japan. This relative weakness in Japan of the direct impact of sectarianism on political transformation culminated in some of the most important characteristics of the Meiji Restoration, which distinguish it from other great modern revolutions—namely that despite the broad structural changes it effected in all spheres of society, it was characterized by the weakness, even the lack, of utopian, universalistic, and

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<sup>27</sup> See J.H. Foard, “In Search of a Lost Reformation,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 7, no. 4 (1980): 284–286.

<sup>28</sup> See Nosco, *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, pp. 3–26.

missionary revolutionary ideologies and by the concomitant reconstruction of the legitimation of the new modern regime in “restorationist” terms.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, to sum up briefly, the transformation of Buddhism and Confucianism in Japan in its symbolic dimension was manifest in the weakening of their transcendental and universalistic orientation, and in their being channeled in an immanentist, particularistic, primordial direction. These transformations took two paths. One emphasized the more transcendental, other-worldly orientation and experience; the other hemmed in these orientations in this-worldly, immanentist directions and frameworks. Such hemming in did not entail the obliteration of the transcendental and other-worldly orientations but rather bracketed them in special segregated arenas. Such bracketing gave rise to the development of sophisticated philosophical, religious, and aesthetic discourse, and created a continuous tension between such discourse and the prevalent intellectual hegemony. But at the same time, this bracketing did not undermine the core of the basic ontological and social premises, even if it did give rise to their continuous reformation.

These transformations could already be identified in the first encounter with Confucianism and Buddhism and then again, in a much more complex and sophisticated way, with the development of New Confucian schools in the Tokugawa period. Throughout these periods Confucianism and Buddhism imbued the basic premises of Japanese order, such as the strong emphasis on commitment to the center—defined in strong primordial-sacral (or natural) terms—on hierarchy, and on group solidarity, with very strong new moral and metaphysical dimensions. They were also important in giving rise to manifold forms of cultural discourse, and in the reconstruction of the realm of private meanings and of public discourse of many sectors of Japanese society.

This gave rise to a widening of the range of discourse and to the reconstruction of more sophisticated and influential discursive modes. It also gave rise to a continuous broadening of the scope of participation of various sectors of Japanese society and cultural creativity,

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<sup>29</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies* (New York: Free Press, 1978); and Marius B. Jansen, “The Meiji Restoration,” in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 5, *The Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 308–360.

and in the political and ideological discourse that developed within it. And yet, as we have seen, the definition of the religious or “cultural” community that developed within Japanese Buddhism or Confucianism was distinctively national and did not strongly emphasize those transnational, civilizational dimensions that could be found in most other Buddhist communities or those universalistic orientations typical of most Confucian and especially Neo-Confucian schools.

On the whole, both Confucianism and Buddhism in Japan have continually reinforced some of the basic prevalent political orientations, premises, and symbols of legitimation of authority in Japan—the emphasis on the national community, defined in primordial terms, minimizing most references to universalistic orientations—thus greatly transforming certain basic tenets of “original” Chinese Confucianism. Moreover, however much of their discourse was couched in Neo-Confucian terms, it was set within a strongly restorative and nativistic framework and premises—even if the framework and premises were continuously reformulated in ever more sophisticated ways. On the institutional or organizational level this transformation entailed relatively little autonomy for the major Confucian schools and scholars and the Buddhist sect leaders and seers, embedding them into the prevailing social settings and networks, be they familial, regional, or political.

Accordingly, however great the impact of the spread of Confucian education and learning on the dynamics of Tokugawa society, neither Confucian (nor Buddhist) groups were active participants in the toppling of the Tokugawa regime. They did not perform those sectarian political roles that, for instance, the Puritans did in the English Revolution. It was, as is well known, different groups of disenchanting and rebellious samurai that toppled the Bakufu. Of course, they were greatly influenced by the development of new modes of public discourse. But the more intellectual groups were not active, autonomous participants in this process of rebellion, even if they provided part of the background for the disintegration of the Tokugawa regime.

The foregoing analysis points out that the essential characteristics of sectarian movements and their impact on political dynamics are not necessarily derived from their beliefs or their ritual practices, but rather stem from the way in which, and the extent to which, these beliefs become transformed into components of the basic premises of their respective civilizations. It is, indeed, the transformation of



such beliefs into the components of the premises of civilization that generates, first of all, in all Axial civilizations the very tendency toward sectarianism, toward heterodoxy, and toward the confrontation between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Yet, while some tendencies toward sectarian organization and activities are to be found in all these civilizations, the specific characteristics and impact of such sects vary greatly according to their respective premises and institutional features. Most important from the point of view of this analysis is the fact that, within the “same” religion, the impact of such sects varies widely in different settings and societies. Also, such variations are greatly, although certainly not exclusively, dependent on whether in any particular setting in any civilization the given religion constitutes only a distinct pattern of belief, ritual, and worship, or whether it has become a component of the basic ontology and beliefs of the civilization and of the concomitant characteristics of the religious elite and its relations with other elites. It is, indeed, these differences that explain the basic relations of such sects to the existing powers and the important variations in their organization and ideologies, as well as—even if not necessarily to the same degree—their more purely theological doctrines.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### A SHORT COMPARATIVE EXCURSE ON THE (THERAVADA) BUDDHIST CIVILIZATIONAL FORMAT AND HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE

#### I

In this short chapter we shall present a brief comparative analysis of the developments in the Buddhist civilization or civilizations—the origin of which was indeed in India where Buddhism developed as the most extreme heterodoxy, but one which created new civilizational formations not in India but outside it—above all in societies in South-East Asia.

Buddhism, with its extreme opposition to the basic tenets of Hinduism, was the only full-fledged sect to emerge from it to develop into a full-fledged civilization. Within the domain of Indian civilization it ultimately shared the fate of other movements, such as the Jaini and Bhakti. Even though they changed many of the orientations and ways of life of the members of their adherents, they were unable to displace the Brahminic hegemony and that central Hindu institutions which they challenged—the caste system—although they often did succeed in circumventing it. Unlike the Jaini and Bhakti movements, Buddhism, probably because of its explicit sectarian orientation and organization, did expand beyond India—to create a new “other-worldly” civilization or civilizations, over a much broader territory than that dominated by Hinduism. It expanded to China, Southeast Asia, and Tibet, and later—to a smaller extent—to Mongolia, where it created theocratic states. From both India and China, Buddhism expanded to Japan, where it was transformed in a non-Axial mode.

Through this expansion it has become a civilizational religion.<sup>1</sup> It was in South and Southeast Asia—Burma, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Laos, Cambodia, and especially southern Vietnam—where it remains the predominant religion—that the civilizational potential of Buddhism

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<sup>1</sup> Reynolds and Hallisey 1987.

manifested itself most clearly. It is here that the full impact of the basic orientations of (especially Theravada) Buddhism on the institutional formations and dynamics of "total" societies became apparent.

## II

Buddhism shared with Indian-Hindu civilization some of the most important institutional implications of an otherworldly civilization: the ideological predominance of the religious collectivity or framework; the crystallization of distinct civilizational frameworks; the principled subordination of the political to the religious arena; and the reconstruction of the symbols and scope of the various ascriptive collectivities. But great differences, to a large extent related to the specific other-worldly conceptions of "salvation" that developed in Buddhism, between Buddhist and Hindu societies or civilizations developed in the specific mode in which these general institutional tendencies, as well as in other aspects of institutional formations, crystallized.

The major points of Buddhism's dissent from Hinduism were the disavowal of the importance of the ritual nexus and of the differential ritual evaluation of mundane activities (so heavily emphasized in Hinduism) and some of the central institutional manifestations of these orientations which crystallized around the caste system. This disavowal was based on a more radical negation of the mundane world and distancing from it than was the case in Hinduism—a negation which generated a different relation to the mundane world—with some rather paradoxical results.

This relation to the mundane world was based, to paraphrase Perdue,<sup>2</sup> on a total disavowal of existence which is marked by the *dukkha*—pain, anguish, of bondage to the meaningless cycle of rebirths amid a transitory flux which is impermanent. This agony is caused by ignorance of the illusory nature of phenomenal existence and particularly by the pernicious notion of the eternity of the soul. It is the elimination of ignorance about desire for phenomenal life which can break the causal sequence and lead to final salvation, to the attainment of wisdom, to enlightenment, and to the ineffable Nirvana ("blowing out") which is the final release from the cycle of incarnations,

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<sup>2</sup> P. Perdue, "Buddhism," *The International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: MacMillan and Free Press, 1968), Vol. 2, 165–73.

which entails the attainment of a mystical transcendence beyond all conceptualization—and which can be attained only by the mendicant monk who has totally abandoned the aspiration of the everyday world. The principal symbols of the rejection of the world displace the archaic religious practices and forms of social organization in the name of a transcendent goal that places all men in a universal religious context that comprises the whole human situation.

### III

The transformation of Buddhism from a sectarian to a civilizational religion was connected with several processes that can be identified already in the earlier stages of Buddhism. The acquisition by monastic centers of extensive properties, encouraged a system of specialized roles for administration and teaching. The proliferation of sects—by the third century BCE there were a number of schools, each emphasizing different philosophical and doctrinal features of the received tradition—ultimately culminated in the “great Schism,” a split between the conservative forerunners of the Theravada and the more liberal Mahasanghika, whose doctrines gave rise to Mahayana Buddhism in the following centuries. The distinction between the elitist and the populist patterns of salvation—which was probably latent from the very beginning of Buddhism—was increasingly institutionalized.

By the end of the Buddha’s long ministry, the Sangha was differentiated along several lines; most important was the class distinction between the monastic elite and the lay devotees. The early Sangha was never a “church” under centralized control or subscriptionist orthodoxy. At Rejagrha, after the Buddha’s death (and supposedly at his own request), the idea of routine patriarchal succession was deliberately rejected. In keeping with autosoteriology, the primary function of the monastic rule was to protect the spiritual independence of each monk. The overriding aim was to provide optimum conditions for pursuit of the ultimate religious goal, not to enforce ecclesiastical unity.

For the laity and secular society, the leadership of the Sangha developed a secondary soteriology based on a merit-making ethic oriented to the economic and political needs of the urban mercantile and artisan classes. Upon joining the Sangha, lay devotees promised to conform to the “five precepts” (which ban murder, theft, falsehood,

adultery, and consumption of alcoholic beverages). By supporting the monastic order and by their personal morality they could accumulate karmic merit and be assured of better rebirth opportunities. By contrast with the archaic sacrificial rites, which still persisted, Buddhism provided less expensive religious practices. The Buddhist laity were expected to make donations to the Sangha, but the soteriology stressed the autonomy of the self as the sacrificial agent. A central component of this transformation was a growing emphasis on the worship of the person and image of the Buddha, as accessible to all adherents.

#### IV

The institutionalization of these orientations in wider societal settings as it developed in Buddhist societies was based on a far-reaching transformation of the conception of relations between purity and auspiciousness prevalent in Hinduism. First of all, it generated a totally different structure of the social roles defined—namely those of the renouncer, the Brahmin, the householder, and the king—in terms of these orientations.

S.J. Tambiah has analyzed this transformation as follows:<sup>3</sup>

The triangular relationship between renouncer, brahmin, and king (who may be taken to encompass his subjects) is quite different in the classical Hindu (Indian) and classical Buddhist (Southeast Asian) contexts . . .

The Hindu's system's centre of gravity lies with the brahmin who has a double relation to the renouncer whose ascetic values and 'purity' associated with the transcendental quest have touched him, and to the King and to all householders in general . . . as the intermediary between the cosmic deities and the earthly overlords. . . . The direct relation between king and renouncer is somewhat weak. . . . The dominant pair is the brahmin and king, and the brahmin is 'superior' to the king in moral valuation.

In the Buddhist case the point of articulation is the King, who . . . must protect and materially support [the bhikkus] so that they may follow their higher path of purification freed from worldly entanglements and illusions. The brahmin or his counterpart are ritual and scribal functionaries. . . . Thus in the Buddhist case the path of purification (*visuddhimagga*) is radically separated from the pursuit of auspicious well-being,

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<sup>3</sup> S.J. Tambiah, "Purity and auspiciousness at the Edge of the Hindu Context in Theravied Buddhist Societies," in J.B. Carman and F.A. Marglin (eds.), *Purity and Auspiciousness in Indian Society* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 94–109.

one assigned to the *bhikkhu* and the other to a brahmin-type agent. . . . King and laity . . . made donations [to the *bhikkhu*] in search of merit and in respect of his superior vocation, [whereas] to the brahmin-type officiants they give rewards for services rendered. And in buddhist 'ideology' as presented in the 'historical' chronicles composed by monks, it is the king's benefactions and support of the *sangha* that earns him praise and his legitimation. And kings have on account of such support of Buddhism assumed the title of *bodhisattva* (the future Buddha).

## V

It was this transformation of the conception of the relations between purity and auspiciousness facilitated the development of the distinction between an elite ethic of salvation and the more relaxed lay ethic. This distinction entailed an acceptance of the world as a possible venue for salvation not based on the ritual standing of different activities.

A major consequence of these Buddhist orientations—and one very closely related to the rejection of the caste system—was the autonomy of the nuclear family and the consequent social importance of father-son relations with strong Oedipal and patricidal components, which can be found in Buddhist as contrasted with Hindu mythology.<sup>4</sup> This family pattern was closely related to the modes of the group bases of social hierarchies that developed in Theravada Buddhist societies, which were radically different from the Hindu caste system. In both civilizations the local group bases of social hierarchies remained similar to those in pre-Axial Age civilizations; at the same time, however, they tended to become connected to new broader ascriptive categories that were constructed in these societies and were at least partially redefined in terms of such broader categories. But there were significant differences developed in this respect between the Hindu and Buddhist realms.

In the Buddhist societies of Southeast Asia, the revaluation of mundane (political and economic) and local status positions was on the whole limited to the religious arena. It affected the overall structuring of social hierarchies by broadening kinship, local, territorial, and ethnic groups, as well as by generating new types of obligations between the different status groups—especially between the religious and mundane ones. But it did not greatly change—a was the case

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<sup>4</sup> I am indebted to Professor G. Obeyesekere for this observation.

with the caste organizations—the organizational implications or forms of such local structuring. Thus, Theravada Buddhist societies did not develop any country-wide status consciousness beyond the religious sphere proper; most status sets were structured in relatively narrow vertical or local sets. Insofar as religious groups were related to the secular hierarchies they tended to become part of the local status sets of clientelistic networks.

## VI

Another institutional implication of Buddhist conceptions of the relations between purity and auspiciousness was the specific evaluation of the political arena and the relations between the political and religious arenas that developed in Theravada civilization. Theravada Buddhism had a much more positive orientation towards the political arena than Hinduism did. Political activity was not seen just as secondary to ritual and religious activity; it was defined as a reflection or representation of basic cosmic conceptions. This reflection or representation added a new dynamic dimension to the Buddhist polity in general and to Theravada polities in particular, which could be best seen in the emergence of what S.J. Tambiah has called the galactic polity,<sup>5</sup> i.e. a polity exhibiting many dynamic characteristics, above all a tendency to expand and reconstruct itself according to the cosmic model. This conception implied the creation of a political center whose relation to the basic cultural premises and ontological conceptions was very different from that existing in Hinduism—an attitude to the political realm which was characteristic already of Asoka's attempt to constitute a truly Buddhist polity—and which encountered significant opposition among the Hindu elites and caste networks.<sup>6</sup> The king was seen as the ideal protector of the (other-worldly) religion and as at least a partial embodiment of the cosmic order. The royal *dharma* (duty) involved a combination of transcendental and mundane orientations, which tended to minimize the tension between the sacred and primordial components of legitimation.

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<sup>5</sup> S.J. Tambiah, *World Conquerors and World Renouncers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol. 295 (1977), 69–97.

<sup>6</sup> R. Thapar, *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

This attitude effected important changes in the construction and definition of local, national, or political communities. The existing primordial or territorial components of such definitions were imbued with a broader orientation that provided the framework for crystallizing new symbols and boundaries of political collective identities and national political communities.

This mode of legitimation also had far-reaching repercussions on the relations between the political and religious arenas and their major carriers and a specific impact on the conception of the rulers and political dynamics of society. Because of Buddhism's stronger orientation to the political arena and the nature of the relations between the Sangha and the rulers, the various religious elites, and the sects in particular, tended to impinge more directly on the political arena than in Hindu society.

In Buddhist societies the center evinced a stronger tendency to regulate the monastic orders; many of the attempts at religious purification were undertaken by the rulers. On the other hand, in certain situations the major religious groups became the standard-bearers of outcries against the ruler's failure to perform his moral duties and important agents in fomenting rebellion or upheaval. They helped spread populist demands to change the concrete application of existing rules and the ruler's policies.<sup>7</sup> The fact that the Theravada countries were all relatively compact kingdoms, each defined as a specific national Buddhist community—in contrast to the decentralized political organization which developed in the realm of Hinduism—facilitated the development of centralized ecclesiastic organization and made it possible for sectarian tendencies to have a much stronger impact on the center than they did in India.

But at the same time the Buddhist sects—like the Hindu ones—did not evolve a new sociopolitical vision beyond the one initially established in their respective civilizations. Their activities were not inspired by such visions. Insofar as they developed alternative conceptions of social or cultural order, these were almost entirely oriented either to the other-worldly religious sphere or to the moral improvement of the community, with much less emphasis on ritual activities than in Hinduism.

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<sup>7</sup> P. Mus, "La Sociologie de Georges Burvitch et l'Asia," *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, vol. 43 (December 1967), 1–21; B.L. Smith, *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Sri-Lanka* (Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima Books, 1978); idem, *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma* (Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima Books, 1979).



The Buddhist ideal of the *bhikku*, like the Hindu renouncer, never led to the development of new attitudes toward the political arena. The lack of a sharp differentiation between the role of the *bhikku* and lay life—which is, paradoxically, closely related to the total devaluation of the mundane world, but a devaluation which is not based on a conception of this world as rooted in radical, ontological evil within it (even if it contains a conception of life as suffering)—prevented these renouncers from finding an Archimedean platform outside this world from which they could try to change it, as was the case in the monotheistic civilizations in general and in Western Christianity in particular.

The moral conscience which they represented implied a more stringent upholding of the given order and of its religious and moral precepts. In Buddhist societies, the autonomy and critical activities of the religious elites were generally confined to the cultural or religious sphere. In the more mundane spheres they never attained more than a (usually limited) organizational autonomy and were symbolically and organizationally dependent on the political authorities. Their organizational autonomy was contingent on the acceptance of the basic rules of the political game established by the political elites. Thus, although they were in a sense vested with the right to legitimate the political order and took part in the formation of new political regimes or in the restructuring of the scope of ascriptive communities, their autonomous, potentially critical participation in the political realm was limited to the directions specified below. Accordingly, the complaints and demands expressed by these elites were formulated chiefly in terms of fuller articulation of the existing premises of legitimation.

Similarly, the millenarian orientations of some of the heterodoxies or sectarian movements that developed in Buddhist societies were not characterized by the articulation of new types of political goals or by attempts to restructure political regimes. Only in popular uprisings against alien or “bad” rulers did such goals crystallize for a short while.

## VII

Accordingly, these sectarian tendencies did not work towards restructuring the centers and the rules regulating their access to the political order. As with Hinduism, their major impact was on the

restructuring of ascriptive-primordial categories and collectivities and the subsumption of most (usually piecemeal) institutional changes within the framework of such restructuring. This restructuring focused on the criteria of membership in ascriptive-primordial and religious communities, the redefinition of the boundaries of these communities and of access to them, and periodically, on attempts to imbue them with an egalitarian emphasis. Yet in Buddhist societies, with their stronger orientation to the political arena than in Hinduism, such impingement by religious groups on the political arena—in addition to their function, in times of crisis, as the moral conscience of the community—generally reinforced the “galactic” tendencies of the rulers and the construction of national Buddhist communities, and could give rise to much stronger identification of the political and the religious communities.

This interrelation between the religious and political elites also had its impact on the nature of the Buddhist international system. Unlike Hinduism, this system was not confined to a single ecological setting, however wide and diversified. Yet despite Buddhism’s strong tendency to expansion, no Buddhist political ecumene arose. Similarly, despite the international links among the different Sanghas, each was constituted on a national basis. No universal Buddhist polity was created. Hence the Buddhist in the (especially Theravada) civilizations of Southeast Asia coalesced into consciously compact yet fragile national polities in which the maintenance of their boundaries and even their expansion were motivated by combined political and religious motives.

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## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# CULTURAL TRADITIONS, CONCEPTIONS OF SOVEREIGNTY AND STATE FORMATIONS IN INDIA AND EUROPE\*

### I

One of the many distinct contributions of Jan Heesterman has been the exploration of similarities in many central characteristics of institutional formations—especially in the political arena—in medieval and early modern Europe and India.

Heesterman's work has indicated that, perhaps contrary to the many comparative analyses which have focused on the comparison between Europe—"The West"—and either China or Japan—, it is the comparison between Europe and India that may be most fruitful. This is for a very simple but basic reason—namely that from a broad comparative perspective, India and Europe shared some very important characteristics that cannot be found in so pristine a form in any of the other great civilizations in the history of mankind. The most important of these characteristics was the existence of relatively broad common civilizational frameworks, rooted in basic ontological conceptions and cultural-religious orientations combined with a multiplicity of continuously changing political centres and subcentres, and of continuously changing economic formations.

In these two civilizations, many of the concrete structural or organizational aspects of the political and economic arenas (especially the former) seemed to evince—as Heesterman has shown in a series of brilliant essays<sup>1</sup>—very strong similarities of structural forms, e.g. in the forms of political domination-kingship, patrimonial, semi-feudal, and semi-imperial regimes as well as in structures of cities. Given these similarities, the greatly different civilizational dynamics of these two civilizations are indeed very striking. This applies to the overall political and economic dynamics, the structure and construction of the centres

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\* Written with Harriett Hartman.

<sup>1</sup> J.C. Heesterman, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition—Essays in Indian Ritual, Kinship and Society*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.

and of their activities, the nature of the protest movements, their articulation into political conflicts as well as to the modes of the incorporation of such movements and of their demands into the centre.

It is not only that in India the modern Western type of capitalism and the modern bureaucratic-territorial state did not develop. The very posing of the problem in such terms is faulty. It is not faulty because such a development did take place after all: obviously it did not and the question whether some such development would have taken place but for British Imperialism, is a very moot one. But the posing of the question in such terms is faulty because contrary to many of the implicit—and sometimes even explicit—assumptions, to be found abundantly in historical and social science literature, that the development of the West should constitute the major yardstick according to which the dynamics of other civilizations should be measured, it is much more fruitful to assume that each civilization developed distinct institutional formations and dynamics. Accordingly, the specific characteristics of these civilizations should be analyzed not only in terms of their approximation to those of the West, but also in terms of their own internal dynamics as they have developed throughout their history.

Lately, Heesterman himself as well as several other scholars influenced by him—perhaps above all André Wink<sup>2</sup>—have shown how the cultural definitions of the political arena and of the major actors within it developed in India in a distinct way, different from that of the West, but with its own specific dynamics. They argued that India developed a concept—and practice—of sovereignty, which emphasized the multiple rights of different groups and sectors of society and not the existence—real or ideal—of a unitary, almost ontological concept of the state. Concomitantly, a rather specific combination developed of a tendency to civilizational, universal—or “Imperial”—expansion with such “fractured” sovereignty.

These definitions have not been “only academic” conceptions of the political realm—they also shaped the principles according to which interaction between rulers and “subjects” were regulated in these arenas.

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<sup>2</sup> Andre Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986.

## II

These definitions of the political arena and of the concomitant rights and obligations between rulers and subjects are closely related to the basic ontological conceptions of these respective civilizations and of their political orders. Accordingly, in this paper we shall focus on one central aspect of Heesterman's work—namely the close relations between ontological conceptions, ritual and institutional formations.

Hinduism, most fully articulated in Brahminic ideology and symbolism, was based on what was, among the Axial Age civilizations, the most radical recognition of the tension between the transcendental and mundane orders—derived from the perception that the mundane order is polluted in cosmic terms, because its very creation constituted a breach of the original cosmic harmony.<sup>3</sup> This pollution can be overcome in two different ways, which are at the same time complementary and contradictory. One way is the faithful performance of the ritual and mundane activities ascriptively allocated to different groups—above all to caste and subcaste groups—which signify different degrees of social and ritual purity or pollution. Closely related is the arrangement of social ritual activities and nexuses in a hierarchical order that reflects an individual's standing in the cosmic order and the performance of his duty with respect to it. At the same time, however, the stress on the pollution of the world also gives rise to attempts to reach beyond it, to renounce it: the institution of the renouncer (*Sannyàsa*) has been a complementary pole of the Brahminic tradition at least since the post-classical period.

The two approaches to the mundane were based on two distinct value orientations, on two 'axes of sacred value'—those of auspiciousness and purity.<sup>4</sup> These two distinct value orientations were always closely interrelated; although purity was hierarchically higher,

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<sup>3</sup> On the Basic Tenets of Hinduism, see: M. Biardreau, *Clefs pour la Pensée Hindoue*, Paris: Seghers, 1972; J.B. Carman and F.A. Margolin, *Purity and Auspiciousness in Indian Society*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985; M. Weber, *The Religion in India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism* (translated by H.M. Gerth and D. Martinodale), New York: Free Press, 1958; W.T. de Barry et al., (Comp.) *Sources of Indian Tradition*, New York: Columbia Un. Press, 1958; C. Bouglé, *Essais sur le Régime des Castes*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969; L. Dumont and D. Pocock, vols.; L. Dumont, *Religion, Politics and History in India*, Collected Papers in Indian Sociology, Paris: Mouton, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> See J.B. Carman and F.A. Margolin, *Purity and Auspiciousness in Indian Society*, op. cit.

it could never be concretely realized without auspiciousness. The concrete working out of the tension between these two axes constituted one of the major motive forces of the dynamics of Indian ideologies, institutions, and history.

At the same time, as indicated above, Hinduism evolved a strong tendency to escape the limitations set up by these hierarchical-ritual prescriptions by going beyond them through acts of renunciation. Such renunciation could be the last stage of one's life-cycle, but it could also entail the breaking out from this life-cycle. Such breaking out was usually manifest not only in purely individual acts, but also in the development of various group processes centred around the figure of the renouncer, which could become the starting points of sectarian formations.<sup>5</sup>

Given this strong articulation of the tension between the cosmic and mundane orders, Hindu civilization, like all the Axial Age civilizations, developed a distinctive centre. The major centre of Hinduism was not, however, political. Louis Dumont, in *Homo Hierarchicus* and other works, and Jan Heesterman have pointed out how Indian conceptions of the political realm differed from the European.<sup>6</sup> They both stressed that in India the political realm was not seen as a major arena of 'salvation', where the tension between the transcendental and mundane orders could be bridged fully. According to Dumont, it constituted a secondary arena in relation to the realm of the sacred, as represented by the Brahmin; Heesterman pointed out that it constituted one of the major manifestations of the degeneration of the given world of 'artha'—against the absolute state of Dharma. According to both interpretations, the political arena did not command a high degree of transcendental commitment, even though kings were often seen as having sacred or sacral attributes and although kingship constituted a central and necessary organ of society, regulated by some combination of orientations of auspi-

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<sup>5</sup> J.C. Heesterman, "Brahmin, Ritual and Renouncer", in J.C. Heesterman, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition*, op. cit., pp. 26–44; and the following articles: T.N. Madan (ed.), *Way of Life: King Householders and Renouncer*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1982, pp. 251–272; R. Thapar, "Householders and Renouncers in the Brahmanical and Buddhist Traditions", *Ibid.*, pp. 273–298; S.T. Tambiah, "The Renouncer: His Individuality and His Community", *Ibid.*, pp. 299–308.

<sup>6</sup> L. Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus*, op. cit.; Idem, *Religion, Politics and History in India*, The Hague: Mouton Pub., 1970; J.C. Heesterman, *The Condition of the Kings' Authority in the Inner Conflict of Tradition*, op. cit., pp. 108–128.

sciousness and purity-pollution. It was opitomized, as Heesterman has shown, in the king-Brahmin-renouncer nexus.<sup>7</sup>

### III

Thus a central aspect of Indian civilization—in comparison with other “Great Civilizations”, especially with the monotheistic ones and, in a different mode, with the Confucian one—is that the political order, the political arena, was not conceived as the major locus of ‘salvation’, of the bridging between the transcendental and the mundane orders, and that the obligations of rulers were conceived accordingly.

These conceptions about the place of the political realm in the overall ontological vision, had far-reaching repercussions on the formation of political institutions and on political dynamics in India. Here some of the major differences between the Indian and the European civilizations, despite their common structural and political-ecological features, stand out.

The major centre of Indian civilization was the religious-ritual one. In close relation to its other-worldly emphasis, its wide ecological spread, and its being strongly embedded in ascriptive primordial units, this centre was not organized in a homogeneous, unified, organizational setting. It rather consisted of a series of networks and organizational-ritual subcentres—pilgrimage shrines and networks, temples, sects, schools—spread throughout the subcontinent, and often cutting across political boundaries.

Truly enough the political arena in India was characterized by a relatively high level of symbolic and organizational distinctiveness and imbued with strong universal orientations. Accordingly, the political ruler achieved a high level of sacral or semi-sacral status, distinction and honor. The king was often portrayed as “king of the universe”, his rule extending to the four corners of the earth, his coronation ceremony and its accompanying horse sacrifice renewing his powers annually.<sup>8</sup> The king’s claim to universal sovereignty, as

<sup>7</sup> J.C. Heesterman, “Brahmin, Ritual and Renouncer”, in Idem, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition*, op. cit., pp. 26–44.

<sup>8</sup> J.C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, The Hague, 1957. Nicholas B. Dirks, “Political Authority and Structural Change in Early South Indian History”, in *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 13(2), 1976, pp. 125–157. J.C. Heesterman, “Ritual Kinship and Civilization: The Political Dynamic of Cultural Change in



“lord of all lords”, and the manifestation of his greatness through temples and monuments attested to the power and distinctiveness of political authority. The symbolic portrayal as king of the universe also reflected an ever-present desire to extend political domination and constant attempts to aggrandize mundane power, primarily through territorial expansion or, even more so, through the encompassing of the loyalty of peoples in the area. Therefore, although the king’s symbolic authority was in principle derived from the overall cultural-religious vision and was symbolized through religious rituals, some degree of authority seems to have been attributed to him independently of religious legitimation.

Yet, given the basic orientation of Hindu civilization away from mundane affairs, the political arenas maintained a certain, even if only partial, detachment from the more “other-worldly” religious arena. This detachment allowed different criteria of access to power, based on mundane criteria of success—military strength, wealth and articulation of solidarity of different local and regional groups or centres—or on some previous traditions of kingship in the area, to develop in the political arena. This was an opening for foreign rulers to be accepted, and for potential rivals to try to usurp power. One manifestation of the distance of the political centre from the religious one, was that political leaders entered into office without the appropriate varna qualifications. Chandragupta, for instance, came from obscure origins, yet became one of the greatest emperors.

Concomitantly, while classical Indian religious thought has a lot to say about policy, the behavior of princes, and the duties—much less about the rights—of subjects, yet to a much greater extent than in other civilizations, politics was viewed in non-transcendental terms that emphasized its distance from the religious centre of the civilization.

#### IV

Moreover, Indian politics developed predominantly patrimonial characteristics, the rulers relying mostly on personal loyalty and ties for recruitment of personnel and for contacts with different sectors of society.

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Medieval South Indian History” (Paper prepared for a Conference on the Historical Experience of Change and Process of Reconstruction of Selected Axial Age Civilizations, Jerusalem, December 28, 1983 to January 3, 1984).

Despite efforts to penetrate the periphery through administrative contacts between the centre and the people, such as public works, temple and monument building, and tax privileges, at no time did the rulers completely disengage themselves from the more personal orientations of the tradition: ritual and kinship-based networks. Nor did they succeed in restructuring the personalized, patrimonial systems which developed. The Indian king remained firmly embedded in the social structure dependent on personal relationships of loyalty.

In the Mauryan empire we know that an extensive espionage system supplemented the system of personal relationships to nip insurrection in the bud. Even the Mughal rulers found it necessary to create an extensive network of personal interrelationships to secure loyalty to the empire, and depended on traditional leaders at the local level to insure a steady flow of resources. Similarly, in most of the great kingdoms or empires, such as the Mauryan, Gupta, even to some extent in the Delhi Sultanate, access to bureaucratic or administrative power was a matter of loyalty or personal relation to the king. Under all regimes the central administration was dependent on the local elites for the collection of taxes and other free-floating resources, and access to these elites continued to be based on local criteria, e.g. dominant caste status based on ritual and social status.<sup>9</sup>

Nor did regular channels of access of different sectors of the society to the centre develop, whether by group representation or other regularized avenues of communication. The gap between the centre and the periphery became successively greater with each empire, usually bridged by a double system of centrally-appointed and locally selected provincial and district officials—a system which came to its fullest fruition under Muslim rule. Accordingly, the political arena was characterized by a relatively high degree of political instability and turnover, manifested among other things in the continual changing of boundaries and in the expansion and contraction of political units,<sup>10</sup> Despite their political distinctiveness and the drive for civilizational expansion, few polities achieved anything near unity of the sub-continent. Although India knew states of different scope, from

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<sup>9</sup> André Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. J.C. Heesterman, "Traditional Empire and Modern State", Leiden University, Draft Paper, 1990.

<sup>10</sup> Stefan Breuer, *Staatenkonkurrenz und Politische Rationalisierung in India und Westeuropa*, Sonderdruck Aus Saeculum, XXXVI, Heft 2-3, 1985. Verlag Karl Alber Treiburg, München.

semi-imperial centres to small patrimonial ones, the overall Indian cultural tradition was never identified with any of them. Kingdoms of various sizes were in constant competition, especially in the fringe areas, resulting in an instability temporarily overcome only by exceptionally strong rulers who formed strong networks of personal ties and espionage. The segmental nature of the political collectivities fostered the relatively easy transference of allegiance to a larger authority, adding to the fluidity and instability of the political structure.<sup>11</sup> The difficulties of maintaining political power were expressed in the underlying segmental nature and decentralization which constituted, as A. Wink has shown, a basic component of most Indian political systems.<sup>12</sup>

These basic characteristics of political organizations and dynamics in India were closely linked to the basic characteristics of civil society in India. The core of this civil society was the relative autonomy of the major social groups and elites, the complex of castes and villages and the networks of cultural, economic and political communication. These castes and caste-networks were not simple primordial or territorial units of the kind known in many tribal or non-literate societies—defined in terms of closed ‘given’ criteria. They were, in fact, much more elaborate ideological constructions—continuously reconstructed—, imbued with a more sophisticated level of symbolization and ideologization, and giving rise to wide-ranging sectors, communities, networks, and arenas. Above all, they led to broader ascriptive groups such as local and regional caste-networks.

It was within these sectors and networks that the major types of institutional—political and economic—entrepreneurs and elites, and articulators of models of cultural order and of the solidarity of different ascriptive groups, emerged and were active. The entrepreneurial activities carried out by these elites were rooted and defined by the combination of highly ideological, ascriptive, primordial, and ritual criteria with a strong emphasis on the proper performance of mundane activities in terms of their transcendent rulers.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See N. Dirks—references in note 8.

<sup>12</sup> Andre Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India*, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> See A. Béteille, *Caste, Class, and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965; K. Ishwaran (ed.), *Change and Continuity in India's Villages*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1970; D.G. Mandelbaum, *Society in India*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970, 2 vols.

These various sectors of civil society were characterized by a very high extent of autonomy, but an autonomy fully embedded in ascriptive (albeit widely and continuously reconstructed) units whose place in the social order was in principle prescribed by their ritual standing in the purity-auspiciousness scheme. Hence these various sectors of civil society did not have, in principle, autonomous access to either the religious or political centres; their access was dependent on their place in the social order.

#### IV

One of the most important derivatives of the relative non-centrality of the political arenas and of the specific structure of civil society in India was the fact that the principled reconstruction of these arenas did not constitute a major focus for movements of protest for the numerous sectarian activities that developed in India.<sup>14</sup>

These movements and sects—Bhakti, Jainism, Buddhism, and other minor sects or movements in Hinduism—had a far-reaching influence on the civilization framework of Indian civilization and of the various institutions and political regimes that developed in these civilizations, giving rise to the restructuring of culture, to the institutional frameworks of Indian civilization, and to its specific dynamics. These processes of cultural and institutional formation and dynamics developed distinct characteristics of their own, unique in the history of mankind and differing greatly from those in purely this-worldly Axial Age civilizations such as China, or in the monotheistic civilizations.<sup>15</sup>

In the mundane sphere, these movements were oriented towards the reconstruction of religious and civilizational symbols and collectivities.

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<sup>14</sup> For a general discussion, see: S.N. Eisenstadt: 'The Paradox of the Construction of Other-worldly Civilizations: Some Observations on the characteristics and dynamics of Hindu and Buddhist Civilizations', in: Yogendra K. Malik (ed.), *Boeings and Bullock-Carts Studies in Change and Continuity in Indian Civilization* Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1990, pp. 21–56.

<sup>15</sup> On Jainism, see C. Gaillat, 'Jainism', in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, New York: MacMillan and Free Press, 1987, vol. 7, pp. 507–514; A.L. Basham, 'Jainism and Buddhism', in W.T. de Bary (comp.), *Sources of Indian Tradition*, op. cit., pp. 37–93; S. Jaini, 'The Pure and the Auspicious in the Jaina Tradition', in J.B. Carman and F.A. Marglin (eds.), *Purity and Auspiciousness in Indian Society*, op. cit.

On Bhakti, see: J.B. Carman, 'Bhakti', in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 130–134; J. Lele (ed.), *Tradition and Modernity in Bhakti Movements*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981; F. Hardy, *Viraha Bhakti: The Early Development of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India*, Oxford, 1981.

They could become closely connected with the extension of the borders of political communities or with the establishment of new ones, but rarely with the reconstruction of the premises of political centres. Buddhism did give rise to new premises, but these became fully institutionalized only outside India, in the new Theravada Buddhist polities of Southeast Asia, and in Mahayana Tibet.

The basic definition of ontological reality and the strong other-worldly conceptions of salvation that developed in these civilizations did not generate strong alternative conceptions of the political order. True, many of these visions and movements tended to develop a strong emphasis on equality, especially in the religious and cultural arenas, and to some extent also in the definition of membership in the political community. But the articulated millenarian and egalitarian orientations one finds in some of the heterodoxies or sectarian movements and which sometimes became connected with rebellions and political struggle, were not characterized by any strong articulation of political goals, nor were they linked with attempts to restructure the political regimes. Only in some popular uprisings against alien or 'bad' rulers such goals crystallized for a short while.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, throughout its long history, India has witnessed the development of far-reaching changes in the organizational, political, or economic arenas, changes in technology and in levels of social differentiation, redefinitions of the boundaries of political units, some restructuring of the economic sphere, and changes in social and economic policies—all effected by coalitions of the different caste-entrepreneurs. But except for the ultimately failed attempt of Asoka, most of these processes or movements of change did not succeed in and possibly did not even aim at—restructuring the premises of the political arena, or of the basic centre-periphery relations.

These characteristics of the major movements, their relations to the centre, and the institutional and symbolic characteristics of the political arena explain one of the most interesting—from a comparative point of view—aspects of Indian medieval and early modern history, namely, that—unlike in Christianity or Islam—wars of religion, i.e. wars in which political goals were closely interwoven with, and

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<sup>16</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, see note 14, and 'Heterodoxies and the Dynamics of Civilizations', in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 128, No. 2 (June, 1984), pp. 104–113.

legitimized by, attempts to impose a religion on a society and redraw political boundaries accordingly, did not develop within it. Concomitantly, given the basic characteristics of Indian civil society, a basic ideological confrontation between state and society also did not emerge.

## VII

All these features of the different processes of change and protest movements constitute some of the distinct characteristics of Indian political dynamics which stand in marked contrast—as we have alluded at the beginning of this paper, and as Heesterman himself did in an as yet unpublished paper<sup>17</sup>—to the mode of such dynamics as they developed in Europe and in Islam. In Europe, like in most Christian civilizations, and unlike in India, the resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders (or, to use Weber's expression, the road to salvation) was not conceived as attainable through a principled negation of the mundane, but rather through different combinations of other- and this-worldly activities. In other words, salvation was attainable not only through religious ritual and worship, and through the performance of ritually defined activities in the social order, but also through the reconstruction of the political, military, cultural, and even—especially in Protestantism—economic arenas.

Consequently, Christianity—in contrast to India—defined the individual as an autonomous and responsible ontological entity with autonomous access to the sacred and mundane orders. Finally, in most Christian civilizations, one notices a high level of activism and commitment to these mundane orders on the part of broader groups and strata, while in India commitment and activism were oriented much more towards the transmundane order, to the religious arena.

## VIII

These tensions in the basic premises and orientations of Christianity were played out in the institutional arenas that were fundamental to this civilization: state-Church relations, monastic organizations and

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<sup>17</sup> J.C. Heesterman, *Traditional Empire and Modern State*, op. cit.

orders, family and community. But the concrete way in which these tensions were played out varied greatly in different historical periods and in different parts of Christianity.

Among the most important of such historical experiences was the fact that in Europe a multiplicity of cultural orientations emerged: the Judeo-Christian, the Greek and the various tribal ones. This greatly reinforced the tendency to pluriformity and complexity of ways to resolve the tensions between the transcendental and mundane orders, through either worldly (political and economic) or other-worldly activities.<sup>18</sup> Concomitantly, these different cultural traditions were not organized in hierarchically organized segments but remained in a state of continuous interaction and competition. Thus, in contradistinction to, for instance, the Byzantine Empire, several orientations rooted in tribal traditions, such as equality of access to the sacred and to the centres of power, were much more strongly articulated in Europe. Among the economic, structural and political aspects, of crucial importance is the type of structural pluralism that developed in Europe.<sup>19</sup> It was characterized above all by a strong combination of low (but continuously increasing) levels of structural differentiation. The combination of the multiplicity of the cultural traditions and of the concomitant modes of resolving the tension between transcendental and mundane order explains the fact that in Western and Central Europe, perhaps even more than in other Christian civilizations, tensions evolved constantly between hierarchy and equality, i.e. between the strong commitment and autonomous access of different groups and strata to the religious and political orders, on the one hand, and the emphasis on the mediation of such access by the Church or by political powers, on the other. Closely related to this was the tension between equality and hierarchy as basic dimensions of participation in the political and religious arenas.

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<sup>18</sup> See F. Heer, *The Intellectual History of Europe*, vol. 1, *From the Beginnings of Western Thought to Luther*, Garden City: Doubleday, Anchor, 1968; J.K. O'Dea and C. Adams, *Religion and Man: Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, New York: Harper & Row, 1972, pp. 111 ff.; The various articles on "Christentum" in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1961, vol. 1, pp. 1685–1721; A. von Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, New York: Putnam, 1908; E. Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, New York, MacMillan, 1931.

<sup>19</sup> See F. Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, London: New Left Books, 1974; M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, 2 vols.; O. Hintze, *The Historical Essays of O. Hintze* (ed. by F. Gilbert), New York: Oxford University Press, 1975; C. Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975; S.N. Eisenstadt, *European Civilization in a Comparative Perspective*, Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1986, Chap. 2.

## IX

This multiplicity of both symbolic models and structural conditions generated several basic institutional characteristics of 'traditional' Western European civilization, which distinguish it from other Axial Age (including Christian) civilizations in general, and from Indian civilization in particular. This distinctiveness is epitomized in the crystallization of rather specific definitions of the political arena and of the rules regulating its dynamics, as well as in the patterns of legitimation of authority, and in the structure of the centre, the centre-periphery relations, and the major collectivities that developed in Western and Central Europe.

It was not only that the construction of political arenas was conceived as one major possible way of bridging the gap between the transcendental and the mundane orders—this was also the case, even in a more pronounced way, in Islam. In Europe, however, unlike in Islam, and certainly unlike in India, this arena (as well as most collectivities) was defined—very much under the combined influence of Greek philosophy and of the basic sociological conceptions of Christianity—as a distinct ontological entity.<sup>20</sup> The impact of such definition could be seen in some crucial aspects of the institutional formations and dynamics of Europe that stand in marked contrast to those of Indian civilization. Thus the patterns of legitimation of political order that developed in Europe were characterized by a tension and a continuous oscillation and separation between the sacred, primordial, and civil dimensions of legitimation in different arenas of social life. Collectivities defined themselves mainly in primordial terms, whereas the Church defined itself in purely sacred ones, and so on. On the other hand, each collectivity and centre also attempted to arrogate all the different symbols of legitimation to itself. The combination of these two tendencies was closely connected with a continuous restructuring of the boundaries of the major collectivities—primordial, political, and religious—and of the relations among them, giving rise to continual conflict.

These patterns of legitimation and of structuring collectivities were also related to the structure of centres and centre-periphery relations that developed in Western and Central Europe. In common with

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<sup>20</sup> See, from among the vast literature on this subject: N. Bobbio, *Stato, Governo, Società*, Torino: G. Einaudi, 1985, esp. Chaps. 1 and 3, and also R. Dumont, *Homo Aequalis*, Paris: Gallimard, 1977.



imperial societies, China, the Byzantine Empire, Western and Central European societies were always characterized by a relatively strong commitment to common 'ideals' or goals; the centre permeated the periphery in order to mobilize support for its policies, and the periphery impinged on the centre in order to influence the shaping of its contours. Contrary, however, to imperial societies, in Europe multiple centres developed: political, religious, and regional. The mere existence of multiple centres, and especially multiple political centres, is not unique to Europe. It can also be found, as we have seen, in India. What distinguishes the European experience is not the multiplicity of centres, but certain characteristics of this multiplicity.

In Europe, these different centres did not coexist in a sort of adaptive symbiosis—in India and to a smaller degree in Islam—with the religious legitimizing the political, and the political providing the religious with protection and resources, while they battled with each other over the relative terms of this adaptation. Rather these multiple centres and subcentres tended to become arranged in a complicated but never unified rigid hierarchy, in which no centre was clearly predominant, but in which many aspired not only to actual but also to ideological predominance and hegemony.

Accordingly, different centres and collectivities tended to struggle over their relative standing in such a hierarchy, and the centres were continuously changed and restructured. Naturally enough, the activities of the more central ('higher') centres were of a wider scope than those of the local ones, but the former did not have a monopoly over any component of 'central' activities. Each type of centre claimed some standing with respect to, and autonomous access to, the 'central' functions of the other, i.e. the religious towards the political and social, and so on. Hence, the various centres were never completely separate from one another. This was true not only of the relations between Church and State, but also of those between different centres and subcentres.

Various movements of protest and heterodoxy have played a very important role in the reconstruction of the various centres and collectivities. This was so because the reconstruction of the political arena—this in marked difference from the Indian case—constituted a very important component in their orientations. Closely related to the place of such heterodoxies in the processes of reconstruction of the centres, many of these centres aimed at universal expansion which would encompass all the other centres and communities. Such expansion

sion was often legitimized in religious and ideological terms—giving rise to wars of religion or to ideological wars.

Hence European political dynamics were characterized by strong tendencies to continuous expansion and consolidation of territorially, ideologically compact units. Accordingly, the processes of social and political dynamics in late medieval and modern times were characterized in Europe by: (a) the existence of multiple centres; (b) a high degree of permeation of the peripheries by the centres and of impingement of the peripheries on the centres; (c) a relatively small degree of overlapping of the boundaries of class, ethnic, religious, and political entities and their continuous restructuring, aiming at the creation of more homogeneous units but never succeeding in it; (d) a comparatively high degree of autonomy of groups and strata and of their access to the centres of society; (e) a high degree of overlapping among different status units combined with a high level of countrywide status (“class”) consciousness and political activity; (f) multiplicity of cultural and “functional” (economic, or professional) elites, a high degree of cross-cutting and a close relationship between them and broader, more ascriptive strata; (g) a high degree of autonomy of cities as autonomous centres of social and structural creativity and the formation of collective civic identities.

## X

These characteristics of the political arena, and of political dynamics, were closely related to the structure of civil society that developed in Europe, especially from the early modern period, though its nuclei developed already in the late Middle Ages.<sup>21</sup>

This civil society was characterized first by the existence of “private”, yet open, potentially autonomous public arenas distinct from the State. Second, it was characterized by the development within such sectors of various associations which regulated many of its activities and prevented it from becoming a shapeless mass society. Third, it was characterized by the openness of these sectors, i.e. by their not being embedded in more or less closed, ascriptive or corporate groups; fourth, by the existence of a plurality of such sectors; and

<sup>21</sup> See M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, op. cit.; O. Hintze, *The Historical Essays of O. Hintze*, op. cit.; J.C. Heesterman, *Traditional Empire and Modern State*, op. cit.; S.N. Eisenstadt, *European Civilizations in a Comparative Perspective*, op. cit.

fifth, by autonomous access to the central political arena, and a certain degree of commitment to the centre.

This civil society was also characterized by the existence and relative autonomy of institutional and ideological links between its sectors and the State, such as the major constitutional frameworks of political representation, the major judicial institutions and arenas, and of the flows of politically relevant information.

It was these features of the society of modern Europe, that gave rise to continuous confrontation between the construction of centres and the process of institution building and to competition between different groups or strata and elites about access to the construction of these centres. Political forces, political elites, and the more autonomous social groups, the state on the one hand, and 'society' or 'civil society' on the other waged a continuous struggle over their relative importance in the formation of the cultural and political centres of the nation-state and in the regulation of access to it. This struggle between state and society developed in Western society in two opposite directions. One was that of the expansion and growth and reconstruction of civil society, i.e. the expansion of democracy. The other direction was that of the victory of state over society most fully epitomized in totalitarian regimes—the Fascist, Nazi and Soviet ones. In all these respects there was indeed a very marked difference from the Indian experience.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION IN EUROPE

### I

In the first centuries of the common era, there developed a breakthrough or transformation from the Jewish civilization of the Second Temple culminating in two late Axial Civilizations—the Rabbinic Jewish Civilization and the Christian one. This crystallization of both of these civilizations can be understood only in the framework of the great religious competition that developed in late antiquity.

The ultimate lack of success of the Jewish religion and people in this competition—and it was indeed only an ultimate lack of success because, for a very long period of time, much longer than has been usually seen by historians, the competition between Judaism and other religions, including Christianity, and later even Islam, did go on—was due not, as has been supposed by Weber, to their having become a purely religious community, but in many ways just for opposite reasons. It was indeed above all due to the fact that the Jewish collectivity continued to combine, in its self perception, in the construction of the symbols of its collective identity primordial-national and political components together with religious and ethical ones.

Of crucial importance in this context has been the fact that even its ascetic elements or groups—the various sects which developed within the framework of Jewish collectivity—were indeed very closely bound to such a view of the close relations between the Jewish civilization and people. Hence whatever other-worldly and potentially rationalizing tendencies they might have had, they were indeed very firmly bound in this framework—often even stressing the ritualistic aspects of the Jewish religion on the one hand, and the strong segregation from other nations on the other hand.

It is here that indeed their great difference between the Jewish civilization of middle and late antiquity and Christianity stands out. The break of Early Christianity with Judaism—whether its beginnings are to be seen already in early Pauline Christianity or a bit

later—has been a very prolonged process going on for a much longer time than has been usually supposed. Its core was focused not only on the place of law as against faith—but in addition, and perhaps above all, on two basic changes in basic premises to the Jewish faith and religion.

First was the transformation of the political and primordial elements from their connection with specific people into a much more general, universal, less specifically national or ethnic directions, thus dissociating the religious from “ethnic” elements—although not necessarily totally negating them—as was later the case in Islam.

The second such crucial transformation of religious orientations that have gradually taken place in Christianity was the weakening of the emphasis on contractual or conventional relations between God and His people, which was characteristic of the Jewish religion, an emphasis that was connected with direct access to the sacred, open to all members of the community, towards a growing emphasis on the mediatory mode of access to the sacred, first vested in the charismatic vein in the figure of Christ, then more and more institutionalized in the Church.

It was indeed the combination of these two transformations of the original Jewish religious orientation—i.e., the weakening of the connection between a primordial religious and later civilizational collectivity; the emphasis on mediatory relation to the sacred, combined with a very strong transcendental orientation, together with the growing emphasis on belief and ritual, as against the law, that has been one of the important reasons for the success of Christianity in the great religious competition in late antiquity.

Of crucial importance in this context has been the transformation and development of asceticism as it took place in early Christianity, in relation to both the Jewish sects as well as to various types of holy men<sup>1</sup> of antiquity—a transformation which gave rise to new transcendental visions, strong other-worldly orientations as well as strong rationalizing tendencies, and seemingly indeed involving strong depoliticisation especially in relation to the Jewish sects.

Another such element was the very strong and cohesive social organizations and networks that have developed among the Christian

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<sup>1</sup> P. Brown, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Mass in Late Antiquity,” in idem., *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*, pp. 103–153; and idem, “Town, Village and Holy Man: The Case of Syria,” in idem, *op. cit.*, pp. 153–166.

communities, many of them based indeed on social networks in the Jewish Diaspora.<sup>2</sup>

It was the combination of all these elements that were characteristic of early Christianity, especially the strong transcendental vision with strong other-worldly orientation, that explain both the success of Christianity in the religious competition of antiquity as well as some of the major characteristics of the medieval Christian civilizations, after its political success with the conversion of Constantine, as well as in its later encounter with tribal elements in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

## II

Truly enough these two tendencies—the strong depoliticization of early Christianity and its strong other-worldly orientations, as compared with Judaism and the later fuller political involvement of Christianity and the crystallization of Christian civilizations in Europe with a very strong civilizational and political orientation—may seem to be contradictory.

This indeed has been the view expressed lately by L. Dumont<sup>4</sup> in a very important article in which he claimed that the transformation of Christianity into a this-worldly, political direction was not due to some tendencies inherent in Christianity which, according to him, were entirely other-worldly, but to the historical “accident” of Constantine’s conversion and to the ensuing political involvement of the Church. It was, according to him, above all these developments—and not any tendencies inherent in Christianity—that have generated the basic civilizational structure within which those processes of far-reaching transformations, culminating in Calvinism and which ultimately led to the emergence of modern Western individualism, have developed.

And yet this interpretation of Christianity, as against Dumont’s general view about the importance of otherworldliness in the construction of the Great Civilizations, is not correct.<sup>5</sup> But the crystallization

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<sup>2</sup> Wayne E. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.

<sup>3</sup> Aaron L. Gurevitch, *Les Catégories de la Culture Médiévale*, Paris: Gallimard, 1983.

<sup>4</sup> L. Dumont, “A Modified View of Our Origins: The Christian Origins of Modern Individualism,” *Religion* 12 (1982): 1–13.

<sup>5</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Transcendental Visions—Otherworldliness and Its Transformation: Some More Comments on L. Dumont,” *Religion* 13 (1983): 1–17.

of the Christian civilization was possibly only if the strong other-worldly orientations of early Christianity were not of a kind which excluded any this-worldly, potentially even political, ones—even if owing both to its dissociation from the Jewish people as well as the political circumstances in the late Roman Empire, these latter orientations were very subdued in early Christianity.

### III

A closer look at the evidence indicates that Christianity in general, and monastic and its ascetic groups in particular, were not totally other-worldly. Indeed here the most appropriate comparative case would be, of course, Buddhism, where there also developed a Church of sorts and where Kings also become converted to the new religion, and yet the whole course of institutional dynamics and transformations was entirely different from what happened in Europe.

The crucial differences between the effects of the Christian conversions and Church and those which developed in the realm of Buddhism do lie in the basic differences in their predominant cultural orientations, in the respective conceptions of salvation that became predominant in them, and in the specific ideological and institutional dynamics which they generated, and it is also these differences that explain the different impact and transformation of the seemingly similar outworldly orientations that developed in these civilizations.

It is here that the crucial difference between the Hindu and Buddhist outworldly orientations and renouncer on the one hand, and the Jewish and Christian, and to some degree Greek or Hellenic ones, stand out—with the Chinese constituting a sort of “middle” case.

In the first cases the “pure” outworldly orientation was in a way an extension, even if a dialectical one, of the dominant mode of orientation of the other-worldly concept of salvation which yet has generated a distinct civilizational pattern which gave rise to the dialectical extension of the ideal of renouncer as the purest embodiment of this orientation.

In the second case in general, and in Christianity in particular, which is our main concern here, the very strong outworldly or other-worldly orientations which developed from its very beginning constituted components of a new transcendental vision in which there existed from the very beginning a combination, interweaving, as well

as a very strong and continuous tension—between this- and other-worldly orientations.

Christianity's inherently this-worldly orientations, i.e. the vision that the reconstruction of the mundane world is a part of the way of salvation, that the mundane world constitutes at least one arena for activities which are relevant to salvation—indeed in marked contrast to Buddhism—has indeed of course been rooted in its Jewish origins.

Such this-worldly orientation, in constant tension with the other-worldly one, has been manifest in Christianity both in its basic orientations and dogma as well as institutional settings. Such strong this-worldly orientations—even in constant tension with the outwardly or other-worldly one—are manifest first of all in the Christian conception, inherited from Judaism, of God as the Creator of the Universe, of this world, and of the centrality of eschatology in general and of the historical dimension of this eschatology, i.e. in the conception of salvation as going to occur in history for the whole of humanity. Second, such this-worldly orientation was evident already in the very central place of the Christ, who in distinction to Buddha was conceived not only as a carrier of an other-worldly vision but as the earthly embodiment or at least aspect of God. Closely related to this has been the strong emphasis on the lack of a complete separability or even opposition between body and soul in general and on resurrection in particular—a concept which in itself contains already a strong this-worldly element or emphasis and which was strongly disputed by Platonists.

This relatively strong this-worldly orientation of Christianity was evident for instance in its polemics—even those of its extreme ascetics—with the Platonic and gnostic schools which have stressed to various degrees, as is well known, a strongly negative attitude to the holy and to the physical world.<sup>6</sup> The difficulties of Christianity with Neoplatonism, despite the strong attraction of Platonic trends of thought to patristic writers, are also important indications of this tendency.

This strong orientation to activities in the mundane world can also be found within the Christian ascetic and monastic communities. Unlike the Buddhist or the Indian renouncer the early centuries

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<sup>6</sup> See on this G.G. Stroumsa, "Ascèse et Gnose: aux origines de la spiritualité monastique," *Revue Thomiste* 81 (1981): 557–573.



(4th on) were oriented in some way towards this world and not to total escape from it. Indeed, as G. Bowersock has indicated, one of the great advantages of Christianity in the great religious competition of Late Antiquity was that its other-worldly orientation and ascetic activities ultimately enabled it to come back to the world carrying a transcendental vision,<sup>7</sup> and similarly H.J.W. Drjivers has stressed the strong orientations to the reconstruction of the world that were inherent in early Christian Ascetism and Monasticism.<sup>8</sup>

It was also this strong orientation to the structuring of the community and of the Church and to the relation between the ascetic orientation and the more mundane activities that have generated among the early Christian ascetics the great concern with the problems of authority and organization.<sup>9</sup>

#### IV

Thus indeed the strong predilection to a conception of salvation which contained within itself some combination of this-worldly and other-worldly orientation, were inherent in Christianity from its very beginning. They were indeed given in Christianity's roots in Judaism and its close—not only contingent—relation, almost from the very beginning, to Hellenistic civilization.

Historical circumstances—the initial low political status of Christianity, its being persecuted—made such this-worldly concerns in the earlier period of Christianity submerged—but did not obliterate them. More propitious historical circumstances—the conversion of Constantine—brought out these this-worldly ideological orientations in full force. Thus while the conversion of Constantine was indeed a turning point in the emergence of the different medieval Christian civilizations, yet these developments have built on potentialities which have existed in early Christianity from the very beginning. Since then tension between them and the pure other-worldly or outworldly ones became a continuous part of the history of Christianity.

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<sup>7</sup> G. Bowersock, "Architects of Competing Transcendental Visions in Late Antiquity," paper prepared for the conference on Origins of the Axial Age and Its Diversity, Bad Homburg, January 1983.

<sup>8</sup> H.J.D. Drjivers, "Early Christian Ascetism and Monasticism," paper presented to the conference on Max Weber and the Analysis of Late Antiquity, Bad Homburg, 1982.

<sup>9</sup> E. Troelsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, New York: Harper, 1960, Vol. I, pp. 158–9.

These various tendencies have of course developed in different ways in different parts of the Christian civilizations—in the European one, the Eastern—the Byzantine and later Russian Christianity, in the Ethiopian or Amenian ones, according to the specific combination of this- and other-worldly orientations that has developed in the respective centers; with the geopolitical circumstances and the structure of political power and elites in each of them. In all of them developed also a very special mode of other-worldly ascetism and its tension with this-worldly orientations.

## V

The most widespread, continuous and dynamics of these civilizations developed in Western, Northern and Central and Central-Eastern Europe. Here, in conjunction with rather specific geopolitical circumstances, there developed some quite specific structural characteristics which are indeed of great importance from the point of view of the Weberian analysis.<sup>10</sup>

Here first of great importance is one characteristic which Europe shares with India and to a smaller degree with the Islamic world—namely the existence of relative continuity in civilizational framework with distinct even if porous and continually changing background, together with the multiplicity, and continuously changing boundaries of political and economic settings. Second, of crucial importance in the shaping of European Christianity was the framework of the structural and cultural ideological pluralism that constituted one of the major components of the European historical experience. The structural pluralism that developed in Europe was characterized above all by a strong combination of low, but continuously increasing levels of structural differentiation with the continuously changing boundaries of different collectivities and frameworks. Parallely there developed in Europe a multiplicity of prevalent cultural orientations

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<sup>10</sup> See in greater detail: S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Dynamics of Civilizations and Development: The Case of European Society," in *Essays on Economic Development and Cultural Change* in honor of B.F. Hoselitz, in *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 25, Supplement, 1977, pp. 123–145.

See also: S.N. Eisenstadt, "Cultural Orientations and Center-Periphery in Europe in a Comparative Perspective," in P. Torsvik (ed.), *Mobilization, Center, Periphery, Structuring and Nation-Building*. A volume in commemoration of Stein Pokkan, Oslo, 1981, pp. 94–108.

which developed out of several traditions—the Jewish, the Christian, the Greek and the various tribal ones; and a closely related multiplicity and complexity of ways to resolve the tensions between the transcendental and mundane orders, through either worldly (political and economic) or other-worldly activities. This multiplicity of orientations was rooted in the fact that the European civilization developed out of the continuous interaction between, on the one hand, the secondary breakthrough of two major Axial civilizations—the Jewish and the Greek one and on the other hand numerous “pagan” tribal traditions and society.

The full crystallization of the structural tendencies combined with the specific cultural orientations, rooted in Christianity and in some tribal traditions, prevalent in Europe gave rise there to (a) multiplicity of centers; (b) a high degree of permeation of the peripheries by the centers and of impingement of the peripheries on the centers; (c) a relatively small degree of overlapping of the boundaries of class, ethnic, religious and political entities and their continuous restructuring; (d) a comparatively high degree of autonomy of groups and strata and of their access to the centers of society; (e) a high degree of overlapping among different status units combined with a high level of countrywide status (“class”) consciousness and political activity; (f) multiplicity of cultural and “functional” (economic or professional) elites with a relatively high degree of autonomy, a high degree of cross-cutting between them and close relationship between them and broader, more ascriptive strata; (g) relative autonomy of the legal system with regard to other integrative systems—above all the political and religious ones; and (h) the high degree of autonomy of cities and autonomous centers of social and structural creativity and identity-formation.

It is the conjunction of these characteristics that explains that second type of structural pluralism that developed the European institutional pattern from mere decentralization as well as from the type of structural differentiation that develops in ecologically compact, above all Imperial, systems. This type of pluralism differed greatly from the one that developed, for instance, in the Byzantine Empire which shared many aspects of its cultural traditional models with Western Europe. Within the Byzantine Empire this pluralism was manifest in a relatively high degree of structural differentiation within a rather unified socio-political framework in which different social functions were apportioned to different groups of social categories. The structural pluralism that developed in Europe was character-

ized, above all, by a continual combination between low, but continuously increasing, levels of structural differentiation on the one hand and continuously changing boundaries of different collectivities, units and frameworks on the other.

The combination of such multiple cultural traditions with pluralistic structural and political-ecological conditions, explains the fact that in Western and Central Europe there developed—more than in other Christian civilizations—continuous tensions between hierarchy and equality, as the basic dimensions of participation of different sectors of the society in the political and religious arenas; and between the strong commitment and autonomous access of different groups and strata to the religious and political orders, on the one hand, and the emphasis on the mediation of such access by the Church or by political powers, on the other. At the same time there developed a strong tendency to define the respective institutional arenas or collectivities or strata as distinct social spaces with relatively sharply defined boundaries.

A second major repercussion of these ideological and structural dimensions has been the fact that the mode of change that has developed in Western Europe, from at least the late Middle Ages on, was characterized by a relatively high degree of symbolic and ideological articulation of the political struggle and of movements of protest; by a high degree of coalescence of changes in different institutional arenas; by a very close relationship between such changes and the restructuring of political centers and regimes. Changes within various institutional arenas in Western Europe—such as the economic or the cultural arenas—impinged very intensely on one another and above all on the political sphere. These changes gave rise to a continuous process of restructure of the boundaries of these different arenas, which did not however obliterate their respective autonomies.

One of the most important repercussions of these changes was that pluralism which developed from early times was manifest in the continuous processes of reconstruction of centers and of various collectivities; the continuous construction and reconstruction of chiefdoms, municipalities, feudal fiefs, cities, principalities and kingdoms as well as of tribal or trans-tribal, regional, proto-national, and national communities.

Between these collectivities and units there did not exist a clear-cut division of labor. Rather there tended to develop among them a continuous competition over their respective standing with respect

to the different attributes of social and cultural order; over the performance of the major societal functions—be they economic, political, or cultural—as well as over the very definition of the boundaries of ascriptive communities.

The European historical experience has been characterized by the continual constitution, within the broad and very flexible frameworks and boundaries of European civilization, of multiple, often competing collectivities and centers, each with claims to be the best representative of this broader civilizational framework.

Within this setting there has developed one of the basic characteristics of European civilization—namely the existence of multiple centers, both different kinds of centers—political, religious and others—as well as of different regional ones. But these were the mere existence of relative multiplicity and of especially political centers not unique to Europe. It can also be found in India—and to a smaller degree in the Islamic realm. What distinguishes the European experience is not just the multiplicity of centers but their structure, and the relations between them in general and between the religious and political ones in particular. The most important of these characteristics is the fact that they did not live—as in India and to a smaller degree in Islam—in just a sort of adaptive symbiosis, the religious legitimizing the political and the political providing the religious with protection and resources, and battling with each other over the relative terms of such adaptation.

Beyond this the relations between the religious and political centers in Europe were characterized by the fact that first each of these types of centers claimed some autonomy and standing role with respect to the “central” functions of the other, i.e. the religious in the political and social and vice-versa. Second, they were characterized by the fact that each of these centers could support its claim by autonomous access to both the material as well as power and prestige bases of resources. Third was the fact that there developed various “graded”—primary, secondary, centers—with some degree of autonomy which also claimed some such autonomous access to the higher center which attempted in its turn to superimpose the higher on the lower ones.

Naturally enough, the activities of the more central or ‘higher’ centers were of a wider scope than those of the local ones, but the former did not have a monopoly over any component of ‘central’

activities. Each type of center claimed some autonomous standing and autonomous access with respect to the 'central' functions of the other, i.e. the religious towards the political and vice-versa. Hence, the various centers were never completely separate from one another. This was true not only of the relations between Church and State, but also of those between different religious, political or ethnic centers and sub-centers.

All these collectivities and central institutions were legitimized in a variety of terms—in terms of primordial attachments and traditions, of sacred transcendental criteria, as well as in terms of civic traditions. The continuous restructuring of centers and collectivities that took place in Europe was closely connected with the continuous oscillation and tension between the sacred, primordial, and civil dimensions of the legitimation of these centers and as components of these collectivities. While, for instance, many collectivities were defined mainly in primordial terms and the Church was seemingly defined mainly in sacred ones, yet, at the same time, however, each collectivity, institution and center also attempted to arrogate all the other symbols of legitimation to itself.

The major characteristics of the reconstruction of centers and of collectivities in Europe was that the very frequent attempts at such reconstruction were closely connected, first with very strong ideological struggles, which focused on the relative symbolic importance of the various collectivities and centers; second with attempts to combine the structuring of the boundaries of these centers and collectivities with the reconstruction of the bases of their legitimation; and third with very a strong consciousness of discontinuity between different stages or periods of their development.

Closely related was the structure of center-periphery relations that developed in Western and Central Europe. In common with Imperial societies, such as China or the Byzantine Empire, Western and Central European societies were usually characterized by attempts of the centers to permeate the periphery in order to mobilize support for its policies, and by the periphery impingement on the center in order to influence the shaping of its contours. Many of these centers aimed at universal expansion which would encompass other centers and communities, and such expansion was often legitimated in universal terms—very often in religious and ideological terms—often giving rise to wars of religion or to ideological wars. In contrast to purely Imperial regimes (like for instance China or the

Byzantine Empire), not only did there develop in Europe a multiplicity of centers and collectivities, but there also developed a much stronger impingement of the periphery and of various sub-centers on their respective centers.

Another characteristic, while not specific to Europe, which has yet been most fully developed in it has been the relatively very high degree of the impingement of the periphery and of secondary centers on the higher centers, a characteristic which in such intensity could be found only in some of the ancient city-states.

It is the combination of these characteristics each of which can be separately found also in other civilizations and settings, that highlights the specificity of the European situation, and developments in different parts of Europe.

## VI

In close relation to these institutional features of European civilization there developed within it distinct patterns of change. These patterns of change were characterized by a relatively high degree of articulation of political struggle and symbolic and ideological structuring of movements of protest and political struggle alike, as well as by a high degree of coalescence of change and the restructuring of political regimes and other components of the macro-societal order. Thus changes within any component of macro-societal order impinged on one another and above all on the political sphere. These changes gave rise to continuous mutual restructuring of these spheres—without necessarily coalescing into one continuous political or cultural framework.

As compared with the pure Imperial systems, Western Europe was characterized by a much lesser stability of regimes, by continuous changes of boundaries of regimes and collectivities and restructuring of centers but at the same time it evinced also a much greater degree of capacity of institutional innovation cutting across different political and “national” boundaries and centers.

The patterns were activated by: (a) high degree of predisposition of secondary elites, relatively close to the center, to be the major carriers of religious heterodoxies and political innovations; (b) a relatively close relationship between such autonomous secondary elites within broader social strata, and hence also to movements of rebellion; (c) a concomitant predisposition on the part of these elites and

broader social strata to develop activities oriented to center-formation and to combine them with those of institution-building in the economic, cultural and educational spheres.

Out of these tendencies there developed a continuous confrontation between the construction of centers, movements of protest and the process of institution-building. Institution-building in most spheres was seen as very relevant to the construction of centers and judged according to its contribution to the basic premises of these centers, while at the same time centers were also judged according to their capacity to promote such just and meaningful institutions. Second was the continuous competition between different groups or strata and elites about their access to the construction of these centers. Third there was a continuous impingement of movements of protest, heterodoxies on the political struggle in the center and the incorporation of many themes of protest into the center.

## VII

The preceding analysis of European "Medieval" Christian Civilization is of special importance from the point of view of that central link which is missing in Weber's analysis—namely that of Catholic civilization—and which, as we shall see later on in chapter, is crucial for the understanding of the development and crystallization of the first modernity. His emphasis on Protestantism as the great carrier of rationalization of the modern world, of the specific Western process of rationalization, has often led to interpretations which imputed to him the view of the Catholic civilization as ritual, "traditional," in the narrow sense—as well as being entirely counter to the rationalizing tendencies, as well as the more dynamic, transformative tendencies brought out by Protestantism.

There can, of course, be no doubt that tendencies to ritualism, "traditionality," and the like were indeed very strong in Catholic civilization and that in many ways Protestantism was the crucial process in their transformation—above all by negating the rather clear distinction between the spheres of application of this and other-worldly orientations which were characteristic of large sectors of official Catholicism.

Yet all these facts notwithstanding should not blind us to the fact that first the Protestantism was originally and basically a heterodoxy that developed within Catholicism, and second that it built



on foundations which were already inherent in Catholicism, above all the combination of other-worldly and this-worldly orientations as they have developed in the monastic or ascetic groups, the gates of which Luther wanted to open for entry into this world.

Thus the tendency to the coalescence of heterodoxies, movements of protest and political struggle—which has become most fully visible in Europe in the case of the Great Revolutions, a very unique and dramatic series of events in the history of mankind—of crucial importance for the process of shaping of the modern world, of rationalization of the major sphere of life and yet curiously neglected by Weber—was indeed very closely related to the development of Protestantism.

But Protestantism was, of course, of crucial importance in effecting the transformation to modernity—and from the point of view of our concern with Weber's analysis of Early Christianity and its relations to Judaism, it is important to note that within Protestantism there took place some "return," as it were some of the religious orientations—the denial of mediation in access to the sacred and a very strong emphasis of the political dimension—that were prevalent in Judaism. Although this emphasis did not entail the strong connection to "primordial" setting as was the case in Judaism, yet Protestantism was indeed very open to some connection to national collectivities—much more than the universal conceptions of Catholicism.

Interestingly enough these tendencies have found their fullest expression in the United States where there has developed a distinct civilization or collectivity, based on political ideology derived from religious-Protestant roots, a rather unique event in the history of mankind—the significance of which seems to have struck Weber during his visit to the United States.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# THE JEWISH HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF COMPARATIVE UNIVERSAL HISTORY\*

## INTRODUCTION

### I

The starting point of my analysis of the Jewish historical experience in the framework of comparative universal history is a critical analysis of Max Weber's analysis of Jewish Civilization, focusing on a very strong contradiction in Weber's analysis of Jewish Civilization.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand Ancient Jewish Civilization, Ancient Judaism are analyzed by him as one of the Great Religions—one, to use a later expression coined by Karl Jaspers, of the "Axial Civilizations"—those religions or civilizations which have revolutionized the history of mankind.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand the subsequent, post-second-Temple exilic Jewish historical experience is portrayed by him as that of "pariah" people—a people basically outside the frame of active history—a connotation to some extent similar to, although certainly not identical with, Toynbee's conception of Jewish civilization as a "fossilized" one,<sup>3</sup> and certainly not imbued with Toynbee's rather strong, even if often subdued, antisemitic connotations.

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\* Earlier versions of part of this paper have been presented as the Thyssen lecture at the Simon Dubnov Institute, Leipzig; and at the meeting honoring Jacob Katz's 90th birthday in December 1994 in Jerusalem. I am indebted to Haim Soloveitchik, I. Twersky, B.Z. Kedar and David Schulman for comments on earlier drafts; and to Ron Margolin for important editorial suggestions and help.

<sup>1</sup> For an earlier examination of Weber's analysis of Ancient Judaism see S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Format of Jewish History: Some Reflections on Weber's 'Ancient Judaism,'" *Modern Judaism* 1 (1981), 54–73, pp. 217–234; and also Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, "Max Weber's Antikens Judentum und der Charakter der Jüdischer Zivilisation," in Wolfgang Schluchter (ed.), *Max Weber's Studie über das antike Judentum Interpretation und Kritik*, Frankfurt 1981, pp. 134–185.

<sup>2</sup> Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism*, Glencoe, Ill., 1952, and the articles in W. Schluchter, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Arnold Joseph Toynbee, *A Study of History*, New York, 1947. In a later shortened edition, Toynbee has reformulated the nature of Jewish existence in Diaspora. On this version see his "Existence in Diaspora" in *A Study of History*, New edition reviewed and edited by the author and Jane Caplan, London 1972.

According to such views, the crux of this “fossilization” was the emergence and hegemony of the “Oral Law” (Torah Shebealpeh) characterized by increased emphasis on legal-ritual prescriptions based on the exegesis, study and continuous elaboration of texts, and on communal prayer as the focus of Jewish religion and tradition, and on continual, seemingly technical interpretation thereof. At the same time the view of the Jews as a “pariah” people was supported by observing the transformation of the political and universalistic components of Jewish collective consciousness and Jewish collective life which developed in the period of the predominance of the Halakha, especially of the seeming “bracketing out” of collective Jewish active participation in the general political arena.<sup>4</sup>

Two aspects of Jewish exilic, medieval historical experience have been identified, according to these approaches, to support such a restricted view of “medieval” Jewish civilization. One is the seeming almost total absence, in that historical experience, of the strong sectarian and heterodox movements—one of the hallmarks of Axial civilizations—and indeed also of the early Israelite civilization. The second is the bracketing out of the political dimension from the communal life and consciousness of the Jewish people—manifest also in their historical passivity, of non-participation in the historical arenas of their host civilizations.

While naturally Jewish historiography did not accept these definitions, yet it accepted, even if implicitly, the emergence of the great discontinuity, almost a rift, between the First and Second Temple periods and the later medieval ones, without being fully able to analyse the nature of the continuity between these periods. The fact that this historiography veered between the definition of Judaism as a religion, a “spiritual” or a national entity—terms derived from modern historiographical discourse, and at the same time emphasized very much the stories of persecution, expulsion, martyrdom—gave indeed rise to a rather restricted view of the medieval Jewish historical experience.

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<sup>4</sup> On these visions see Arnold Joseph Toynbee, “Existence in Diaspora” in *A Study of History*: New edition reviewed and edited by the author and Jane Caplan, op. cit.; Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism*, op. cit.

THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF THE MOLD OF HALAKHAH—  
THE CIVILIZATIONAL CONTEXT OF JEWISH HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE

II

In the following pages I shall examine these assumptions and shall attempt to indicate how such an examination bears on some of the major characteristics of Jewish civilization and on Weber's analysis thereof.

Does a close analysis of Jewish life in the long medieval period support the view that these characteristics—the concentration of most cultural activities in the legal-ritual arena, and the cultural self-closure of Jews in their communities—exhaust the Jewish medieval historical experience, and does it justify the view of Jews or rather of Jewish medieval civilization as a civilization within which there is no place for great cultural and institutional creativity, or for any sectarian heterodox or antinomian tendencies?

Here it might be worthwhile to examine in greater detail some of the central aspects and the historical context of the crystallization of the halakhic rabbinical mold, the mold of the *tora shebe'alpeh* (Oral Law), and its assuming hegemony in Jewish communities, as well as some of the central aspects thereof. Of central importance for our analysis is the fact that this mold developed within the broader framework of the transformations—cultural, ideological, as well as institutional—of Second Temple Jewish civilization which in turn built on the earlier “Israelite” foundations of the First Temple but also greatly changed them and what went beyond them.<sup>5</sup>

The ancient Israelite and early Jewish collective experience bore some of the most salient characteristics of the so called “Great Religions” or “Axial” Civilizations.<sup>6</sup> It entailed the promulgation of a transcendental vision which called for a reconstruction of the world, of communal life, and the structure of the family. Like other Axial civilizations, the ancient Israelite and above all the Jewish civilization developed some distinct characteristics of its own. First, a very strong emphasis developed on the covenantal, semicontractual relationship

<sup>5</sup> See Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *Jewish Civilization: the Jewish Historical Experience in a Comparative Perspective*, Albany 1992, ch. III.

<sup>6</sup> Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*, Albany 1986.

between God and the tribes of Israel, the people of Israel. The covenant with God was seen as the central focus of the tribal confederation, of the process of forging the Israelite tribes into a distinct nation as God's chosen people.

The focus on the special, distinct way in which this collectivity, this—to use a modern, not entirely appropriate, term—nation, was constituted was the promulgation of a rather unusual combination of communal and cultic law and calendric prescriptions, religious and ethical commandments together with civil laws, with a very strong emphasis on social legislation—like the laws of the Sabbath and of the Sabbatical year, in which all debts are cancelled. These laws were given a religious and ethical connotation, giving rise to what David Weiss Halivni called “justified law”.<sup>7</sup> The promulgation of these visions, cultural themes and formations was combined in the ancient Israelite and in the later Jewish civilization with the construction of a distinctly “national” (or “ethnic”) political community or collectivity, which entailed the concomitant interweaving of universalistic and particularistic orientations and of continuous tensions between them, in the definition of this collectivity.

This vision was promulgated by various distinct, autonomous, cultural groups or elites such as—during the period of the First Temple—the priests, Levites, and perhaps above all the prophets. These different groups did not merely claim to have their own distinct, separate domains; they also aimed to participate in the common political, legislative, and cultic frameworks and to promulgate different interpretations of the common visions. The conflicts and tensions that arose among these elites and sub-elites, reflected not only different interests or differences with respect to varied technical details of cults or of law, but also distinctive interpretations of the tradition and distinctive emphases on its cultic, legal, and ethical components. These groups competed for acceptance as the representatives of the higher authority to which rulers and community were accountable. Such claims were rooted in a combination of older tribal tradition and of the covenantal ideology which emphasized that all members of the community were partners to the covenant with God.<sup>8</sup> Between these

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<sup>7</sup> David Weiss-Halivni, *Midrash, Mishnah, and Gemarah*, Cambridge, Mass. 1986.

<sup>8</sup> Stuart A. Cohen, *The Three Crowns: Structures of Communal Politics in Early Rabbinic Jewry*, Cambridge 1990.

groups, as in all the other Axial civilizations, there developed continuous struggles and confrontations—as well as cooperation—which bore potentialities for the later development of sectarianism.<sup>9</sup>

### III

These basic characteristics of the ancient Israelite civilization became greatly transformed with the emergence, within the Jewish community in Eretz Israel during the Second Temple period, of several new cultural or ideological orientations, and new patterns of communal life and leadership.

The most important among such cultural transformations was the weakening, but not the full obliteration, of the monopoly of access to some of the attributes of holiness, sacrality and sacredness held by priests and sometimes kings, and, paradoxically, also by more individual and charismatic elements such as the prophets. The central sacred arena became more and more accessible to all members of the community. There developed a concomitant increased emphasis on a new type of communal cohesion, based on the conception of “holy community”, as a constituent component of the collective religious-political identity.<sup>10</sup>

Concomitantly a more diversified scope of political-religious leadership developed, creating the basis for more intensive communal conflicts. New, often competing, criteria of leadership and elite status were articulated. The channels of mobility into the upper religious and civic positions and political leadership were increasingly opened to all members of the community—though this was probably more true in the period after the destruction of the Second Temple, rather than before. Closely related to this, the idea of the accountability of the rulers to a higher law became more fully crystallized, with fierce competition among the different elite groups as to which was the true representative of this higher law.<sup>11</sup> But at the same time tensions developed between the strong elitist orientation based on the study of the law, and the broader populist base that

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<sup>9</sup> Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Civilizations*, op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Yitzhak Fritz Baer, “Mekhkharim ve-Massot be-Toldot ‘Am Israel’” (Studies in the History of the Jewish People), Jerusalem 1985, part 2.

<sup>11</sup> Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *Jewish Civilizations: The Jewish Historical Experience in a Comparative Perspective*, op. cit.

emphasized prayer, observance of rules and membership in the holy community. Concomitantly among these various groups new themes were promulgated: philosophical, mystical as well as apocalyptic or which were to no small degree connected with the encounter with other civilizations, but often built on later internal traditions.<sup>12</sup>

Many of these new themes were promulgated by a new type of cultural and political elite—the scribes (*sofrim*), the members of the Great Assembly, and the leaders of a host of religious-political movements and sects, the best known of which were the various groups that identified themselves, or were identified by others, as the Pharisees.

All these new elite groups shared some of the characteristics of many of the elites of the First Temple period, especially their relative symbolic and organizational autonomy and the strong interweaving of political and religious orientations. But they differed, as indicated already above, from the elite groups of the earlier periods, as well as from the priestly families of their own period, in the relative weakness among them of both ascriptive (priestly) and individual-charismatic (“prophetic”) components.

Another crucial development in this period was the appearance of multiple diasporas as a permanent feature of the Jewish experience, giving rise, to use S. Talmon’s expression, to a “multicentric” situation.<sup>13</sup> This added a new dimension to the heterogeneity of the structural elements in Jewish life and the volatility of the geographical or geopolitical situation of the Jewish people, which became even more pronounced with the final disappearance of Jewish political independence and the growing ideological identification of dispersion with Exile.

#### IV

It was in close relation to these orientations and themes that there crystallized various institutional molds, including the incipient mold of the Oral Law. The multiple intellectual-institutional molds that

<sup>12</sup> On the importance of apocalyptic and themes in the Jewish tradition see Gedaliahu A.G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology*, Leiden 1984; and Ithamar Gruenwald, ‘Scripture and Culture—A Case Study, Apocalypticism as Cultural Identity: Past and Present’, Adele Yarbo Cillins (ed.), *The Bible and Culture: Festschrift for Professor H.D. Betz*, Atlanta 1998 (in print).

<sup>13</sup> Shmaryahu Talmon (ed.), *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, Sheffield 1991; idem, ‘Exil und Ruckkehr in der Ideenwelt des Alten Testaments’, in R. Moses (ed.), *Exil, Diaspora, Ruckkehr*, Dusseldorf 1978, pp. 43–47.

crystallized within Jewish society throughout the period of the Second Commonwealth entailed developments, which have indeed been fully recognized in Jewish and general historiography of proto-sectarian or sectarian tendencies—focused around different interpretations of the basic components and orientations of the continually crystallizing Jewish civilization.

The groups or sects which developed in this period shared an emphasis on the combination of the basic components of this civilizational vision—of civil, communal and cultic law and calendric prescriptions, religious and ethical commandments, together with a very strong emphasis on social legislation, and prescription of different “religious” practices; but they differed greatly with respect to the relative emphasis on these components and their interpretation. They all promulgated different cultural themes—philosophical, mystical and the like, many of which developed out of the interaction with other—especially Persian and Hellenistic—civilizations, and different definitions of Jewish collectivity and collective identity in relation to other societies and civilizations.<sup>14</sup>

A very central component of the basic orientations of these different groups, movements or sects was indeed the relation of the Jewish collectivity to other civilizations, and they all promulgated different visions of the relations between the particularistic and universalistic components of this consciousness and of different definitions of the specificity of Jewish collectivity. The tension between these different components of Jewish identity, especially the nature of its relations to other civilizations, has become more sharply accentuated—at least since the return from Babylon—with the encounter with Hellenism. Thus, for instance, as Shaye Cohen has shown, that it was indeed in the period of the Second Temple out of the encounter with Hellenism, above all in the Maccabean period, that the dual nature of Jewish identity emerged as a traditional community even if with specific relations to other communities, and as a way of life (or in our terms as a civilization).<sup>15</sup> Since then the concern with the rela-

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<sup>14</sup> Victor Avigdor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, Philadelphia 1959; see also: Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, Philadelphia 1974; and the classical work of Elias J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age*, Cambridge, Mass. 1988.

<sup>15</sup> Shaye D. Cohen, “Religion, Ethnicity and ‘Hellenism’ in the Emergence of Jewish identity in Maccabean Palestine”, in P. Bilde, T. Engberg-Pedersen, L. Hannestad & J. Zahle (eds.) *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, Aarhus 1990, pp. 204–223.



tions to other civilizations has been a basic concern of Jewish groups and sects—and very often a bone of contention between them.

All these tendencies and controversies were not purely of an “intellectual” or “academic” nature. They were promulgated and reinforced by the new types of leadership that developed within the framework of Jewish communal institutions and networks. But whatever the differences between them, these groups, with the possible exception of some of the “scroll” sects, did not exist in separate enclaves, but shared common social and cultural frameworks—even if they differed with respect to the relative centrality of the symbolism of the Temple or the Torah.<sup>16</sup>

## V

Contrary, however, to the implications of later literature, these sects and sectarian tendencies cannot be fully described as heterodoxies, as in the period of the Second Temple there did not develop any clear hegemonic orthodoxy.

During the first two or three centuries after the destruction of the Second Temple, many sects and groups continued to be conspicuous in Judea and Galilee, in the various diasporas, and in the desert in the form of various Samaritan or Hagarist groups. Some of the former became closely connected to a new and powerful universal civilization: Islam.<sup>17</sup> These sects, prominent among them the Pharisees, the Sadducean, the several “scroll” sects, various groups in the multiple diasporas, and, in the first centuries of the Christian era, various Jewish-Christian groups,<sup>18</sup> were in this period vying for such hegemony, or at least for autonomy in construction of their distinctive spaces.

In parallel with these developments a marked change took place in the Jewish social and institutional organizations—there took place a shift to communal organizations, rabbinical and communal courts and centers of learning—and in the contacts and economic relations among them. But despite the far-reaching changes that occurred after the destruction of the Second Temple, a striking continuity or at least similarity, and even intensification in characteristics can be

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<sup>16</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, *Jewish Civilization*, op. cit.; and Seth Schwartz, “Language, Power and Identity in Ancient Palestine”, *Past and Present* 148 (1995), pp. 3–47.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Allan Cook and Patricia Crone, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge 1977. This view has not been accepted by all students of early Islam.

<sup>18</sup> David Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, Jerusalem 1988.

identified in the new types of leadership in relation to the old one, especially in their relative autonomy and the continual competition between them.

The competition between these groups and sects (who were still related by their common origin in Jewish civilization) and the claims of each of them to be the true bearer of this civilization, was often quite bitter and intense. From this competition the predominance of rabbinical Judaism gradually emerged—a predominance that would continue up to the end of the “medieval” and the beginning of the modern period.

It took a relatively long time—until the fifth or sixth century of the Christian era—for this orthodoxy to become fully institutionalized. But even when this mold was crystallized, many of the sects and sectarian orientations were not obliterated; they were basically, as it were, forced underground into the margins of Jewish society or the interstices between the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic civilizations. Moreover, the different themes promulgated by these groups were never fully subdued, and their influence persisted even after the crystallization of this mold, the mold of the Halakhah. The essence, the central focus of this mold was indeed the seemingly total supremacy of the Halakhah, of the Oral Law, its exposition, study and interpretation as the major arena of the implementation of the distinct Jewish transcendental vision, of the covenant between God and the Jewish people, and the major regulator of all aspects of Jewish life.

## VI

It was these basic characteristics of this mold which served the basis for its designation as a “fossilized civilization” and “pariah” people, and some of the characteristics of this mold seemingly could support such a view. This mold was indeed characterized by an increased emphasis on legal-ritual prescriptions based on the exegesis, study and continuous elaboration of texts, and on communal prayer as the focus of Jewish religion and tradition, and on continual, seemingly technical interpretation thereof. Interpretation itself was based on an increasing systematization of the legal-ritual precepts, on the rich literature of commentaries on the Bible, Mishna and Talmud, and the widespread “ethical” (*Musar*) literature.<sup>19</sup> It was this literature which

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<sup>19</sup> Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, Jerusalem 1975; idem,

epitomized the hegemony of the halakha aimed to regulate most aspects of the Jews' daily life.

At the same time there took indeed place a far-reaching transformation of the political and universalistic components of Jewish collective consciousness and Jewish collective life which developed in the period of the predominance of the Halakha, especially the seeming "bracketing out" of Jewish active participation in the general political arena, and the weakening of most institutional derivatives of the more universalistic orientations prevalent in earlier periods of Jewish history.<sup>20</sup>

Their involvement in the international political arena, so dominant during the Second Temple period, seemingly disappeared almost entirely. The fact of dispersion and political subjugation made such involvement difficult. In terms of the prevalent ideological interpretation by most of the promulgators of the Halakhah, life in the Galut was seen in principle in many ways as a negative or problematic existence, even if in practice it constituted of course the arena of Jewish communal and cultural activities. The Jewish communities in the medieval world were seen, or saw themselves, as if they were outside the mainstream of contemporary history, engaged only in concrete negotiations with the powers-that-be to further their communal interests, but not participating in the construction of the mainstream of this history.

Most of the universalistic themes of Jewish civilization that developed in this period were seemingly only "intellectual," with little—if any—application to the institutional arenas of the broader societies in which they lived—and only to a very limited extent to their institutions. Truly enough, their basic attitude to the mundane world—to economic life and communal organization—remained positive. But these arenas were not seen as those in which the tenets of the Jewish civilization could or should be implemented. The only institutions that were constructed according to the basic tenets of the Jewish cul-

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*Baalei ha-Tosafot: Toldoteihem, Chibureihem ve-Shitatam*, (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1968 [Baalei Hatosafot: History, Composition, and Methods]; Isadore Twersky, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides*, New Haven 1980.

<sup>20</sup> Aviezer Ravitzky, "To the Utmost Human Capacity—Maimonides in the Days of the Messiah" in Joel L. Kraemer (ed.), *Perspectives on Maimonides*, Oxford 1991; Yehuda Eben-Shmuel, *Moises Ben Maimon 1204–1135, Sefer Moreh Ha-Nevochim* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1935.

tural vision and tradition were those of learning, ritual observance and prayer, and communal organization.<sup>21</sup> It was within this mold that the Halakhah emerged as the major arena of the implementation of this vision and seemingly as the main focus of cultural creativity in medieval exilic Judaism, in which—by implication—there would be no place for the development of antinomian heterodoxies and potentialities.

SECTARIANISM AND HETERODOXY AT THE BEGINNING AND TOWARD THE END OF THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE MOLD OF HALAKHAH; THE POTENTIAL CHALLENGES TO THE MOLD OF HALAKHAH IN THE PERIOD OF ITS HEGEMONY; INTERNAL AND INTERCIVILIZATIONAL DIMENSIONS

VII

And yet a closer look at the crystallization and development of the mold of the Halakhah presents a rather different, more complex picture than the one implied in the designation of this mold and of Jewish medieval civilization as a fossilized one, and the Jewish people as a pariah people. A closer examination of this mold indicates first that the development and hegemony of halakhic Judaism cannot be understood except as a continuation, even if dialectical, of the Jewish civilization as it started to develop in the period of the First Temple and crystallized in a more distinct intercivilizational mode in the period of the Second Temple. Second is the fact that this mold emerged not as “natural” development, but through continual struggles between different groups and tendencies, which had strong roots in the preceding period. In close relation to this fact, that many of the sectarian orientations which were so strong in the period of the crystallization of this mold were never, and many of the themes that were predominant in the preceding were not, fully obliterated. Their influence persisted even after the crystallization of this mold and out of them there could develop at least potential challenges to this mold and to its central assumption about the supremacy of the Halakhah.

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<sup>21</sup> Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, New York 1991.

## VIII

In order to understand the nature of such potential challenges to the mold of Halakhah that persisted, even if often in muted ways, throughout the medieval period, it might be worthwhile to look first of all at those obviously heterodox groups which crystallized at the very beginning of the full crystallization of this mold and towards the end of its hegemony, namely the Karaites on the one hand and the Marranos—and of course later the Sabbatean movement—on the other.<sup>22</sup>

In both cases it was the principled negation in principle of the hegemony and validity of the very central core of this mold of the Halakhah that constituted the core of their respective heterodoxies, and in both cases such negation was connected with a strong combination of “religious” themes together with different emphases on the definition of Jewish collective identity, its relations to other civilizations and perhaps, above all, its political component.

The focus of the Karaite vision was the negation in principle of the Oral Law in name of a “realistic” as against “nominalistic” view of it. The Karaites often saw themselves as continually referring back to Sadducean and sectarian Halakhah—that whatever the exact provenance of the consciousness of such continuity. They did at the same time combine religious with intercivilizational themes, with a distinct interpretation of Jewish collective identity.

Thus indeed at least some of the Karaites espoused a strong political orientation and negation of exilic existence, as indicated in their attitude to Eretz Israel and to *galut*.<sup>23</sup> Many of them were also engaged in the reformulation of specific cultural themes, above all in a philosophical “rationalistic” direction, very much under the impact of intercivilizational relations.

The Karaite heterodoxy emerged to become of central importance in the life of Jewish communities, especially, but not only, in the

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<sup>22</sup> On the Karaites see Daniel R. Schwartz, “Law and Truth: On Qumran-Sadducean and Rabbinic Views of Law,” *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty years of Research* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1992, pp. 229–240. On relevant aspects of the Karaite Halacha see also: Yoram Erder, “Mercaziuta shel Eretz Israel beHugei Ha-Karaut Ha-Kduma le-Or Hilchotav shel Mishwaya Al’Aukbari” (The Centrality of Eretz Israel among ancient Karaism according to Mishwaya Al’Aukbari), *Zion* 60 (1995), pp. 37–67; idem, “The First Date in ‘Megillat Ta’nit’ in the light of the Karaite Commentary on the Tabernacle Dedication”, *Jewish Quarterly Review* 82 (1992), pp. 263–283; idem, “The Karaites Sadducee Dilemma”, *Israel Oriental Studies* 14 (1994), pp. 195–215.

<sup>23</sup> See Yoram Erder, *The Centrality*, op. cit.

Middle East. Religious and philosophical confrontation between rabbinic and Karaite Judaism, and the continual interaction between the two camps in social and economic life, constituted a basic fact of Jewish history for many centuries. Rabbinic Judaism ultimately won, but the confrontation with the Karaites was not an easy one. Moreover, the fact that, despite all the fierce controversies, social and religious contacts between them, including intermarriage, continued—even while it constituted a continuous focus of debate and of rabbinic responsa—hints at the possibility of some common Jewish identity beyond the boundaries of the halakhah.

A rather similar—even if naturally radically different in detail—combination of reexamination of the place of the Oral Law, the bases of its legitimacy, in connection with broader cultural themes and possible redefinition of political and collective Jewish identity, was to reappear, albeit in a new guise, with the beginning of the disintegration of the halakhic hegemony—among some groups of returned Marranos that retained a strong Jewish identity to one degree or another. Among these groups, especially in the Low Countries, heterodox tendencies developed which challenged the hegemony of the halakhah and promulgated various attempts at a new non-halakhic, potentially even secular, definition of Jewish identity.

It is of interest that some of the Marranos looked to the Karaites as a possible model of non-halakhic, “authentic biblical” Judaism, and attempted to establish contacts with Karaite sages in Eastern Europe. Although their knowledge of the Karaites was mostly based on Protestant writings, the very reference to them attests to the fact that at least among some Jewish communities an awareness existed of the Karaite “heresy.”<sup>24</sup>

Very strong antinomian, potentially even fully heterodox, attitudes, even if they did not entail a secular definition of the Jewish collectivity, developed later on in the Sabbatean and Frankist movements. Later on, the problem of the primacy and predominance of the Halakhah in relation to the constitution of Jewish collectivity also constituted the central focus of the various reform movements in modern Judaism—and in a powerful but different way in Hasidism. But such heterodox tendencies were not limited to these “dramatic” cases. They were simmering throughout the Middle Ages among many groups of Kabbalists, mystics and philosophers.

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<sup>24</sup> Y. Kaplan, “‘Karaites’ in Early Eighteenth-Century Amsterdam”, *op. cit.*

## IX

What was the nature of the potential antinomian, sectarian or heterodox tendencies most fully indeed visible among the Karaites and the Marranos, and later in the Sabbatean movements, but simmering also in many groups throughout the long medieval period? It was not the standing of the Halakhah itself as the major regulator of Jewish life that constituted the potential object of these tendencies. It was rather the assumption which was at the core of the hegemony of the Halakhah that the Halakhah, constituted the major or only way to implement God's vision for Israel, that served as the starting point of such antinomian and heterodox potentialities and tendencies, which could be—and were—promulgated by various intellectuals—kabbalists, mystics, ascetics, or philosophers.

It is true that the Halakhah, in contrast for instance to the Islamic legal frameworks, has been very open, not only in fact but also de jure, emphasizing strongly the autonomy of new interpretation. But however open it was in comparison with other civilizations, in the eyes of Halakhists this discourse was internally self-regulating, and did not need any legitimation beyond itself.

Although the groups which promulgated mystical, ascetical, kabbalistic, philosophical or proto-scientific thinking, did not usually challenge the prescriptive dimension of the Halakhah, and the legitimacy of study and prayer as the major arena of implementation of the specific Jewish vision, many of them did not always fully accept its internal self-legitimacy, and above all the vision that it constituted the major, possibly exclusive arena of the implementation of God's vision for the Jews as His Chosen People. Moreover, beyond this questioning lurked a much more radical possibility, namely, that the Halakhah itself may at times be superseded as the major arena of the implementation of God's vision for the Jewish people by other types of cultural creativity.

One of the most important indications or illustrations of such antinomian or heterodox potentialities can be found in the field of the Kabbalah. As Jacob Katz has shown in a series of incisive articles,<sup>25</sup> it is possible to distinguish between two types of scholars who

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<sup>25</sup> Jacob Katz, "Halakha ve-Kabbala ke-Nosei Limud Mitcharim" in idem, *Halakha ve-Kabbalah* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1984, pp. 70–101 [Halakha and Kabala as competitive fields of study]; and idem, "The Rule of the Traditional Halakha de Facto and de Jure," *ibid.*, pp. 237–255.

engaged in kabbalistic studies and possibly also practices. One was those scholars who saw the halakhah as the major arena of appropriate study, and for whom kabbalistic meditations and practices were but supplementary to it. There were, however, others who saw the study of kabbalah and the engagement in kabbalistic practices as epitomizing the proper way to implement Israel's mission.<sup>26</sup>

The same was, in principle, true of the study of philosophy which could be viewed as even more dangerous to the bearers of the halakhah. Thus the many injunctions against studying philosophy or any other alien wisdom by the young who have not yet immersed themselves in the study of the Talmud and commentaries, and the limitations placed on the time that could be devoted to such studies.

## X

Such heterodox or antinomian attitudes to the other non-halakhic arenas of study or behavior often referred to concepts that were central in Jewish religious discourse. One such concept was that of the "hidden" or "true" Torah, or the secrets of the law, given to Moses side by side with the "open" revealed law, the Halakhah.<sup>27</sup> Another very important theme in this context was that of the "reasons" or "justifications" of the prescriptions (*ta'amei ha-mitzvot*).<sup>28</sup>

These concepts were imbued with powerful antinomian potentialities. They implied—or could be interpreted as implying—that the revealed Torah with its injunctions and prescriptions was in some sense secondary, even if legitimate in its own contexts, and that "behind" it there existed the "true" or hidden Torah which could be revealed only to special people—usually members of some sects, or in more propitious circumstances or times possibly in the messianic era. This hidden or "real" Torah could be seen as the true manifestation of God's vision for Israel which may, could, or should in appropriate circumstances supersede the revealed Torah. This

<sup>26</sup> See also Moshe Idel, *Kabbala: New Perspectives*, New Haven 1988.

<sup>27</sup> Rivka Schatz Uffenheimer, "Ha-Kabala—Masoret o Hidush (diun Histori Ve-Hashlachotav)" (Hebrew), in Michal Oron & Amos Goldreich (eds.) *Masvot*, Jerusalem 1984 [Ha-Kabala Tradition or Renovation: Historical discussion and its consequences].

<sup>28</sup> Isadore Twersky, *Studies in Jewish Law and Philosophy*, New York 1982; idem, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides*, op. cit.; idem, *A Maimonides Reader* op. cit.; idem, *Studies in Maimonides*, op. cit.; Amos Funkenstein, "Maimonides: Political Theory and realistic Messianism" op. cit. For an earlier discussion, see: Haim Yehuda Roth, *Al Taamei Hamitzvot*, Ahad Haam Lecture, Jerusalem 1933.



concept could indeed entail a strong antinomian attitude to temporal, historical process. It could entail the possibility that while the revealed Torah is indeed binding in the present diasporic existence it may be supersede with the coming of the Messiah—when the hidden Torah will supersede the revealed one.

Similarly, the very “need” as it were to justify the major prescriptions could lead to attempts to find such justifications beyond the vision of the Halakhah as the direct, only command of God to the Jewish people.

## XI

These challenges to the Halakhah were not just the technical ritual ones, nor did they constitute just a “simple” weakening of the hold of tradition. These challenges to the mold of the Halakhah were closely connected to the promulgation of the major cultural and civilizational themes which constituted foci of the self-definition of the Jewish community and of its intercivilizational relations which developed within the fold of the Halakhic Judaism, but with very strong roots in the preceding periods. These themes entailed very strong intercivilizational dimensions, which were closely interwoven with the major cultural themes promulgated in the preceding periods, and they were fraught with many internal tensions.

The most important of such themes, the kernels of which could be discerned to some extent during the Second Temple period and became more fully articulated and incorporated into the Jewish tradition, were the metaphysical and ideological evaluation of Eretz Israel, the ideology of *galut* and Eretz Israel, the fuller articulation of messianic visions, and of the solidarity of the Jewish people.

Dispersion was not unique to the Jews—many peoples in antiquity and later on experienced it—although its scope and continuity probably were. What was unique was the tendency to conflate dispersion with Exile, and to endow the combined experience of dispersion and Exile with a strong metaphysical and religious negative evaluation of *galut*. Explaining the fact of *galut* became a major concern of many, if not most, Jewish philosophers and scholars, and a central concern of Jewish religious discourse.<sup>29</sup> In most cases *galut*

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<sup>29</sup> Jizchak Fritz Baer, *Galut*, Berlin 1936; New York 1947. See also the new French edition, Paris 2000, with a critical introduction by J.H. Yerushalmi.

was seen as basically negative, explained in terms of sin and punishment. Life in *galut* was defined as a partial, suspended existence, but at the same time it had to be nurtured in order to guarantee the survival of the Jewish people until the Redemption.

This negative evaluation of *galut* focused on two closely connected but sometimes antithetical themes: the lack of political sovereignty (*shi'abud malkhuyot*), and the partial and distorted spiritual or religious existence that was seen as the negative metaphysical evaluation of *galut*. These two themes were often combined, but different scholars or groups emphasized them in different degrees.

The political and the metaphysical or redemptive themes were also central in the attitude toward Eretz Israel and in the articulation of messianic visions. The growing metaphysical relationship to Eretz Israel, in a sense, was the counterpoint to that toward *galut*, often enunciated by the same thinkers, but with some difference.<sup>30</sup> Eretz Israel was defined in both primordial and political terms—possibly more than it was so conceived in the period of the Second Temple; but—and this constituted a great innovation, even if built on earlier foundations—there was also a growing metaphysical relationship to it.

These attitudes toward *galut* and Eretz Israel converged around the third theme, which in a sense subsumed them: the messianic and eschatological one. Rooted in the early Second Temple period, possibly even in the period of Babylonian exile, it found expression in the various sects of the Second Temple period as well as in Christianity. The proper interpretation of the Messiah who would come at the end of Time became the central focus of controversy between Judaism and Christianity. The salience of this point was intensified by the loss of political independence, dispersion and expulsion, and the contours of the messianic vision became much more elaborated around the basic motifs of political and religious redemption.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Haim Hillel Ben Sasson, "Galut be Israel" (Diaspora in Israel), in *Rezev u-Temurah* (Continuity and Change), op. cit.; Moshe Hallamish & Aviezer Ravitzky (eds.), *Eretz Israel Behagut ha-Yehudit Bimei ha-Benaim* (The Land of Israel in Medieval Jewish Thought), Jerusalem 1991; Eliezer Shweid, *Moledet Ve-eretz Yeuda* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1979 [Motherland and Land of Destiny].

<sup>31</sup> Israel J. Yuval, "Ha Nekom vohaKlala, haDam vohaAlila—MeAlilot Kdoshim leAlilot Dam," (Hebrew), *Zion* 58 (1993), pp. 33–99 [Vengeance and the Curse, Blood and libel—from Martyrology to Blood Libels]; see also the various articles in *Zion* 59 (1994), N. 2–3, which take up critically various aspects of Yuval's thesis.

Another basic theme that became fully articulated during this long era, as a dialectic counterpart to the messianic hope, was that of martyrdom. *Kiddush Hashem*, the sanctification of God's name through martyrdom, dates back at least as far as Roman times. It reached full expression in the wake of persecution and pogroms, was legitimized in terms of the basic religious chasm between Christianity and Judaism when the Jews were often called upon to choose between apostasy and death, and became a permanent theme of Jewish collective consciousness, emphasizing the Jews' complete commitment to their tradition.<sup>32</sup>

A complementary theme was Jewish solidarity, *Ahavat Yisrael*, the love of Israel," the need to close ranks in the face of external threats. This theme, which emerged both at the ideological and at the more popular levels during the long period of *galut*, was closely related to various aspects of the constitution of the Kehillot and their regulation with respect to mutual help within each Kehillah, and between Kehillot. It is closely related to self-imposed segregation, to ambivalence and often intolerance toward other religions. In its extreme manifestation it could easily turn into intense xenophobia.<sup>33</sup> The very promulgation of these themes with their roots in the preceding periods entailed continual internal tensions—tensions which became intensified when these themes became interwoven with "older" but continually transformed ones—philosophical, mystical, pietist, and the like, and all of which were fraught with many antinomian and even heterodox potentialities with respect to the predominance of the Halakhah.

BEYOND "FOSSILIZED CIVILIZATION" AND "PARIAH PEOPLE"; THE  
INTERCIVILIZATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF MEDIEVAL JEWISH  
CIVILIZATION—THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ARENAS

XII

These tensions and dynamics generated continual cultural creativity belying Toynbee's designation of medieval Jewish civilization as a "fossilized" one. It is rather difficult to envisage why the host civi-

<sup>32</sup> On Kidush Hashem see *Encyclopedia Judaica*; Haim Hillel Ben Sasson, "Historical Aspects" Vol. 10, pp. 981–986; and Norman Lamm, "Kidush Hashem and Hilul Hashem", *ibid.*, pp. 977–981.

<sup>33</sup> Haim Hillel Ben Sasson, "The Middle Ages" in *A History of the Jewish People*, op. cit.

lizations—Christian and Muslim—would bother to maintain continual and highly ambivalent relations with a fossilized civilization, and above all to engage in a continual cultural debate with it.

But more important indeed, contrary to Toynbee's conception, Jews continuously participated in the cultural arenas and discourses of their host civilizations. The mere fact that there were important philosophers, mystics, and the like among the Jews in the Middle Ages is not the point. What is of crucial importance are three closely interrelated aspects of their activities.

First is the fact that the great philosophers—Sa'adiah Ga'on, Yehudah Halevi and many others, and above all Maimonides—were not isolated or marginal figures. Their activities, including their halakhic expositions, constituted an integral component of medieval Jewish cultural creativity.

Second, these activities and studies—sometimes the more ritual and legal ones as well—were not confined to the framework of the Jewish community, but were part of the general medieval cultural scene, sharing many of the common problematics of the three monotheistic civilizations. The philosophers, and to some degree the legal scholars, often wrote in Arabic; they had close relations with non-Jewish scholars, and often provided mutual reference points for one another. Indeed, the definition of what was specifically Jewish, Christian, or Muslim frequently emerged from the continual controversies among them.<sup>34</sup> Thus for instance, as Malachi Beit Arieh has shown, the Hebrew manuscripts which abounded in Europe and in Muslim countries in the Middle Ages contained many references to Western philosophy, Christian mysticism and the like, and Jewish philosophers and scholars were employed by some rulers, such as Frederic II, in Sicily.<sup>35</sup>

The third paradoxical but crucial fact in this context is that these controversies usually were not just academic exercises or polemics;

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<sup>34</sup> See on the general background: Amos Funkenstein, ch. 4, "Medieval Exegesis and Historical Consciousness," and ch. 6, "Polemics, Responses and Self-Reflection," in idem, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, op. cit., pp. 81–131 and 169–220, respectively; Alan Franklin Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World*, Cambridge, Ma. 1986; see also: Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and the Bible Criticism*, op. cit.; Alan Franklin Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World*, op. cit. See also: R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe 950–1250*, Oxford 1987.

<sup>35</sup> Malachi Beit-Arieh, "Hebrew manuscripts of East and West: Towards a Comparative Codicology, The Penuizi Lectures, 1992, London, The British Library, 1993.

they bore the hallmark of heated and intense intercivilizational or interreligious competition. Indeed, the exegesis and interpretations of biblical texts constituted the central aspect of this intercivilizational discourse.

### XIII

No less do these tensions and dynamics belie Weber's designation of the Jews as a pariah people. The term "pariah people" derives from the analysis of Indian society and refers to the untouchables beyond the caste system. But the analogy with the Indian situation is poor at best. In this context it should be emphasized, first, that the ritual segregation of the Jews was in many ways self-chosen and not just imposed by others—and indeed by being self-imposed could constitute a challenge to the host civilization. Second, the very existence of the disputations indicates that if the Jews were just a sort of low caste or non-caste, their host civilizations would not have needed to keep proving their superiority, nor have constantly attempted to convert them.

This misplaced analogy with India is part of a more general approach espoused by Weber, namely his view of the nature of the change in the basic characteristics of the Jewish historical experience after the rise of Christianity missed very crucial dimensions of the Jewish medieval historical experience. As we have seen, Weber stressed that after the period of the Second Temple the Jews became a purely religious, and not a political community, in contrast to Christianity's development into a dominant political, world religion. But this is an erroneous picture even if it contains, of course, kernels of truth.

The seeming bracketing out of the political dimensions or orientations by the bearers of the mold of the Halakhah did not abate the continual mutual intercivilizational confrontations and the importance of intercivilizational relations in its construction, attesting to the very intense creativity, heterogeneity, dynamics, and "openness" of this mold to the continuity of this period of Jewish historical experience with the earlier ones. Of crucial importance from the point of view of this analysis is the fact that the various tensions and dynamics analyzed above, with their potential heterodox and even antinomian tendencies, developed not only with respect to the internal dimensions of Jewish identity and culture. All these "internal" themes were indeed continually related to the problem of relations of the Jews to the other, monotheistic, civilizations.

The belief of the Jews in the universal significance of their religion did not abate, even if in fact they could no longer compete openly with other civilizations and had to invest most of their energies in safeguarding their own cultural-religious framework by maintaining a firm control of their way of life, through segregation from the host society and construction of relatively closed collective boundaries.

The bracketing out of active independent collective participation in the concrete international historical experience, and above all as we shall see in the "historia sacra" of their host civilizations by the bearers of the mold of the Halakhah did not entail—contrary to the suppositions of Toynbee and to some extent of Weber, and also unwittingly, mostly implicitly, of large parts of modern Jewish historiography—the giving up, in the "medieval" Jewish experience in the mold of the Halakhah, of the civilizational visions; of the claim to be a civilization of universal significance. Truly enough Jews could no longer realistically compete actively with other civilizations, although these civilizations continued to fear such competition.

Indeed even in these circumstances, the legitimacy which the Jews claimed for themselves, and which was also accepted, albeit in ambivalent or negative terms, by their host societies, was not only religious or "cultic." Indeed, throughout this long period of Halakhic predominance, the intercivilizational component—in relation above all to the two other monotheistic civilizations—continued to be central in the definition of Jewish collective identity. Christianity and Islam, "Axial" monotheistic religions with claims to universality, were attempting to construct civilizations that encompassed all those with whom they came into contact, including, of course, the Jews. Above all, Christianity, and in a somewhat milder version Islam as well, were historically related to the Jewish religion and people, to Jewish civilization. This historical—and in the case of Christianity highly ambivalent—relation was a basic constitutive point of their self-definition. The relations among the three monotheistic civilizations were defined in terms of common historical-religious origin, and the denial by the Christians—and to a lesser degree by the Muslims—of the legitimacy of Jewish non-acceptance of Christianity, or of Islam. At the same time each of these civilizations strongly emphasized those of its premises which differentiated it from the other two, as indications of its relative superiority. The history of the Kazarite-Jewish kingdom in the Crimean region is of very great interest here. However unclear the details of its history, the very fact that a pagan king chose to convert himself and his kingdom to Judaism, presumably

in order to avoid being embroiled in Christian-Muslim rivalry, attests to the fact that Judaism existed—or at least was conceived—as a potentially active actor on the intercivilizational scene.

These mutual intercivilizational attitudes were not purely intellectual or academic, although their promulgation constituted a very central concern of theologians and scholars, significantly enough also, perhaps especially, of those who were concerned with the interpretation of the Bible. These attitudes constituted central components in the self-definition and legitimation of these civilizations, and the ideological core of their interrelationships. Since the Jews were seen as a potential threat to the legitimacy of the hosts' own religion, a basic ambivalence to the Jews developed in both Christianity and Islam which went far beyond their attitude to other minorities. This added a new dimension to the political subjugation or dispersion of the Jews, which was seen, especially by the Christians, as evidence of the loss of their place as the "chosen people." Thus tense, hostile and ambivalent relations developed between the host societies and the "guest" Jewish communities—each trying to assert the basic legitimacy of its own civilization. The hostility found expression not only in pogroms, persecutions and expulsions, but also in ideological dimensions, as manifest, inter alia, in the frequent polemical debates between Christian priests and theologians and Jewish rabbis and theologians, in attempts at forced conversion, and in blood libels accusing Jews of killing Christian children and drinking their blood. All these were closely related to Jewish martyrology in sanctification of the Name (of God) (*kiddush Hashem*).

The consciousness of such challenging competition was present in many of the themes that developed within the Jewish community and bore the kernels of antinomianism with respect to the basic attitudes of most of the bearers of the Halakhic mold to political activity. For example, many of the messianic themes entailed specific orientations to the "host" civilization and often indicated the nature of ambivalence towards them. As the late Gershon S. Cohen has briefly indicated, and as has been taken up lately in great detail by Israel Yuval, there developed far-reaching different conceptions of redemption, especially of redemption through vengeance as against redemption through conversion<sup>36</sup>—conceptions which necessarily

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<sup>36</sup> Gershon D. Cohen, *Studies in the Variety of Rabbinic Cultures*, Philadelphia 1991, especially "Messianic Postures of Askenazim and Sepharadim"; Israel J. Yuval. "Ha

entailed deep-seated ambivalence, often hostility, to the host nations.

Such consciousness of the ambivalence, indeed potential hostility between the Jews and their host civilizations seems to have pervaded not only the more intellectual, messianic or mystic orientations but also, as for instance as Elliot Horwitz has shown, some of the more popular carnival-like festivals such as the Purim celebrations which were also perceived as expressions of such hostility by non-Jews.<sup>37</sup>

#### XIV

This analysis bears also very closely on the second question or problem raised by Weber's analysis—namely the extent of their active participation in the major, especially political arenas of their host civilizations. The usual view, interestingly and perhaps paradoxically espoused also by the modern Zionist ideology and to some extent also by Zionist historiographies, is that during the long medieval period the Jews were basically, by virtue of their "pariah" status, politically passive, being at most supplicants before the respective powers-that-be. According to the Zionist ideology it was only Zionism, the Zionist movement and later the State of Israel, that have "brought the Jews back into history," enabling the Jewish people to function again, for the first time since the Second Temple, to function as an autonomous political body, as a collectivity with political power, with the capacity for independent political action. The examination of this thesis is of course of great importance from the point of view of our analysis.

The theory that before their re-entry into history the Jews were merely passive objects in the major political arenas of their respective host societies is of course, valid to a certain extent. It is true that Jews as a minority within monotheistic cultures, were often viewed as problematic by their host societies, and were under constant threat of expulsion and persecution. In this respect they were indeed passive. Yet throughout the long period from late antiquity to the Middle Ages, Diaspora Jews fared no worse than many sectors of the Muslim and Christian world in which they lived—they

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Nekam vohaKlala, haDam vohaAlila", op. cit.; idem, "The Lord Will Take Vengeance, Vengeance for His Temple—Historia Sine Ira Et Studio" (Hebrew), *Zion* 59 (1994), pp. 351–414.

<sup>37</sup> Elliott Horowitz, "'And It Was Reversed': Jews and Their Enemies in the Festivities of Purim" (Hebrew), *Zion* 59 (1994), pp. 129–168.



fared better, in fact than some members of the peasantry and the bourgeoisie. Not only was the economic status of Jews generally better, but they were often active players in the game of politics both at home and across borders.

Indeed, a closer look at Jewish political organizations and activities throughout the Middle Ages—in Muslim and Christian lands alike—indicates that the Jews, whether collectively or as individual agents, were not limited to playing the part of “Court Jews” or petitioners but could take on important political roles, in the patrimonial settings of Southern France, or in such organizations as the Council of Four Lands (Vaad Arba Aratzot) in Poland or in the Council of the Communities of Lithuania.

They were albeit not top political players—kings or members of the high aristocracy—and they did not engage in military campaigns. But they were not always entirely passive either. For long periods of time they were allowed to play an important, even if limited, role in the corporate world of medieval Europe, or in the different communal politics of Muslim lands.

As Professors Baer and Beinart have shown, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal—seemingly a prime example of their passive fate—in fact bears witness to the part they played in the internal politics of these kingdoms.<sup>38</sup> Thus notwithstanding the picture normally painted of a Jewish minority under constant threat of expulsion and massacre, they could also play “Jewish” political or diplomatic games—as attested to by a letter found in the Geniza from Hasdai Ibn Shaprut, adviser to the Spanish king in the 10th century, to the Empress Helena, asking for her protection over the Jewish communities in Byzantium, and promising in return to protect the Christians in Muslim Spain.

Of special interest in this context are indeed, as mentioned above, the Khazars, one of the most enigmatic cases of medieval history. But whatever the solution to the mystery, the conversion of the Khazars and the existence of a Jewish Kingdom or culture bear witness to the existence of some awareness in medieval times of a potentially political dimension of Jewish existence.

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<sup>38</sup> Jizchak Fritz Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, Philadelphia 1966; Haim Beinart, *Trujillo: A Jewish community in Extremadura on the Eve of the Expulsion from Spain*, Jerusalem 1980; Haim Beinart, *Conversos on Trial: The Inquisition in Ciudad Real*, Jerusalem 1981.

Needless to say, such political activity could be, and often was, precarious; Jews were indeed often subject to persecutions and expulsions. But during periods when they were not—and these in qualitative terms, were probably the longest in the history of their respective countries, although there was, it is true, always some threat of persecution and expulsion—they could act not only as petitioners, depending on their relative numbers, their relations with rulers, their place in the economy and the like.

Thus indeed, as earlier Simon Dubnov and later and perhaps more emphatically as Baer and Momigliano<sup>39</sup> have indicated, and contrary to Max Weber's view of the Jews as a pariah people, Jewish identity throughout this long "medieval" period had a political dimension to it, often associated with a strong transcendental orientation. Dubnov has continually researched how throughout the exilic period, Jews developed political institutions and how political components were important in their collective consciousness. Even in this period Jews went on searching for ways to forge a cultural, symbolic, institutional framework that would enable them to maintain their political, religious and ethnic identity and sustain some of their claims to a universal validity. Communal arrangements and political institutions, whether in Babylon of the Gaonic era, or in Lithuania in the seventeenth century, were often perceived by Jews as an extension of Davidic rule—with Messianic overtones. This dimension was manifest in the emphasis placed on collective salvation and political redemption and in the definition, unique among a dispersed people, of the experience of Exile in metaphysical terms, combined with a metaphysical definition of the primordial relationship between the Land of Israel and the people of Israel.

And yet in one crucial sense the Jews were indeed excluded—and on the whole, with the significant partial exception of the Messianic movements, excluded themselves—from "history," not the mundane history which in those periods was not usually defined as history at all, but from "historia sacra": the eschatological history defined in terms of a Christian vision. They were excluded—and excluded themselves—from playing an active role in the eschatological historical

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<sup>39</sup> Arnaldo Dante Momigliano, "Some Remarks on Max Weber's Definition of Judaism as a Pariah Religion," *History and Theory* 19 (1970), pp. 313–318; Yizchak Fritz Baer, *Galut*, New York 1941; Simon M. Dubnov, *History of the Jews*, New York 1967–1977.

scenarios of world history as it was then conceived. The attempts of Messianic movements to break through such exclusion could bring about strong confrontations with their host societies and with the leadership of their own communities. This often led to their being “hemmed in” by their own leadership who suppressed their attempts at participation, at re-entering the sacred historical arena fearing the result of such attempts, as had been the case with the Sabbatean movement. But contrary to many sectarian and Gnostic conceptions, Augustine’s separation of the City of God from the City of Man meant that the Jews were sometimes allowed to participate in the affairs of the City of Man.

Thus indeed, Jews could no longer realistically compete actively with other civilizations, although these civilizations continued to fear such competition. But the tensions between the host monotheistic civilizations and Jewish communities throughout the medieval period were of continuous relevance for the construction of Jewish collective identity and collectivity which continued to harbor strong political orientations and components, and of crucial importance in the transformation of many of the older Jewish civilizational themes and the development of new ones. Moreover, and of special importance, from the point of view of our discussion, is, above all, the fact that the development of such themes also generated or intensified *potential* sectarian or heterodox orientations within the framework of Halakhic Jewish civilization.

## THE INTERNAL DYNAMICS OF MEDIEVAL JEWISH CIVILIZATION

### XV

The preceding analysis bears closely on the characteristics of medieval Jewish civilization—beyond “fossilized civilization” or “pariah people.” It is only if we take into account that the crystallization of the mold of Halakhah did not abate the concern with the definition of the Jewish collectivity and its intercivilizational relations; and that this concern gave rise to continual promulgation of multiple cultural themes which were crucial in the Jewish self-understanding—that we understand that there developed within the mold of the Halakhah, the possibility of the transformation of seemingly legal semi-technical disputes into antinomian and possibly even heterodox potentialities; the possibility that these disputes and controversies between all these

groups would be not only purely dry, legal ritual controversies—"just" various secondary interpretations of the dominant Halakhic mold—although many of them were indeed such secondary interpretations, focusing mainly on concrete technical details of halakhic legislation. But beyond many of the discussions around such legislation, focused as it was on the sphere of learning and ritual observance, there developed continuous tensions and struggles concerned with the problem of the legitimation of the Halakhah; with the possible questioning of the centrality of the study of Halakhah as the major way for the implementation of the Jewish transcendental vision. The recognition of this fact can be seen in many of the Halakhic proscriptions.

## XVI

All these tendencies and controversies were not purely of an "intellectual" or "academic" nature. As in former periods, they were reinforced by the new types of leadership that developed within the framework of Jewish communal institutions and networks. Despite the far-reaching changes that occurred after the destruction of the Second Temple, a striking continuity in characteristics can be identified in-between the new types of leadership and organizations and those which developed in the darker periods of Jewish history.

The major elite groups in most Jewish communities always comprised some combination of three elements: the stronger, wealthier oligarchic stratum; would-be popular political leaders; and the learned class of rabbis, scholars and mystics. They usually composed the ruling coalitions that controlled community life. The last of these elements, be they rabbis who exchanged responsa, mystics, kabbalists, or philosophers, tended to develop a degree of specialization and autonomy in supra-communal and even transnational networks. Between these different leadership groups there developed, as in the preceding periods, internal tensions and competition.

The tensions between these sectors were rooted in the fact that, despite all the changes, they all shared the basic beliefs and orientations of the Jewish civilization, particularly a strong commitment to the belief that all members of the community had access to the realm of the sacred.

It was the combination of these different types of leadership and modes of communal organization, with the promulgation of the various multiple cultural and religious themes and orientations that gave

rise, just as in the preceding periods of Jewish history, to an intense dynamic in Jewish communal life and patterns of cultural creativity, with strong sectarian or even heterodox potentialities, and with potentially strong political orientations.

## XVII

The attitudes of the bearers of the mold of Halakhah of the hegemonic cultural groups in Jewish societies to all these potentially antinomian themes and orientations were rather ambivalent. Among the carriers of the mold of the Halakhah there developed a double tendency with respect to these antinomian tendencies. On the one hand, as I. Twersky has shown in great detail in a series of incisive studies, there were those scholars who attempted to imbue the very study of Halakhah with some spiritual dimensions, to incorporate philosophical and mystical themes, attempting to create a united framework which would indeed contain all these components without, of course, giving up the predominance and basic autonomy and self-legitimation of the Halakhah.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, the bearers of halakhah were indeed suspicious of the potential religious antinomies inherent in these themes (for instance, the "spiritual," as distinct from political, dimensions of the messianic vision), and of their power to disrupt both the authority of the halakhah and the precarious existence of the dispersed Jewish communities. But at the same time they were not able to suppress or do away with them.

Between these tendencies continuous tensions developed. Very often those scholars who promulgated the first view could be seen by others as the very bearers of such antinomian tendencies. The fear of the potentially antinomian possibilities of these tendencies and orientations was fully recognized by them.

Thus for instance the famous talmudic ruling, strongly upheld by Maimonides, that there is no difference between the messianic and contemporary reality except *shi'abud malkhuyot*, that is, the lack of political independence was probably oriented against the more religious, spiritual, or redemptive interpretation of the messianic vision.

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<sup>40</sup> Isadore Twersky, "Introduction: Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century: Problems and Perspectives", in Bernard Dov Cooperman (ed.), *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge, Mass., 1983, pp. ix–xx; idem, "Talmudists, Philosophers, Kabbalists: The Quest for Spirituality in the Sixteenth Century", *ibid.*, pp. 431–459; idem, "Religion and Law," in S.D. Goitein (ed.), *Religion in a Religious Age*, Cambridge, Mass. 1974, pp. 69–83.

The very continual promulgation of this ruling attested to the tension between the “spiritual,” religious view and the more mundane, especially political, dimensions of the messianic orientation and also to the strong antinomian potentialities which contained a strong implicit challenge to the legitimation of the halakhah—which indeed became fully realized in the Sabbatean movement and its aftermath.<sup>41</sup>

To take another, less dramatic, illustration, some of the regulations about the extent of fasting permitted on Shabbat were not just technical legal injunctions but were oriented against potentially very strong, ascetic tendencies that were dominant in some sectors of Jewish society.<sup>42</sup>

Similar illustrations can be brought with respect to philosophical, mystical, and kabbalistic themes, as well as to attitudes to “science” and secular learning,<sup>43</sup> as well as with respect to themes more specifically related to the experience of life in dispersed communities in the Diaspora, in constant tensions with their “host” civilizations. Thus for instance the emphasis or “overemphasis” on martyrdom sometimes developed as a reaction against the sages who sanctified the preservation of life and tried to minimize the overt tensions with the host people—though of course not at the cost of apostasy. At the other pole of this discourse controversies developed about the extent to which the community or families should pay ransom for captured Jews—one of the major themes of Jewish solidarity.

Truly enough, whatever the strength of all these antinomian tendencies or potential they were indeed during most of this long “medieval” period contained or hemmed in within the broad framework of the Halakha. Most such heterodox tendencies were indeed very muted. It was indeed characteristic of the situation in medieval

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<sup>41</sup> Gershom Scholem, *Shabbatai Zevi, The Mystical Messiah, 1626–1676*, Princeton 1973; Aviezer Ravitzky, “to the Utmost Human Capacity”, op. cit.; Isadore Twersky, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides*, op. cit.; idem, *A Maimonides Reader*, New York 1972; idem, *Studies in Maimonides*, Cambridge Mass., 1990; Amos Funkenstein, “Maimonides: Political Theory and Realistic Messianism”, in idem, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, Berkeley 1993, pp. 131–154.

<sup>42</sup> Y.D. Gilat, “Fasting on the Sabbath” (Hebrew), in idem, *Studies in the Development of the Halakha*, Ramat Gan 1992, pp. 109–122.

<sup>43</sup> On the attitude to Science in the Medieval Jewish Culture see for instance: Gad Freudenthal, “Science in the Medieval Jewish Culture of Southern France”, \_\_\_\_\_; idem, “Les Sciences dans les Communautés Juives Médiévales de Provence: Leur Appropriation, Leur Role,” *Revue des Etudes Juives* 152 (1993), pp. 29–136; Amos Funkenstein, “The Threshold of Modernity,” (Chapter VI) in *Perceptions of Jewish History*, op. cit., pp. 220–256.

Jewish history that it was the Halakhah itself—the promulgation of Halakhic prescriptions, above all with respect to study and prayer—that constituted the major arena in which these potentially heterodox orientations were as it were worked out. These orientations became especially visible in their attempts to influence the Halakhic daily ritual or prescriptions with their own orientations—and were often opposed by the more orthodox bearers of the Halakhah.<sup>44</sup> Yet they were not able at the same time to suppress or do away with them. Accordingly rabbinical orthodoxy, without entirely denying any of these different orientations, always tried to keep them within the strict limits of the halakhic discourse and, on the whole, to subsume them as secondary elements within the framework of the halakhah. Although never obliterated, they were in principle denied symbolic and especially, organizational autonomy.

But such potential heterodox tendencies, however muted they were, did exist. Not only did they influence some dimensions of the halakhic legislation, but they represented important components of Jewish life, and were foci of cultural creativity and subterranean developments. It is indeed only this heterodox potential that can explain the development and characteristics not only of the different Marrano, Sabbatean, and Frankist movements, but also of some of the later movements of emancipation and assimilation that developed among the Jews in the late eighteenth century.

## XVIII

Several crucial factors assured the containment of all the heterodox potentials within the framework of rabbinic Judaism. One was the close internal cohesion of the Jewish communities, due to a combination of internal solidarity and the maintenance of basic cultural traditions. This solidarity was rooted in strong familial cohesion and was reinforced through the close interweaving of the different leadership elements. Second, many would-be apostates actually left the fold. Third, the fact of dispersion paradoxically helped to maintain the internal cohesion of the communities, preserve the boundaries of the faith, and keep many within the fold. The dispersion and the lack of a unified central authority provided multiple arenas for many

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<sup>44</sup> Jacob Katz, "The Rule of Traditional Halakha de Facto and de Jure," *op. cit.*

of the more autonomous and even semi-anarchic elements among the Jews.<sup>45</sup> The numerous contacts among the various communities and centers of learning also provided flexible common frameworks that allowed for some heterogeneity and different types of creativity, and which facilitated the hemming in of their varied potentially heterodox tendencies.

The same was probably true in the field of learning in its broadest sense and in the sphere of halakhah proper. Here, too, there was no single authority; different scholars and centers of learning jealously guarded the right of collegial and even individual interpretation and legislation within the common bounds of the accepted, yet constantly changing tradition. The decisions of one court were not necessarily binding on others, although they could serve as references and precedents. On the whole, in both communal and halakhic matters, a strong emphasis developed on the relative autonomy of different courts and scholars in matters of legal interpretation. Some of the controversy around Maimonides, the towering intellectual figure of medieval Jewry, focused not on his strong philosophical predilections and the concrete details of his halakhic interpretations and modes of codification, but on the possibility that he, and later his work, would attain some sort of monopoly in all these fields and bar further interpretation.

This plurality or pluralism could find its expression also at the very centre cores of the Halakhah—as manifest in the different Siddurim—Ashkenazi, Sephardi and variations within each of them, and the different legislations, Mizrach and Ma'arav, Sephardi and Ashkenazi, touching even on such central issues as polygamy vs. monogamy—the former upheld in the Sephardi and the latter in Ashkenazi communities. These variations—all of them legitimate, even if not always fully accepted in all the Kehillot—entailed the incorporation of different potentially heterodox—Kabbalist, mystic or poetist, and the like—themes, thus creating spaces in which these themes could find legitimate expression in the broad framework of the Halakhah.

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<sup>45</sup> Stuart A. Cohen, *The Three Crowns*, op. cit.



DECLINE OF THE HALAKHIC MOLD AND THE GROWING  
HETEROGENEITY OF JEWISH LIFE. DIFFERENT MODELS OF JEWISH  
REENTRY INTO HISTORY: ZIONISTS VERSUS THE ASSIMILATIONISTS,  
AUTONOMISTS, MARXIST AND THE ORTHODOXY

XIX

Attendant on the developments within Jewish communities, along with the Enlightenment and, above all, the French Revolution, the creation of the modern state, and the Emancipation of the Jews, Halakhic Judaism lost its hegemonic status. The movement called Orthodoxy, or neo-Orthodoxy, became one of many within the Jewish world, even if their leaders continually attempted to arrogate to their communities the older hegemonic status. Because of this, large sectors of the Orthodox community inclined towards a rather proto-fundamentalist, sectarian direction.

This radical change in the mode of Jewish political participation in history that took place in modern time was rooted in a change in the conception of the relations between mundane events and sacred history which characterized the hegemonic (as opposed to the many heterodox) sectors of Christian and Jewish medieval civilizations alike changed drastically in modern times—starting with the Reformation, Counter Reformation and the Enlightenment, and culminating in the Great Revolutions and above all in the institutionalization of the post-revolutionary regimes which developed in Europe from the eighteenth century on.

These Revolutions constituted the culmination of the sectarian, heterodox potentialities which developed in the Axial civilizations—especially those in which the political arena was seen as at least one implementation of their transcendental vision. Such transformation entailed the reversal—though ultimately in secular terms—of the hegemony of the Augustinian vision. It was a vision which promulgated the separation of the City of Man from the City of God, and negated attempts to implement heterodox sectarian visions of bring the City of God to the City of Man. The Great Revolutions can indeed be seen as the first or at least the most dramatic, and possibly the most successful attempts in the history of mankind to implement on a macro-social scale utopian visions with strong Gnostic components. It was Eric Voegelin's great, if overstated, insight that

the roots of the modern political program lie deep in the heterodox and Gnostic traditions of medieval Europe.<sup>46</sup>

The French Revolution transformed the historical self-concept of European nations; the essence of modern “sacred history” changed—the crux of which was a tendency to conflate mundane and sacred history. It was this change, this growing tendency to conflate the mundane and the sacred histories, which opened up the possibility and the challenge for Jews to participate in a history in which the mundane and eschatological dimensions merged.

The changes in the definition and premises of political communities; the new conceptions of citizenship attendant on the French Revolution and the institutionalization of “post-revolutionary” regimes opened up the gates of European society before the Jews and entailed first of all changes in the economic and professional life of the Jews and in the structure of their communities, and ultimately in the very construction of the collective boundaries of the Jewish collectivity.

Changes did indeed first of all develop in the internal structure of Jewish communities. Jews were not longer legally segregated in distinct communities that defined, according to the premises of the mold of the Halakhah, the basic boundaries of their collective life and the guidelines for the implementation of their civilizational vision. In terms of these internal organizations of Jewish life, these changes were most apparent in the official, juridical standing of Jewish communal organizations. When their traditional powers and jurisdiction were taken away, the symbolic rabbinical, Halakhic institutional mold, together with its premises, and its legal-ritual status as the hegemonic institutional and specific civilizational framework of the Jewish people, eroded, even disappeared in many places. The specific institutional features of the Jewish communities, above all their synagogues, organizations of mutual help, and to some degree the traditional institutions of learning, and even the new distinctly Jewish institutions, no longer constituted the central matrix of Jewish life, nor could they alone define its boundaries. The various Jewish communal organizations

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<sup>46</sup> Eric Voegelin, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, edited by John H. Hallowell, Durham 1975; idem, *The New Science of Politics*, Chicago 1952; idem, *Die Politischen Religionen*, Munich 1996; idem, *Das Volk Gottes*, Munich 1994; J. LeGoff, ed., *Heresies et Societes, Civilisations et societes*, Paris 1968; F. Heer, *The Intellectual History of Europe*, Garden City 1968.

that sprang up (many of them with new centralized patterns like the Board of Deputies of England and the Consistoire in France), and the new institutions of Jewish higher learning no longer encompassed the whole of the life of the Jews, except among the neo-Orthodox (and even among them, only partially). More and more their lives became structured according to modern premises and principles. It is true that, generally speaking, a large part of the Jewish population moved mostly in Jewish circles, but they were no longer defined in specifically Jewish terms nor were they bound to relatively closed communal frameworks. Specific Jewish patterns of life became increasingly secondary in their experience. Jews began entering into the central arenas of the societies in which they lived (as professionals, writers and journalists), and their visibility in these fields became pronounced, especially in Germany and Austria, to some degree in France and England, and later on and very forcefully in the United States. They also entered another arena formerly barred to them—that of social and political movements. As the more conservative parties in Europe did not favor emancipation and were accordingly, at least de facto, closed to Jews, the latter were most active in more radical political movements, above all in the search and struggle around the collective self-definition of the Jewish communities.

THE CONFLATION OF SACRED HISTORY AND MUNDANE HISTORY IN  
THE MODERN ERA AND THE RE-ENTRY OF JEWS INTO HISTORY—  
JEWISH COLLECTIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE MODERN AGE

The mode of the participation of Jews in the various cultural and political arenas in different arenas of historical attitudes have radically changed in the modern time. The analysis of both the modes of their participation in these arenas in the Middle Ages as well as the radical changes thereof that took place in modern times are of central importance for the examination of the assumptions of general and Jewish historiography, and above all of Zionist historiography that it was the Zionist movement that brought Jews back into history—an examination which is of great importance for the analysis of the Weberian thesis.

XX

All these changes and especially the confrontations between the different premises of European modernity, generated also numerous

attempts at a new definition of the premises of Jewish collective identity in relation to their host societies, participation in which came more and more to be seen as a legitimate endeavor.

Significantly, attempts were made even to imbue the very process of emancipation and assimilation with ideological dimensions, in terms derived from Jewish civilization and historical experience. Assimilation became formulated, as Jacob Katz has shown, in almost eschatological terms:<sup>47</sup>

Naturalization and emancipation were hailed as traditionally reserved for the Messianic Age, to the point of identifying kings and princes, the guarantors of the new civil status, with the person of the Messiah. This identification should not be dismissed as an ideological embellishment of the new political and social achievement. It was more than that. . . . The various segments of the nation would be granted a home in their respective environments, thus achieving for the individual, in terms of legal and political status, what the messianic expectation held out for the nation as a whole.

The internal developments and transformations were closely connected with dramatic attempts in different Jewish communities and movements to redefine in radically new ways the boundaries of Jewish collectivity, which varied between different Jewish communities and movements. The emancipation of the Jews, which was indeed a central focus of Jewish history in nineteenth-century Europe, entailed not only the granting of citizenship but also the possibility and the challenge of participation in modern history. Their re-entry into history, or their attempt to re-enter it, particularly after the French Revolution—was twofold: in various types of organizations not only dealing with mundane affairs but also in attempts to participate in the new, secularized, *historia sacra*.

Most of the movements that developed in Jewish communities in modern times—Jewish “Enlightenment,” “Liberal” or “Reform” Judaism in Europe, “Conservative” and Reform in the US; and later, especially in Eastern and Central Europe, the various Jewish movements with strong political, collective orientations—promulgated different selections and reinterpretations of different themes of Jewish civilization in its relation to other civilizations and to their host societies, entailing a radical change in the basic premises of Jewish culture, civilization and collective identity and different modes of

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<sup>47</sup> Jacob Katz, “The Jewish Diaspora: Minority Positions and Majority Aspirations,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* Fall 1992, pp. 68–78.

participation in the host civilizations. The radicality of this change was evident above all in the fact that whatever the directions of all these attempts, they all entailed the decomposition of the different components of the Jewish collective consciousness that came together during the medieval period, and of their relation to the Halakhah as the major area of the implementation of the specific Jewish civilizational identity. Within many of these movements growing dissociation emerged between civilizational visions, religious premises and religious observance on the one hand—and the construction of Jewish collective consciousness on the other.

Concomitantly in many of these movements or sectors of the Jewish community the relation to Halakhah was not of central importance, although it retained its centrality in those groups that focused on the more specifically religious dimension of Jewish collectivity. In the various Reform, Liberal or Conservative groups within Judaism there was increasing emphasis on the “external” bases of legitimation of Halakhah, as against its internal justification. This entailed a gradual shift to ethical or philosophical themes as the major bearers of legitimation of Jewish collective existence and civilization, and a distancing from Halakhah as the major arena for the implementation of the Jewish transcendental vision. Such developments were often connected with attempts to reconstruct Jewish religious practice in ways more attuned to the premises of the modern “secular” age, and with the view that other arenas of cultural activity or study could also be ways to implement the Jewish mission. The obverse of these developments was the growing “proto-fundamentalist” transformation of the Halakhah, involving rigid sectarianism and self-containment, in contrast to the great creativity and relative openness of the Halakhic framework in the period of its hegemony.<sup>48</sup>

Yet another approach to the reconstruction of Jewish collective identity was promulgated by various collectivist movements that developed in modern Jewish history—autonomist movements like the Bund, the Territorialists, and above all Zionism. Instead, these movements focused on the reconstruction of Jewish collectivity, defined in some combination of ethnic, territorial, civil and some universal culture

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<sup>48</sup> Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinartz (eds.), *The Jews in the Modern World*, New York 1980; Michael K. Silber, “The Emergence of Ultraorthodoxy”; Jacob Katz, *Halakha beMatzot: Machsholim al Derech ha-Ortodoxia beHithavuta* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1992 [Obstacles on the Creation of Orthodoxy]; S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Jacobin Components of Fundamentalist Movements,” *Contention* 5 (1996), pp. 155–170.

terms, in modern conditions. Here the attitude to Halakhah was less central—although it was to re-emerge in confrontational terms in the State of Israel and in contemporary Jewish communities.

Each movement or approach entailed a different program of selection and reconstructed different combination of the universalistic and particularistic, the ethnic and religious, components of Jewish collective consciousness, and was marked by its own consciousness of Jewish historical experience as it bears on the constitution of different Jewish communities.<sup>49</sup>

Paradoxically, in more ways than one, the situation was similar to the one that existed in the period of the Second Temple, and this became even more true with the development of the Yishuv and the establishment of the State of Israel. It has indeed been one of the most distinctive characteristics of the modern era in Jewish history, of the new civilizational format that crystallized among the Jews that the concrete ways in which these patterns crystallized varied greatly in different European countries and later beyond Europe, especially in the US, Latin America and Israel, far beyond the heterogeneity between different Jewish collectivities in the medieval period.<sup>50</sup>

## XXI

These various developments could be seen as a transformation in the modern era of latent antinomian, sectarian and heterodox tendencies that were prevalent in Jewish communities in the long medieval period. Although it is difficult to speak of heterodoxy in modern Jewish history, as there is no longer any reigning orthodoxy, yet all these different interpretations of Jewish civilizational premises and collective identity have indeed entailed the developments of very strong sectarian-like activities, in the sense that each perceives itself as providing the proper answer to the perennial questions and problems of Jewish existence, and it is impossible to understand the dynamics of modern Jewish historical and cultural experience, without taking into consideration these sectarian, seemingly heterodox tendencies.

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<sup>49</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "Concluding Observations: The Jewish Experience in the Modern and Contemporary Eras," Chapter IX of *Jewish Civilization: The Jewish Historical Experience in a Comparative Perspective*, op. cit., pp. 259–285.

<sup>50</sup> See on this in greater detail, Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *Jewish Civilization*, op. cit.; idem, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*, London, 1985; Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (eds.), *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship*, op. cit.

But they entailed a new development of the sectarian and autonomous tendencies of earlier periods. These tendencies became already largely transformed according to the new premises of European civilization and the consequent new intercivilizational relations between Jewish communities and different Western nations. They were promulgated in new, "modern" ways that would have been seen as heterodox in earlier periods—and so they were seen by orthodox circles. The activities of such different "heterodoxies" were not confined to the internal arenas of the Jewish communities, but also in the orientations of Jews to many arenas of the general societies, and in their activities in these arenas.<sup>51</sup> But these seemingly sectarian tendencies have been now transformed in to the problem of Jewish pluralism, each of them entailing a distinct mode of entry of Jews into modern history, of participation in it. All these movements attest to the fact that the collective Jewish entry into modern history did not begin with Zionism—it had started within the various movements which developed in the wake of the Emancipation, and which constituted, together with the orthodox sectors, the major fronts of confrontation of Zionism.

Thus the distinctiveness of the Zionist movement lay not in its being the first to attempt to bring the Jews back to history—to that Western European history in which mundane and sacral, even if defined in secular terms were to some extent conflated—but in its radical stance against other attempts to do so.

The confrontation between the different modes of Jewish entry into history in Europe ended tragically with the Second World War and the Holocaust. The confrontation with "history" and the attempts of Jews to enter it and to struggle for emancipation, were distinctly European, rooted in the specific European historical experience, in the double heritage of the Revolutions and the modern nation state.

Already earlier, a new mode of Jewish historical experience, and of Jewish entrance into history, was developing in the United States. The American historical experience was markedly different from the European one. The American collectivity was not defined in historical or primordial terms but in religious-political utopian ones, in terms of the American myth or what R.N. Bellah called the American "civil religion."<sup>52</sup> Although anti-Semitism abounded, Emancipation,

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<sup>51</sup> These different potentially heterodox activities with their roots in the earlier periods were also sometimes manifest in many bizarre life stories of individuals.

<sup>52</sup> R.N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96 (1967), pp. 1–21.

the granting of full citizenship, did not constitute a problem. Full citizenship was granted automatically, bearing within itself also the possibility, even if it took a long time to be realized, of the Jews' collective participation—not just as a distinct “minority” as in Eastern Europe, but as a part of American collective life and politics.

After the Second World War, with the American Jewish community becoming the largest Diaspora, and with the weakening on the contemporary scene of the classic European nation-state, new elements were added to contemporary Jewish life, new modes of Jewish participation in history entailing challenges for its reconstruction.

Of special importance from the point of view of our analysis is the emergence of legitimate Jewish political activity within the political framework of the respective societies in the period after the Second World War. The pinnacle of this development was, of course, the establishment of the State of Israel—but to a very significant extent there developed also a situation in which Jewish communities throughout the world became politically active and conscious as Jews in the public sphere, and not only as representatives of a minority.

The seemingly internal Jewish collective activities and discussions were taking place not only in the private space of the Jews, but in the more public and political arenas. They were conducted mostly in the languages of their respective countries of residence (English, French, Spanish, and the like) and in the terms of intellectual discourse of these societies. They were often presented both as expressing the different dimensions of Jewish identity and as a legitimate component in the life of the general society. Moreover, international Jewish organizations (such as the World Jewish Congress, or the American Jewish Congress, and lately many pan-European Jewish groups) shifted the thrust of their activity away from mainly philanthropic to political independent Jewish causes, whether the struggle for the rights of Soviet Jewry or the claim for restitution of Jewish properties in European countries, with an emphasis on their distinct role in the international political arena.

The changes in the historical experience of Jews in the US, Europe and Latin America since the Second World War went beyond the premises of modern European and classical Zionist ideology, the very ideology that shaped the revolutionary and ideological premises of Israel and guided and shaped much of Israel's perception of, and attitude toward, the Diaspora—but they all attested to the multiplicity of collective Jewish activities in the major arenas of contemporary societies.



## XXII

The preceding analyses do indeed point out on the one hand to the weakness in Weber's analysis of the Jewish "exilic" medieval historical experience as one of pariah people. These analyses indicate that two of the at least implicit phenomena characteristic of "pariah" people—the weakness of sectarian and heterodox tendencies and political passivity—were not characteristic of the Jewish historical experience. On the other hand these analyses point out to some of Weber's great insights about Jewish civilization—namely first to his recognition of this civilization as one of the Great Religions or of Axial Civilizations—with all its dynamics; second to his identification of many of the themes and orientations of this civilization; and third to his pointing out to the necessity to analyze the transformations of these themes and of their institutional implications in different, in changing historical settings. While his concrete analysis of these transformations in the exilic medieval period do not, on the whole, stand up on closer examination—the very problematic he set out, rooted in his basic view of the Jewish civilization as one of the "Great Religions" or—to use Jasper's nomenclature—"Axial Civilizations," is indeed of crucial importance not only for that period but also the modern one.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

# CIVIL SOCIETY, PUBLIC SPHERE, THE MYTH OF ORIENTAL DESPOTISM AND POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN ISLAMIC SOCIETIES\*

### THE PROBLEMATIC OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND PUBLIC SPHERE IN A COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK

#### I

Notions of civil society were proposed and elaborated in different European contexts in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially within the intellectual tradition of what came to be termed the Scottish Enlightenment, but also earlier by such scholars as Pufendorf. However the revival of interest in this concept in contemporary social science has been largely and somewhat curiously limited to the rather particular conceptualization of civil society, formulated mainly by Hegel, in a continental European setting in the period of transition from absolutist monarchies to nations and states. This conceptualization certainly did not apply to other European societies, such as the Scandinavian countries, Holland, or even England, where, in the relations between “state” and “society,” the influence of the latter on the former was much greater than in the German states or even in France.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever its strengths and limitations, the discourse on civil society was for a long period dormant in the social science literature— to be revived again only after the breakdown of the Soviet Empire

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\* The text presented here is based on the concluding paper presented and discussed in a workshop on Public Sphere in Islamic Societies that took place in Jerusalem at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, and is published as *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies* edited by M. Hoexter, S.N. Eisenstadt and N. Levtzion, New York: SUNY Press, forthcoming. A special section on Oriental Despotism and on the Political Dimension of Sectarianism in Islamic Societies was added here.

<sup>1</sup> Eisenstadt and Schluchter 1998, this is partly based on a research proposal by S.N. Eisenstadt, W. Schluchter and B. Wittrock, entitled “Collective Identity, Public Sphere, and Political Order: Cultural Foundations and the Formation of Contemporary Societies.”

and the promulgation of the concept of civil society as a norm for Middle and East European societal reconstruction. This revived discourse was connected with greater attention to the concept of “public spheres” in the period after World War II—a concept presented in Jürgen Habermas’s *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, a book that gained additional recognition in the contemporary discourse.<sup>2</sup> In this discourse, the concepts of public sphere and civil society tended to be coupled, overlapped, almost conflated, often without any clear distinction between them. Moreover, in this contemporary discourse a very strong assumption emerged that the development of a public sphere and a civil society constitutes a critical condition for the formation and continuity of constitutional and democratic regimes.<sup>3</sup>

The available historical and contemporary evidence shows these assumptions to be very problematic. First, the relations between civil society, public sphere, and the political arena are much more variable than is implied in these assumptions. The concept of a public sphere entails that there are at least two other spheres—the official sphere and the private sphere—from which the public sphere is more or less institutionally and culturally differentiated. It is, therefore, a sphere located *between* the official and the private spheres. It is a sphere where collective improvements, the common good, are at stake. This holds also for the official sphere; but in the public sphere such business is carried out by groups that do not belong to the ruler’s domain. Rather, the public sphere draws its membership from the private sphere. It expands and shrinks according to shifting involvements of such membership, as Albert O. Hirschman has demonstrated with regard to modern development.<sup>4</sup>

The public sphere is the place of voice rather than of loyalty, to use Hirschman’s famous distinction. Its strength depends on its institutional locus, whether it is dispersed or unified, whether it is close to the centre or on the periphery. It is based on oral or written communication. Its influence rests on interpretations of the common good vis-à-vis the ruler on the one hand and the private sphere or spheres of different sectors of the society on the other.

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<sup>2</sup> Habermas 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Cohen 1999; Galston 1999; Mardsen 1999; Barber 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Hirschman 1982; idem 1970.

The term “public sphere” therefore denotes the existence of arenas that are not only autonomous from the political order but are also public in the sense that they are accessible to different sectors of society. Public spheres are constructed through several basic processes—namely, those of framing, communicating, and institutionalizing. The first process is one of categorization; it defines a discourse beyond face-to-face interaction. The second process is one of reflexivity; it invites a debate on problems of the common good, on criteria of inclusion and exclusion, on the permeability of boundaries, and on the recognition of the “other.” The third process stabilizes this sphere. Public spheres tend to develop dynamics of their own, which, while closely related to those of the political arena, are neither coterminous with nor governed by the dynamics of the latter. They develop in different ways in different societies, and they differ in their relations not only to the rulers but also to what has been often designated as civil society.

Hence second, these two concepts—public sphere and civil society—should not be conflated. Public sphere must be regarded as a sphere between the official and the private. And it must be regarded as a sphere that expands and shrinks according to the constitution and strength of those sectors of society that are not part of the rulership. Civil society entails a public sphere, but not every public sphere entails a civil society, whether of the economic or political variety, as defined in the contemporary discourse, or as it developed in early modern Europe through direct participation in the political process of corporate bodies or a more or less restricted body of citizens in which private interests play a very important role. We do indeed expect that in every civilization of some complexity and literacy a public sphere will emerge, though not necessarily of the civil society type.<sup>5</sup>

Even this broad definition of the public sphere seems to be culturally bound, however. As Benjamin Schwartz once remarked in a rejoinder to Hannah Arendt’s distinction between the public and the private, a number of important societies such as the Chinese “had long done quite well without any conception at all of the public as distinct from the private good.”<sup>6</sup> And indeed, the notion of private

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<sup>5</sup> Eisenstadt 1987; idem 2000.

<sup>6</sup> As quoted in Hirschman 1982, p. 63; see also Eisenstadt and Schluchter 1998, pp. 10–12.

interests as distinct from public interests—especially the idea that private interests could serve as a solid base for the pursuit of public interests—seems to be European. It is tied to a legal tradition that endows the individual with subjective rights and defines many associations as corporate bodies with legal rights, to an economic tradition that relies on the rational pursuit of self-interest; and it belongs to an institutional tradition that emphasizes the separation between state and civil society.

But whatever the differences with respect to the relations between public sphere, civil society, and the political arena, in all societies these relations have entailed continual contestation about power and authority, their legitimation and accountability.

In recognition of the very complex and variable relations among public sphere, civil society, and the political arena, one central focus of the program within whose framework the Jerusalem workshop was undertaken was first, the reexamination of these concepts—especially, but not only, as they apply to non-Western societies; second, the ways in which the contestations about power and its legitimation have crystallized in different civilizations and shaped their dynamics; and third, a possible reassessment of the dynamics of Western societies themselves.

## II

Such a critical appraisal of the concepts of public sphere and civil society as they developed in contemporary scholarship is closely related to the “Orientalist” debate—that is, criticism of the analysis, in Western and Western inspired scholarship, of non-Western, especially Asian, societies.

Critics of so-called Orientalism, from Edward Said on, have shown that many of the analyses of “Oriental” (above all Asian) societies undertaken by Western and Western-inspired scholarship have imposed concepts and categories rooted in the cultural program of modernity that developed in the West.<sup>7</sup> In particular, the conceptions of world history implicit in such scholarship have viewed the modern nation state as the epitome of progress.

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<sup>7</sup> Said 1978; Hussain, Olson, and Qureshi 1984, esp. the chapter by Turner; Breckenridge and Van der Veer 1993; Dirks 1995.

On the analytical level, this approach often entailed, as Talal Asad has shown, the transposition of certain concepts—for instance, “religion”—that were rooted in Western thought and in the distinct Western historical experience, to the analysis of non-Western societies, often giving rise to the misinterpretation of many crucial aspects of the latter.<sup>8</sup>

On the conceptual level, the imposition of these concepts on the analysis of “Oriental” societies was often connected with a view that depicted Asian societies as being a mixture of stagnation and Oriental despotism. Truly enough, this view of Asian societies was not the only one prevalent in modern European historiographical discourse. Indeed, a strong current in this discourse as it developed in the Enlightenment promulgated a very positive view of some of these societies (e.g., the Chinese) as exhibiting civilizing features not to be found in the West. Yet the negative “Orientalist” view of these societies has become predominant in large parts of Western, especially European, scholarship and in public discourse.<sup>9</sup> Many studies have been guided by the implicit—and often also explicit—assumption to be found already in Marx’s discussion on the “Asian mode of production.”<sup>10</sup> The assumption was that these civilizations, even when initially dynamic, became static, stagnant—one major manifestation of such stagnation being that “modernity,” whether in the economic or in the political sphere, and rationality did not develop in them. In the case of Muslim societies, such decline was seen to set already early in the thirteenth century, with the victory of orthodoxy over the more open trends oriented to “Western” Greek philosophy.<sup>11</sup>

Concomitantly, many such societies—including most of the Muslim societies, especially Middle Eastern ones, as well as China—were often portrayed as epitomizing Oriental despotism; all power was seen as concentrated in the hands of the rulers, with the various sectors of society granted no autonomy beyond purely local affairs and even these affairs often tightly regulated by the great despots.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Asad 1993.

<sup>9</sup> Stauth 1993.

<sup>10</sup> See Vidal-Naquet 1996 esp. chap. 11, pp. 267–76 and chap. 12, pp. 277–318.

<sup>11</sup> Grunebaum 1976; Grunebaum and Hartner 1960.

<sup>12</sup> Springborg 1987.

## III

The critique of Orientalism gave rise, as is well known, to intensive discussion and controversy—with highly ideological overtones. It became closely connected with the many criticisms of the models—predominant in the social sciences of the 1950s and early 1960s—of the structural-framework approach, in particular, studies of modernization.<sup>13</sup> One of the major foci of these criticisms was that no institutional or organizational setting was taken as “given,” nor was the extent to which different parts or components thereof contributed to its continuity considered. Instead the very construction of any such setting was seen as problematic—and as always taking place through continual power contestations and negotiations among the different actors, through which, to follow Gramsci’s terminology, hegemonies were established.<sup>14</sup> These intensive discussions and controversies opened up the problem of the relations between agency and social structure and between social structure and culture.<sup>15</sup>

The criticism of Orientalism was indeed closely interrelated with general developments in the social sciences and humanities. Such criticism has shown that much of the research that was guided by “Orientalist” conceptions neglected many aspects of non-Western societies—especially those related to power contestations and the relations between power and culture, which are crucial for understanding their contours and dynamics. At the same time the researches that burgeoned in conjunction with these broad controversies highlighted the extent to which the crystallization of different hegemonies have influenced many aspects of social life, among them constructs of sexuality and gender, conceptions of the human body, or the shaping of collective memory and rituals of commemoration.<sup>16</sup>

Within the broad spectrum of such studies, two major lines of research developed that directly challenged what they perceived as the “Orientalist” assumption. One was the so-called subaltern studies,<sup>17</sup> developed first in India, which emphasized above all the continual development of different forms of opposition, or more accurately

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<sup>13</sup> Eisenstadt 1973; idem 1995 chap. 11, pp. 280–305; Vidal-Naquet 1996; Dirks, Eley, and Ortner 1996.

<sup>14</sup> Gramsci 1991.

<sup>15</sup> Eisenstadt 1995.

<sup>16</sup> Gorski 1993.

<sup>17</sup> Guha and Spivak 1988.

resistance, to the Western political and also intellectual hegemony, especially on different local levels. The other, more recent line of research, rooted far more than the subaltern studies in Western “post-modern” scholarship, criticized the emphasis on the modern nation state as defined in Western terms as the model and the major unit of analysis, with the concomitant neglect of regional, occupational, gender, and other social sectors and networks.<sup>18</sup>

But interestingly enough, the critics of “Orientalist” scholarship did not take up the most important and potentially most constructive challenge opened up by the “Orientalist” debate—namely, how to account for the internal dynamics of these non-European modern civilizations in their own terms, possibly also putting them in a comparative framework that would not bestow a privileged position on the Western experience.

It is paradoxical that many of the studies of Asian societies criticizing the Orientalist approach in many ways accepted the assumption that in most of these societies, in some crucial period of their development, a process of stagnation had set in; that the impact of colonialization and imperialism had, at least partially, stifled their transformation into modern capitalist societies. One fascinating illustration of such an approach is the debate on the potentialities for capitalist development in seventeenth- to early nineteenth-century India, presumably stifled by British colonialism.<sup>19</sup>

Marshall Hodgson’s ideas, as expressed in his *Venture of Islam* and some of his very incisive articles, many published posthumously, could have served as a starting point for going in such directions beyond the “Orientalist” debate had they been more fully developed by Hodgson himself before his untimely death. He had as yet taken only the very first steps in analyzing the Muslim societies, and their encounter with modernity, which of course later became the point of departure for much of “Orientalist” critique and scholarship.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Hodgson was not followed, at least until quite recently, in the mainstream studies of Islamic societies, even if references to him abounded.

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<sup>18</sup> Duara 1988.

<sup>19</sup> Chandra 1968; Matsui 1968; Morris 1968.

<sup>20</sup> Hodgson 1974; idem 1993.



## IV

The failure of these studies to analyze the internal dynamics of Asian societies was possibly rooted in a certain analytical blindness or blockage connected with the general ideological ambience of the intellectual and academic discourse of the 1970s. The central analytical point of much of such discourse—possibly the point most emphasized in the Orientalist debate and certainly one that was greatly influenced by Foucault<sup>21</sup> and to a smaller extent by Gramsci<sup>22</sup>—was the close relation between power and culture, indeed, Foucault saw an almost complete identity between the two. Most of the criticism focused on the ways in which the cultural program of modernity was imposed on these societies through the exercise of power—especially colonial or imperial power. Yet, until recently, most of these studies did not address the problem of the extent to which the relation between power and culture developed in the dynamics of these civilizations prior to the impact of the West. They did not take up the problem of how relations between culture and power—and the challenges to the hegemonic relations and discourses that developed in these societies—differed from or were comparable to Western ones, much less how these relations and challenges differed among various non-Western societies.

With the interesting exception of some studies of early Mesoamerican societies,<sup>23</sup> an important outcome of this analytical blindness was the fact that these studies, with their strong emphasis either on subaltern resistance or on the autonomy of various social sectors (regional, professional, economic, gender) barely touch on a problem central to Weber's analysis. That problem relates to the various broad symbolic and institutional frameworks of these civilizations—whether of the Brahminic or Sanskritist or Confucian cosmopolis, or of the Islamic *ummah*—and its dynamics. It is Sheldon Pollock's singular merit to be probably the first among the critics of Orientalism to raise this problem. In his central statement as well as his later work on the vernacular millennium, he pointed out the importance of the relations among the carriers of these broad frameworks and the various groups—especially various local political elites and groups—and

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<sup>21</sup> Foucault 1973; idem 1988; idem 1975; idem 1965.

<sup>22</sup> Gramsci 1991.

<sup>23</sup> Pollock 1993; Brown 1991; Tedlock 1992.

the specific dynamics generated by these relations.<sup>24</sup> Further research would indicate how such dynamics—which included both resistance and a quest for autonomy, but also potential challenges to the legitimation of such hegemonies and patterns of power—crystallized in different societies.

It is interesting that most of these studies did not refer to Weber; and insofar as they did, they adopted that interpretation of Weber which tended to see him as a Eurocentric preoccupied with analyzing the origin of modern capitalism and demonstrating the superiority of the West.<sup>25</sup> They neglected the other side, or other reading, of his work—namely, the reading of the *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* as studies of the internal dynamics of the various great civilizations in their own terms, with a special emphasis on the role of heterodoxies and sectarian movements in these dynamics.<sup>26</sup>

The comparison between Weber and Foucault is indeed of great interest from the point of view of our analysis. As is well known, Foucault and his followers focused on the ways in which the concrete institutional patterns, patterns of life, and basic conceptions of order have been shaped by the interweaving of culture in the exercise of power. The relation between power and knowledge is also a central focus of Weber's analysis in the *Gesammelte Aufsätze*—probably best illustrated in his analysis of the place of the Confucian literati in the construction of the Chinese imperial order. Needless to say Foucault's own work—as well as the many more contemporary historical, sociological, and anthropological studies influenced in one way or another by Foucault—provide far more detail than can be found in Weber's analysis, even if many details of Foucault, especially his analysis, have recently been subjected to far-reaching criticism.<sup>27</sup>

This can perhaps be best seen in Foucault's reluctance to face two broad problems. There is the problem of agency and its place in the constitution of different social and political orders, different orders of power and culture. And there is the closely related problem of the historical roots of different orders, and of continuities or discontinuities between historical periods and the concomitant difficulty

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<sup>24</sup> Pollock 1998a; idem 1998b.

<sup>25</sup> Stauth 1993.

<sup>26</sup> Eisenstadt 2000; Schluchter 1989, esp. part II, pp. 83–279.

<sup>27</sup> O'Neill 1986; Van Krieken 1990.

in explaining the possible place of resistance in the generation of processes of social change.

As T.B. Hansen has indicated, the term “parrhesia” is used by Foucault for the courageous act of disrupting dominant discourses, thereby opening a new space for another truth to emerge—not a discursive truth but rather a “truth of the self,” an authentication of the courageous speaker in this “eruptive truth-speaking.”<sup>28</sup> But while this term goes beyond the simple emphasis on resistance as simply due to the inconvenience of being confined within the coercive frameworks of an order, it does not systematically analyze the nature of the agency through which such other truth may emerge,<sup>29</sup> or how the emergence of such “truth of the self” may become interwoven with processes of social change and transformation.

In contrast to Foucault, Weber’s analysis focused on the way in which institutional patterns are constructed by human agency as well as on the problems of continuity and discontinuity between different historical periods.<sup>30</sup> Weber did not conflate power and culture; he attempted to specify the distinct aspects or dimensions of culture. For instance, he tried to clarify how the basic ontological premises, conceptions of salvation, and the like prevalent in a society influence specific institutional patterns—such as the structure of rulership or configurations of strata—as well as the mechanism through which such influence is exerted. Second, he emphasized that the contours of such patterns constitute a continual focus of contention among various groups among which of special importance are the various heterodoxies that potentially develop and continually challenge the existing hegemonies. The strong emphasis on the importance of heterodoxies in crystallizing such challenges indicates that such challenges are influenced not only by pure “power” contestation but also by the basic premises of the different religions or systems of belief and knowledge that become hegemonic in their respective societies, and that such premises, especially when institutionalized, contain within them seeds of potential challenge—and transformation.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Hansen 1999, p. 243 (note 3 to chap. 2).

<sup>29</sup> It is only in his reportages of the Iranian revolution that Foucault went beyond these limitations; but in these reportages he did not take up the analytical challenge of reconciling such different portrayals.

<sup>30</sup> Weber 1924; idem 1968; idem 1951; idem 1958; idem 1952.

<sup>31</sup> Eisenstadt 1995, ch. 12, pp. 306–27.

## V

It is indeed with respect to analyzing the relation between culture and power that the analysis of public spheres is of central importance. Public spheres—and of course social movements, especially heterodoxies, sectarianisms, and collective identities (for example, those that crystallized in the vernacular age)—constituted the most important institutional arena in which, in all these societies, the continual negotiation, contestation and confrontation took place—between the rulers, different elites, and various social groups; between the centres and peripheries of those civilizations—about the definition of the common good, and about the legitimation and accountability of authorities, and the concomitant possible challenges to the existing hegemonies.

But the concrete ways in which such negotiations or contestations develop differ greatly among different civilizations—attesting to the different ways in which power and culture are interwoven—and shape their distinct dynamics. Analyzing the dynamics of different societies may help in facing the challenge of how on the one hand to recognize the dynamics specific to particular civilizations, and on the other to confront the problem of the fruitfulness—and limits—of applying concepts developed in the Western social science discourse to the analysis of non-Western societies.

## PUBLIC SPHERE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES

## VI

The papers presented in this volume will hopefully help to resolve some of these problems and take up some of these challenges. To no small degree the papers build on some of Hodgson's powerful insights and clearly indicate the inadequacy of the approaches that have promulgated the view of Muslim societies as stagnant and of their political regimes as epitomizing Oriental despotism. They clearly demonstrate, as Miriam Hoexter, Nehemia Levtzion, and Dale Eickelman succinctly indicate in their introduction and preface, that there crystallized in Muslim society a very vibrant and autonomous public sphere that was of crucial importance in shaping the dynamics of Muslim societies.

This public sphere crystallized out of the interaction of the *'ulama'* (the interpreters of the religious sacred law), the *shari'a* (the religious

law), various sectors of the broader community, and the rulers. The basic framework within which such interaction took place was that of the *shari'a*, which was the main overall framework of Islamic societies, the regulator of the moral and religious vision, the cohesive and boundary-setting force of Muslim communities.

In the words of Hoexter and Levzion in their introduction:

*Umma* and *shari'a* are central conceptions that run through the discussion in virtually all the papers included in the present volume. The *umma*—the community of believers—was accorded central importance in Islamic political thought. Not only were the protection and furthering of its interests the central concern of the ruler, the individual Muslim and the 'ulama'. The *umma's* consensus (*ijma'*) on the legitimacy of the ruler as well as on details concerning the development of social and cultural norms was considered infallible. The community of believers was thus placed as the most significant group in the public sphere, and above the ruler. (see Miriam Hoexter).

The *shari'a*—the sacred law, or the rules and regulations governing the lives of Muslims, derived in principal from the Qur'an and *hadith*—was developed by *fuqaha'* (jurists) and was basically an autonomous legal system, independent from the ruler's influence. Above and beyond a legal system, the *shari'a* embodied the values and norms of the social order proper to the community of believers (the *umma*) and became its principal cultural symbol. The sacred nature of the *shari'a* has been entrenched in a deep-rooted public sentiment of Muslim societies. The sanction of the sacred law contributed to the formation of a Muslim public opinion, and endowed institutions and social groupings based on the *shari'a*—such as the *qadi*, the *mufti*, the schools of law (*madhabib*)—with a degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the rulers. It also accorded moral authority to the 'ulama'—the *shari'a* specialists—who asserted the position of the authorized interpreters of the *shari'a* law and the custodians of the moral values underlying the ideals of social order of the *umma*.

Among the many organizations that developed in Muslim societies, it was mainly in the schools of law, the *waqf*, and the different Sufi orders that reconstitution of the public sphere continually took place. As the papers presented here indicate, the relative importance and scope of these institutions did change in different historical settings and periods; but some combination of them seems to have existed in all cases. Many aspects of the institutional arenas constituting the public sphere varied in different societies and periods; though regulated by the ruler, they were yet autonomous and could exert far-reaching influence on the ruler—an influence that went far beyond simple subservience to official rule or attempts to evade it.

## VII

The overall pattern of the public sphere (or spheres) that developed in Muslim societies, the mode of interaction between the *'ulama'*, the different sectors of society, and the rulers, was rooted in the basic premises and conceptions of Islam. The specific constellations, the concrete institutional arenas thereof, on the otherhand, were shaped by the historical experience of the various Islamic societies.

Most important among the factors bearing on the construction of public spheres in Islam was the ideal of the *umma*—the community of all believers—as the major arena for the implementation of the moral and transcendental vision of Islam; the strong universalistic component in the definition of this Islamic community; and the closely connected emphasis on the principled political equality of all believers.

This pristine vision of the *umma*, probably implicit only in the very formative period of Islam, entailed a complete fusion of political and religious collectivities, the complete convergence or conflation of the sociopolitical and religious communities.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the very conceptual distinction between these two dimensions, rooted as it is in the Western historical experience, is probably not entirely applicable to the concept of the *umma*.

In the implementation of these basic premises of Islamic vision, Islamic societies evinced, as Maxime Rodinson has put it,<sup>33</sup> the characteristics of a “totalitarian movement,” as if it were a political party strongly oriented to the reconstruction of the world and very militant in this pursuit—albeit needless to say without having all the modern technological and administrative means of totalitarianism. Such implementation, however, was to be realized not in the establishment of one continual political regime but through the *shari'a*, the law, which from early on in Islamic history became the main framework of the overall moral and transcendental visions of Islam and the regulator of the modes of its implementation. It was only in the early phase of Islamic conquest and then in some of the “renovated” regimes to be discussed later that these “totalitarian”-like tendencies became predominant.

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<sup>32</sup> Cook 1983; Hodgson 1974; Turner 1974; Lapidus 1988; idem 1982; Shahid, 1970; Schluchter 1987; Pipes 1981; Crone 1980.

<sup>33</sup> Rodinson 1971.

The emphasis on the construction of a political-religious collectivity was connected in Islam with the development of a principled ideological negation of any primordial element or component within this sacred political-religious identity. Indeed, of all the Axial Age civilizations in general, and the monotheistic ones in particular, Islam was, on the ideological level, the most extreme in its denial of the legitimacy of such primordial dimensions in the structure of the Islamic community—although de facto of course the story was often markedly different, as Bernard Lewis has shown.<sup>34</sup> In this it stood in opposition to Judaism, with which it shared such characteristics as an emphasis on the direct, unmediated access of all members of the community to the sacred. It differed, however, from Judaism in its basic conception of the relations between man and God, in the strong emphasis—as the name Islam connotes—on the total submission to God and in the lack of any possible contractual or covenantal relationship between God and the community of believers.<sup>35</sup>

Two primordial aspects have very forcefully persisted in very central areas of Islam: first, the strong emphasis, in the initial historical phase of Islam, then to a large extent in Shi'ite Islam, and in its Moroccan version, on descent from the Prophet as a source of legitimation of rulers; second, the emphasis on Arabic as the sacred language of Islam, of the Koran, of prayer, and also to a large degree of the legal exegesis. This was in contrast to Judaism, where the Bible was read in Greek in Alexandria (and in English in many synagogues in the United States); and to Christianity, where the liturgy was naturally read in Greek (or other languages) in the East, and later on in Europe after the Reformation not only in Latin but in the various vernacular languages. But beyond these two primordial elements or emphases, there developed in Islam no sanctification of any “ethnic” primordial-communal elements or symbols, and it was the universalistic ideology of the *umma* that became predominant.

Yet from the very beginning of Islam's history strong tensions developed between these particularistic primordial Arab components, which were natural, as it were, to the initial carriers of the Islamic vision and the universalistic orientation—tensions that became more important with the continual conquest and incorporation of new ter-

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<sup>34</sup> Lewis 1973; Al Azmeh 1997, esp. part II, chs. 6–8.

<sup>35</sup> Eisenstadt 1992a.

ritorial entities and ethnic groups.<sup>36</sup> The final crystallization of this universalistic ideology took place with the so-called Abbasid revolution.

Paradoxically, also in this period—indeed, in close relation to the institutionalization of this universalistic vision—there developed, especially within Sunni Islam, a de facto separation between the religious community and the rulers. This separation was partially legitimized by the religious leadership, and was continually reinforced, above all by the ongoing military and missionary expansion of Islam—an expansion far beyond the ability of any single regime to sustain. This separation between the religious and political elites involved, as M. Sharon has shown,<sup>37</sup> a shift in the legitimation of rulers in Sunni Islam (with the partial exception of some rulers such as for instance the Moroccan sultans) from direct descent from the Prophet to the consensus of the community and the rulers' ability to maintain their power.<sup>38</sup> Ultimately, any persons or groups able to seize power were accepted and post facto legitimated through the influence of the *khalifa*.

In the different Muslim regimes that developed under the combined impact of the continual expansion of Islam and the Mongol invasion, a separation took place between the *khalifa* and the actual ruler, the sultan, heralding de facto separation between the rulers and the religious establishment (*'ulama'*). The *khalifa* often became de facto powerless yet continued to serve as an ideal figure—the presumed embodiment of the pristine Islamic vision of the *umma*, and the major source of legitimation of the sultan—even if de facto he and the *'ulama'* legitimized any person or group that seized power. Such separation between the *khalifa* and the sultan was closely connected with the crystallization (in close relation to the mode of expansion of Islam, especially of Sunni Islam) of a unique type of ruling group—namely, the military-religious rulers, who emerged from tribal and sectarian elements. It also produced the system of military slavery, which created special channels of mobility—such as the *ghulam* system in general and the Mameluke and Ottoman *devshima* in particular—through which the ruling groups could be recruited from alien elements.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Lapidus 1975; idem 1996.

<sup>37</sup> Sharon 1983.

<sup>38</sup> Gibb 1968; Lapidus 1987; idem 1996; Pipes 1981; Crone 1980.

<sup>39</sup> Ayalon 1951; idem 1996.



But even when some Imperial components developed, as was the case in Iran, which became a stronghold of Shi'ite Islam and in which relatively continual strong patrimonial regimes developed, a complete fusion between the political ruler and the religious elites and establishment did not ensue.<sup>40</sup>

## VIII

This separation between *khalifa* and sultan was most prevalent in the mainstream of Islamic (Sunni) religious thought and tended to legitimize any ruler who ensured the existence of the Muslim community and the upholding of the *shari'a*. At the same time this mode legitimated—indeed assumed—the possible coercive nature of such rulers and their distance from the pristine Muslim ideal regarding the moral order of the community. While rulers, even oppressive ones, were legitimized in the seemingly minimalistic tone necessary for the maintenance of public order and of the community, they were not seen as the promulgators, guardians, or regulators of the basic norms of the Islamic community. But whatever the extent of the acceptance of their legitimation, it usually entailed the rulers' duty to uphold the social order and to implement *shari'a* justice—and hence also the possibility of close scrutiny of their behavior by the '*ulama*'—even if such scrutiny did not usually have clear institutional effects. It was indeed the '*ulama*', however weak their organization, who were the guardians of the pristine Islamic vision, upholders of the normative dimensions of the *umma*, and keepers and interpreters of the *shari'a*.

It was the central place of the '*ulama*'—its relatively high symbolic standing despite small organizational autonomy—that distinguishes that Muslim regimes from other traditional patrimonial regimes in South or Southeast Asia or the early Near East. Truly enough, this highly autonomous religious elite did not develop into a broad, independent, and cohesive ecclesiastic organization, and the religious groups and functionaries were not organized as a distinct, separate entity; nor did they constitute a tightly organized body—except, and even then only partially, in the Ottoman Empire,<sup>41</sup> where large sectors of the '*ulama*' were organized by the state or in different modes

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<sup>40</sup> Arjomand 1999; idem 1988a; idem 1984; idem 1988b.

<sup>41</sup> Gibb 1968; Inalcik 1973.

in Shi'ite Islam.<sup>42</sup> Yet the '*ulama*' were largely autonomous in that they were constituted according to distinctive—even if highly informal—criteria of recruitment and were, at least in principle, independent of the rulers.

It was these religious leaders, the '*ulama*'—even the relatively controlled '*ulama*' of the Ottoman Empire, as Haim Gerber shows, who were the custodians of the law, of *shari'a*, and through it of the boundaries of the Islamic community, and hence performed important juridical functions. It was the '*ulama*' who created major networks that brought together, under one religious—and often also social-civilizational—umbrella, varied ethnic and geopolitical groups, tribes, settled peasants, and urban groups, creating mutual impingement and interaction among them that otherwise would probably not have developed. And it was the '*ulama*', acting through different, often transstate, networks, who were the crucial element forming the distinctive characteristics of public spheres in Islamic societies. As M. Hodgson has indicated, and as is fully illustrated in the papers presented in this volume, it was the '*ulama*' who, through their activities in schools of law, the *waqfs*, and the Sufi orders constituted the public spheres in Islamic societies and provided arenas of life not entirely controlled by the rulers. These public spheres were areas in which different sectors of the society could voice their demands in the name of the basic premises of Islamic vision. Indeed the dynamics of these public spheres cannot be understood without taking into account the crucial importance in them of the place of the community, rooted also in the basic premise of Islam, that of the equality of all believers and of their access to the sacred—conceptions which have necessarily given members of the community a right to participate, if not in the political arena, certainly in the communal and religious ones, in the promulgation and voicing of norms of public order.

## IX

The continual interaction between the '*ulama*', the rulers, and the different sectors of the community, then, were crucial to the constitution of an autonomous public sphere in Islamic societies. To quote Hoexter and Levtzion's introduction once more:

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<sup>42</sup> Arjomand 1988a.

The picture that emerges from the papers in this volume is that of a vibrant public sphere, accommodating a large variety of autonomous groups and characterized by its relatively stable but very dynamic nature. The community of believers was the centre of gravity around which activity in the public sphere revolved. Its participation in the formation of the public sphere was a matter of course; its well-being, its customs and consensus were both the motives and the main justifications for the introduction of changes in social and religious practices, in the law and policies governing the public sphere. The independence of the *shari'a* and the distribution of duties towards the community between the ruler and the '*ulama*', established very clearly in Islamic history, were crucial factors in securing the autonomy of the public sphere and in putting limits on the absolute power of the ruler.

The relative strength of these actors varied of course, as the papers in this volume attest, in different periods and in different Muslim societies; and these differences greatly influenced the specific contours of the major institutions of the public sphere.

In some cases, as Said Arjomand has shown in his analysis of the emergence of the academics in medieval Islamic societies, they could indeed be greatly dependent on the ruler; he could exercise strong control—based on patronage—over the appointment of personnel to the institutions and hence limit their independence.<sup>43</sup> But in all cases the rulers retained the basic parameters of public spheres as constituted in Islamic societies. In cases where the rulers were weak, as for instance in Malaka, as Robert Heffner has shown, strong merchant groups could become not only autonomous in their own milieu but also major players in the political arena vis-à-vis the ruler.<sup>44</sup>

## X

The autonomy of the '*ulama*', the hegemony of the *shari'a*, and the continuous yet variable vitality of the public spheres in Muslim society do not however imply direct autonomous access to the domain of rulership. Notwithstanding what might have been deduced from some of the more recent discussion about civil society and democracy, these factors did not result in the decision-making process of rulers, as they did in European parliaments and corporate urban institutions. Needless to say some—often very strong—attempts to

<sup>43</sup> Arjomand 1988a; idem 1999.

<sup>44</sup> Heffner 1998.

exert such influence did develop in many Muslim societies. But in concrete matters, especially foreign or military policy, as well as in such internal affairs as taxation and the keeping of public order and supervision of their own officials, the rulers were quite independent from the various actors in the public sphere.

It was this rather limited access of the major actors in the public sphere to concrete policymaking that gave rise to the wrong perception of the rulers of Muslim societies as Oriental despots. This image is wrong because in fact the scope of the decision making of these rulers was relatively limited. Even if the rulers could behave in despotic ways in their relations to the officials most close to them, in internal affairs beyond taxation and the keeping of public order, they were limited, and not only because of the limits of technology. Their power was also limited because, unlike the European experience, rulership (“politics”) in these above all Sunni Islamic societies did not constitute, contrary to the pristine image of the Muslim ruler as the embodiment of a transcendental vision of Islam—a central ideological component in the upholding of the *moral* order, even if pragmatically it constituted a necessary condition for the implementation of *shari’a*. Paradoxically enough, the fact that political problems constituted a central focus of Muslim theology was to no small extent rooted in this disjunction between the ideal of the Islamic ruler as the upholder of the pristine transcendental vision of Islam and the reality of his rulership. Moreover the “political” weakness of many of the major organizations in the public sphere, as Said Arjomand has shown, is to be attributed not to the despotic tendencies of the ruler but to the absence of legal concepts and of corporations.<sup>45</sup>

Thus in Muslim, especially Sunni, societies a very interesting decoupling developed between the make-up of the public sphere and access to the decision-making of the rulers. This decoupling was manifest in the combination, on the one hand, of granting to large sectors of the society, to the major actors in the public sphere, rather limited autonomous access to concrete policy-making; on the other hand the upholding of the moral order of the community was vested in the *‘ulama’* and in the members of the community, with the rulers playing a secondary role.

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<sup>45</sup> Arjomand 1999.

## THE MYTH OF ORIENTAL DESPOTISM

## XI

The preceding analysis of the distinct characteristics of the public sphere in Islamic societies bear also on a central myth—which pervaded the study of Asian societies—namely the myth of “Oriental Despotism.” According to this very widespread myth in large parts of Western analyses of Asian polities, these societies were ruled by Oriental despots, and of the political regimes that developed within them as Oriental despotism, in which all the power was seen as concentrated in the hands of the rulers and the various sectors of society were not granted any autonomy beyond purely local affairs, with even these affairs often tightly regulated by the Great Despots. One of the best-known illustrations of this conception was Karl Wittfogel’s book *Oriental Despotism*, in which he applied this term to the Chinese Empire and to the systematic analysis of the Chinese imperial system.<sup>46</sup>

The roots of this approach, as illustrated by Wittfogel but going beyond him, could be found first in the discussion on the Marxist Asian mode of production.<sup>47</sup> The other, even earlier root of this approach—one that indeed focused much more on the Muslim societies, especially the Ottoman Empire, as Patricia Springborg has shown—was rooted in the encounter of European societies with the growing might—and threat—of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>48</sup>

These conceptions, including, paradoxically perhaps, the Marxist discussion about the Asian mode of production, could be seen as the precursors, or manifestations, of what would later be called the “Orientalist” approach. This approach was accused by its critics, from Edward Said on,<sup>49</sup> of imposing many of the analyses of “Oriental”

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<sup>46</sup> K. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

<sup>47</sup> P. Vidal-Naquet, “Karl Wittfogel et la notion de mode de production asiatique: note liminaire,” in idem, *La Démocratie Grecque vue D’Ailleurs* (Paris: Flammarion, 1996), 267–76; idem, “Karl Wittfogel et la notion de mode de production asiatique,” in Vidal-Naquet (1996), 277–318; *Sur le Monde de Production Asiatique* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1969); F. Tokei, *Sur le Mode de Production Asiatique* (Budapest: Akademiai, Klado: Studia Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, 1966).

<sup>48</sup> Patricia Springborg, “The Contractual State: Reflections on Orientalism and Despotism,” *History of Political Thought* 8, no. 3 (1987), 395–433. See also S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Study of Oriental Despotism: A System of Total Power,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 17 (1958), 435–46.

<sup>49</sup> E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978); A. Hussain, R. Olson,

(above all Asian—Muslim, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and Buddhist) societies, concepts, and categories rooted in the cultural program of modernity that developed in the West, and especially in the conceptions of world history implicit in this program and portraying these societies as being a mixture of stagnation and Oriental despotism. Truly enough this view of Asian societies was not the only one prevalent in modern European historiographical discourse. Indeed a strong current in this discourse as it developed in the Enlightenment promulgated a very positive view of some of these societies—as for instance of the Chinese as exhibiting very positive civilizing features not to be found in the West. Yet the negative “Orientalist” view of these societies has indeed become relatively predominant in at least large parts of European scholarship and public discourse.<sup>50</sup>

Many of these studies were guided by the implicit—and often also explicit—assumption to be found already in Marx’s discussion on the “Asian mode of production”:<sup>51</sup> that these civilizations, even when initially dynamic, became static and stagnant—one major manifestation of such stagnation being paradoxically enough that “modernity,” be it in the economic or in the political sphere, and rationality did not develop in them. In the analysis of Muslim societies, such decline was seen to set in already earlier, in the 13th century, with the victory of orthodoxy over the more open trends oriented to “Western” Greek philosophy.<sup>52</sup>

Such conceptions of these societies naturally constituted the butt of anti-Orientalist criticism. But such criticism—beyond pointing out that these rulers were not as absolute as was implied in the connotations as “Oriental despots,” or that in fact large sectors of these societies often enjoyed relatively far-reaching autonomy—was, as we

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and J. Qureshi, eds., *Orientalism, Islam and Islamists* (Brattleboro, Vt.: Amana Books, 1984), esp. B. Turner, “Orientalism and the Problem of Civil Society in Islam,” 23–42; S. Pollock, “Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and Power beyond the Raj,” in C.A. Breckenridge and P. van der Veer, eds., *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 76–133; N.B. Dirks, ed., *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

<sup>50</sup> G. Stauth, *Islam und Westlicher Rationalismus: Der Beitrag des Orientalismus zur Entstehung der Soziologie* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1993); Pollock, “Deep Orientalism?” (see preceding note).

<sup>51</sup> See reference in note 2, above.

<sup>52</sup> G.E. Grunebaum, *Islam and Medieval Hellenism* (London, 1976); G.E. Grunebaum and W. Hartner, eds., *Klassizismus und Kulturverfall* (Frankfurt, 1960).

have already indicated above, not usually accompanied by a detailed critical analysis of their institutions and dynamics, which could have illustrated the inapplicability of such conceptions to these societies. The critics of Orientalist scholarship did not take up the most important and potentially most constructive challenge among the issues opened up by the Orientalist debate—namely, how to account for the internal dynamics of these modern non-European modern civilizations in their own terms, possibly also putting them in a comparative framework that would not endow the Western experience with a privileged position. The preceding analysis of the relations between the public sphere and civil society in Muslim society do indeed bear also on a critical examination of the concept of oriental despotism.

It was indeed the rather limited access of the major actors in the public sphere to concrete policymaking that gave rise to the wrong perception of the rulers of Muslim societies as Oriental despots. This image is wrong because in fact the scope of the decision making of these rulers was relatively limited. Even if the rulers could behave in despotic ways in their relations with the officials most close to them, in internal affairs beyond taxation and the keeping of public order they were limited, and not only because of the limits of technology. Their power was also limited because, unlike the European experience, rulership (“politics”) in these above all Sunni Islamic societies did not constitute—contrary to the pristine image of the Muslim ruler as the embodiment of transcendental vision of Islam—a central ideological component in the upholding of the *moral* order even if, pragmatically, it constituted a necessary condition for the implementation of *shari’a*. Paradoxically enough, the fact that political problems constituted a central focus of Muslim theology was to no small extent rooted in this disjunction between the ideal of the Islamic ruler as the upholder of the pristine transcendental vision of Islam and the reality of his rulership. Moreover the “political” weakness of many of the major organizations in the public sphere, as Arjomand has shown, is to be attributed not to the despotic tendencies of the ruler but to the absence of legal concepts and of corporations.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> E. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958); Arjomand, “The Law, Agency, and Policy in Medieval Islamic Society” (see note 19, above).

This decoupling of an autonomous and vibrant public sphere from the political arena—or to be more precise from the realm of rulership, which differed greatly from its counterparts in Europe, especially Western and Central Europe—constituted one of the distinctive characteristics of Muslim civilization. It was distinctive, too, from the relations between the public sphere and the political rulership arena that developed in other non-Muslim Asian civilizations. It differed from India, where the political order did not constitute a major arena for the implementation of the predominant transcendental and moral vision; where sovereignty was highly fragmented; and where rulership was to a large extent embedded in the very flexible caste order,<sup>54</sup> giving rise to a vibrant public sphere with relatively strong access to the rulers. And it differed from China, where the political order in fact constituted the major arena for the implementation of the transcendental vision and where it was the rulers who, together with the Confucian literati, constituted the custodian of this order, leaving very limited scope for an autonomous public sphere.<sup>55</sup>

## SECTARIANISM AND POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES

### XII

From the point of view of the contemporary discourse on civil society, constitutionalism, and democracy, this specific combination of a vibrant public sphere with highly limited access of the major actors to the rulers' decision making gave rise in Muslim societies to a very paradoxical situation with respect to the impact of these main actors on changes in the political arena. The most important fact here—one that seemingly strengthened the view of these regimes as despotic—is that despite the potential autonomous standing of members of the *'ulama'*, fully institutionalized effective checks on the decision making of the rulers did not develop in these societies, and there was no machinery other than rebellion through which to enforce any far-reaching "radical" political demands.

And yet in contrast to other patrimonial regimes, the potential not just for rebellion but also for principled revolt and possible regime

<sup>54</sup> Goodwin Raheja 1988; Rudolph and Rudolph 1987; Wink 1994.

<sup>55</sup> Balazs 1964; Chang 1955; Van der Sprenkel 1958; Wakeman 1998; Woodside 1998; Eisenstadt 1992b.



changes was endemic in Muslim societies. True, as Bernard Lewis has shown,<sup>56</sup> a concept of revolution never developed within Islam. But at the same time, as Ernest Gellner indicated in his interpretation of Ibn Khaldoun's work,<sup>57</sup> a less direct yet *very* forceful pattern of indirect ruler accountability and the possibility of regime changes did arise. This pattern was closely connected with a second type of ruler legitimation and accountability in Muslim societies—that embodied in the ruler being seen as the upholder of the pristine, transcendental Islamist vision.

Yet the possibility of implementing that pristine vision of Islam, of achieving that ideal fusion between the political and the religious community, of constructing the *umma*, was actually given up on relatively early in the formation and expansion of Islam. Indeed, the fact that political issues constituted a central focus of Muslim theology was to no small extent rooted in this disjunction between the ideal of the Islamic ruler as the upholder of the pristine transcendental vision of Islam and the reality of rulership in Islamic religion.<sup>58</sup> Yet although never fully attained, it was continually promulgated, as Aziz Al Azmeh has shown, with very strong utopian orientation, by various scholars and religious leaders, in the later periods.<sup>59</sup> Given the ongoing perception of the age of the Prophet as an ideal, even utopian model, the idea of restoration constituted a perennial component of Islamic civilization, promoted above all by some of the extreme reformist movements. Muhammad's community in Medina became—in the apt phrase of Henry Munson, Jr., the Islamic “primordial utopia.”<sup>60</sup> Many of the later rulers (the Abbasids, Fatimids, and others) came to power on the crest of religious movements that upheld this ideal and legitimized themselves in just such religious-political terms.

### XIII

The impact of this enduring utopian vision of the original Islamic era, and ideal, of the fact that this ideal was neither ever fully implemented nor ever fully given up, became evident in some specific

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<sup>56</sup> Lewis 1973.

<sup>57</sup> Ibn Khaldoun 1988; Gellner 1981

<sup>58</sup> Al Azmeh 1997; Rosenthal 1958; Rosenthal 1968.

<sup>59</sup> Al Azmeh 1997; idem 1993.

<sup>60</sup> Munson 1988.

characteristics of the political dynamism of Islamic regimes and of Islamic sects—or rather movements with sectarian tendencies. One has of course to be very careful in using the term “sect”—with its Jewish and especially Christian roots—with respect to Islam, or even with respect to Hinduism. Other than the fundamental break between the Shi’ites and the Sunnis, the distinctive characteristic of Christian sectarianism—the tendency to schism—has barely been applicable to Islam. But sectarian-like tendencies have existed in the recurring social movements in Muslim societies; and one of their distinctive characteristics has been the importance of their political dimensions, frequently oriented toward the restoration of that pristine visions of Islam, which has never been given up. Such renovative orientations were embodied in the different versions of the tradition of reform—the Mujaddid tradition.<sup>61</sup>

These radical reform movements could be focused on the person of a *mahdi* and/or be promulgated by a Sufi order or in a tribal group such as the Wahabites, or in a school of law. As Emanuel Sivan has pointed out:

Islamic Sunni radicalism was born out of the anti-accommodative attitude towards political power which had always existed within this tradition as a vigilante-type, legitimate, albeit secondary strand. Its most consistent and powerful paragon over the last seven centuries was the neo-Hanbalite school of Islamic law. When modern Sunni radicals looked in the 1920s and 1960s for a tradition to build upon, they turned quite naturally, like their predecessors in the late eighteenth century (the founders of Saudi Arabia) to neo-Hanbalism.<sup>62</sup>

Such restorative profundamentalist tendencies were often connected with strong utopian eschatological orientations. In the words of Aziz Al Azmeh:

The Medinan Caliphate can thus be regarded, with Laroui, as a utopia. What Laroui omits is an important complement without which consideration of this matter would remain incomplete: this is eschatology. Unlike activist, fundamentalist utopia, this finalist state of felicity and rectitude associated with the future reigns of the Mahdi (the Messiah) and of ‘Isab. Maryam (Jesus Christ) is not the result of voluntaristic action! Like the medinan regime and the prophetic example, it is a miraculous

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<sup>61</sup> Landau-Tasserou 1989; Lazarus-Yafeh 1986; Levtzion 1986; Levtzion and Voll 1987; Levtzion and Weigert 1995; Voll 1991.

<sup>62</sup> Sivan 1994, p. 16.

irruption by divine command onto the fact of history, although it will be announced for the believers by many cosmic and other signs. Not only is the End a recovery of the Muslim prophetic experience, it is also the recovery of the primordial Adamic order, of the line of Abel, of every divine mission like those of Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus and Muhammad, who incorporates, transcends and consummates them all in the most definitive form of primeval religiosity, Islam. The End, like the beginning and like the periodic irruptions of prophecy, is really against nature; it is the calque of the beginning so often repeated in history, and is the ultimate primitivism.<sup>63</sup>

Political and/or renovative orientations could be oriented toward active participation in the political centre, or its destruction or transformation, or toward a conscious withdrawal from it. But even such withdrawal, which developed in both Shi'ism and Sufism, often harboured tendencies to pristine renovation, leading potentially to political action.

#### XIV

The fullest development of the political potential of such renovative tendencies took place in Islamic societies where such tendencies became connected with the resurgence of tribal revival against "corrupt" or weak regimes, rooted in the mode of Islamic expansion. Here the political impact of such movements became connected with processes attendant on the expansion of Islam and especially with the continuous impingement on the core Islamic polities of relatively newly converted tribal elements who presented themselves as the carriers of the original ideal Islamic vision and of the pristine Islamic polity. Many tribes (e.g. some of the Mongols), after being converted to Islam, transformed their own "typical" tribal structures to accord with Islamic religious-political visions and presented themselves as the symbol of pristine Islam, with strong renovative tendencies oriented to the restoration of pristine Islam.<sup>64</sup>

This tendency became closely related to the famous cycle depicted by Ibn Khaldoun—namely, the cycle of tribal conquest, based on tribal solidarity and religious devotion, giving rise to the conquest of cities and settlement in them, followed by the degeneration of the

<sup>63</sup> Al Azmeh 1993, p. 98

<sup>64</sup> Lewis 1973, ch. 18, pp. 253–66; Gellner 1981; Ibn Khaldoun 1988.

ruling (often the former tribal) elite and then by its subsequent regeneration out of new tribal elements from the vast—old or new—tribal reservoirs. Ibn Khaldoun emphasized above all the possibility of such renovation from within the original, especially Arab, tribal reservoir, and not from reservoirs acquired as it were through the expansion of Islam. Moreover, he focused more on the dilution of internal tribal cohesion as an important factor in the decline of Muslim dynasties and paid less attention to the “dogmatic” dimensions of Islam. But the overall strength of Ibn Khaldoun’s approach is that it provides an important analytical tool for understanding the dynamics of Islamic societies beyond the geographical scope of his own vision. Such new “converts”—along with the seemingly dormant tribes of the Arabian peninsula, of which the Wahabites constituted probably the latest and most forceful illustration—became a central dynamic political force in Islamic civilization.

By virtue of the combination of this expansion with such sectarian, renovative orientations, Islam was probably the only Axial civilization within which sectarian-like movements—together with tribal leadership and groups—often led not only to the overthrow or downfall of existing regimes but also to the establishment of new political regimes oriented, at least initially, to the implementation of the original pristine, primordial Islamic utopia.

## XV

It was indeed the Wahhabites who constituted, as John Voll has indicated, the last—and very forceful—case of a “traditional” Islamic, renovative proto-fundamentalist movement:

The vision of creating a society in which the Qur’an is implemented means that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s mission would inevitably entail political consequences. It was the local rulers who forced him to leave the town where he began teaching, and it was another local ruler, Ibn Sa’ud, who provided necessary support. The political system created by the Wahhabis did not place the inspirational teacher in a position of political rule. Instead, the Wahhabi state was based on the close cooperation of a learned ruler (*shaykh*) and an able commander (*emir*). The combination reflected a long-standing perception of the proper relations between the institutions of the scholars and those of the commanders. Such a system of institutionalization reflected a reduced emphasis on charismatic leadership among Sunni fundamentalists and was also an important aspect of the great Sunni sultanates of the medieval era.

“Wahhabism” is thus a term used today for the type of reformism elucidated in Abd al-Wahhab’s opposition to popular religious superstitions and innovations, his insistence on informed independent judgment rather than the rote reliance on medieval authorities, and his call for the Islamization of society and the creation of a political order that would give appropriate recognition to Islam. Wahhabism represents an important type of fundamentalism, one that continues to operate within the modern world but was not initiated as a result of conflict with the modernized West. The Wahhabis succeeded in establishing a state that, while imperfect, has nonetheless been recognized by many in the Islamic world as consonant with the fundamentalist vision to create an Islamic society. It is the most enduring experiment within the broader mission, and as such it has provided a standard against which other movements and states could be measured.<sup>65</sup>

In such “renovative” regimes a concept of rulership, and of its legitimation, was promulgated that presented the ruler as the upholder of the pristine, transcendental vision. Such regimes constituted probably the most widespread illustration of at least a partial transformation of the “usual” conception of rulership in Sunni Islam. Such transformation could be found also in cases where the rulers, the sultans, were also recognized as being *khalifas*—or at least as having many of the attributes of *khalifas*—by virtue of some charismatic qualities of “barakah” attached to them. This was the case among the Moroccan rulers. For instance, the Moroccan sultans Sidi Muhammed and Mowlay Suleiman based their claim to represent the pristine vision largely on “barakah” (blessing), derived from the fact that they could claim to be descendants of the prophets—to be challenged by different sectors of the ‘ulama’ and various popular sectarian-like movements.<sup>66</sup> Such rulers could be recognized—in John Waterbury’s felicitous characterization—as “Commanders of the Faithful” by wide-ranging groups over whom they would not impose their sultanical rulership.<sup>67</sup>

The most extreme case of such transformation of the usual Sunni conception of rulership was to be found within Shi’ite Islam, where a strong potential for the implementation of such visions by the ruler continually existed, even if in a subterranean fashion, in the image of the hidden imam. When combined with messianic or eschato-

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<sup>65</sup> Voll 1991, p. 351.

<sup>66</sup> Munson 1988.

<sup>67</sup> Waterbury 1970.

logical orientations it came to embody, in the mahdis, messianic-like renovators who appeared in Muslim societies—first in Sunni then in Shi'ite ones—throughout history. Their transformed conception of rulership and of its legitimation was connected with a public sphere that differed greatly from the one analyzed above. With the possible exception of the Mahdi regimes, the *'ulama'* continued to constitute a very important element in those *waqf* institutions that were fully developed, although the Sufi orders were suppressed by the “puritan” renovative regimes. In the latter regimes, the public sphere was much less autonomous, and the ruler constituted the major—possibly the dominant—actor in the public sphere, at least in the regulation of the moral consensus of the community.

## XVI

Insofar as such movements did not create, in the Ibn-Kahldounian mode, new regimes, the impact of such movements on Muslim societies indeed continually constituted their organizational foci. Such construction of autonomous public spheres gave rise to some of the distinct patterns of pluralism characteristic of these societies. This pluralism was characterized by very strongly *patrimonial* features—such as the existence of segregated—regional, ethnic, and religious—sectors perhaps best illustrated by the Ottoman millet. It also resulted in a relative blurring as between the center and the periphery, as well as the prevalence—especially in these sectors—of multiple patterns of legitimation. But in contrast to more classical patrimonial regimes that developed in such non-Axial civilizations as those of Mesoameria, the ancient Near East, and (Hinduized) South Asia, the Muslim patrimonial regimes were in constant tension with the more sectarian “totalistic” tendencies and they could be undermined by the more extreme proto-fundamentalists, who could attempt, as was the case with the Wahhabis, to establish new “pristine” regimes.

## XVII

It is only natural that these tensions and confrontations between pluralistic and totalistic tendencies became intensified in Muslim societies with the establishment within them of regimes rooted in the ideological premises of modernity, with their strong emphasis on relatively homogeneous territorial states. The rise of modern nation states, with their claim to homogeneity, has greatly undermined the autonomy

of the public sphere—with the state attempting to appropriate, control, and even monopolize it. Although, as Dale Eickelman has shown,<sup>68</sup> a vibrant public sphere did develop in these regimes—and its very development attests to a growing democratization—this trend did not necessarily broaden the scope of autonomous political participation and of pluralism. These problems became even more acute with the rise of contemporary fundamentalist movements, which often combined the control mechanisms of the modern states with strong Jacobin tendencies, legitimized in terms of an essentialist tradition.

Contemporary Muslim societies can be seen as moving between two poles: attempts to establish territorial states with some elements of pluralism that build on their earlier historical experience; and strong anti-pluralistic tendencies in the form of either extreme secular oppressive—often military—regimes or extreme Jacobin fundamentalist ones. But these problems are beyond the scope of this volume.

## XVIII

The above analysis of the characteristics and dynamics of public spheres in Islamic societies illustrates how one might account for the internal dynamics of these non-European modern civilizations at least to some extent in their own terms; how one might analyze the ways in which power and culture are interwoven in different societies and shape also the distinct dynamics of these societies; how to put them in a comparative framework that does not bestow a privileged position on the Western experience.<sup>69</sup>

Additionally, the analysis of public spheres in Islam provides some clues as to the applicability of Western social scientific concepts to non-Western societies. We cannot avoid Western concepts, but we can make them more flexible, so to speak, through differentiation and contextualization. The use of such concepts as public sphere, civil society, and collective identity is helpful as long as we do not assume that the way in which these components were put together in Europe constitutes an evaluative yardstick for other modernizing societies. These components can develop in many different ways, depending, among other factors, on the major symbols available, especially the relative importance of their religious, ideological, pri-

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<sup>68</sup> Eickelman and Piscatori 1996; Eickelman 1993; Eickelman and Anderson 1999.

<sup>69</sup> This follows Eisenstadt and Schluchter 1998.

mordial, and historical aspects; the conception of the political order and its relation to other societal orders; the conception of political authority and its accountability; the conception of the subject; and the modes of centre-periphery relations.

We need to avoid the pitfalls of both Western- and Eastern-centredness. Such a fallacious position can be found, for instance, in the Nihonjinron literature, with its claims about the incomparable uniqueness of Japan. We cannot identify uniqueness without making some comparisons. The attitude of “inverted Orientalism,” sometimes to be found among the more critical Western and Japanese scholars, developed in reaction to the Nihonjinron literature and led to a denial of the validity of certain Japanese categories of thought as applied to the analysis of Japanese historical and contemporary experience. Such an approach turns out to be rather paradoxical, as it goes against the exploration of those categories emphasized by the critics of the “Orientalist” approach.

The existence of debates on these issues attests to the intricacies of comparative research. The root of the problems lies not only in the fact that, at least until recently, most of the scholars who addressed these issues came from the West but also in that this type of research has developed almost entirely—Ibn Khaldoun notwithstanding—as part of the Western modern discourse. The adoption of various critical stances toward the earlier “Orientalist” literature—in the West, in India, in Japan, and elsewhere—has remained part of this discourse. The continuous reconstruction of this discourse by intellectuals in non-Western countries has greatly transformed it, but for the most part these interventions have not gone beyond the confines of this discourse.

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## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

# JAPAN AND THE MULTIPLICITY OF CULTURAL PROGRAMMES OF MODERNITY

### I

One of the central problems or foci of studies of modernization has been the extent of convergence of modern societies, and concomitantly, whether with the worldwide expansion of modernity there will develop only one modern civilization.

In the context of these problems, and in particular the latter, Japan constitutes perhaps the most important test-case—and paradox. One central paradox, of the many that Japan constitutes for the analysis of modernity, is that this has been the first and at least till recently the only fully successful non-Western modernization of a non-Axial civilization—a civilization which could not be seen, in Weber's term, as a Great Religion or World Religion.

Weber's analysis of the civilizational roots of capitalism was part of his comparative sociology of religion. This comparative analysis was based on the premise that in all the Great Religions which he studied there existed the structural and cultural potentialities for the development of capitalism—but that it was only in the West these potentialities bore fruit. In other Great Religions or Civilizations—in what later on would be called Axial civilizations—these potentialities were obviated by the specific hegemonic combination of structural and cultural components that developed within them—very central among them being the confrontations between orthodoxies and heterodoxies or sectarianism.

Truly enough Weber dealt only with the emergence of the original, first capitalism—not with its expansion, and yet even in this framework the paradox of Japan, a non-Axial civilization that has become the first fully modernized non-Western society, stands out.

The explanation of this fact has been very often related to some of the structural characteristics of Tokugawa society,<sup>1</sup> which were in

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<sup>1</sup> The Tokugawa period was 1600–1867; the Meiji period was 1868–1912.

many ways very similar to those which industrialization in Europe was attributed to—the development of structural pluralism, of a multiplicity of centres, of economic power, the breakdown of narrow segregated ecological frameworks, the opening up of family structure, especially indeed in the rural sector, which generated many new resources, and more than incipient, very wide, cross-domain marketization. Of no small importance were also the high levels of literacy and urbanization, and extensive economic integration.<sup>2</sup>

Given this structural similarity in the ‘causes’ of modernization or industrialization between western Europe and Japan, the latter also presents another interesting comparative paradox which is of great importance from the point of view of our discussion, namely that the pattern of modernity—economic, political, or cultural—is markedly different from the original Western one.

It has long been recognized that Japanese modern society, polity and economy exhibit some very distinct characteristics, a distinct mode of structurations of modern institutions and organizations which are structured in ways radically different from those which have developed in other—especially Western—societies. Such differences are not just local variations. They pertain to the very basic ways in which the various modern institutional arenas are regulated, defined, and the broader social and cultural contexts in which they operate.

The common denominator of these characteristics is a very high level of structural differentiation, mobility, openness and dynamics grounded in conceptions of service to social contexts, ideally (as promulgated in the Meiji ideology) to the national community. Neither the emphasis on equality nor the strong emphasis on achievement were grounded in any conception of principled transcendently oriented individuality or of transcendental legitimation of different functional (e.g., political or economic) activities.

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<sup>2</sup> See for instance T. Smith, *Native Sources of Japanese Industrialization, 1750–1920*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1988; J. Baechler, *The Origins of Capitalism*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1975. See also Jean Baechler, ‘The Origins of Modernity: Caste and Feudality (India, Europe and Japan),’ in J. Baechler, J.A. Hall and M. Mann (eds.), *Europe and the Rise of Capitalism*, London, Basil Blackwell, 1988, pp. 39–66.

## II

These distinct characteristics of institutional formation that developed in Japan are closely related to the rather specific mode of definitions of the major arenas of social life that have been prevalent in Japan. The major characteristics of this have been the strong emphasis on contextual frameworks and the concomitant relative weakness of fully formalized, abstract rules demarcating clearly between the different arenas of action, and defining them in abstract formal terms as separate entities. Any institutional arena—political, economic, family and cultural creativity, or individual, group or organizations—has been defined in terms of its relation to the social nexus in which it was embedded. Such nexus was defined in some—continuously changing—combination of primordial, sacral, natural and ascriptive terms. The distinctive characteristic of these terms was that they were not defined in relation to some principles transcending them.

Thus, social actors, individuals or institutional arenas, have been defined in their relation to other such actors not as autonomous ontological entities, but in terms of their mutual interweaving in common frameworks or contexts.

Concomitantly, the major arenas of social action have not been regulated above all by distinct autonomous, legal, bureaucratic or 'voluntary' organizations or rules—even if such organizations have developed within them—but mostly through various less formal arrangements and networks which have in their turn usually been embedded in various ascriptively defined, and continuously redefined, social contexts.

Accordingly, no social, economic or political sectors could easily develop a principled autonomy, autonomous claims to access to the centre, and it was very difficult for autonomous public spaces to develop. In contrast to such potential autonomy, there developed a strong tendency to the conflation of different occupational or class sectors within the different social contexts—be they enterprises, neighbourhoods or such frameworks as various new religions—above all within the context of the overall national community. Within such contexts, and in conjunction with the far-reaching structural differentiation, mobility and openness, there developed a very intensive dynamic—the best known outcomes of which were the educational and economic miracles. But it was in many ways a regulated dynamic but regulated in a rather distinct way.



It is indeed the combination of such regulations with very high levels of dynamics that attests to what constitutes one of the major puzzles for Western scholars—namely that Japan is highly regulated and controlled and yet not a totalitarian and a continually dynamic and innovative society.<sup>3</sup>

### III

In order to understand the roots of the development of such distinct institutional formations in Japan, it might be worthwhile to have a look at the crucial event in the modernization of Japan—the Meiji Ishin, the so-called Meiji Restoration—and to compare it, as has been often done in the literature, with the Great Revolutions—the English Great Rebellion and Civil War, the American and French Revolutions and the subsequent Russian, and even Chinese, ones.<sup>4</sup> The basic long-range processes and causes leading to the downfall of the Tokugawa regime were very similar to those of the Great Revolutions, just as the processes and the causes of the rise of the Tokugawa regime were similar to those of the crystallization of the early modern European absolutist regimes. The most important among such causes were the disintegration of the old mould of political economy through the development of new economic forces,<sup>5</sup> and the consequent undermining of the bases of control of the ruling groups; the spread of education; the growing marketization of large sectors of the economy—two processes which cut across the different domains; the deterioration of the economic situation of the lower samurai and of large sectors of the peasantry; and the improvement of the economic situation of the merchants and of some peasant groups. Last

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<sup>3</sup> See for instance K. van Wolferen, *The Enigma of Japanese Power*, New York, Knopf, 1988, and its very extensive bibliography.

<sup>4</sup> For the most recent presentation of the process of the Restoration see M.B. Jansen (ed.), 'The Meiji Restoration,' in J.W. Hall et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 5, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 308–67; C. Totman et al., 'The Meiji Ishin: Product of Gradual Decay, Abrupt Crisis or Creative Will,' in H. Wray and H. Conroy (eds.), *Japan Examined: Perspectives on Modern Japanese History*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1983, pp. 55–78; W.G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1972; K. Timbergen, *Revolutions from Above*, New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1978.

<sup>5</sup> For an early analysis see: Zenichi Itani, 'The Economic Causes of the Meiji Restoration,' *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Second Series, Vol. XVII, 1938.

but not least were the internal struggles within the central elite—in various samurai groups in the bakufu and in the domains. In the last decades of the Tokugawa regimes—as in those of the Absolutist regimes in Europe—there also developed, as we have seen in the cultural scene, new modes of intellectual and ideological discourse which called into question many of the basic premises of the Tokugawa ideology. All these processes constituted a very important background to the movements which toppled the Tokugawa bakufu.

The late Tokugawa period—from the Tempo reforms of the beginning of the 19th century—abounded in peasant rebellions, in rural and urban movements of protest,<sup>6</sup> and in continuous struggles in the central court of the Shogun in the bakufu—as well as in the relations between the bakufu and the great lords, the daimyo. Extensive struggles also developed with the growing dissatisfaction of many of the lower echelons of samurai within the domains of the daimyo. It was the cooperation between various groups of upper and lower samurai within several domains, especially Choshu and Satsuma, with some connivance from the Imperial Court, that toppled the Tokugawa regime.<sup>7</sup>

Intellectual ferment also abounded. New forms of political ideological discourse were developing—greatly influenced, on the one hand, by neo-Confucian schools and education and on the other by the various movements of nativistic schools and movements. The great expansion of education and literacy, of Confucian schools and academies—an expansion which probably made late Tokugawa Japan the most literate pre-industrial society—provided a very important background to the development of new discourse. New groups, above all of unattached educated Samurai (shishi)—and to a smaller extent urban and peasant groups—organized themselves and travelled around the country, promulgating various would-be radical programmes. There developed also, in common with the situations preceding the Great Revolutions, a general consciousness of the disintegration of the centre. All these developments created at the end of the Tokugawa

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<sup>6</sup> See for instance H.P. Bix, *Peasant Protest in Japan 1590–1884*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1986.

<sup>7</sup> A.M. Craig, *Choshu in the Meiji Restoration*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1961; W.G. Beasley, 'Politics and the Samurai Class Structure in Satsuma, 1858–1868,' *Modern Asian Studies* I, 1, 1967, pp. 47–57.

regime a potentially revolutionary situation, not dissimilar to the situations which developed on the eve of the Great Revolutions.

#### IV

The Meiji Ishin also shared some very important characteristics with these revolutions in terms of its 'outcomes'. In common with them it deposed an existing 'traditional' ruler, in this case the Shogun, and changed the composition of the ruling class entirely.

The institutional effects of the Meiji Restoration in terms of structural change and modernization are also easily comparable to those of Western revolutions—and in Japan, unlike in the first European or American revolutions, these processes were outcomes of conscious policies. The tempo of urbanization, of expansion of education, of commercialization (the high level of which, especially from the end of the eighteenth century, contributed in no small degree to the erosion of the Tokugawa regime) and the relatively quick process of industrialization and of crystallization of a modern capitalist-industrial system, was very intensive.<sup>8</sup> In many ways it was much quicker and more intensive than parallel processes in many European countries, as was also the very strong international orientation—i.e., an orientation to attain an independent, possibly a major standing in the new international order dominated by Western European and American economic or political and colonial orientation.

Similarly the Meiji Ishin ushered in a new mode of legitimation of the political system, even if this new mode was ultimately presented as a restoration of an old, traditional one, and was legitimized in a combination of such restorative terms and new, above all pragmatic, knowledge.

Moreover, just as the Great Revolutions, the Meiji Ishin ushered in not only a new mode of legitimation, but a new—essentially modern—overall cultural programme which encompassed most arenas of life. It constituted indeed a total change of Japanese society.<sup>9</sup> It was

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<sup>8</sup> M.B. Jansen and G. Rozman (eds.), *Japan in Transition: from Tokugawa to Meiji*, Princeton University Press, 1986; *Cambridge History of Japan*, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> See G.M. Wilson, *Patriots and Redeemers in Japan—Motives in the Meiji Restoration*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992, Chap. 2; Najita Tetsuo, 'Conceptual Consciousness in the Meiji Ishin,' in N. Michio and M. Urrutia (eds.) *Meiji Ishin: Restoration and Revolution*. Tokyo, United Nations University Press, 1985, pp. 83–8.

indeed a modern programme, even if in many crucial ways, it differed from the cultural programme of modernity in the West.

## V

And yet from the very beginning the Meiji Ishin differed in some very crucial aspects from the European, American (and later on the Russian and Chinese) revolutions. The first such difference is of course manifest in its very name—even if the term Ishin is possibly closer to Renovation, or being pulled in a new direction rather than simply Restoration as it has been called in Western literature.

The discourse that developed at the end of the Tokugawa period and during the Ishin and in the Meiji state contained several elements which can indeed be probably found in all programmes of modernity. Two—potentially contradictory—of these elements have been the more pragmatic of state formations and the more ‘social’ egalitarian communal themes, themes of social justice and participation. But the way in which these tensions worked out—ideologically and institutionally—differed greatly between the Meiji regime and the post-revolutionary regimes in societies which developed out of Axial civilizations.

The crux of this difference was indeed, rooted in, or closely connected with, the Axial or non-Axial roots of, respectively, the Great Revolutions and the Meiji Ishin. Of special importance in this context was the nature of the utopian components or orientations, especially the relative predominance of universalistic, missionary, future-oriented orientations, which necessarily entailed a strong break with the past.

It is indeed here, in the cultural programme promulgated in the revolution and in the post-revolutionary regimes that some of the distinctive characteristics of the Meiji Ishin which distinguish it from the Great Revolution are to be found. This programme differed greatly from that of most of the Great Revolutions. It was in a way the reverse mirror image of those of the Great Revolutions—although in many ways it was no less radical. It was proclaimed as a renovation of an older archaic system which in fact never existed before, and not as a Revolution aiming to change the social and political order to totally reconstruct state and society alike, according to principles transcending that now in a new direction.

The new cultural programmes, the cosmology and ontology entailed

in it were promulgated as the renovation of an older archaic system, which in fact never existed, not as a revolution aimed at changing the social and political order in an entirely new universalistic direction. Utopian, future-oriented orientations, rooted in a universalistic-transcendental vision, were, in contrast to the other Revolutions, very weak, almost nonexistent, although millenarian restorative themes were prominent in different sectors of the uprisings before and during the Restoration.

Concomitantly in the Meiji Ishin there did not develop, as was the case in the Great Revolutions in Europe, the U.S., Russia, and China, a universalistic, transcendental, missionary ideology, or any components of class ideology—two elements which were also very weak in the peasant rebellions and movements of protest of the Tokugawa period. Some elements of a universal civilizing mission developed in late Meiji, in attitudes towards Korea and China, but these did not entail the conception of these societies constituting, together with the Japanese one, parts of a general universal civilization. The Meiji Ishin was inward-oriented towards the Japanese people; it aimed at the revitalization of the Japanese nation, at making it capable of taking its place in the modern world, but it had no pretence to 'save' the entire world—mankind as a whole—in terms of a new universalistic, future-oriented utopian vision. Many of the leaders of groups which were active in the Restoration emphasized the importance of learning and of promulgating universal knowledge, but only very few of them translated it into principles of overall political action, of ways to reconstruct the Japanese polity and collectivity—and these leaders lost out very early in the game. Similarly, explicit social symbolism—especially class symbolism—was almost entirely absent and was certainly not incorporated into the major symbols of the new regime—not even in connection with the semi-utopian or rather 'inverted utopian' restorationist themes.

The cultural programme promulgated in the Meiji Ishin—and later on by the Meiji state—consisted of a mixture of pragmatic orientations to the question of how to adapt to the new international setting with strong Restorationist components or orientations. It constituted a combination of the restorationist nativistic vision with what may be called functional prerequisites of modern society, such as efficacy, achievement and equality. These later themes were indeed very strongly emphasized—but mainly in terms of their functional contribution to the organization of a modern society.

To follow Sonoda Hidehiro:<sup>10</sup>

The new principle of social equality of the four classes caused by the reorganization of the samurai class was embodied in tendencies commonly shared by the navy, army and university run by the central government. The character of social equality expressed in these tendencies was, of course, quite different from that of European egalitarianism, 'Equality' in this historical context meant that whoever had the ability of perform the samurai's specialized duty could have an 'equal' chance to do it. Conversely, all Japanese people should have 'equal' functions or duties to the state which have been exclusively occupied by the samurai estate. To realize the national policy of 'enrich the country and strengthen the military,' it was thought that 'equal' allocation of the samurai's specialized duty to the four classes was absolutely necessary. We would like to call this type of social equality 'functionalistic egalitarianism' because it was distinguished by the 'equal' requirement of all persons in their duties or functions to the state. Functionalistic egalitarianism was not the recognition of 'equal' human rights as a political ideology which was of European origin and played a significant role in European history, but was the unintentional outcome of the samurai's thorough pursuit of practicality in service to the state. In giving explanations of the decline of the samurai class it is important to acknowledge that a distinct form of egalitarianism had already become established during the last days of the Tokugawa regime when Western political ideology, which had a strong influence on the equalization of highly stratified societies and on the decline of the aristocracy in Europe, began to be introduced into Japan . . . It was only among small groups of intellectuals that there developed a tendency to ground these functional prerequisites in principled metaphysical or transcendental orientations, but they were not successful in changing the hegemonic orientations and premises. The message promulgated by the Meiji Restoration was oriented to the renovation of the Japanese nation—it had almost no universalistic or missionary dimensions. During the Ishin and especially after the Restoration numerous individual scholars engaged in the pursuit of knowledge from abroad and promulgated various, including strong universalistic, new ideas at home, but ultimately it was the so-called Meiji oligarchs, composed of the leaders of the different rebellious factions in the Restoration, that moulded the Meiji regime.

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<sup>10</sup> H. Sonoda, 'The Decline of the Japanese Warrior Class, 1840–1880,' *Japan Review*, Vol. 1, 1990, pp. 73–112.

## VI

It is the combination of these characteristics that makes the designation of 'Revolutionary Restoration' or 'Revolutionary Renovation' the most appropriate one to describe the Meiji Ishin. It was indeed—because it envisaged a new type of society, a new modern cultural programme—a revolutionary transformation, more than a 'simple' violent change of regimes, or more than 'just' a political event. It espoused a totally new vision of society. But the cultural programme which gradually crystallized in the Ishin, and above all in the Meiji State regime, distinguish it from the Great Revolutions and from the cultural programmes of modernity that were promulgated with them.

## VII

These distinct characteristics of the Ishin ideology were closely related to some of the structural characteristics of the revolutionary process itself—which again distinguished it from that of the Great Revolutions. The most important of these characteristics were the relative weak connections between different rebellious groups, their relative segregation, the almost total absence of sacralization of violence, and of the construction of the centre in a liminal mode, which distinguish the revolutionary processes that toppled the Tokugawa bakufu from those of the Great Revolutions.

Of special importance in this context is the fact that close and continuous contacts did not develop between the major actors in the Restoration and religious or cultural sectarian groups or autonomous religious leaders. True enough, cultural developments were of very great importance in the background of the Restoration. There was first of all the very wide spread of education,<sup>11</sup> especially of Confucian education among the samurai groups, the merchants and even among some sectors of the peasants, making Japan probably the most literate pre-industrial country and contributing to a very high level of public consciousness. Second there were the many new reli-

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<sup>11</sup> I. Matsutaro, 'The Meiji Restoration and the Educational Reforms,' *American Anthropologist* 54, 1988, pp. 24–7; R. Rubinger, *Private Academies of Tokugawa Japan*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982; R.P. Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.

gions,<sup>12</sup> the 'religions of relief', which were so widespread in the last decades of the Tokugawa rule.

The numerous Confucian academies that sprung up since the eighteenth century greatly contributed to the development of such political consciousness and to the undermining of the legitimacy of the Tokugawa rule. Moreover, many of the themes of protest that developed, whether in the periphery or in the centre, were imbued with relatively recently constructed ideologies—whether Confucian or 'nativistic'.

But in all these developments there were but few independent Confucian scholars or Buddhist monks who played an autonomous role or attempted to construct the basic framework of the revolutionary discourse.

What is perhaps most distinctive about the Meiji Restoration as compared to the Great Revolutions was the almost total absence of *autonomous*, distinct religious or secular intellectual groups as active independent elements in the political process of the Restoration—and not as simply providing the background for the revolutionary process. This was indeed in marked contrast to the situation, for instance, with respect to the Puritans in the English Revolution and their descendants in the American one, the ideologues of the French Revolution, or the Russian Intelligentsia.<sup>13</sup>

It was above all the samurai, some of them learned in Confucian lore, the shi-shi (who also included, as we have seen, some merchants, peasants and even women), who were most active in the Restoration—but on the whole they did not act as Confucian scholars bearing a distinctly Confucian vision, but rather as members of their respective social and political groups. Accordingly it was possibly the weakness, the near-absence of autonomous groups of ideologues, of intellectuals independent of other social sectors and cutting across

<sup>12</sup> H.M. Harootunian, 'Religions of Relief,' in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 5, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> On the Puritans see: M. Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, Cambridge Mass., Harvard University Press, 1966. On the Intellectuals in the French Revolution, see A. Cochin, *La révolution et la libre pensée*, Paris, Plon-Nourrit, 1924; idem, *L'esprit du Jacobinisme*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1979; F. Furet, *French Revolution*, New York, Macmillan, 1970; idem, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981. On the Russian Intelligentsia, see V.C. Nahirny, *The Russian Intelligentsia: From Torment to Silence*, New Jersey, Rutgers N.J., Transaction Publications, 1982.



them, that explain the fact that in the Meiji Ishin there developed few new, relatively continuous political settings, frameworks bringing different social groups together and moulding them according to an overall political-social vision, and in which there developed common discourse and political activism.<sup>14</sup>

Some additional aspects of the revolutionary process of the Meiji Ishin are interesting from a comparative point of view. Significantly, while violence did of course rage during the events leading to the Restoration and after it—it did not become sanctified to the extent that it did in the Great Revolutions. It was above all elite violence, especially on the part of Tokugawa loyalists, often manifest in rebellions such as that of Sakamoto Ryoma, who did engage in violence in order to ‘restore’ the shogun, very much in line with the more traditional type of violence, with the ‘nobility of failure’ that was sanctified at least among some of the elite groups.<sup>15</sup> But unlike in the Great Revolutions, no such sanctification was accorded to popular violence, nor even to the violence that was employed by those samurai groups which toppled the bakufu regime. Such violence was not seen as the expression of the search for a new overall social order.

Similarly while liminal situations abounded, of course, among the different rebellious groups and movements of protest, yet the central political areas did not become, as in the revolutions, such a liminal area.

## VIII

It was within the framework of these orientations that there developed the definition of modernity in Japan out of the parameters of the Meiji Ishin and the cultural programme of modernity that crystallized in the Meiji Ishin as keeping up with the times, as adapting to the times, to the mastery of Western technology and finding

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<sup>14</sup> T. Najita, ‘Conceptual Consciousness in the Meiji Ishin,’ op. cit.; H.D. Harootunian, ‘Religions of Relief,’ op. cit. For a comparative analysis see S.N. Eisenstadt, ‘Frameworks of the Great Revolutions: Culture, Social Structure, History and Human Agency,’ *International Social Science Journal* 44 (3), Aug. 1992, pp. 385–401.

<sup>15</sup> M.B. Jansen, *Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1961; J. Morris, *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975; N.L. Waters, *Japan’s Local Pragmatist: The Transition from Bakumatsu Meiji in the Kawasaki Region*, Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1983.

a proper place in the international arena. 'Keeping up with the times' was defined as the verdict of the movement of history, but such movement was not defined—as in the West, with its Christian roots, as well as to some extent in other civilizations in terms of historical progression as a historical process defined or measured by some transcendental, universalistic criteria or values or vision<sup>16</sup>—in terms which are perceived as being beyond existing mundane reality. Closely related was the quest for authenticity among wide sectors of Japanese society, for finding Japanese authenticity in the new intellectual sector.

This search for the authenticity of Japanese collectivity and the concomitant evaluation of modernity moved, as we have seen above, between several basic poles. One such major pole was the search to negate modernity—in such cases defined mostly as Western modernity—as undermining the true Japanese spirit or pristine nature; the other such pole was the appropriation of modernity by Japan and the concomitant attempts to identify the true Japanese as against other. Western modernity, sometimes even seeing this as a proof of technological success of the Japanese, of the superiority of Japanese spiritual sensibilities. One direction of the search for Japanese authenticity was the emphasis of the uniqueness of the spiritual essence of the Japanese peoplehood or collectivity.

However limited—as Befu and Manabe have shown the belief of wide sectors of Japanese society in many of the concrete tenets of Nihonjiron as objectively 'true'—the very wide spread of this literature and responsiveness to it does attest to the fact that it must have struck on some chords very close to the search for authenticity among large sectors of the Japanese population.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See for instance Kano Masanoa, 'The Changing Concept of Modernization', *Japan Quarterly*, Jan.-Mar, 1976, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, pp. 28–36. See also G. McCormack and Y. Sugimoto (eds.), *The Japanese Trajectory: Modernization and Beyond*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988; and T. Najita and H.D. Harootunian, 'Japanese Revolt Against the West: Political and Cultural Criticism in the Twentieth Century,' in the *Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 6, Cambridge Press, 1988, pp. 711–60. See also, for a general discussion of the predicament of modernity in Japan, Tetsuo Najita, 'Personal Notes on Modernity and Modernization,' Association for Asian Studies, Presidential Address, March 26, 1993, Los Angeles, CA.

<sup>17</sup> Harumi Befu and Kasufum Manabe. 'A Dynamical Study of Nihonjinron—How Real is the Myth?' *Kwansei Gakuin University Annual Studies*, 1981, XXXVI, pp. 98–111. And also, 'Nihonjinron: The Discussion and Confrontation of Cultural Nationalism,' *Kwansei Gakuin University Annual Studies*, Vol. XL, 1991.

The other major direction of the search for identity, which could overlap with the former, but could also develop in a contrary direction, was that of search for authentic 'natural' universal essence beyond the artificial contrivances of political, social, or even linguistic—a search which could be identified in such 'utopia' as those of Ando Shoeki.<sup>18</sup> The emphasis on such universal essence was in principle universalistic—albeit couched in highly immanentist terms.

Despite strong differences between these orientations to modernity and to the constitution of Japanese collective identity, the common core of this discourse was the strong immanentist orientations thereof and the concomitant bracketing out of universalistic values as rooted in transcendental visions or orientations which are perceived as being beyond existing mundane reality, beyond the 'times'—and as guiding them.<sup>19</sup>

Closely related to this strong core of the Japanese discourse of modernity was the continual dissociation between 'Zweckrationalität' and 'Wertrationalität,' with a very strong tendency to extol instrumental and technological achievement in a technocratic mode—one of the more recent manifestations of which is the emphasis on information as the core of a new societal order, of non-confrontational society of which Japan is the precursor. There could also develop a total negation of such Zweckrationalität in the name of pristine Japanese or 'natural' spirituality—with, however, but little discussion of the relation of such instrumental rationality with different Wert-rationalität, or of the discourse of different 'Wertrationalitäten.' Concomitantly, there developed on the level of ideological discourse relatively little autonomous, critical evaluation by different groups of intellectuals, of the concrete developments of the modern society that developed in Japan, which could guide concrete political programmes.

## IX

It was this cultural programme of modernity, rooted as it was in the non-Axial, immanentist ontologies that have been prevalent in Japan,

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<sup>18</sup> T. Najita, 'Remembering Forgotten Texts: Ando Shoeki and the Predicament of Modernity.' Lecture at Hachinote Aomori (10/17). Symposium on 'Ando Shoeki and Today.' Draft.

<sup>19</sup> Lawrence Olson, *Ambivalent Moderns: Portraits of Japanese Cultural Identity*, foreword by Ronald A. Morse. London; Rowman and Littlefield, 1992.

that guided the crystallization of the Meiji state and later on the development of modern Japanese society, and to some extent at least the specific characteristics of the major institutional formations of modern Japan to which we have alluded at the beginning of this article. I will illustrate these characteristics in somewhat greater detail as they apply to the political arena.

The strong emphasis on the embeddedness of the major arenas of action in contexts defined in some combinations of natural, sacral or primordial terms can be identified first of all in the strong tendency to the conflation of the national community, of the state and of society—a tendency which has become especially prevalent in the modern and contemporary arenas.

Such conflation has had several repercussions on the structuring of the ground rules of the political arena. The most important of these repercussions have been the development, first of a weak concept of the state as distinct from the broader overall, in modern terms national community (national being defined in sacral, natural and primordial terms), and second of a societal state characterized<sup>20</sup> by a strong tendency to emphasize guidance rather than direct regulation and permeation of the periphery by the centre.

The view of the Japanese state as a 'weak' one was proposed by D. Okimoto who has also proposed that power in Japan is not conceived as an independent entity to be applied to different arenas and life according to 'objective' criteria. Rather, it is embedded in a structure of interdependent relationships which operate on the basis of dispersed actions and coordination up and down vertical hierarchical networks, rather than on the basis of coercion from above. It is based on fine tuning, consensus building and continual adaptation. Hence government could be compared to an 'orchestra conductor',<sup>21</sup> and there has developed a marked tendency—to use a term proposed by Victor Koschmann—to 'soft rule', the rule of a given authority, not grounded in some transcendental vision, and hence not confronting society in terms of such visions either.

Such conflation of the national community and of the state, and the concomitant weakness of distinct conceptions of the state and of

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<sup>20</sup> For numerous illustrations of this mode of political activities, presumably rooted in the agrarian as against the equestrian society, see Shoichi Watanabe, *The Peasant Soul of Japan*, foreword by Louis Allen. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.

<sup>21</sup> D. Okimoto, Power in Japan, The Societal State, final draft, August 1989.

civil society, had developed already in the Sengoku and Tokugawa periods, in the concept of Kokutai, and has developed in the modern and contemporary periods in the concept or slogan of 'united monarch and people' (*kunmin dochü*), and in the closely related distinction between Kokutai (national structure) and seitai (political structure) which makes the latter inferior to the former and embedded in it.

Closely related has been a very weak development of an autonomous civil society, although needless to say elements of the latter, especially the structural, organizational components thereof (such as different organizations) have not been missing. One of the most interesting corollaries of this embedding of the political arena and of civil society alike within the overall community has been, as we have seen, the absence in the historical ('feudal') and early modern conceptions of autonomous legal rights and of representative institutions. In Japan, however, unlike in many absolutist, or totalitarian systems, the absence of such institutions was not connected with a strong symbolic distinction of the centre, of the state, or with strong efforts by the centre not only to control, but also to restructure and mobilize the periphery—according to a new vision destructive of the values hitherto prevalent in the periphery.

These characteristics of the political arena can be also identified in the political system which developed in Japan after the Second World War and which has recently been judged by a group of Japanese and Western scholars to be a clearly democratic system in which some of the major components of democracy—rule of law, freedom of assembly, of the press—have been continuously expanding.

Concurrently this system has continued to exhibit some very distinct characteristics. Closely connected to these characteristics of the major institutional arenas of modern Japan there has also developed a rather distinct pattern of political dynamics, especially of the impact of movements of protest on the centre. The most important characteristic of this impact was the relatively weak principled ideological confrontation with the centre—above all the lack of success of leaders of such confrontational movements to mobilize wide support; the concomitant quite far-ranging success in influencing, if often indirectly, the policies of the authorities and the creation of new autonomous but segregated social spaces in which activities promulgated by such movements could be implemented.

But it is not only that many of the components of a 'full' liberal democracy have been, as it were, underdeveloped, as manifest in the nature of the impact of movements of protest. What is especially important in the context of our discussion here are the reasons for such underdevelopment.

Such underdevelopment has been due not only to the presumed autocratic or repressive components of the regime. It is also—perhaps above all—rooted in some of the basic premises of the mode of legitimation of this system as it developed under the Meiji, above all in the very narrowness of the autonomous public space, or civil society, independent of the state organs and in the concomitant legitimation of the state in terms of its embeddedness in the national community.

The processes of democratization and of the continual diversification of sectors and elites that took place after the Second World War have expanded the access of broader sectors of society to the organs of government and imbued these organs with a greater respect for the legal specification of the rights of citizens and for legal procedure. It has not, however, greatly expanded the scope of an autonomous civil society which could promulgate its own criteria of legitimation and impose them on the state in the name of principles transcending the state and the national community alike.

The specific type of civil society that developed in Japan is perhaps best illustrated by the continual construction of new social spaces which provide semi-autonomous arenas in which new types of activities, consciousness and discourse develop, which however do not impinge directly on the centre. Those participating in them do not have autonomous access to the centre, and are certainly not able to challenge its premises. The relations between state and society are rather effected in the mode of patterned pluralism, of multiple dispersed social contracts.

But this weakness of civil society was not due to its suppression by a strong state, but rather to the continual conflation of state and civil society with the national community. While it is those close to the centre—oligarchies, bureaucracies, politicians and even heads of economic organizations—who have on the whole shaped the contours of this community, yet they have not done it in a continuous confrontational response to the demands of other sectors of civil society. The constitutional-democratic system that has developed in Japan

has not been grounded in the conceptions of principled, metaphysical individualism or in a principled confrontation between state and society as two distinct ontological entities.

Accordingly, changes in the types of political regimes, or in the relative strength of different groups, have not necessarily implied changes in principles of legitimation and in the basic premises and ground rules of the social and political order.

## X

All these institutional characteristics of modern Japan are indeed closely related to the distinct cultural programme of modernity that developed there, with its strong non-Axial roots—as it crystallized in the Meiji Ishin and the Meiji state.

They attest to the possibility of the development of multiple programmes of modernity. They attest to the fact that the incorporation of different themes and institutional patterns of Western modern civilization in new Western European societies did not entail their simple acceptance in their original form. It rather entailed the continuous selection and reinterpretation of such themes and reconstruction of the institutional pattern.

Such cultural programmes that develop in these societies entailed different interpretations of the basic cultural programme of modernity; they entailed different emphases on different components of these programmes—such as man's active role in the universe; the relation between *Wertrationalität* and *Zweckrationalität*; the conceptions of cosmological time and its relation to historical time; the belief in progress; the relation of progress to history as the process through which the programme of progress occurs; the relation to the major utopian visions; and the relation between the individual and the collectivity, between reasons and emotions, and between the rational and the romantic and emotive, could be realized.

In many of these civilizations the basic meaning of 'modernity'—its cultural historical programme—was quite different from its original Western vision rooted in the ideas of Enlightenment, of progress, of the unfolding of the great historical vision of reason and self realization of individuals, of social and individual emancipation.

While modernity was, within many of the non-Western societies, conceived as growing participation both on the internal and inter-

national scene in terms derived from the ideas of equality and participation, the other dimensions—especially those of individual liberty, of social and individual emancipation and individual autonomy as closely related to the historical unfolding of reason, which were constitutive of the Western European discourse on modernity from the Enlightenment on—were not necessarily always accepted.

These different symbolic and institutional constellations have developed first of all with respect to the interpretation of the basic symbolic conceptions and premises of different modern civilizations; with respect to the ways in which these basic symbolical premises of modernity are selected and reinterpreted according to the new 'modern' traditions; in their conception of themselves and of their past; and with respect to their new symbols and collective identity and their negative or positive attitudes to modernity in general and to the West in particular.

These processes of reinterpretation also apply to the basic concept of economic development. While the emphasis on economic and technological development has certainly become part of each modern or modernizing society or civilization, these still differ greatly with respect to the overall cultural and social premises. Above all, they vary with respect to the degree to which the emphasis on economic development is connected with an emphasis on the mastery of their respective environments as against an adaptation to it; to the relative importance of economic goals in the panorama of human goals; to conceptions of the social order to productive as against distributive economic orientations; with respect to the type of political regimes—whether authoritarian, pluralistic or totalitarian regime, with respect to the major modes of political protest and participation, to conceptions of authority, hierarchy, and equality.

These differences between the different programmes of modernity were not purely cultural or academic. They were closely related to some basic problems inherent in the political and institutional programmes of modernity. Thus, in the political realm, they were closely focused on the relations between the utopian and the civil components in the construction of modern politics; between 'revolutionary' and 'normal' politics, or between the general will and the will of all; between civil society and the state, between individual and collectivity. These different cultural programmes of modernity entailed also different conceptions of authority and of its accountability, different



modes of protest and of political activity, and different modes of constitutional formations.

These considerations do not negate the obvious fact that in many central aspects of their institutional structure—be it in occupational and industrial structure, in the structure of education or of cities—very strong convergences have developed in different modern societies. These convergences were above all manifest in the development of common problems—but the modes of coping with these problems differed greatly between these civilizations. These differences are attributable to a great variety of reasons—such as, among others, the various historical convergences, the historical timing of the incorporation of different societies into the emerging international systems. But beyond all these reasons, even if in close relation to them, these differences were also closely related to the development of the new distinct cultural programmes of modernity which crystallized in these societies or civilizations.

These different cultural programmes of modernity were not shaped by what has been sometimes presented in some of the earlier studies of modernization as natural evolutionary potentialities of these societies; by the natural unfolding of their tradition, nor by their placement in the new international settings. Rather they were shaped by the continuous interaction between the cultural premises of these different societies; their historical experience; and the mode of impingement of modernity on them and of their incorporation into the modern political economic, ideological world frameworks.

Such different cultural programmes of modernity crystallized through the process of a highly selective incorporation and transformation in these civilizations of the various premises of Western modernity.

From this point of view modernity development has to be viewed as a distinct type of civilization which has its own distinct expansive capacities. This approach is, of course, very close to the Weberian one, but in many ways goes beyond it, as well as beyond the initial studies of modernization of the fifties and sixties of this century. As against the assumptions of these latter studies it became clear that while indeed modernization and industrialization gave rise to many common problems and some common core institutional patterns, yet the patterns of institutional response to these problems vary greatly between different societies or civilizations.

Or, in more general words, it became clear that in their encounters with the impact of the political, economic, and ideological forces

of modernization, different societies and civilizations develop different patterns of response, different dynamics, different patterns of modern civilization, and that these are to some degree at least related to the patterns of symbolic institutional dynamics that developed within them in previous 'historical' times.

Thus, while the spread of modernity has indeed taken place throughout most of the world, yet it did not give rise to just one civilization, one pattern of ideological and institutional response, but to at least several basic variants—and in order to understand these different patterns, it is necessary to take into account the pattern of historical development of these civilizations.

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## CHAPTER NINETEEN

# SOME COMPARATIVE INDICATIONS ABOUT THE DYNAMICS OF HISTORICAL AXIAL AND NON-AXIAL CIVILIZATIONS

### I

In this chapter I would like to present on the basis of the analysis presented in the chapters in this section,<sup>1</sup> a short comparative foray on some of the major dimensions of change, namely on the extent to which structural, institutional changes, the crystallization of new types of institutional formations, the reconstruction of centers and collectivities, and the development of new organizations and roles were related to the construction of new types of legitimation and new symbols of collective consciousness and identity as they developed in some of the major Axial civilizations and in Japan. I shall also consider the major characteristics of reflexivity that developed in these civilizations; the extent to which in each civilization there developed a consciousness of discontinuity between different historical periods, and how such discontinuity was conceived; and the impact of the encounter with other civilizations on these modes of reflexivity and on the reconstruction of tradition.

### WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE

### II

We shall start with the analysis of Western and Central Europe, and of the modes of changes and reconstruction of centers and collectivities within it. As both Europe—especially Western and central Europe—and Japan were in some crucial phases of their history highly decentralized societies with strong regional organizations and allegiances, there developed within both continuous processes for the

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<sup>1</sup> In these chapters there are to be found also the relevant references.

reconstruction of various centers and collectivities. The major characteristics of such construction in Europe were the connections of the frequent attempts at such reconstruction, first, with ideological struggles that focused on the relative symbolic importance of the various collectivities and centers; second, with attempts to combine the structuring of the boundaries between centers and collectivities with the reconstruction of the bases of their legitimation; and third, with a strong consciousness of discontinuity between different stages of their development. At the same time, far-reaching institution, economic, and political changes were in Europe often connected not only with the development of new organizations but also with the redefinition of major roles in terms of new criteria and with their legitimation in terms of new symbolic tropes.

One central aspect of European medieval and modern history was the continuous construction and reconstruction of chiefdoms, municipalities, feudal fiefs, and cities, as well as of tribal or transtribal, regional, protonational, and national communities. Indeed, one of the most distinctive characteristics of European historical experience has been the continual constitution, within the broad flexible frameworks and boundaries of European civilization, of multiple, often competing communities, each claiming to be the best representative of this broader civilizational framework. The various centers and subcenters, as well as the different collectivities that developed in Europe, did not simply coexist in a sort of adaptive symbiosis. They tended to become arranged in a complicated but never unified rigid hierarchy, with no clearly predominant center. Many of them, however, aspired not only to actual but also to ideological predominance and hegemony.

Hence, the various centers were never completely separate from one another. This was true not only of the relations between church and state, but also of those between different religious, political, and ethnic centers and subcenters and collectivities. These collectivities and institutions were legitimized in a variety of terms—in terms of primordial attachments and traditions, of transcendental criteria, and of standards of civic tradition—and their continuous restructuring in Europe was closely connected with the oscillation and tension between these sacred, primordial, and civil dimensions of legitimation. While, for instance, many collectivities were defined mainly in primordial terms and the church mainly in sacral ones, each collectivity and

center also attempted to arrogate all the other symbols of legitimation to itself.

Closely related was the structure of center-periphery relations that developed in Western and central Europe. As in the imperial societies, such as China or the Byzantine empire, Western and central European societies were usually characterized by a relatively strong commitment among their more active sectors—both central and peripheral—to common ideals or goals; the center permeated the periphery to mobilize support for its policies, and the periphery impinged on the center to influence the shaping of its contours. Many of these centers aimed at expansion, which would encompass other centers and communities, and such expansion was often legitimated in universal—often religious and ideological—terms, frequently giving rise to religious or ideological wars. But in contrast to purely imperial regimes, there developed in Europe, not only a multiplicity of centers and collectivities, but also a much stronger impingement of the periphery and of various subcenters on their respective centers.

The potential of such impingement was rooted in the combination of structural and cultural pluralism that developed in Europe. This combination of cultural traditions with pluralistic structural and political-ecological conditions explains the fact that in Western and central Europe there developed—more than in other Christian civilizations—continuous tensions between the conception of hierarchy and that of equality as the basic dimensions of participation of different sectors of the society in the political and religious arenas, and between the strong commitment and autonomous access of different groups to the religious and political orders, on the one hand, and the emphasis on the mediation of such access by the church or by political powers, on the other.

### III

The mode of change that developed in Western and Central Europe, from at least the late Middle Ages on, was characterized by a relatively high degree of symbolic and ideological articulation of political struggles and of movements of protest; by a high degree of coalescence of changes in different institutional arenas; and by a close relationship between such changes and the restructuring of political centers and regimes. As, for instance, the economic or cultural arenas changed, they impinged on one another and above all

on the political arena. Such impingement was, as in any society, often conceived as bearing on the basic premises of these arenas. These changes gave rise to a continuous restructuring of boundaries, which did not, however, obliterate the autonomy of these different arenas. Rather, there developed a strong tendency to define institutional arenas, collectivities, or strata as distinct social spaces with relatively sharp boundaries and to conceive of different arenas of social life, of individuals, and even of roles as distinct ontological entities, often delineated in absolutist ideological terms. The strong tendency toward the ideological demarcation of different arenas of life at times conflicted with the multiplicity of collectivities and centers. In some historical circumstances, as for instance in the period of the Reformation, it gave rise to intensive wars of religion and later, in the modern period, to extreme nationalistic movements. A related tendency toward defining new activities, roles, or organizational complexes and collectivities in relatively autonomous terms also developed.

#### IV

The continuous changes in the structure of centers and collectivities, and the struggle over their relative cultural and institutional standing, were activated in Europe by primary and secondary elites relatively close to the center, among them the major carriers of religious heterodoxies and political innovations. These elites, often closely related to broader social strata, tended to direct their activities toward center formation and to combine them with those of institution building in the economic, cultural, and educational spheres.

It was the various religious orthodoxies and heterodoxies and the political rulers that promulgated the ideological dimensions of the restructuring of centers and collectivities; protest movements, many of which were oriented toward the reconstruction of the political arena, also played a very important role. It was indeed in close relation to the place of heterodoxies—and, of course, that of the orthodoxies they confronted—that the tendencies to universal claims and expansion developed.

#### V

There developed also in early-modern Europe the nuclei of a distinctive type of civil society characterized, first, by the existence of “private” public arenas distinct from the state; second, by the devel-

opment within such arenas of associations that regulated many of the activities of the major social groups and prevented the civil society from becoming a shapeless mass society; third, by the relative openness and autonomy of these arenas, that is, by the fact that they were not embedded in closed, ascriptive, or corporate groups; fourth, by the multiplicity of such sectors; and, fifth, by the autonomous access of most of these sectors to the central political arena, combined with a certain degree of commitment to the center.

These features of civil society in modern Europe were closely related to the continuous, often ideological confrontation between the construction of centers and the processes of institution building, as well as to the continuous competition between different groups for access to the construction of these centers. In close relation to such confrontations, there developed—especially in modern Europe but with roots in earlier periods—the assumption that political elites and the more autonomous social groups, the state on the one hand and civil society on the other, were engaged in a continuous, ideological struggle over their relative importance in the formation of the cultural and political centers of the nation-state and in the regulation of access to it.

## VI

The most important institutional changes—especially those from feudal to absolutist and from absolutist to modern, revolutionary nation-state—were in Europe connected with marked changes in the legitimation of regimes and with the development of a strong consciousness of discontinuity, in patterns of legitimation and in the conception of the cosmic order, which became an integral part of the European collective consciousness. The most important such shifts were the changes from social-religious legitimation to the theological principle of the divine rights of kings, then to the concept of sovereignty and later the patterns promulgated by the great revolutions and the Enlightenment. The centrality of the revolutions in the European collective consciousness is the clearest manifestation of this conception of discontinuity. The growing legitimation of the economic arena in its own terms—especially its definition, in relation to Protestantism, in soteriological terms—is yet another illustration.

True enough, all these patterns of legitimation built on themes and tropes already present in the rich traditions derived from tribal,



Greek, Roman, Jewish and Christian sources. But in many situations of historical change these themes and tropes were reconstructed in a very selective manner. This is, of course, true to a great extent in all societies and civilizations. Beyond this, there developed in Europe a strong tendency to emphasize the novelty of the new patterns of legitimation, even if such breaks were legitimized in terms of older themes (such as the rights of Englishmen, in the Puritan revolution). The various themes and tropes were not only de facto reconstructed but consciously and advisedly so. There developed with respect to the premises of European philosophical and social discourse—especially from about the fifteenth century on—a strong consciousness of discontinuity and innovation and a tradition of questioning these premises in terms of various, often changing, transcendental values and premises, formulated both in “religious” and in “secular” terms.

These changes in patterns of legitimation and this consciousness of discontinuity were also closely related to a mode of reflexivity in which the older order was reflected upon according to new criteria that transcended both old and new orders. Such emphases on discontinuity were, in the European setting, closely related to the impact of Jewish, and above all Christian, eschatological visions, which not only gave rise to a strong historical consciousness but also shaped some very important dimensions of this consciousness. The most important of these, from the point of view of our discussion, was the evaluation of concrete institutional developments in terms of the unfolding of some universal historical plan—not just (as was the case in some Buddhist historiography) the evaluation of a given epoch in general moral or cosmic terms, or in terms of the fate or decline of the universe, but also the evaluation of events and institutional formations in terms of a temporal progression toward a (religious or secular) eschatological end and according to the criteria or values implied in such a vision.

## VII

From its very beginning European civilization confronted, albeit in different ways, the two other monotheistic civilizations, Jewish and Muslim. While the confrontation with Jewish civilization was mostly a religiously ideological one with but a slight power component, this latter component was of central importance in the encounter with Muslim civilization. Throughout these encounters—and even more

so later on, during the age of discoveries and the expansion of Europe—the consciousness of other civilizations constituted a continuous component of the self-definition of European civilization. These encounters, imbued with strong ideological dimensions and often connected with attempts to redefine the very boundaries of European civilization, were usually characterized by an oscillation between a willingness to incorporate and acknowledge the legitimacy of some aspects of the other civilizations and the principled denial of their validity.

Many of the discontinuities and breaks between different “stages” of European society, and above all the consciousness thereof, were related to such encounters with other civilizations. These encounters did of course expose European societies to foreign or alien influences, not only in the technological arena or with respect to various commodities, but also with respect to different conceptions of moral and social order. The absorption of such foreign influences was in many, perhaps most, cases effected according to the premises of the European societies. Yet both the encounters with other civilizations and the absorption of their influences were effected in ways that emphasized the discontinuities and differences within these premises and often gave rise to patterns of reflexivity that tended to question the basic premises of European civilization and its major institutional corollaries.

Hence the concern with defining the “other” constituted a central and continuous component of European civilization. Such concern could easily spill over to the relations between collectivities within Europe itself, each of which sometime portrayed other such collectivities as the “other.”

## VIII

There also developed in Europe strong competition between different *Wertrationalitäten* (value rationalities), such as the religious and philosophical ones in the Middle Ages, and between them and different instrumental rationalities, which would sometimes—especially in the modern period, as with science—make claims to be the bearers of ultimate values. These tendencies were closely related to the modes of reconstruction of tradition in Europe, which oscillated between principled traditionalism and the selective incorporation of components of the tradition into new frameworks. Principled traditionalism is not to be confused with a “simple” or “natural” upkeep of a

given tradition. Rather, it denotes an ideological stance directed against new symbols; it espouses aspects of the older tradition as the only legitimate symbols of the traditional order and upholds them against "new" trends. By opposing these trends, traditionalist attitudes tend toward formalization on both the symbolic and the organizational levels and toward rather sharp segregation between traditional (ritual, religious) and nontraditional spheres of life without, however, developing any strong connective symbolic and organizational bonds between the two. At the same time, a predisposition toward or demand for some clear unifying principle tends to persist, and uneasiness and insecurity becomes pronounced when it is lacking. As a result, a tendency can develop toward the ritualization of the symbols of traditional life, on the personal and collective levels alike. Relatively rigid, militant attempts to impose traditional symbols on the new, secular world may then alternate with efforts to isolate these traditional symbols from the impurities of that world. This persistence of traditional patterns is often accompanied by an intolerance of ambiguity on both personal and collective levels and by apathy and the concomitant erosion of any normative commitments.

On a macrosocietal level this pattern, most fully manifest in Europe in the Counter-Reformation and its offshoots, has been usually characterized mainly by conservative ideologies, coercive orientations and policies, and an active ideological or symbolic closure of the new centers, with a strong traditionalistic emphasis on older symbols.

A second major pattern of the reconstruction of tradition in Europe yielded a continuous differentiation among the various layers of tradition and between the traditional and nontraditional (or religious and nonreligious) spheres of life. Such differentiation allows for more continuity and greater overflow and overlapping between the different arenas of life, and this continuity does not ordinarily become fully formalized or ritualized. In such patterns there does not usually develop a strong predisposition toward rigid unifying principles, and greater tolerance of ambiguity and of cognitive dissonance is continuously built up. The social groups that develop this pattern tend to distinguish between different layers of traditional commitments and motivations and to draw on them all, insofar as possible, in the development of new tasks and activities. Other flexible relations tend to develop between these different layers of tradition, between certain poles or modes of perception of the cosmic, cultural, and social orders, and between symbols of the collective identities of major sub-

groups and collectivities. Traditional symbols may be transposed into new broader frameworks by groups or elites with tendencies to innovate, to create new central symbols of personal or collective identity, as well as new criteria of behavior.

## INDIA

### IX

This comparative foray will be now continued with an analysis of some of the most salient aspects of the processes of change and continuity in Indian civilization.

From a broad comparative perspective, India and Europe share some important characteristics that cannot be found in so pristine a form in any of the other great civilizations in the history of mankind. The most important of these characteristics is the existence of relatively broad common civilizational frameworks, rooted in basic ontological conceptions, cultural-religious orientations, and a multiplicity of continuously changing political centers and subcenters and economic formations. Islamic civilization, especially in the Middle East, also shared some of these characteristics. But given the continuous expansion of Islam, as well as its continuous confrontation with other civilizations, the sense of a continuous, semiterritorial civilizational framework was not as strongly developed as in either Europe or India. In this sense Islam has been the most universalistic civilization, having, in principle at least, negated primordial-territorial or kinship components.

Many concrete structural or organizational aspects of the political and economic arenas (especially the former) that developed in India and Europe evince similarities, for instance, in forms of political domination; kinship; patrimonial, semifeudal, and semiimperial regimes; and the structures of cities. Given these similarities, the different civilizational dynamics of these two civilizations are indeed very striking. The overall political and economic dynamics, the structure and construction of the centers and of their activities, the nature of the protest movements, their articulation into political conflicts, and the modes of incorporation of such movements and of their demands into the center differed greatly between the two civilizations.

In India, as in Europe (and as in Japan), institutional change has been continuous, entailing the construction of a great variety of

economic, political, and religious institutions and organizations. As in Japan, most of these have been embedded in prevalent yet continuously reconstructed broad social settings, above all in what have been designated, without great precision, as countrywide caste orders—which are in fact more local or regional—and legitimized in multiple themes rooted in Hindu ontologies.

The interrelations between castes have been constructed according to schemas rooted in some of the basic ontological conceptions prevalent in Hinduism, probably among the most complicated in the major Axial civilizations. On one level, that of the Brahmanic ideology and symbolism, Hinduism was based on what could be seen, among the Axial Age civilizations, as the most radical recognition of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders—the perception that the mundane order is polluted in cosmic terms, because its very creation constituted a breach of the original cosmic harmony. This pollution can be overcome in two ways, which are at once complementary and contradictory. One such way is through the faithful performance of the ritual and mundane activities ascriptively allocated to different groups—above all caste and subcaste groups. Such hierarchical arrangement of social ritual activities signifies different degrees of social and ritual purity or pollution and reflects an individual's standing in the cosmic order and his duties with respect to it. Here we encounter the other dimension or level of the ontological conceptions prevalent in Hinduism—namely that in many ways the mundane activities are, perhaps paradoxically from the point of view of the pristine conception of purity and pollution, endorsed with some sacral elements and transcendent orientations.

At the same time, however, the stress on the pollution of the world also gives rise to attempts to reach beyond it, to renounce it; the institution of the renouncer (*Sannyasa*) has been a complementary pole of the Brahmanic tradition at least since the postclassical period. Such renunciation could be the last stage of one's life cycle, but it could also entail the breaking out from this life cycle. Such breaking out was usually manifest not only in purely individual acts, but also in the development of group processes centered around the figure of the renouncer, which could become the starting points of sectarian formations.

The two approaches to mundane arenas were based on two distinct value orientations, two “axes of sacral value”—those of auspiciousness and purity. These axes were always closely interrelated;

although purity was hierarchically higher, it could never be concretely realized without auspiciousness, in which other castes, especially the Ksatriya from which the ruler usually comes, predominated. The concrete working out of the tension between the two axes, and between the acceptance of the mundane life in terms of the sacred and the emphasis on renouncement, constituted one of the major motive forces of Indian ideologies, institutions, and history, of the construction of caste interrelations, of political formations and dynamics, and of sectarian activities.

These castes and caste networks were not simple units of the kind known in many tribal or nonliterate societies, defined in terms of relatively restricted kinship or territorial criteria. They were, in fact, elaborate ideological constructions—continuously reconstructed—that imbued such primordial attributes with a more sophisticated level of symbolization and ideologization, giving rise, above all, to broader ascriptive local and regional caste networks, which interacted continuously with the political arena.

Within this broad framework there developed no sharp distinction between religion and politics—or economics. Rather all arenas of life, and perhaps above all kingships, were imbued with strong sacral dimensions rooted in auspiciousness. Insofar as a more transcendental otherworldly orientation toward purity prevailed, the Brahman and the renouncers constituted the pivot. Other castes, especially but not only the Ksatriya, were imbued with sacral dimensions rooted much more in the cosmology of auspiciousness, which was very powerful in its own realms, but did not challenge the Brahman's predominance in its own specific context. Nevertheless, the Brahmanic orientations were not the only ones effective in intercaste relations.

## X

It was in close relation to these basic ontological conceptions and the construction of caste networks, there developed in India, as we have seen, a rather complex principled definition of the political arena—or rather, as this arena was barely conceived of as an autonomous entity—of the realm of rulership.

On the one hand the political arena did not constitute—as it did in monotheistic civilizations or in Confucianism—a major arena of “salvation,” of the implementation of the predominant transcendental vision. The major center of Indian civilization was not the political

but the religious-ritual one. This center, with its otherworldly emphasis, its wide ecological spread, and its embeddedness in various ascriptive units, was not organized in a homogeneous, unified, organizational setting. Rather, it consisted of a series of networks and organizational-ritual subcenters—pilgrimage shrines and networks, temples, sects, schools—spread throughout the subcontinent, and often cutting across political boundaries.

Yet, as we have seen, within this context the king played a central and rather complex role, giving rise, as we have seen above, to a rather distinct mode of political dynamism.

These conceptions of the political arena were closely related to the conception and practice of sovereignty that developed in India. As Wink, the Rudolphs, and others have shown, this concept emphasized the multiple rights of different groups and sectors of society rather than a unitary, quasi-ontological concept—real or ideal—of the state. This “fractured” sovereignty was combined with a tendency to civilizational, universal expansion. The tendency to expansion did not, however, give rise—as in China and the monotheistic civilizations—to autonomous political centers, distinct from the periphery, with strong imperial orientations.

Accordingly, Indian politics developed predominantly patrimonial characteristics, the rulers relying mostly on personal loyalty and ties for recruitment of personnel and for contacts with different sectors of society. True, the political centers that developed—for instance, in the Gupta or Mauryan empires—were stronger, and the territorial scope of the polities wider than those of previous polities. Their central and provincial administrations had strong centralizing tendencies; yet these tendencies retrained strong patrimonial characteristics and did not lead to the restructuring of the relations between center and periphery, to the creation of new links between them, or to any break with the ascriptive premises of the periphery. The rulers of these political entities were not able to imbue the political arena with meaning beyond the existing premises. On the rare occasions when they attempted to do so their efforts were successfully counteracted by coalitions of the leaders of various networks. Thus indeed, no imperial or absolutist conceptions developed in the political arena.

Moreover, despite their political distinctiveness, sacral attributes, and drive for civilizational expansion, few polities achieved anything approaching unity of the subcontinent. Although India knew states of different scope, from semiimperial centers to small patrimonial

ones, the overall Indian cultural tradition was never identified with any of them.

This organizational picture is, of course, similar to the one that prevailed in Europe throughout the Middle Ages and the early-modern period. The crucial difference is, however, that in Europe the idea of political unification—manifest in the ideal establishment of the Holy Roman Empire, however fragile its institutional bases were—constituted an ideal model that was later transformed into that of the modern nation-states. In India—at least until recently—such an ideal was at best very weak. Indian civilization, unlike that of Europe and even more so that of China, did not define itself in political terms, and only lately have tendencies in this direction developed, among political groups promulgating a specific Hindu identity.

These conceptions of the political arena and the concomitant weak tendencies toward “absolutization” have had far-reaching repercussions on the political dynamics that developed in India, two of which are of special interest in the comparison with Europe. The first is that in India—despite all its “empires”—there never developed a conception of statehood as a distinct, absolutist ontological entity. Second, there were not—until modern times—wars of religion.

Political imagery nonetheless played a crucial role in the construction of Indian collective consciousness—especially in encounters with other, above all Islamic, civilizations. Such encounters, as Sheldon Pollock has shown, have intensified the importance of the cult of Rama in large parts of India since about the twelfth century, and that of the political components in the self-definition of both the Indians and the new “others.” Significantly, however, even the intensification of this political component did not give rise to attempts to impose one Axial vision (Hinduism) against the other (Islam), that is, to confront the other civilizations with assertions of the universalistic exclusivity of one’s own.

## XI

Accordingly, the principled, ideological reconstruction of the political (or economic) arena according to basic transcendental orientations did not as we have seen constitute, as it did in Europe and in China, a major focus of the movements of protest or the numerous sects that developed in India—Bhakti, Jain, Buddhism, and other, minor movements within Hinduism—even if in many cases segments of



such movements participated in the changes of political regimes and the wars between different kings and princes.

These movements, oriented toward the reconstruction of ascriptive civilizational symbols and collectivities, could become connected with the extension of the borders of political communities or with the establishment of new ones, with changes of dynasties, but rarely with the reconstruction of the premises of the political centers. Buddhism did give rise to such new premises, but they became fully institutionalized only outside India, in the new Theravada Buddhist polities of southeast Asia and in Mahayana Tibet.

The major thrust of these dynamics was focused on the continuous restructuring of the criteria of membership in ascriptive-primordial and religious-political communities, with the redefinition of the boundaries of these communities and of access to them, and with periodic attempts to imbue them with an emphasis on equality. These characteristics of the major religious and popular movements, their relations to the center, and the institutional and symbolic characteristics of the political arena explain one of the most interesting aspects, from a comparative point of view, of Indian medieval and early-modern history, namely the absence of wars of religion, such as characterized Christianity and Islam, that is, wars in which political goals were closely interwoven with, and legitimized by, attempts to impose a religion.

## XII

In contrast to Europe, the reconstruction of collectivities and the development of new types of organization in India were not, on the whole, connected with shifts in the modes of their legitimation, or with struggles concerning the bases of such legitimation. The bases of legitimation of the various mundane activities—political, economic, and the like—defined in terms of their respective dharmas, were relatively continuous throughout Indian history, even if their concrete applications were often rather flexible.

Within these broad frameworks new types of activities could be incorporated without becoming defined in autonomous terms, as happened in Europe first in the political arena and later in the economic one. Organizational changes in the major institutional arenas, political or economic, did not, in India, either change their symbolic legitimation or imbue them with new autonomous meanings beyond the sacral components they entailed.

Thus, throughout its long history India witnessed far-reaching changes in its political and economic organization, in technology, and in levels of social differentiation—redefinition of the boundaries of political units, some restructuring of the economic sphere, and changes in social and economic policies—all effected by coalitions of entrepreneurs rooted in different caste networks. But except for the ultimately unsuccessful attempt of Asoka, most of these processes or movements of change did not succeed in—and possibly did not even aim at—restructuring the basic premises of the political arena or the basic center-periphery relations.

### XIII

The characteristics of political and economic organization and dynamics in India were closely linked to those of the civil society that developed there, the core of which was, as we have seen, the *relative* autonomy of the major social groups and elites, the complex of castes and villages, and the networks of cultural, economic, and political communication. The nature of this autonomy has been captured by Ronald Inden, who defines the various local and caste groups as both subjects and citizens, who, although taxed and controlled by the kings, were also allowed a high degree of self-regulation: they “had an inherent, but limited and partial capacity (we might call it rights) to combined within and among themselves and order their own affairs.”

Accordingly the various sectors of civil society were characterized by a high degree of autonomy—but an autonomy embedded in ascriptive, albeit wide and continuously reconstructed, frameworks. Sectors’ place in the social order was in principle prescribed by their ritual standing in the purity-auspiciousness schemes. Hence their autonomous access to the religious and political centers was, in principle, seemingly limited by their prescribed place in the social order. Given these basic characteristics of Indian civil society, there developed no basic ideological confrontation between state and society—until recent times, under the impact of European modernity—and no wars of religion.

### XIV

The patterns of innovation and change analyzed above have developed also in the cognitive-symbolic realm and in the concomitant

processes of reconstruction of tradition that developed in India. The most important characteristics of these patterns are the low ideologization of the attitude to change; a relatively nontotalistic approach to mundane change; weak attempts to organize the various aspects of reality in a hierarchical way; and the continuous addition and incorporation of new contents and patterns of behavior into the existing tradition, without any great effort to combine them in a clear, hierarchical way.

Concomitantly, there did not develop in India a strong emphasis on principled discontinuity between different political regimes, and usually no new principles of legitimation developed in conjunction with such changes. This deemphasis of the transcendental significance of discontinuity in mundane affairs was connected with a distinctive conception of the relations between cosmic and mundane time. Cosmic time, in Hindu cosmology, was full of ruptures and discontinuities—but it was not directly connected or even interwoven with mundane time or events. Such events were, in principle, bracketed out of cosmic time and were not on the whole relevant to it—and it was cosmic time that was predominant in the collective consciousness of Hindu civilization. Thus there developed a sharp dissociation between ontological time, defined in terms of the different ages of the universe, and mundane institutional change, the importance of which was devalued. Discontinuity between cosmic, as against mundane, ages was much more strongly emphasized.

Historical consciousness, consciousness of the passage of time, was, however, incipient in the Indian tradition; Pollock has shown that “a-historicity” is itself historical, that it develops out of Mimansa’s confrontation with history. In other words, we are dealing not with a simple (if puzzling) lacuna in consciousness but with an attempt to deal with the problem of time by deliberately turning away from the historical moment, with all its specificity, in favor of apparently unchanging or eternal prototypes.” As Narayana Rao and D. Shulman have shown, such denial of historicity did not impede the development of a rich discourse in which the present is conspicuously preferred to the mythic past, and in which mythology serves not as a way of looking back but of bringing forward into the present various “mythic themes.” But such historical consciousness did not develop into the conception of a clear interweaving between discontinuities in cosmic and in mundane time. At most, there developed a con-

ception of the possibility of interweaving the sequence of mundane events with the unfolding of a cosmic order.

A similar pattern can be discerned with respect to the impact of other civilizations in India and the absorption of their influences. Given the flexible relation between arenas of action, especially those concerning mundane activities, many influences from abroad, whether in the form of artifacts or of organizational and institutional patterns, could be absorbed without impinging directly on the basic premises of Indian civilization. The impact of Muslim rule is of course the most extreme illustration of such capacity, but similar tendencies can be identified in earlier times. The impact especially of Muslim and, later, Western civilizations, which led to the transfer of political sovereignty in the Indian territories to others, gave rise to the consciousness of what V.S. Naipaul has termed "wounded civilization." But even such consciousness did not change the more eclectic dimensions of Indian approaches to other religions or civilizations.

## CHINA

### XV

We shall continue our comparative excursus with a discussion of China, the Axial civilization that had, in premodern times, the greatest impact on Japan. The closest Axial civilization to Japan from the point of view of territorial and cultural continuity, China also exhibited some striking similarities to Japan in other respects. Indeed, among the most distinctive characteristics of Chinese civilization were, first, its political compactness, a territorial, political, and cultural continuity almost unique among the Axial civilizations (with the partial exception of the Byzantine empire) and, second, its sanctification of the political arena as the major, almost exclusive, arena for the implementation of the prevalent transcendental vision. Moreover, as in Japan, there developed a seemingly this-worldly emphasis. Yet there also developed, in these very same arenas, far-reaching differences between China and Japan. Apart from the obvious difference in size, most of these were rooted in the fact that China was an Axial civilization.

True enough, doubts have often been expressed as to whether China, given its strong this-worldly orientation—emphasized already

by Weber—could indeed be designated as an Axial civilization. The starting point for the analysis of this problem lies in the recognition of what is probably the major principled error in Weber's interpretation of Chinese civilization—namely the denial of the existence, within Confucian China, of any transcendental tension.

Contrary to what seems to be the Weberian view, the Chinese—above all in the Confucian tradition—did not deny the existence of this tension. Accordingly, there developed within Chinese civilization a high level of rationalization of the cultural (or religious) orientations connected with the elaboration and definition of such tension. In Benjamin Schwartz's words, "In the Analects we find considerable emphasis on his [Confucius's] relations to 'heaven' which is treated not simply as the immanent Tao of nature and society but as a transcendental will interested in Confucius' redeeming mission. . . . Beyond this it is already clear that the word Tao in Confucius refers not only to the objective structures of society and cosmos but also to the inner way of man of *Jen*."

In the classical Chinese belief systems the tension between the transcendental and mundane order was couched in relatively secular terms, that is, in terms of a metaphysical or ethical—and not religious—distinction. Concomitantly there developed a conception of time that was basically cyclical and secular, not historical or eschatological. This secularly defined tension and approach to the implementation of the metaphysical vision, and the rationalizing tendencies they involved, became here connected with an almost wholly this-worldly conception of the resolution of such tension.

The official Confucian position was that the implementation of this vision was attained through the cultivation of the social, political, and cultural orders as the major way of maintaining cosmic harmony. Thus, it focused on the elaboration of what Herbert Fingarette has defined as the cultivation of the "secular as sacred," and stressed the proper performance of worldly duties and activities within the existing frameworks—the family, broader kin groups, and imperial service—as the ultimate criteria for the resolution of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order and for individual responsibility. Such stress could be seen as a simple, traditional, ritual upholding of the existing social arrangements, and in practice this might have been the case for many Confucians. Yet in principle this was not the case. The major thrust of the Confucian orientation was the conscious taking out of these social relations from

their seemingly natural context and their ideologization in terms of the higher transcendental orientations, the proper attitude to which could be only acquired through a largely demysticized and demagigized ritual, learning, and contemplation. This learning and contemplation, paradoxically enough, not only allowed but—as can be seen especially in neo-Confucianism—emphasized a nontraditionalistic, reflexive definition of the nature of the cosmic order and of human existence. This definition contained within itself a principled awareness of the tension between the cosmic ideal and the given, imperfect reality of the mundane order in general and the political one in particular. It was only partially legitimated in terms of the basic cosmic harmony, and great personal tensions were involved both in the attempts to maintain such harmony through proper conduct and attitude, which necessitates a very stringent and reflexive self-discipline, and in the development of a critical attitude toward the existing mundane world—all of which, of course, developed in China among the many Confucian and especially neo-Confucian schools.

But all these orientations had, in comparison with those which developed in other post-Axial Age civilizations and especially in the great monotheistic civilizations, relatively limited institutional effects.

## XVI

The structural and organizational changes that developed in imperial China, at least from the Tang dynasty on, entailed like those in the other Axial civilizations strong ideological dimensions. China underwent changes in all institutional areas far beyond what can be found in non-Axial civilizations—not only dynastic changes and divisions of the empire, but also growing differentiation in the structure of both agrarian and urban sectors of the economy, as well as changes in the importance of cities, in the relative power and standing of different cultural and social groups (such as the aristocracy), and in the predominance of the emperors as against the bureaucracy.

As in Europe, India, and other Axial civilizations, movements of protest and change, popular rebellions, warlord uprisings, and especially different sectarian movements and secret societies developed in the Chinese empire. The various processes of change mentioned above, as well as these movements, rebellions, and uprisings, had a strong impact on the center, often with potentially transformative

ideological dimensions—a fact of which the center was not unaware. The symbols and aims of these movements often included strong political, historical, and semimythical or utopian components, seemingly similar to those found in the monotheistic civilizations, particularly in the West.

Unlike what occurred in other civilizations, however, no radical, principled breakthroughs developed in the institutional realms. From the institutionalization of the Confucian-legalistic imperial system under the Tang and throughout the long period of the empire, the overall political formations and the modes of political economy underwent no far-reaching changes—such as the development of fully fledged feudal economic patterns or the transition from tribal to patrimonial formations—as happened in various ways in Europe, India, and Japan, even if it naturally happened in different ways in each of these civilizations. The breakthroughs that did take place in the cultural arenas—especially those of philosophy, education, and art—were hemmed in by the hegemonic imperial Confucian elites, and this was even more true of potential economic and political breakthroughs.

Thus, ultimately, the rebellions and ideological developments that emerged in China usually provided only secondary interpretations of the dominant value structure—even the development of neo-Confucianism in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which may appear to break the existing mold. Most emphasized the ideology and symbolism of the mandate of heaven and did not spawn radically new orientations or institutional patterns, above all with respect to the accountability of rulers. The political orientations of the military governors and warlords were also usually set within the existing value system and political framework. Although they strove either for greater independence from or for control of the central government, only rarely did they attempt to establish a new type of political system. It was only with the downfall of the empire that “real” warlordism developed.

Above all, the movements of protest and religious movements that arose in the institutional periphery evinced little capacity (despite incipient tendencies in this direction) to connect with the central political struggle and to develop new ideologies and frameworks of action, particularly in relation to the definition and structuring of the major institutional complexes. Similarly, few enduring organizational, structural, and ideological connections developed between the

central heterodoxies, the various ideologies and policies emanating from the center, and the more popular movements. True, many (usually unemployed) literati and members of the gentry participated in secret societies and rebellions, but those either tended to articulate the ideology of the mandate of heaven or to provide different secondary interpretations of the predominant ideologies. Nor did the relations between the central political struggle and the secondary religions or heterodoxies, like Buddhism and Taoism, exert any far-reaching transformative influences on the Chinese social and political order (except in the T'ang period, when the Buddhists were pushed out of the center), although they brought about many changes in particular institutional arenas. Accordingly, the pattern of change that developed in China was characterized by a relatively low level of coalescence between the restructuring of the political regimes and of the various economic institutions or strata, even if the latter did influence the policies undertaken by the center.

The closest relation that developed in the Chinese empire between changes in political regimes and those in strata formation was that common to all imperial societies—namely, the relation between the strength and standing of free peasants and that of the various aristocratic elements or gentry. But even this connection was manifest in China—as distinct from, for instance, the Byzantine empire—more in the development of the rulers' policies than in the political articulation of the demands of these strata. Similarly, even the great urban and commercial development under the Sung, or the growing differentiation of the economy under the late Ming and the Ch'ing, while connected with changes in government policy, were not as evident in the mode of impingement of the respective economic groups on the center. Changes in political boundaries and dynasties were less strongly connected with changes in the agrarian or commercial economic systems than they were in some other imperial systems, though obviously the need to maintain proper economic conditions and to develop adequate policies constituted continuous challenges for the rulers.

Changes in the cultural arena—above all in the schools and ideologies of Confucianism and in the rise of neo-Confucianism—were indeed closely related to those in the political sphere and led to many political struggles, to changes in the composition of elites, and to policies with a high ideological tone. But these changes were confined to the center—to the literati, the bureaucracy, and the



emperor. Unlike, for instance, in the Roman or Byzantine empires, there was little participation by broader strata or secondary elites in these movements, and these changes were, officially at least, not seen as involving far-reaching political ideological standing.

In contrast to Europe but like Japan (and to some extent India), China saw few redefinitions of the major roles and institutional arenas or changes in the bases of their legitimation. The official Confucian evaluation of different patterns of activity continued on the macro-sociological level throughout most periods of Chinese history until modern times. Concomitantly, there developed a relatively low level of consciousness of breaks in the historical process. Such changes were mostly perceived in a cyclical mode, and accordingly no consciousness of far-reaching, principled breaks arose.

The conception of time in China combined the perception of cosmic changes with that of mundane changes, but given the cyclical nature of this perception dynastic changes, for instance, were not conceived as breaks or discontinuities, but rather as recurrent modes of relations between cosmic and mundane changes.

The mode of reconstruction of tradition and of response to the impact of other civilizations was closer to that of India than to that of Europe. The development of neo-Confucianism constitutes the clearest illustration of this pattern. While neo-Confucianism, as it developed under the Sung, was greatly influenced by Buddhism—in a way it constituted a response to Buddhism—and incorporated some Buddhist orientations, it did so only within the reformulated and reconstructed premises of Confucianism, and did not quite acknowledge a legitimate place for Buddhism in the hegemonic discourse.

## XVII

The development of a specifically Chinese historical experience was closely related to the emphasis on a this-worldly mode of “salvation,” of the implementation of a transcendental vision distinct from that of both pre-Axial and other Axial civilizations, and the modes of legitimation of the social structure, the major institutional arenas, and the hegemonic elites. The continuity of Chinese civilization, in a way the epitome of this historical experience, constitutes a great riddle, the crux of which is China’s ability to contain most internal, structural, and ideological changes—which were more far-reaching than those acknowledged by the official Confucian ideology or later

by much of Western historiography (itself greatly influenced by Confucian ideology)—within the basic premises of the Confucian-legal system, allowing the premises themselves to undergo continuous processes of reformulation while avoiding radical transformations.

The key to our understanding of this ability lies in the recognition of the fact that China was characterized, not by the lack of a transcendental vision or tension, but rather by a “secular” definition thereof. Thus, the sanctification of the political arena in this-worldly terms had a different meaning in China than it did in Japan. In China, unlike Japan, such sanctification was effected in transcendental and not in immanentist terms. As a result there developed in China an emphasis on a mixture of civility and sacredness as the central criterion of the legitimation of the sociopolitical order, while purely sacred or primordial criteria were secondary or absent. That is, the tension between different criteria of legitimation tended to be relatively weak in comparison to other Axial Age civilizations. Civility tended to be formulated in a mixture of traditional and legal terms with relatively weak charismatic components focused mostly around the office of the emperor.

This pattern of legitimation had crucial repercussions in the basic institutional formats of Chinese society and civilization. First of all, the political-cultural center was defined and perceived in Confucian-legalist China as the major locus of attempts to maintain cosmic harmony. This autonomous, absolutist center tended, through mobilization and communication, to mold—but only partially—the periphery according to its own premises. This center shared with the periphery, in principle, a common cultural framework, but it mediated access to its sacred charismatic attributes, controlling the orientations of the periphery to the center, if not the material life of the periphery itself.

The basic characteristics of the center, center-periphery relations, and the social structure of elites were finely attuned in the civil society that developed in China. As in Europe and India, there developed wide social sectors that were autonomous from the state; however, in China such autonomy was only *de facto*—it was not fully legitimated. In principle most arenas of social life were regulated by the state, according to the Confucian-legalist precepts—although in fact many social sectors and spaces had far-reaching autonomy. But the most important difference from India and from Europe was the fact that none of these sectors in China had any autonomous access to

the state, to the center. Such access was totally monopolized and controlled by the center.

This structure of the center was closely related to that of the major collectivities and subcenters. This was evident first of all in the ideological centrality and institutional strength of the political frameworks—albeit defined in cultural terms—as against the institutional weakness of the civilizational ones, insofar as they were institutionally interwoven with the political. We find in China, of all the Axial civilizations, the closest interweaving, sometimes verging on identity, between cultural and political collectivities and the concomitant weakness of any distinct cultural or religious center which might compete with the political one in defining the attributes and boundaries of society.

All these characteristics of Chinese society and civilization, closely related to the specifically Chinese this-worldly orientations, were constructed and effected by the predominant elites. The most important elites and subelites in China were of course the famous Confucian literati and bureaucracy, who were the major bearers of the Confucian-legalistic world order outlined above. As such they were, especially symbolically, relatively autonomous vis-à-vis both the broader strata and the political center, though rather closely related to them. They were recruited, legitimated, and organized according to criteria directly related to, or derived from, the precepts of the Confucian-legalistic canon, and were not mediated or controlled by either the broader strata of society or in principle (if not always in practice) by the emperor himself.

The literati were not, however, just learned men performing intellectual functions. Their stratum constituted a source of recruitment for the bureaucracy, and they exercised at least a partial monopoly over venues of access to the center. Together with the emperors, their entourage, and sometimes the major warlords, the literati were major partners in the ruling coalitions—to the almost total exclusion of other groups or social elements. Their structure and organization were influenced by their predominantly this-worldly orientation. Unlike the parallel European, Byzantine, and Islamic elites, the literati combined both cultural-religious and administrative-political functions, with only a slight degree of organizational or even symbolic distinction between these activities. Their organizational framework was almost identical with that of the state bureaucracy (which recruited 10 to 20 percent of all the literati), and except for some schools and

academies they had but little organization of their own. Accordingly, they developed no separate political, administrative, and religious organizations and hierarchies.

At the same time, central administrative and cultural elites, as against the emperors and their entourage, had few autonomous bases of power and resources. Only in the educational sphere did autonomous organizations and structures develop, but even these were usually closely interwoven with and oriented toward the political-administrative setting and rather segregated from the activities of secondary elites in the periphery.

These characteristics of the center, of center-periphery relations, of the structure of the literati, and of civil society in China explain, to some extent at least, the riddle of the continuity of the Chinese institutional structure—a continuity, that is, within an Axial civilization with great potential for discontinuity. Significantly, China was the only Axial civilization in which no secondary breakthrough—such as Christianity within Judaism, Islam in relation to Christianity, or Judaism or Buddhism within Hinduism—took place.

## JAPAN

### XVIII

We may now return to the comparison of patterns of continuity and change in the three Axial civilizations discussed above—Europe, India, and China—with those in Japan. We have seen that the patterns of institutional change that characterized the Japanese historical experience were quite similar to those in Western Europe, to a lesser extent similar to those in India, and markedly different from those in China.

The central axis of differentiation between the historical experience of Axial civilizations and that of Japan, however, lies in the strength of the tendency toward the ideologization of changes and struggles in different social and, above all, institutional arenas. The intensive mode of institutional change that developed in Japan entailed a relatively low level of such ideologization and of ideological, principled struggles—that is, struggles defined in terms that emphasized general principles beyond the existing reality. This relatively low level of ideologization was first of all manifest in the restructuring of centers and collectivities. Changes in the structure of regional and urban

centers and subcenters continually developed, especially during the monarchical and feudal ages, with the relative strength and fortunes of the various centers changing greatly over time—some even disappearing or becoming incorporated into others. These fluctuations were often closely related to the construction of strong regional identities.

Some such changes—for instance, the move of the imperial court from Kyoto to Edo in the Meiji Ishin, and the establishment of the Meiji state—constituted important symbolic moves, signaling the end of the bifurcation of power and authority between the shogun and the emperor and the creation of a new political system—albeit one legitimized in “traditional,” restorationist terms. Most changes in the location, strength, and fortunes of the various centers and collectivities were not, however, connected with strong ideological struggles. Moreover, because the struggles that developed in connection with these changes in Japan were not focused, as was the case elsewhere, on the ideological standing of collectivities and centers, no sharp demarcation of the symbolic boundaries of such entities emerged—even if many such changes were indeed symbolized in distinctive ways.

The various centers were continuously embedded and incorporated within the broad framework of the Japanese collectivity and its central symbols, often epitomized in the symbolism of the emperor. There were no criteria or values beyond those of this framework in terms of which new centers or collectivities could be constructed and their boundaries defined. Accordingly, it was, on the one hand, difficult for those not belonging to the primordial Japanese collectivity to penetrate it. On the other hand, within the boundaries of the Japanese collectivity and the numerous social contexts continuously constructed and reconstructed in Japan, many new and varied activities could be incorporated without ideological struggles and without principled reconstruction of such boundaries.

Of crucial importance in this context was the fact that in Japan the geographical and political boundaries were on the whole continuous with those of Japanese—at least Yamato—civilization, and that Japan did not view itself as part of broader civilizational frameworks (as was, for instance, the case with England—another island to which Japan was sometimes compared—which deemed itself part of the European civilization). Hence, there was little room in Japan for the development of ideological confrontations between different collectivities in terms of their relation to the broader civilizational framework. The various minority people, the Okinawa Ainu, while

often attempting to resist the homogenizing tendencies of the Japanese-Yamato collectivity, did not on the whole connect themselves with other, broader civilizations, even if some contacts did develop.

The same applies, as we have seen, to the structuring and definition of new activities, roles, and organizations, and new political and economic formations. These continuously developed in Japan but, in contrast to Europe and much more in line with India and China, were rarely connected with the construction of new principled definitions or new modes of legitimation. The many new roles in both the economic and political arenas—for instance, entrepreneurial or bureaucratic functions, industrial enterprises, and political parties—and the ground rules that evolved to regulate them, were not defined in entirely new, autonomous ways. They were usually legitimated neither in terms of their functional prerequisites nor as autonomous manifestations of some higher, transcendental order, but rather in terms of their contribution to the respective contexts in which they were embedded—contexts defined in some version of primordial, natural, or sacral terms.

Most of these activities and organizations were defined and perceived as embedded in the prevalent social settings or, to be more exact, in the various continuously redefined social contexts. Thus in Japan, new activities and organizations could be relatively easily incorporated without the need for principled changes in the basic premises of these frameworks and contexts.

The same combination of continuity and of construction of new spaces was also to be found, as we have seen throughout the preceding discussion, with respect to the definition of the Japanese collectivity. Many of the concrete details of such definitions—as for instance the place of the different marginal groups like the Ainu, or the weakening sacral or archaic definitions of the early Meiji ideology—could be shed with the “secularization” that set in after the Second World War, and some new components, such as the growing emphasis on knowledge, which had already developed in the early Meiji, could be added without the core necessarily becoming the focus of political and ideological struggles. It is within this institutional and symbolic framework that the dominant mode of struggle developed in periods of transition, with fierce outbursts which yet did not radically change the framework and bases of legitimation.

This low level of ideologization of institutional change and the concomitant weak demarcation of boundaries between the various

contexts of social interaction was in marked contrast to the historical experience of Europe, where there developed a strong tendency toward the construction of such boundaries, the construction of which could become a focus of intensive political and ideological contestation. As a result of such struggles, various sectors and activities could be denied autonomy or even the right to exist.

The tendency in Japan toward weak ideological struggle around institutional changes was, to a limited extent, similar to that which developed in India. Japan shared with India the strong tendency to embed new organizational tasks within wider societal frameworks. In India, however, such frameworks, especially the various ascriptive communities, were continuously reconstructed, very often in connection with the activities of sects imbued with a strong transcendental vision.

In China, no principled reconstruction of the basic premises or boundaries of collectivities or centers or of the definition of major roles took place either. Yet in contrast to Japan many of the processes of change and movements that impinged on the centers in China bore within themselves the seeds of strong ideologization and ideological struggle and entailed the potential for such reconstruction; the development of these tendencies could be avoided only through the specific processes of regulation analyzed above. Hence in China, the relatively clear symbolic boundaries of the major institutional arenas seemed to be relatively continuous throughout most of imperial history.

Given the existence within all these Axial civilizations of cultural or civilizational collectivities distinct from primordial or political ones, at least some of these institutional arenas constituted foci of principled ideological struggles and reconstructions. But the intensity of such struggles and their specific loci varied greatly: in India it was above all the ascriptive collectivities (both political and religious ones, such as various sects), in Europe the political and religious arenas, and in China the political-cultural center. In Japan, however, no institutional arena or collectivity constituted, as we have seen, a focus for the implementation of transcendental visions and intensive ideological struggle. Hence, such struggle was very weak—almost nonexistent.

This was closely related to the fact that, in contrast to developments in the Axial civilizations, few principled confrontations between orthodoxy and heterodoxy developed in Japan. The sects that developed in Japan did not, as we have seen, challenge the basic non-

Axial premises of the society but rather tended to generate a two-pronged response: the “Japanization” of the potentially universalistic and transcendental orientation combined with the creation of new spaces amenable to “internal spiritualization.” Thus certain dimensions of the immanentist-particularized settings would be open to activities regulated by universalistic or transcendental orientations but these spaces were usually segregated from the overall institutional frameworks and centers.

The common denominator of this pattern of change in Japan was a continuity of symbols that allowed extensive change within a familiar symbolic context, thus softening the sense of rupture. Such continuity also shaped the patterns of incorporation of change that characterized Japanese society, especially the construction of new contexts independent of the construction of new roles, modes of legitimation, or boundaries. Once they touched or threatened the central frameworks or symbols, as the cases reported by Norma Field attest to, they were put, as it were, outside the pale. The symbolic impact of changes did not usually go beyond the existing frameworks in the name of any transcendent principles. Rather their impact was manifest in the incorporation of such changes into the existing frameworks and in the reconstruction of these frameworks without reference to such “external” principles.

#### SOME CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

### XIX

In all Axial civilizations there developed, as we have seen, conceptions of the existence of discontinuities in cosmic time and of a relation between such discontinuities and those in mundane time—even if the definitions of such relations and the nature of such discontinuities differed greatly in different Axial civilizations. In Japan, given the mutual embeddedness of culture and nature and the topological, mythical, and indexical time conceptions, the situation was markedly different.

There did not develop, in Japan, the emphasis on a *principled* discontinuity between different regimes or “stages” of institutional change. Nor did there develop any strong conception of such changes and breaks as constituting steps in the unfolding of historical programs or cosmic plans with possible eschatological implications. In principle



no new modes of legitimation were connected with such changes. The assumed, mythical continuity of the imperial symbolism—often fictitious but continuously emphasized—was crucial in this respect. The bases of legitimation—especially those rooted in the symbolism of the emperor, as we have seen—were continuous and could not, as the illustration of Hakuseki in the tokugawa period attests to, be dismantled or changed. The epitome of this emphasis on (a reconstructed) continuity could be seen in the totally new construction of the emperor system under the Meiji regime.

The continuity of the major symbols of legitimation in Japan was closely connected with several factors: First, with a reflexivity couched in a hermeneutical mode, which in turn was closely interwoven with Japanese collective consciousness and identity, that is, it was based on looking inward, not beyond the given reality. Second, with the modes of development of rationality that developed in Japan. This rationality was characterized by a continuous extension of the arenas in which instrumental rationality, *Zweckrationalitaet*, could develop without the development of a discourse of *Wertrationalitaet*, of critical reflexivity about the sphere of ultimate values rooted in some type of transcendent orientation. Accordingly the development of instrumental rationality did not become interwoven with such reflexivity. And, third, with the reconstruction of tradition, which was characterized by openness to changes that were then brought under the reconstructed canopy of the existing framework, defined in sacral, natural, and primordial terms as traditional, and legitimated through the indexical, hermeneutical, self-referential mode of reflexivity. Tradition and traditionalism constituted a sort of general orientation, often identified with what was authentically Japanese, in the name of which many activities and organizations, old and new, were brought together and legitimized. This canopy provided the general orientations for the construction of one” social world—toward the mode of sacral discourse—but did not create sharp breaks between the traditional and nontraditional arenas or levels of life.

Japan, however, shared with the Axial civilizations a tendency to develop principled attitudes toward tradition, which in their most extreme manifestations entailed strong fundamentalist potentials, as against principled openness. The development of such differences in attitudes toward change and tradition was especially sharp in the monotheistic civilizations, which emphasized the interweaving of this- and otherworldly orientations and a strongly linear conception of

time. In China, where the otherworldly orientations did not seemingly bear at all on the mundane, the differences in attitudes toward tradition were much less sharply drawn.

All these factors also greatly influenced the impact of encounters between civilizations and the modes of incorporation of foreign influences. While within the Axial civilizations such encounters accordingly were greatly influenced by their respective basic premises, the extent to which such premises, their major institutional implications, and the consciousness of the continuity of collective identity were transformed through such encounters differed greatly. The most crucial differences resided, first, in the extent to which such encounters were connected with a consciousness of discontinuities within these civilizations and, second, in the extent to which they gave rise to a reformulation of the civilization's premises in terms of new principles that seemingly negated or transcended the existing ones.

Such transformations and the consciousness of discontinuity were strongest in the monotheistic civilizations, weaker in Hinduism and Buddhism, and probably weakest on Confucianism. In contrast, there developed in Japan a double-pronged response to such impingements—an openness to them combined with a tendency to Japanize them with but little effect on the basic Japanese ontological premises and conceptions of social order, even if such premises were continuously reformulated, and with the constant construction of special spaces in which new modes of social and cultural discourse could develop.

Thus the core of the Japanese historical experience, as distinct from that of the Axial civilizations analyzed above, was the marked dissociation between institutional changes and their ideological reconstruction; the weakness of the tendency to define boundaries between different institutional arenas ideologically, combined with the generation of new spaces within such arenas; and the continual shifts between contexts, with the concomitant strong tendency toward self-referential hermeneutical reflexivity.

## XX

These constellations of continuity and change in different civilizations were related to different modes of constructing trust, solidarity, power, and the division of labor. The distinctive characteristic of the Japanese civilization was that the broader civilizational framework

was based on a continuous extension of trust, symbolized in primordial kinship terms, from the family to the broader institutional formations. In other words, the permeation of the basic family units and the mobilization of family resources by broader institutional formations, by the center, was legitimized in kinship terms.

As against this, in all the Axial civilizations permeation by the center of the family units (and of the periphery in general) was legitimized in terms of universalistic principles. Accordingly, there developed a break and potential confrontation between trust defined in primordial terms and the claims of universalistic principles. In all these civilizations the problem of how to interweave the primordial with the universalistic constituted a potential point of contention. The Confucian controversy over the relative priority of filial piety as against loyalty to one's lord—a controversy which developed in all Axial civilizations—is but one illustration of such contention. Such confrontations were effected, as was the permeation of the center into the periphery and into the various familial settings, by various autonomous cultural and political elites and influentials, who, in their interaction with broader sectors of the society, also constituted, as we have seen, the most active elements in the ideological reconstruction of centers, collectivities, and institutional formations and in the struggles attendant on such reconstruction, struggles to no small extent borne by different sects and heterodoxies.

As against this, in Japan the major elites and influentials were embedded in broader settings, defined in some combination of primordial, sacral, and natural terms in which symbols of kinship were often predominant. Hence the extension of trust from the family units to broader settings, to the centers, did not entail the confrontation with autonomous elites promulgating universalistic principles or the concomitant confrontations between orthodoxies and heterodoxies, and this mode of extension of trust accordingly generated a distinctive pattern of change and of historical continuity.

These characteristics of the historical experience of the different civilizations also had far-reaching impacts on their interactions with processes of modernization and on the cultural programs of modernity that developed within them.

COMPARATIVE CIVILIZATIONS AND  
MULTIPLE MODERNITIES

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# COMPARATIVE CIVILIZATIONS AND MULTIPLE MODERNITIES

PART II

BY

S.N. EISENSTADT



BRILL  
LEIDEN · BOSTON  
2003

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Comparative civilizations and multiple modernities / by S.N. Eisenstadt.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN: 9004129936 (set)

1. Civilization, Modern—20th century. 2. Civilization, Modern—1950-  
3. Social change. 4. Civilization, Modern—Philosophy. 5. Comparative  
civilization.

CB427 .E37 2003

909.82—dc21

2003041895

ISBN 90 04 12993 6 (Set)

ISBN 90 04 12534 5 (v. 1)

ISBN 90 04 12992 8 (v. 2)

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## CONTENTS

Preface .....	vii
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### III. *Modernity as Civilization*

20. The Civilizational Dimension of Modernity: Modernity as a Distinct Civilization .....	493
21. Multiple Modernities in an Age of Globalization .....	519
22. Multiple Modernities .....	535
23. Barbarism and Modernity: the Destructive Components of Modernity .....	561

### IV. *The Historical and Civilizational Framework of Western Modernity*

24. Origins of the West. The origins of the West in recent Macrosociological Theory. The Protestant Ethic Reconsidered .....	577
25. Frameworks of the Great Revolutions: Culture, Social Structure, History and Human Agency .....	613
26. The Sectarian Origin of Modernity .....	641

### V. *Multiple Modernities*

#### A. *The Classical Age of Modernity*

27. The Breakdown and Transformation of Communist Regimes .....	679
28. The First Multiple Modernities: The civilization of the Americas .....	701
29. Mirror Image Modernities: Contrasting Religious Premises of Japanese and U.S. Modernity .....	723
30. Israeli Politics and the Jewish Political Tradition: Principled Political Anarchism and the Rule of the Court .....	759



31. The Puzzle of Indian Democracy .....	781
32. Center Formation and Protest Movements in Europe and the U.S.A.: Comparative Perspective .....	831
33. The Structuring of Social Protest in Modern Societies: The Limits and Direction of Convergence .....	849
34. Construction of Trust, Collective Identity and the Fragility and Continuity of Democratic Regimes .....	877
 B. <i>The Contemporary Scene</i>	
35. The Contemporary Scene: Beyond the Hegemony of the Nation and Revolutionary State Model .....	911
36. Globalization, civilizational traditions and multiple modernities .....	925
37. The Jacobin Component of Fundamentalist Movements .....	937
38. The Reconstruction of Religious Arenas in the Framework of Multiple Modernities .....	953
 S.N. Eisenstadt: List of Publications .....	 981
Index of Names .....	1017
Index of Subject .....	1021

## PREFACE

Most of the papers collected in this volume were published in the last twenty years and focus on the comparative analysis of civilizations—especially of the Axial civilization and of modernities—two topics which constitute—as I explained in chapter I—central focus my work in this period. Many of my theoretical papers which have been published during this time, have been collected in the volume *Power, Trust and Meaning*—University of Chicago Press—1995.

Given the relatively long time space and the numerous occasions for which the papers were written—there are many repetitions or overlaps between them. These were not taken out so as to keep the flow of the argument of each of these.

I would like to thank the various publishers who have granted the permission or agreed to have chapters published by them to be republished in this collection; Nadav Chorev for help in the preparation for this collection; Joel Elich from Brill Publishers for his initiative and Anita Roodnat-Disseldorp, also from Brill Publishers for supervising with great care the preparation of the volume and Caroline Diepeveen for preparing the index; and to Mayan Zigda for the preparation of the bibliography of all my publications.

Jerusalem, November 2002

S.N. Eisenstadt

PART THREE

MODERNITY AS CIVILIZATION

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## INTRODUCTION TO SECTION III ON MODERNITY AS CIVILIZATION

The three chapters in this section present the general premises of the civilizational approach to modernity, i.e. to the view that modernity is best understood as a distinct civilization. The first chapter elaborates this thesis. The second chapter on Multiple Modernities presents in relatively greater detail a basic assumption of the analysis of modern societies presented in the other sections—namely that while modernity is best analyzed as a distinct civilization, yet, contrary to the assumptions of many theories of modernization, and of the more recent view about “end of history,” this civilization is not a homogeneous one but that within it—as indeed within each of the Axial Civilizations—there continually develop a multiplicity of institutional and ideological patterns which, while sharing some of the core characteristics of this civilization, do yet crystallize in distinctive patterns and evince distinctive dynamics.

The third chapter focuses on the destructive potentialities inherent in modernity—a problem underanalyzed at least till lately in most studies of modernity.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For some of the recent analyzes of this problem see Hans Joas, *Kriege und Weste*, Velbrueck Wissenschaft, 2000; and the articles by Joas, Tiryakian and Roxborough in the Dec. 1999 issue of *International Sociology*; and also B. Wittrock.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY

# THE CIVILIZATIONAL DIMENSION OF MODERNITY: MODERNITY AS A DISTINCT CIVILIZATION

### MODERNITY AS A DISTINCT CIVILIZATION

#### I

##### *Introduction*

In this paper\* I would like to analyze modernity from a civilizational perspective—as a distinct type of civilization.<sup>1</sup> 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' terminology, of a distinct social “imaginaire,” indeed of the ontological vision, of a distinct cultural program, combined with the development of a set or sets of new institutional formations—the central core of both being, as we shall see later in greater detail, an unprecedented “openness” and uncertainty.

Modernity, the modern cultural and political program, developed in one of the Great Axial Civilizations—the Christian-European one.<sup>2</sup> 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

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\* Published in *International Sociology*, Sept. 2001, vol. 16(3), pp. 320–340.

<sup>1</sup> On the civilizational dimension in sociological analysis, see S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Civilizational Dimension in Sociological Analysis,” *Thesis Eleven*, No. 62, August 2000: 1–21. London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

<sup>2</sup> On the Axial Age Civilizations, see S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics”, *European Journal of Sociology*, 23/2, 1982, pp. 294–314; idem, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial-Age Civilizations*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986.

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 mankind to implement on a 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 center and were transposed into the general political movements and the centers 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 program crystallized and expanded throughout most of the world encompassing all the “classical” Axial civilizations, as well as pre- and non-Axial ones.

This civilization, the distinct cultural program 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, giving 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.

## THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL PROGRAM OF MODERNITY

### II

The modern project, the cultural and political program 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 shift 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 real-



ized by autonomous human agency—or by the march of history—are open. The core of this program 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 program, who in principle denied the legitimacy of such reflexivity.

The central core of this cultural program has been possibly most successfully formulated by Weber. To follow James D. Faubian'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 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. . . .<sup>3</sup>

It is because of the fact that all such responses leave the problematic intact, the reflexivity which developed in the program of modernity went beyond that which crystallized in the Axial Civilizations. The reflexivity that developed in the modern program 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

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<sup>3</sup> James D. Faubian, *Modern Greek Lessons. A Primer in Historical Constructivism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 113–115.

and of the institutional patterns related to them. It gave rise to the awareness of the existence of multiplicity of such visions and patterns and of the possibility that such visions and conceptions can indeed be contested.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup>

Concomitantly, closely related to such awareness and central to this cultural program were the emphasis on the autonomy of man; his or hers, but in the initial formulation of this program 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, mastery of nature, possibly including human nature, and of society. Parallely, this program 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 centers.

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 program. The first such tendency was that the program as it crystallized above all in the

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<sup>4</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics", op. cit.; idem, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial-Age Civilizations*, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> D. Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1958; A. Inkeles and D.H. Smith, *Becoming Modern. Individual Change in Six Developing Countries*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1974.

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 and group goals and interests and of multiple interpretations of the common good.<sup>6</sup>

### III

The modern program 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 legitimation 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 constructed by human actors. It combined orientations of rebellion and intellectual antinomianism, together with strong orientations to center-formation and institution-building, 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 centers and of

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<sup>6</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "Frameworks of the Great Revolutions: Culture, Social Structure, History and Human Agency", *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 133, 1992, pp. 385-401; idem, *Revolutions and the Transformation of Societies*. New York: Free Press, 1978; idem, "Comparative Liminality: Liminality and Dynamics of Civilization", *Religion*, Vol. 15, 1985, pp. 315-338; idem, "Cultural Traditions and Political Dynamics", *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 32, 1981, pp. 155-181; Eric Voegelin, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, edited by John H. Hallowell, Durham N.C., Duke University Press, 1975; A. Seligman, "The Comparative Studies of Utopias", "Christian Utopias and Christian Salvation: A General Introduction" and "The Eucharist Sacrifice and the Changing Utopian Moment in Post Reformation Christianity", in idem (ed.) *Order and Transcendence*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1989, pp. 1-44.

the impingement of the peripheries on the centers, of the concomitant blurring of the distinctions between center and periphery. Fourth was the combination of the charismatization of the center or centers 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 centers. Themes and symbols of protest—equality and freedom, justice and autonomy, solidarity and identity—became central components of the modern project of emancipation of man. It was indeed the incorporation of such themes of protest into the center which heralded the radical transformation of various sectarian utopian visions into central components of the political and cultural program.

Out of the combination of the ideology and premises of the political program 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 to 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 mankind—one of the major foci of open political constestation and struggle. Third, and in close connection with the two preceding characteristics, the continuous restructuring of center-periphery relations has become the central focus of political process and dynamics in modern societies.<sup>7</sup>

#### IV

This program 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 transcendental “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 bound-

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<sup>7</sup> B. Ackerman, *We The People*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1991.

aries 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.<sup>8</sup>

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 program—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 program, 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, giving 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 has shown,<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt and B. Giesen, “The construction of collective identity”, *European Journal of Sociology*, Tome 36, No. 1, 1995, pp. 72–102; E. Shils, “Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties”, in idem, ed., *Center and Periphery. Essays in Macrosociology*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1975, pp. 111–126.

<sup>9</sup> S. Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, New York, Free Press, 1990.

even if in a rather exaggerated way, in the difference between the more pluralistic conceptions of Montaigne or Erasmus which have entailed also the recognition and legitimizing of other cultural characteristics of human experience as against the totalizing vision of reason promulgated by Descartes. Among the most important such conflations 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 program of modernity continual—even if changing in their concrete manifestations—contradictions between the basic premises of the cultural and political programs 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, Michel Foucault and others—or in other words, to follow Peter Wagner’s formulation between freedom and control.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> N. Elias, *The Court Society*, Oxford, B. Blackwell, 1983; idem, *The Civilizing Process*, New York, Urizen Books, 1978–1982; M. Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*:

## 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—i.e., 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 program 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

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*An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, New York, Vintage Books, 1973; idem, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1988; idem, *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la Prison*, Paris, Gallimard, 1975; idem, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1965. Peter Wagner, *A Sociology of Modernity. Liberty and Discipline*, London, Routledge, 1994

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 center 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 programs 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>11</sup> Communist and fascist movements, each of which was indeed, even if in different ways, international, constituted distinct variant patterns of modernity.

## THE EXPANSION OF THE CIVILIZATION OF MODERNITY

### VIII

The cultural program of modernity, rooted as it was in the transformations of the late medieval European civilizations and polities, and as it crystallized in tandem in Europe especially after the Revolutions in early modern Western, military, economic, technological

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<sup>11</sup> On the Revolutions and modernity, see for instance the special issue on “The French Revolution and the Birth of Modernity”, *Social Research*, 1989. On the role of groups of heterodox intellectuals in some of the revolutions and in the antecedent periods, see A. Cochin. *La Revolution et la Libre Pensee*. Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1924; idem, *L'esprit du Jacobinisme*, Paris: Universitaires de France, 1979 and J. Baechler, preface in idem, pp. 7–33; F. Furet. *Rethinking the French Revolution*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Nahirny, V.C. *The Russian Intelligentsia: From Torment to Silence*, New Jersey: Rutgers, Transaction Publication, 1981.



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; and 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 has by the end of this century reached unprecedented dimensions.

This world-wide expansion raised, almost from the beginning of modernity, certainly from the second half of the twentieth century, the question of whether the world, the modern world which crystallized under the impact of such expansion of the process of globalization, will 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 fifties of the twentieth century, indeed against the views of the classical sociological analyses of Marx, Durkheim and to a large extent even of Weber<sup>12</sup>—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 program 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 program of modernity. While 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

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<sup>12</sup> E. Kamenka, ed., *The Portable Karl Marx*, New York, Viking Press, 1983; M. Weber, *Die Protestantische Ethik: Kritiken und Antikritiken*, Guetersloh Germany, Guetersloher Verlagshaus, 1978; idem, *Politik als Beruf*, Berlin, Dunker and Humblot, 1968; idem, *On Charisma and Institution Building: Selected Papers*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968; *Emile Durkheim On Morality and Society. Selected Writings*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1973.

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 traditionalistic movements which developed in all these societies from about the middle of the nineteenth century up to after the Second World War, but also as we shall see in greater detail later on, 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 centers 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 centers, 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 centers and their presumed yet also exclusivist premises and symbols; a continual oscillation between on the one hand denial of these premises and on the other hand a strong attraction to them and to the centers in which they were promulgated and efforts to appropriate them and reinterpret them. These themes developed already 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.

THE INITIAL PREDOMINANCE OF THE MODEL OF  
NATION AND REVOLUTIONARY STATE

## IX

In all the societies the basic model of the territorial state, later of the nation state, of the basic premises and symbols of Western modernity as well as its institutions—representative, legal and administrative—have become adopted, seemingly fully accepted, but at the same time far-reaching transformations thereof have taken place and new challenges and problems have arisen.

The attraction of many of the themes and institutional settings of the modern program of the core modern institutions for many groups in these societies were 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 of political discourse to many sectors in the non-Western European countries 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 programs of modernity, of orientations of protest with institution-building and center-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.<sup>13</sup>

## 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 programs 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 programs that have been continuing to develop in these societies entailed different emphases on different components of the cultural and political program 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 centers and program of modernity which developed among them differed from any of the European or the American ones—as well as from each other.

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<sup>13</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics", op. cit.; idem, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial-Age Civilizations*, op. cit.; idem, "Cultural Traditions and Political Dynamics", op. cit.

## 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 program 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 centers 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 sixteenth or seventeenth 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 centers thereof.<sup>14</sup>

Fourth, they were changing because of the continual confrontations between interpretations promulgated by different centers 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 program 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

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<sup>14</sup> E. Tiryakian, "The Changing Centers of Modernity," in E. Cohen, M. Lissak and U. Almagor (eds.), *Comparative Social Dynamics: Essays in Honor of S.N. Eisenstadt*, Boulder, CO and London: Westview, 1985; idem, "Modernization—Exhumetur in Pace" (Rethinking Macrosociology in the 1990s), *International Sociology*, Vol. 6, No. 2, June 1991, pp. 165–180; idem, "The New Worlds and Sociology—An Overview," *International Sociology*, Vol. 9, No. 2, June 1994, pp. 131–148.

movements, of continual reinterpretation of the major themes of this program 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, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Japanese civilizations.

The continual changeability of the institutional and ideological patterns of modernity indicate that the history of modernity is best seen as a story of continual development and formation, constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs of modernity and of distinctively modern institutional patterns, and of different self-conceptions of societies as modern—of multiple modernities.<sup>15</sup>

## XII

The development and expansion of modernity was 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, repressions and exclusions constituted continual components thereof. Wars and genocide were not, of course, new in the history of mankind. 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 ide-

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<sup>15</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," *Daedalus*, and the entire work devoted to this topic.

ologization 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.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE—BEYOND THE HEGEMONY  
OF THE NATION AND REVOLUTIONARY STATE MODEL

XIII

The multiple and divergent modernities of the “classical” age of modernity have crystallized during the nineteenth century and above all the first six or seven decades of the twentieth century in the different territorial nation- and revolutionary states and social movements that have 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 nation states 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 programs 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 program 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 such as among women's and the ecological movements all closely related to or rooted in the student and anti-Vietnam war movements of the late sixties and seventies, which 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 twentieth 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, new types of ethnic minorities like for instance the Russian ones 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 above 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 centers of their respective societies and also often in the international arena. They contested the hegemony of the older homogenizing programs, claiming their own autonomous places in central institutional arenas—be it in educational programs, 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. In these settings local dimensions were often brought together in new ways beyond the model of the classical nation state, with transnational ones such as for instance the European Union; or with broad religious identities—many of them rooted in the great religions such as Islam, or Buddhism, or different branches of Christianity, but reformulated in new modern ways.

Parallely there took place continuous shifts in the relative hegemony of different centers of modernity—first European and U.S. ones, moving to East Asian—shifts which became continually connected with concomitant growing contestations between such centers around their presumed hegemonic standing.<sup>16</sup>

#### XIV

Such developments raised the problem as to whether the contemporary world, one of as it were withdrawal from the modern program either in the direction of the “end of history” as promulgated by Francis Fukuyama,<sup>17</sup> in which the ideological premises of modernity with all their tensions and contradictions inherent in it 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.<sup>18</sup>

Both these approaches implied that we may be witnessing here a process of de-Axialization—that the Axial program or at least the “secondary Axialization” have been by now exhausted—such exhaustion being manifest both in the development of multiple post-modern and in seemingly anti-modern and anti-Western, possibly non-Axial movements and identities. A closer examination of the contemporary scenes indicates a rather more complex situation.

<sup>16</sup> See E. Tiryakan, “The New Worlds and Sociology—An Overview,” *International Sociology*, Vol. 9, No. 2, June 1994, pp. 131–148.

<sup>17</sup> F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York, Free Press, 1992.

<sup>18</sup> S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1996.

All these developments do indeed indicate far-reaching changes or shifts from the model or models of modern nation- and revolution-ary state. 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 program of modernity and collective identity. But do they all signal the “end of history,” the end of the modern program—epitomized in the development of different “post-modernities”—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 program?

## XV

Several characteristics of the fundamentalist movements and the communal religious movements which have been portrayed—and in many ways have also presented themselves—as *diametrically* opposed to the modern program which bear closely on this problem 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 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 of 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 programs 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.<sup>19</sup>

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 program, 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 tension 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.<sup>20</sup>

Third, one can identify some very significant parallels between these various religious, including fundamentalist, movements with their seemingly extreme opposites—the different post-modern 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 programs of modernity; and above all the concern

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<sup>19</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions. The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions. The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 1998; idem, *Post-Traditional Societies*, New York, 1974.

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 centers was also continuously connected with an ambivalence towards these centers 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 post-revolutionary permutations, the political system has been perceived as the major arena of the implementation of the transcendental utopian visions—even in the modern era if such vision was couched in modern secular terms. As against this, the ideological reconstruction of the political center 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.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> This, how-

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Ping-ti Ho and Tang Tsou, eds., *China in Crisis. Vol. 1. China's Heritage and the Communist System*, 2 books, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1968; J. Arnason, *The*

ever, has of course been also the case with the first, European, modernity—which was deeply rooted in specific European civilizational premises and historical experience.<sup>23</sup> 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 both 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.<sup>24</sup>

## THE DETHRONEMENT OF THE WESTERN HEGEMONY OF MODERNITY—MULTIPLE APPROPRIATIONS OF MODERNITY

### XVII

The prevalence of all these themes and the tensions between pluralistic and totalistic orientations and programs, between multifaceted as

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*Future that Failed. Origins and Destinies of the Soviet Model*, London, Routledge, 1993; V. Tismaneanu, ed., *The Revolutions of 1989*, London, Routledge, 1999.

<sup>23</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *European Civilization in a Comparative Perspective*, Oslo, Norwegian University Press, 1987.

<sup>24</sup> The Economist, “The Road to 2050. A Survey of the New Geopolitics”, *The Economist*, July 31st, 1999.

against closed identities; the continual confrontation between particularistic and universalistic identities in the settings of new universalistic hegemonies and the continual ambivalence to the major centers of this hegemony that can be identified in almost all of these movements, attest to the fact that while going beyond the model of the nation state, these developments have not gone beyond the basic Axial problematics of modernity. They all are deeply reflexive about sharing the awareness that no answer to these tensions is final—even while attempting to provide such final non-contestable answer to the basic problematics of modernity.

They have however reconstituted this problematic in new historical contexts, in new arenas, in new ways. First among these new ways is the worldwide reach and diffusion (especially through the various media) of such movements and of the confrontations they entail; second their politicization, their continual interweaving with fierce contestations formulated in highly political ideologies and terms; and third, a crucial component of these reinterpretations and appropriations of modernity is the continual reconstruction of collective identities in reference to the new global context and contestations between them. Such contestations may indeed be couched in “civilizational” terms—but these very terms are already couched in terms of the discourse of modernity, defined in totalistic and absolutizing terms derived from the basic premises of the discourse of modernity, even if it can often draw on older religious animosities. When such clashes or contestations are combined with political, military or economic struggles and conflicts they can indeed become very violent.

Fourth, the reconstructions of the various political and cultural visions and such collective identities on the contemporary scene entail a very important shift in this discourse with respect to the confrontation between the Western and non-Western civilizations or religions or societies and the relations of these confrontations to the Western cultural program of modernity. As against the seeming, even if highly ambivalent, acceptance of these premises combined with their continual reinterpretation that was characteristic of the earlier reformist religious and national movements, most of the contemporary religious movements—including the fundamentalist and most communal religious movements—as well as the more general discourse of modernity which developed within these societies, promulgate a seeming negation of at least some of these premises. They promulgate a markedly confrontational attitude to the West, to what

is conceived as Western, and attempts to appropriate modernity and the global system on their own modern, but non-Western, often anti-Western, terms. The confrontation with the West does not take with them the form of searching to become incorporated into the new hegemonic civilization on its own terms, but rather to appropriate the new international global scene and the modernity for themselves, for their traditions or “civilizations”—as they were continually promulgated and reconstructed under the impact of their continual encounter with the West. These movements attempted to completely dissociate Westernization from modernity and they denied the monopoly or hegemony of Western modernity, and the acceptance of the Western cultural program as the epitome of modernity. Significantly enough many of these themes are espoused also, even if naturally in different idioms, by many of the “post-modern” movements.

Thus the processes of globalization that have been taking place in the contemporary scene do not thus 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 problematique of premodern Axial civilizations. Rather, all these developments and trends constitute aspects of the continual reinterpretation, reconstruction of the cultural program 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.

While the common starting point of many of these developments was indeed the cultural programme of modernity as it developed in the West, more recent developments gave rise to a multiplicity of cultural and social formations which go far beyond the very homogenizing and hegemonizing aspects of this original version. All these developments do indeed attest to continual development of multiple modernities, or of multiple interpretations of modernity—and above all to the de-Westernization of the decoupling of modernity from its “Western” pattern, of depriving, as it were, the West from monopoly of modernity. It is in this broad context that European or Western

modernity or modernities have to be seen not as *the* only real modernity but as one of multiple modernities—even if of course it has played a special role not only in the origins of modernity but also in the continual expansion and reinterpretation of modernities—becomes fully highlighted. But at the same time these developments constitute illustrations of the different potentialities inherent in the Axial, especially global Axialities as they unfold on the eve of the twenty-first century.

## XVIII

This emphasis on the essentially modern characteristics of all these movements and collective identities which go beyond the classical model of the territorial, national and/or revolutionary state does not necessarily entail an optimistic view. On the contrary—they emphasise not only the fragility and changeability of different modernities but also the destructive forces which are inherent potentialities in the modern program, most fully manifest in the ideologization of violence, terror and wars. These destructive forces, the “traumas” of modernity which brought into question the great promises of modernity, emerged clearly after the First World War, became even more visible in the Second World War, in the Holocaust, even if they were paradoxically ignored or branched out from the discourse of modernity in the first two or three decades after the Second World War. Lately they have re-emerged again in a most frightening way on the contemporary scene, in the new “ethnic” conflict—in parts of the Balkans, especially in the former Yugoslavia, in many of the former republics of Soviet Russia, in Sri Lanka and in a most terrible way in African countries, such as Rwanda.<sup>25</sup> These are not outbursts of old “traditional” force—but outcomes of modern reconstruction and seemingly “traditional” forces in a modern way—just as the fundamentalist and religious communal movements developed within the framework of the processes of modernity and they cannot be fully understood except within this framework. Thus indeed modernity is, to paraphrase Leszek Kolakowski’s felicitous and sanguine expression—“on endless trial.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> E. Tiryakian, “The Wild Cards of Modernity,” *Daedalus*, Vol. 126, No. 2, September 1997, pp. 147–181.

<sup>26</sup> L. Kolakowski, *Modernity on Endless Trial*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### MULTIPLE MODERNITIES IN AN AGE OF GLOBALIZATION\*

#### I

Recent events and developments—especially the continual processes of globalization and the downfall of the Soviet regime—have indeed sharpened the problem of the nature of the modern, contemporary world. Indeed, as we are approaching the end of the twentieth century, new visions or understandings of modernity, of modern civilization are emerging throughout the world, be it in the West—Europe, the United States—where the first cultural program of modernity developed, or among Asian, Latin American and African societies. All these developments call out to a far-reaching reappraisal of the classical visions of modernity and modernization.

Two major interpretations of these events on the contemporary scene have emerged. One, promulgated by Francis Fukuyama, announced the “end of history”—the homogenization, albeit of course with local variations of the modern world in terms of the liberal world-view and predominance of market economy, a view very close to the earlier theories of the convergence of industrial societies. The other, opposite view, promulgated above all by Samuel P. Huntington, while not denying the growing technological convergence in many parts of the world, emphasized that the processes of globalization bring us not to one relatively homogeneous world but rather to the “clash of Civilizations,” in which the Western civilization is compared, often in hostile terms, with other civilizations—especially the Muslim and Confucian ones (Fukuyama 1992; Huntington 1996).

While both scholars point out some very important aspects of the contemporary world, they both seem to me to be wrong. In my view, what we witness in the contemporary world is the development—

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\* This study work was supported by grants from the Israel Science Foundation and by the Chiang-Ching-huo Foundation.

certainly not always peaceful, often indeed confrontational—of multiple modernities.

Such a view necessitates a far-reaching appraisal of the classical visions of modernity and modernization (Eisenstadt 1966: 1973).

Such a reappraisal should be based on several considerations. It should be based first of all on the recognition that the expansion of modernity has to be viewed as the crystallization of a new type of civilization not unlike the expansion of great religions, or great imperial expansions in past times. Because, however, the expansion of this civilization almost always and continually combined economic, political, and ideological aspects and forces its impact on the societies to which it spread was much more intense than in most historical cases.

This expansion indeed spawned a tendency—rather new and practically unique in the history of mankind—to the development of universal, worldwide institutional, and symbolic frameworks and systems. This new civilization that emerged first in Europe, later expanded through the world and created a series of international frameworks or systems, each based on some of the basic premises of this civilization, and each rooted in one of its basic institutional dimensions. Several economic, political, ideological, almost worldwide systems—all of them multi-centered and heterogenous—emerged, each generating its own dynamics, its continual changes in constant relations to others. The interrelations among them have never been “static” or unchanging, and the dynamics of these international frameworks or settings gave rise to continuous changes in these societies.

Just as the expansion of all historical civilizations, so also that of the civilization of modernity undermined the symbolic and institutional premises of the societies incorporated into it, opening up new options and possibilities. As a result of this, a great variety of modern or modernizing societies sharing many common characteristics, but also evincing great differences among themselves, developed out of these responses and continual interactions.

The first, “original” modernity as it developed in the West combined several closely interconnected dimensions or aspects: first, the structural, organizational one—the development of the many specific aspects of modern social structure such as growing structural differentiation, urbanization, industrialization, growing communications and the like, which have been identified and analyzed in the first

studies of modernization after the Second World War; second, the institutional one—the development of the new institutional formations, of the modern nation-state, of modern, especially national, collectivities, of new and above all capitalist-political economies; and, last but not least, a distinct cultural program and closely related specific modes of structuration of the major arenas of social life.

The “classical theories” of modernization of the 1950s, indeed the classical sociological analyses of Marx, Durkheim, and to a large extent even of Weber (Kamenka 1983; Weber 1968a, 1968b, 1978; Durkheim 1973)—or at least in one reading of him, have implicitly or explicitly conflated these different dimensions of modernity; these approaches assumed that even if these dimensions are analytically distinct, yet historically they do come together, becoming basically inseparable. Moreover, most of the classics of sociology as well as the studies of modernization of the forties and fifties have assumed, even if only implicitly, that the basic institutional constellations which came together in European modernity and that the cultural program of modernity as it developed in the West will “naturally” be ultimately taken over in all modernizing societies. The studies of modernization and of convergence of modern societies have indeed assumed that this project of modernity with its hegemonic and homogenizing tendencies will continue in the West, and with the expansion of modernity, prevail throughout the world. In all these approaches, the assumption that the modes of institutional integration accompany the development of such relatively autonomous, differentiated institutional arenas in all modern societies was implicit.

But the reality that emerged proved to be radically different. The actual developments indicated in all or most societies that the various institutional arenas—the economic, the political, and that of family—exhibit continually relatively autonomous dimensions that come together in different ways in different societies and in different periods of their development. Indeed, the developments in the contemporary era did not bear this assumption of “convergence” and have emphasized the great diversity of modern societies, even of societies similar in terms of economic development like the major industrial capitalist societies—the European ones, the U.S., and Japan. Sombart’s old question: “Why is there no socialism in the U.S.?” formulated in the first decades of this century attests to the first, even if still only implicit, recognition of this fact. Far-reaching variability developed

even within the West—within Europe itself and above all between Europe and the Americas—the U.S., Latin America, or rather Latin Americas (Sombart 1976).

The same was even more true with respect to the relation between the cultural and structural dimensions of modernity. A very strong, even if implicit, assumption of the studies of modernization was that the cultural dimensions or aspects of modernization—that the basic cultural premises of Western modernity are inherently and necessarily interwoven with the structural ones became highly questionable. While the different dimensions of the original Western project have indeed constituted the crucial starting and continual reference points for the processes that developed among different societies throughout the world, the developments in these societies have gone far beyond the homogenizing and hegemonic dimensions of the original cultural program of modernity.

Modernity has indeed spread to most of the world, but did not give rise to a single civilization or to one institutional pattern, but to the development of several modern civilizations, or at least civilizational patterns, i.e. of civilizations which share common characteristics, but which tend to develop different, even cognate ideological and institutional dynamics. Moreover, far-reaching changes which go beyond their original premises of modernity have been taking place also in Western societies.

## II

The civilization of modernity as it developed first in the West was from its very beginning beset by internal antinomies and contradictions, giving rise to continual critical discourse which focused on the relations, tensions, and contradictions between its premises and between these premises and the institutional development of modern societies. The importance of these tensions was fully understood in the classical sociological literature—Tocqueville, Marx, Weber, or Durkheim—and was later taken up in the thirties, above all in the Frankfurt school in the so-called “critical” sociology—which was, however, focused mainly on the problems of fascism, but then became neglected in post-Second World War studies of modernization. It came again lately to the forefront to constitute a continual component of the analysis of modernity (see in greater detail Eisenstadt 1973, 1977; Goldthorpe 1971).

The tensions and antinomies that have developed within the basic premises of this program were first that between totalizing and more diversified or pluralistic conceptions of the major components of this program—of the very conception of reason and its place in human life and society, and of the construction of nature, of human society and its history; second, between reflexivity and active construction of nature and society; third, between different evaluations of major dimensions of human experience; and fourth, between control and autonomy.

In the political arena, these tensions coalesced with those between a constructivist approach which views politics as the process of reconstruction of society and, especially, of democratic politics—active self-construction of society as against a view which accepts society in its concrete composition; between liberty and equality, between the autonomy of civil society and the charismatization of state power; between the civil and the utopian components of the cultural and political program of modernity; between freedom and emancipation in the name of some, often utopian, social vision; above all between Jacobin and more pluralistic orientations or approaches to the social and political order; and between the closely related tension between, to use Bruce Ackerman's formulation, "normal" and "revolutionary" politics (see Eisenstadt 1998).

These various tensions in the political program of modernity were closely related to those between the different modes of legitimation of modern regimes, especially but not only of constitutional and democratic polities—namely between, on the one hand, procedural legitimation in terms of civil adherence to rules of the game and on the other hand, in different "substantive" terms; a very strong tendency to promulgate other modes or bases of legitimation—above all, to use Edward Shils' terminology, various primordial, "sacred"—religious or secular—ideological components (Shils 1975: 111–126).

It was around these tensions that there developed the critical discourse of modernity. The most radical "external" criticism of modernity denied the possibility of the grounding of any social order, of morality, in the basic premises of the cultural program of modernity especially in autonomy of individuals and supremacy of reason; it denied that these premises could be seen as grounded in any transcendental vision; it denied also the closely related claims that these premises and the institutional development of modernity could be seen as the epitome of human creativity. Such criticisms claimed that

these premises and institutional developments denied human creativity and gave rise to flattening of human experience and to the erosion of moral order; of the moral—and transcendental—bases of society, and to the alienation of man from nature and from society. The more internal criticisms of this program, which could often overlap or become interwoven with the “external” ones, evaluated the institutional development of modern societies from the point of view of the promises of the cultural and political programs of modernity as well as from the point of view of the basic antinomies and contradictions inherent in this program. Of special importance here was the multifaceted, continual and continually changing confrontation of the claims of the program to enhance freedom and autonomy with the strong tendency to control; to inequality and continual dislocation of various social sectors that developed with the crystallization of modern institutional formations.

### III

All these antinomies and tensions developed from the very beginning of the institutionalization of modern regimes in Europe. The continual prevalence of these antinomies and contradictions had also—as the classics of sociology were fully aware of, but as was to no small extent forgotten or neglected in the studies of modernization—far-reaching institutional implications and were closely interwoven with different patterns of institutional constellations and dynamics that developed in different modern societies. With the expansion of modern civilizations beyond the West, in some ways already beyond Europe to the Americas, and with the dynamics of the continually developing international frameworks or settings, several new crucial elements have become central in the constitution of modern societies.

Of special importance in this context was the relative place of the non-Western societies in the various—economic, political, ideological—international systems that differed greatly from those of the Western ones. It was not only that it was Western societies which were the “originators” of this new civilization. Beyond this and above all was the fact that the expansion of these systems, especially insofar as it took place through colonialization and imperialist expansion—gave to the Western institutions the hegemonic place in these systems. But it was in the nature of these international systems that they gener-

ated a dynamics which gave rise both to political and ideological challenges, to existing hegemonies, as well as to continual shifts in the loci of hegemony within Europe, from Europe to the United States, then also to Japan and East Asia.

But it was not only the economic, military-political, and ideological expansion of the civilization of modernity from the West throughout the world that was important in this process. Of no lesser—possibly even of greater importance was the fact that this expansion has given rise to continual confrontation between the cultural and institutional premises of Western modernity, with those of other civilizations—those of other axial civilizations, as well as non-axial ones, the most important of which has been, of course, Japan. Truly enough, many of the basic premises and symbols of Western modernity as well as its institutions—representative, legal, and administrative—have become indeed seemingly accepted within these civilizations, but at the same time far-reaching transformations and challenges have taken place and new problems have arisen.

The attraction of these themes—and of some of these institutions, for many groups within these civilizations—lay in the fact that their appropriation 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 into 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 which differed from those that were predominant in the West or their negative attitude towards the West.

The attraction of these themes of political discourse to many sectors in the non-Western European countries was also intensified by the fact that their appropriation in these countries entailed the transposition to the international scene of the struggle between hierarchy and equality. Although initially couched in European terms, it could find resonances in the political traditions of many of these societies. 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 many of the programs promulgated

by these groups, of orientations of protest with institution-building and center-formation.

Such transposition was generated not only by the higher hierarchical standing, actual hegemony of the Western countries in these new international settings, but also by the fact that the non-Western civilizations were put in an inferior position in the evaluation of societies which was promulgated by the seemingly universalistic premises of the new modern civilizations.

Thus various groups and elites in Central and Eastern Europe, and Asian and African societies were able to refer to both, the tradition of protest and the tradition of center-formation in these societies, and to cope with problems of reconstructing their own centers and traditions in terms of the new setting. From this perspective the most important aspect of the expansion of these themes beyond Western Europe and of their appropriation by different groups in the non-Western European societies lay in the fact that it made it possible to rebel against the institutional realities of the new modern civilization in terms of its own symbols and premises (see Eisenstadt 1998).

#### IV

But the appropriation of different themes and institutional patterns of the original Western modern civilization in non-Western European societies did not 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 programs of modernity, and the development and reconstruction of new institutional patterns. The cultural programs that have been continuing developing in these societies entailed different interpretations and far-reaching reformulations of the initial cultural program of modernity, its basic conceptions and premises; they entailed different emphases on different components of this program, on its different tensions and antinomies and the concomitant crystallization of distinct institutional patterns. They entailed the continual construction of symbols of collective identities; their conceptions of themselves and of their part; and their negative or positive attitudes to modernity in general and to the West in particular.

These differences between the different cultural programs of modern-



ity were not purely “cultural” or academic. They were closely related to some basic problems inherent in the political and institutional programs of modernity. Thus, in the political realm, they were closely related to the tension between the utopian and the civil components in the construction of modern politics; between “revolutionary” and “normal” politics, or between the general will and the will of all; between civil society and the state, between individuality and collectivity. These different cultural programs of modernity entailed also different conceptions of authority and of its accountability, different modes of protest and of political activity, of questioning of the basic premises of the modern order and different modes of institutional formations.

In close relation to the crystallization of the different cultural programs of modernity, a continual process of crystallization of different institutional patterns and of different modes of critical discourse has been taking place in different modern societies, which focused on interrelations and tensions between different institutional arenas, and between them and the different premises of the cultural and political programs of modernity and their continual reinterpretations.

The preceding considerations about the multiple programs of modernity do not of course negate the obvious fact that in many central aspects of their institutional structure—be it in occupational and industrial structure, in the structure of education or of cities—in political structures very strong convergences have developed in different modern societies. These convergences have indeed generated common problems, but the modes of coping with these problems, i.e. the institutional dynamics attendant on the development of these problems, differed greatly between these civilizations.

But it is not only with the societies of Asia or Latin America that developments took place which went beyond the initial model of Western society. At the same time in Western societies themselves, new discourses have developed which have greatly transformed the initial model of modernity and which have undermined the original vision of modern and industrial society with its hegemonic and homogenizing vision. There has emerged a growing tendency to distinguish between *Zweckrationalität* and *Wertrationalität*, and to recognize a great multiplicity of different *Wertrationalitäten*. Cognitive rationality—especially as epitomized in the extreme forms of scientism—has certainly become dethroned from its hegemonic position, as has also been the

idea of the "conquest" or mastery of the environment, whether of society or of nature.

## V

These different cultural programs and institutional patterns of modernity were not shaped by what has been sometimes presented in some of the earlier studies of modernization as natural evolutionary potentialities of these societies; or, as in the earlier criticisms thereof, by the natural unfolding of their respective traditions; nor by their placement in the new international settings. They were shaped rather by the continuous interaction between several factors. In most general terms, they were shaped by the historical experience of these societies in civilization and by the mode of impingement of modernity on them and of their incorporation into the modern political economic and ideological international frameworks.

In greater detail, these programs were first shaped by basic premises of cosmic and social order, the basic "cosmologies" that were prevalent in these societies in their "orthodox" and "heterodox" formulations alike as they have crystallized in these societies throughout their histories. Second was the pattern of institutional formations that developed within these civilizations through their historical experience, especially in their encounter with other societies or civilizations.

Third was the encounter and continual interaction between these processes and the new cultural and political program of modernity; the premises and modes of social and political discourse that were prevalent in the different societies and civilizations as they were incorporated into the new international systems and the continual interaction of these societies with these processes. In this encounter, of special importance were the internal antinomies and tensions or contradictions in the basic cultural and above all in the political program of modernity, as it developed initially in the West—and even in the West in a great variety of ways, and as it became transformed with its expansion—and with the internal changes in Western societies.

Fourth were the dynamics and internal tensions and contradictions that developed in conjunction with the structural-demographic economic and political changes attendant on the institutionalization of modern institutional frameworks with the expansion of modernity,

and between these processes and the basic premises of the cultural and political premises of modernity.

It was the continual interaction between these factors that generated the continual changes in the cultural programs that developed within them, and their continual reinterpretations, as well as the major components of their institutional formations, namely the constitution of the boundaries of their respective collectivities and the components of collective consciousness and identity—of what has been designated as nationalism or ethnicity; second, different configurations of civil society and public spheres; and last but not least, different modes of new modern political economies.

The major actors in such processes of reinterpretation and of formation of new institutional patterns which were continually taking place in all these societies were various political activists, intellectuals, in conjunction above all with the social movements. Such activists, intellectuals and leaders of movements which have been developing in all these societies promulgated and reinterpreted the major symbols and components of the cultural programs of modernity, and addressed themselves to the antinomies and contradictions within these programs and between them and institutional realities. In all modern societies, such movements arose in relation to the problems that developed attendant on the institutionalization and development of modern political regimes and their democratization of modern collectivities, and the expansion of capitalism and new economic and class formations, especially in relation to the contradictions which developed between, on the one hand, the premises of the political and cultural program of modernity and on the other hand these institutional developments with the continuous struggle of wide social sectors for access to the center. It is above all these movements which promulgated the antinomies and tensions inherent in the cultural and political programs of modernity and which attempted to interweave them with the reconstruction of centers, collectivities and institutional formations.

Whatever the concrete details of these agendas, they highlighted the continual challenge of the contradiction between, on the one hand, encompassing, totalistic, potentially totalitarian overtones based either on collective, national, religious and/or Jacobin visions, and, on the other, a commitment to some pluralistic premises. None of the modern pluralistic constitutional regimes has been able to do entirely away—or can even possibly do away—with either the Jacobin

component, especially with its utopian dimension, with the orientation to some primordial components of collective identity, or with the claims for the centrality of religion in the construction of collective identities or in the legitimization of the political order. The ubiquity of this challenge has also highlighted the possibility of crises and breakdowns as inherent in the very nature of modernity (Eisenstadt 1998; Goldthorpe 1971).

## VI

Thus, within all modern societies continuously developed new questionings and reinterpretations of different dimensions of modernity—and in all of them there have been continually developing different cultural agendas.

All these developments attest to the growing diversification of the visions and understanding of modernity, of the basic cultural agendas of the elites of different societies—far beyond the homogenic and hegemonic visions of modernity that were prevalent in the fifties. While the common starting point of many of these developments was indeed the cultural program of modernity as it developed in the West, yet the more recent developments gave rise to a multiplicity of cultural social formations which go far beyond the very homogenizing and hegemonizing aspects of its original version.

Hence many, if not all of the components of the initial cultural vision of modernity have been challenged in the last decade or so. These challenges claimed that the modern era has basically ended, giving rise to the post-modern one, and were in their turn counter-challenged by those like Jürgen Habermas who claimed that the various post-modern developments basically constitute either a repetition, in a new form of criticisms of modernity which existed there from the very beginning, or constitute yet another manifestation of the continual unfolding of modernity (Habermas 1987). Indeed, it can be argued that the very tendency or potential to such radical reinterpretations constitute an inherent component of the civilization or civilizations of modernity.

This is even true, even if in a very paradoxical manner, of the most extreme anti-modern movements that developed in the contemporary period, namely communal-religious, especially the fundamentalist ones, even if anti-Enlightenment ideology and a highly

essentialized conception of tradition is the core of their ideology. The basic structure or phenomenology of their vision and action is in many crucial and seemingly paradoxical ways a modern one, just as has been the case with the totalitarian movements of the twenties and thirties, and these movements bear within themselves the seeds of very intensive and virulent revolutionary sectarian utopian Jacobinism, seeds which can, under appropriate circumstances, come to full-blown fruition.

Whatever the ultimate verdict about these developments, there can be no doubt that they all entailed the unfolding of the civilizations of modernity, even if many of these movements and trends entail a radical transformation of some of the initial premises of Western modernity and above all of the modes of structuration of social activities and institutional arenas that characterized the first "bourgeois" (and paradoxically also the later communist) modern societies.

## VII

Thus, while the spread or expansion of modernity has indeed taken place throughout most of the world, it did not give rise to just one civilization, one pattern of ideological and institutional response, but to at least several basic variants—and to continual refracting thereof. In order to understand these different patterns, it is necessary to take into account the pattern of historical experience of these civilizations.

But the importance of the historical experience of the various civilizations in shaping the concrete contours of the modern societies which developed in the historical spaces of these civilizations does not mean, as S.P. Huntington seems to imply in his influential "The Clash of Civilizations," that these processes give rise on the contemporary scene to the emergence of several of closed civilizations which basically constitute a continuation of the historical civilization (Huntington 1996). It is not only, as Huntington correctly indicates, that modernization does not automatically imply westernization. What is of crucial importance is that on the contemporary scene the crystallization of continually interacting modern civilizations takes place in which even the inclusive particularistic tendencies are constructed in typically modern ways which attempt to appropriate from modernity on their own terms and articulate continually in different concrete ways in different historical settings, the antinomies and

contradictions of modernity. But it is not only that there have been continually developing multiple modern civilizations—but these civilizations, which shared many common components and which continually constituted mutual reference points, have been continually developing, unfolding, giving rise to new problematic and continual reinterpretations of the basic premises of modernity. Within all societies, new questionings of modernity developed continually and in all of them, different cultural agendas have been developing. All these attested to the growing diversification of the visions and understanding of modernity, of the basic cultural agendas of different sectors of modern societies, far beyond the homogenic and hegemonic visions of modernity that were prevalent in the fifties. The fundamentalist—and the new communal-national—movements constitute one of such new developments, in the unfolding of the potentialities and antinomies of modernity.

Such development may indeed also give rise to highly confrontational stances—especially to the West—but these stances are promulgated in continually changing modern idioms and they may entail a continual transformation of these indications and of the cultural programs of modernity.

While such diversity has certainly undermined the old hegemonies, yet at the same time it was closely connected, perhaps paradoxically, with the development of new multiple common reference points and networks—with a globalization of cultural networks and channels of communication far beyond what existed before.

At the same time, the various components of modern life and culture were refracted and reconstructed in ways which went beyond the confines of any institutional boundaries, especially those of the nation-state—giving rise to the multiple pattern of globalization, in diversification studied by such scholars as Arjun Appendurai, Ulf Hannerz, and Roland Robertson (Appendurai 1996; Hannerz 1996; Robertson 1992).

It is this combination of the growing diversity in the continuous reinterpretation of modernity on the one hand with development of multiple global trends and mutual reference points on the other hand that is characteristic of the contemporary scene.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### MULTIPLE MODERNITIES

#### I

The notion of “multiple modernities” denotes a certain view of the contemporary world—indeed of the history and characteristics of the modern era—that goes against the views long prevalent in scholarly and general discourse. It goes against the view of the “classical” theories of modernization and of the convergence of industrial societies prevalent in the 1950s, and indeed against the classical sociological analyses of Marx, Durkheim, and (to a large extent) even of Weber, at least in one reading of his work. They all assumed, even if only implicitly, that the cultural program of modernity as it developed in modern Europe and the basic institutional constellations that emerged there would ultimately take over in all modernizing and modern societies; with the expansion of modernity, they would prevail throughout the world.<sup>1</sup>

The reality that emerged after the so-called beginnings of modernity, and especially after World War II, failed to bear out these assumptions. The actual developments in modernizing societies have refuted the homogenizing and hegemonic assumptions of this Western program of modernity. While a general trend toward structural differentiation developed across a wide range of institutions in most of these societies—in family life, economic and political structures, urbanization, modern education, mass communication, and individualistic orientations—the ways in which these arenas were defined and organized varied greatly, in different periods of their development, giving

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene Kamenka, ed., *The Portable Karl Marx* (New York: Viking Press, 1983); Max Weber, *Die Protestantische Ethik: Kritiken und Antikritiken* (Guetersloh, Germany: Guetersloher Verlagshaus, 1978); Weber, *Politik als Beruf* (Berlin: Dunker and Humblot, 1968); Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building: Selected Papers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Weber, *The Rational and Social Foundations of Music* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1958); W.G. Runciman, ed., *Max Weber: Selections in Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Robert N. Bellah, ed., *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society: Selected Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973); Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984).

rise to multiple institutional and ideological patterns. Significantly, these patterns did not constitute simple continuations in the modern era of the traditions of their respective societies. Such patterns were distinctively modern, though greatly influenced by specific cultural premises, traditions, and historical experiences. All developed distinctly modern dynamics and modes of interpretation, for which the original Western project constituted the crucial (and usually ambivalent) reference point. Many of the movements that developed in non-Western societies articulated strong anti-Western or even antimodern themes, yet all were distinctively modern. This was true not only of the various nationalist and traditionalist movements that emerged in these societies from about the middle of the nineteenth century until after World War II, but also, as we shall note, of the more contemporary fundamentalist ones.

The idea of multiple modernities presumes that the best way to understand the contemporary world—indeed to explain the history of modernity—is to see it as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs. These ongoing reconstructions of multiple institutional and ideological patterns are carried forward by specific social actors in close connection with social, political, and intellectual activists, and also by social movements pursuing different programs of modernity, holding very different views on what makes societies modern. Through the engagement of these actors with broader sectors of their respective societies, unique expressions of modernity are realized. These activities have not been confined to any single society or state, though certain societies and states proved to be the major arenas where social activists were able to implement their programs and pursue their goals. Though distinct understandings of multiple modernity developed within different nation-states, and within different ethnic and cultural groupings, among communist, fascist, and fundamentalist movements, each, however different from the others, was in many respects international. One of the most important implications of the term “multiple modernities” is that modernity and Westernization are not identical; Western patterns of modernity are not the only “authentic” modernities, though they enjoy historical precedence and continue to be a basic reference point for others.

In acknowledging a multiplicity of continually evolving modernities, one confronts the problem of just what constitutes the common core of modernity. This problem is exacerbated and indeed trans-

formed with the contemporary deconstruction or decomposition of many of the components of “classical” models of the nation and of revolutionary states, particularly as a consequence of globalization. Contemporary discourse has raised the possibility that the modern project, at least in terms of the classical formulation that held sway for the last two centuries, is exhausted. One contemporary view claims that such exhaustion is manifest in the “end of history.”<sup>2</sup> The other view best represented is Huntington’s notion of a “clash of civilizations,” in which Western civilization—the seeming epitome of modernity—is confronted by a world in which traditional, fundamentalist, antimodern, and anti-Western civilizations—some (most notably, the Islamic and so-called Confucian groupings) viewing the West with animus or disdain—are predominant.<sup>3</sup>

## II

The cultural and political program of modernity, as it developed first in Western and Central Europe, entailed, as Björn Wittrock notes, distinct ideological as well as institutional premises. The cultural program of modernity entailed some very distinct shifts in the conception of human agency, and of its place in the flow of time. It carried a conception of the future characterized by a number of possibilities realizable through autonomous human agency. The premises on which the social, ontological, and political order were based, and the legitimation of that order, were no longer taken for granted. An intensive reflexivity developed around the basic ontological premises of structures of social and political authority—a reflexivity shared even by modernity’s most radical critics, who in principle denied its validity. It was most successfully formulated by Weber. To follow James D. Faubian’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. . . .”

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<sup>2</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

... What Weber asserts—what in any event might be extrapolated from his assertions—is that the threshold of modernity may be marked precisely at the moment when the unquestioned legitimacy of a divinely preordained social order began its decline. Modernity emerges—or, more accurately, a range of possible modernities emerge—only when what had been seen as an unchanging cosmos ceases to be taken for granted. Countermoderns reject that reproach, believing that what is unchanging is not the social order, but the tasks that the construction and functioning of any social order must address. . . .

... 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. . . .<sup>4</sup>

The degree of reflexivity characteristic of modernity went beyond what was crystallized in the axial civilizations. The reflexivity that developed in the modern program not only focused on the possibility of different interpretations of core transcendental visions and basic ontological conceptions prevalent in a particular society or civilization; it came to question the very givenness of such visions and the institutional patterns related to them. It gave rise to an awareness of the possibility of multiple visions that could, in fact, be contested.<sup>5</sup>

Such awareness was closely connected with two central components of the modern project emphasized in early studies of modernization by both Daniel Lerner and Alex Inkeles.<sup>6</sup> The first recognized among those either modern or becoming “modernized” the awareness of a great variety of roles existing beyond narrow, fixed, local, and familial ones. The second recognized the possibility of belonging to wider translocal, possibly changing, communities.

Central to this cultural program was an emphasis on the autonomy of man: his or her (in its initial formulation, certainly “his”)

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<sup>4</sup> James D. Faubion, *Modern Greek Lessons: A Primer in Historical Constructivism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 113–115.

<sup>5</sup> On the axial age civilizations, see S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics,” *European Journal of Sociology* 23 (2) (1982): 294–314; Eisenstadt, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial-Age Civilizations* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1986).

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958); Alex Inkeles and David H. Smith, *Becoming Modern: Individual Change in Six Developing Countries* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

emancipation from the fetters of traditional political and cultural authority. In the continuous expansion of the realm of personal and institutional freedom and activity, such autonomy implied, first, reflexivity and exploration; second, active construction and mastery of nature, including human nature. This project of modernity entailed a very strong emphasis on the autonomous participation of members of society in the constitution of the social and political order, on the autonomous access of all members of the society to these orders and to their centers. From the conjunctions of these different conceptions arose a belief in the possibility that society could be actively formed by conscious human activity. Two complementary but potentially contradictory tendencies developed within this program about the best ways in which social construction could take place. The first, crystallized above all in the Great Revolutions, gave rise, perhaps for the first time in history, to the belief in the possibility of bridging the gap between the transcendental and mundane orders—of realizing through conscious human agency, exercised in social life, major utopian and eschatological visions. The second emphasized a growing recognition of the legitimacy of multiple individual and group goals and interests, as a consequence allowed for multiple interpretations of the common good.<sup>7</sup>

### III

The modern program entailed also a radical transformation of the conceptions and premises of the political order, the constitution of the political arena, and the characteristics of the political process. Central to the modern idea was the breakdown of all traditional legitimations of the political order, and with it the opening up of

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<sup>7</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "Frameworks of the Great Revolutions: Culture, Social Structure, History and Human Agency," *International Social Science Journal* 133 (1992): 385–401; Eisenstadt, *Revolutions and the Transformation of Societies* (New York: Free Press, 1978); Eisenstadt, "Comparative Liminality: Liminality and Dynamics of Civilization," *Religion* 15 (1985): 315–338; Eisenstadt, "Cultural Traditions and Political Dynamics," *British Journal of Sociology* 32 (1981): 155–181; Eric Voegelin, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, ed. John H. Hallowell (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1975); Adam B. Seligman, "The Comparative Studies of Utopias," "Christian Utopias and Christian Salvation: A General Introduction," and "The Eucharist Sacrifice and the Changing Utopian Moment in Post Reformation Christianity," in *Order and Transcendence*, ed. Adam B. Seligman (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989), 1–44.

different possibilities in the construction of a new order. These possibilities combined themes of rebellion, protest, and intellectual antinomianism, allowing for new center-formation and institution-building, giving rise to movements of protest as a continual component of the political process.<sup>8</sup>

These ideas, closely aligned with what were emerging as the defining characteristics of the modern political arena, emphasized the openness of this arena and of political processes, generally, together with a strong acceptance of active participation by the periphery of “society” in questions of political import. Strong tendencies toward the permeation of social peripheries by the centers, and the impingement of the peripheries on the centers, led, inevitably, to a blurring of the distinctions between center and periphery. This laid the foundation for a new and powerful combination of the “charismatization” of the center or centers with themes and symbols of protest; these, in turn, became the elemental components of modern transcendental visions. Themes and symbols of protest—equality and freedom, justice and autonomy, solidarity and identity—became central components of the modern project of the emancipation of man. It was indeed the incorporation of the periphery’s themes of protest into the center that heralded the radical transformation of various sectarian utopian visions into central elements of the political and cultural program.

From the ideology and premises of the political program of modernity and the core characteristics of modern political institutions, there emerged three central aspects of the modern political process: the restructuring of center-periphery relations as the principal focus of political dynamics in modern societies; a strong tendency toward politicizing the demands of various sectors of society, and the conflicts between them; and a continuing struggle over the definition of the realm of the political. Indeed, it is only with the coming of modernity that drawing the boundaries of the political becomes one of the major foci of open political contestation and struggle.

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<sup>8</sup> Bruce A. Ackerman, *We The People* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

## IV

Modernity entailed also a distinctive mode of constructing the boundaries of collectivities and collective identities.<sup>9</sup> New concrete definitions of the basic components of collective identities developed—civil, primordial and universalistic, transcendental or “sacred.” Strong tendencies developed toward framing these definitions in absolutist terms, emphasizing their civil components. At the same time, connections were drawn between the construction of political boundaries and those of cultural collectivities. This made inevitable an intensified emphasis on the territorial boundaries of such collectivities, creating continual tension between their territorial and/or particular components and those that were broader, more universalistic. In at least partial contrast to the axial civilizations, collective identities were no longer taken as given, preordained by some transcendental vision and authority, or sanctioned by perennial custom. They constituted foci of contestation and struggle, often couched in highly ideological terms.

## V

As the civilization of modernity developed first in the West, it was from its beginnings beset by internal antinomies and contradictions, giving rise to continual critical discourse and political contestations. The basic antinomies of modernity constituted a radical transformation of those characteristics of the axial civilizations. Centered on questions unknown to that earlier time, they showed an awareness of a great range of transcendental visions and interpretations. In the modern program these were transformed into ideological conflicts between contending evaluations of the major dimensions of human experience (especially reason and emotions and their respective place in human life and society). There were new assertions about the necessity of actively constructing society; control and autonomy, discipline and freedom became burning issues.

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<sup>9</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt and B. Giesen, “The Construction of Collective Identity,” *European Journal of Sociology* 36 (1) (1995): 72–102; Edward Shils, “Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties,” in *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*, ed. Edward Shils (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 111–126.

Perhaps the most critical rift, in both ideological and political terms, was that which separated universal and pluralistic visions—between a view that accepted the existence of different values and rationalities and a view that conflated different values and, above all, rationalities in a totalistic way. This tension developed primarily with respect to the very concept of reason and its place in the constitution of human society. It was manifest, as Stephen Toulmin has shown in a somewhat exaggerated way, in the difference between the more pluralistic conceptions of Montaigne or Erasmus as against the totalizing vision promulgated by Descartes.<sup>10</sup> The most significant movement to universalize different rationalities—often identified as the major message of the Enlightenment—was that of the sovereignty of reason, which subsumed value-rationality (*Wertrationalität*), or substantive rationality, under instrumental rationality (*Zweckrationalität*), transforming it into a totalizing moralistic utopian vision.

Cutting across these tensions, there developed within the program of modernity continual contradictions between the basic premises of its cultural and political dimensions and major institutional developments. Of particular importance—so strongly emphasized by Weber—was the creative dimension inherent in visions leading to the crystallization of modernity, and the flattening of these visions, the “disenchantment” of the world, inherent in growing routinization and bureaucratization. This was a conflict between an overreaching vision by which the modern world became meaningful and the fragmentation of such meaning by dint of an unyielding momentum toward autonomous development in all institutional arenas—economic, political, and cultural. This reflects the inherently modern tension between an emphasis on human autonomy and the restrictive controls inherent in the institutional realization of modern life: in Peter Wagner’s formulation, between freedom and control.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis* (New York: Free Press, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1983); Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (New York: Urizen Books, 1978–1982); Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973); Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988); Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la Prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965); Peter Wagner, *A Sociology of Modernity, Liberty and Discipline* (London: Routledge, 1994).



## VI

Within modern political discourse, these stresses have been manifest in the intractable contention between the legitimacy of myriad discrete individual and group interests, of different conceptions of the common good and moral order, and the totalistic ideologies that flatly denied the legitimacy of such pluralities. One major form of totalistic ideology emphasized the primacy of collectivities perceived as distinct ontological entities based on common primordial or spiritual attributes—principally a national collectivity. A second has been the Jacobin view, whose historical roots go back to medieval eschatological sources. Central to Jacobin thought was a belief in the primacy of politics, in politics being able to reconstitute society, transforming society through the mobilization of participatory political action. Whatever the differences between these collectivist ideologies, they shared a deep suspicion of open, public discussion, political processes, and (especially) representative institutions. Not surprisingly, they shared strong autocratic tendencies.

These various stresses in the political program of modernity were closely related to those between the different modes of legitimation of modern regimes—between, on the one hand, procedural legitimation in terms of civil adherence to rules of the game, and, on the other, “substantive” modes of legitimation, relying above all, in Edward Shils’s terminology, on various primordial, “sacred,” religious, or secular-ideological components.<sup>12</sup> Parallel contradictions developed around the construction of collective identities, promulgated by new kinds of activists—the national movements.

## VII

Of special importance among these activists were social movements, often movements of protest. They transformed, in the modern setting, some of the major heterodoxies of the axial civilizations, especially those heterodoxies that sought to bring about, by political action and the reconstruction of the center, the realization of certain utopian visions. Most important among the movements that developed during the nineteenth century and the first six decades of the

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<sup>12</sup> Shils, “Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties,” 111–126.

twentieth were the liberal, socialist, or communist movements; they were followed by two others, fascist and national-socialist, building on nationalist prejudices. These movements were international, even where their bases or roots lay in specific countries. The more successful among them crystallized in distinct ideological and institutional patterns that often became identified with a specific state or nation (as was the case with Revolutionary France and, later, with Soviet Russia), but their reach extended far beyond national frontiers.<sup>13</sup>

The contestations between these movements and others—religious, cooperative, syndicalist, or anarchist—were not simply ideological. They all took place within the specific confines of the modern political arena; they were affected as well by the modern political process, especially the continuing struggle over the boundaries of the realm of the political.

Patterns of contention between these social actors developed in all modern societies around poles rooted in the antinomies inherent in the specific cultural and political programs of modernity. The first was the extent of the homogenization of major modern collectivities, significantly influenced by the extent to which the primordial, civil, and universalistic dimensions or components of collective identity became interwoven in these different societies. The second pole reflected a confrontation between pluralistic and universalizing orientations.

These clashes emerged in all modern collectivities and states, first in Europe, later in the Americas, and, in time, throughout the world. They were crucially important in shaping the varying patterns of modern societies, first within territorial and nation-states, generating within them differing definitions of the premises of political order. They defined the accountability of authority relations between state and civil society; they established patterns of collective identity, shaping the self-perceptions of individual societies, especially their self-perception as modern.

As these contestations emerged in Europe, the dominant pattern of the conflicts was rooted in specific European traditions, focused

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<sup>13</sup> On the revolutions and modernity, see, for instance, the special issue on “The French Revolution and the Birth of Modernity,” *Social Research* (1989). On the role of groups of heterodox intellectuals in some of the revolutions and in the antecedent periods, see Augustin Cochin, *La Révolution et la Libre Pensée* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1924); Cochin, *L'esprit du Jacobinisme* (Paris: Universitaires de France, 1979); J. Baechler, “Preface,” in *ibid.*, 7–33; François Furet, *Rethinking the French Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Vladimir C. Nahirny, *The Russian Intelligentsia: From Torment to Silence* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1981).

along the rifts between utopian and civil orientations. Principles of hierarchy and equality competed in the construction of political order and political centers. The state and civil society were seen as separate entities by some. Collective identity, very often couched in utopian terms, was differently defined. The variety of resulting societal outcomes can be illustrated by the different conceptions of state that developed on the continent and in England. There was the strong homogenizing "laicization of" France, or, in a different vein, of the Lutheran Scandinavian countries, as against the much more consociational and pluralistic arrangements common to Holland and Switzerland, and to a much smaller extent in Great Britain. The strong aristocratic semifeudal conception of authority in Britain contrasted with the more democratic, even populist, views in other European countries.<sup>14</sup>

In the twenties and thirties, indelibly marked by the tensions and antinomies of modernity as they developed in Europe, there emerged the first distinct, ideological, "alternative" modernities—the communist Soviet types, discussed in this issue by Johann Arnason, and the fascist/national-socialist type.<sup>15</sup> The socialist and communist movements

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<sup>14</sup> Stephen R. Graubard, ed., *Norden—The Passion for Equality* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1986); Stein Kuhnle, *Patterns of Social and Political Mobilizations: A Historical Analysis of the Nordic Countries* (Beverly Hills: Sage Productions, 1975); Bo Rothstein, *The Social Democratic State: The Swedish Model and the Bureaucratic Problem of Social Reforms* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996); D. Rustow, "Scandinavia," in *Modern Political Parties*, ed. Sigmund Neumann (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 169–194; K. Thomas, "The United Kingdom," in *Crises of Political Development in Europe and the United States*, ed. Raymond Grew (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 41–98; E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968); David Thomson, *The Democratic Ideal in France and England* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1940); Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Pelican Books, 1960); Pieter Geyl, *The Revolt of the Netherlands* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1958); Max Beloff, *The Age of Absolutism: 1660–1815* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1954); H. Daalder, "On Building Consociational Nations: The Case of the Netherlands and Switzerland," *International Social Science Journal* 23 (1971): 355–370; Jean Francois Bergier, *Naissance et croissance de la Suisse industrielle* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1974); Gerhard Lehmbuch, *Proporzdemokratie: Politisches System und politische Kultur in der Schweiz und in Osterreich* (Tubinger: Mohr, 1972); V. Lorwin, "Segmented Pluralism, Ideological Cleavage and Political Behavior in the Smaller European Democracies," *Comparative Politics* 3 (1971): 141–175; Jurg Steiner, *Amicable Agreement Versus Majority Rule: Conflict Resolution in Switzerland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974).

<sup>15</sup> Johann P. Arnason, "The Theory of Modernity and the Problematic of Democracy," *Thesis Eleven* 26 (1990): 20–46; Heinz Sunker and Hans-Uwe Otto, eds., *Education and Fascism: Political Identity and Social Education in Nazi Germany* (London: The Falmer Press, 1997).

were fully set within the framework of the cultural program of modernity, and above all within the framework of the Enlightenment and of the major revolutions. Their criticism of the program of modern capitalist society revolved around their concept of the incompleteness of these modern programs. By contrast, the national or nationalistic movements, especially of the extreme fascist or national-socialist variety, aimed above all at reconfiguring the boundaries of modern collectivities. They sought to bring about a confrontation between the universalistic and the more particularistic, primordial components of the collective identities of modern regimes. Their criticism of the existing modern order denied the universalistic components of the cultural program of modernity, especially in its Enlightenment version. They showed less missionary zeal in transcending purely national boundaries. Yet, significantly, though they repudiated the universalistic components of the cultural and political program of modernity, they sought in some ways to transpose them into their own particularistic visions, attempting to present these visions in some semi-universalistic terms—of which, paradoxically, race might be one.

By the middle of the century, the continual development of multiple modernities in Europe testified to an ongoing evolution. As Nilüfer Göle observed, one of the most important characteristics of modernity is simply its potential capacity for continual self-correction. That quality, already manifest in the nineteenth century, in the encounter of modern societies with the many problems created by the industrial and democratic revolutions, could not, however, be taken for granted.

The development of modernity bore within it destructive possibilities that were voiced, somewhat ironically, often by some of its most radical critics, who thought modernity to be a morally destructive force, emphasizing the negative effects of certain of its core characteristics. The crystallization of European modernity and its later expansion was by no means peaceful. Contrary to the optimistic visions of modernity as inevitable progress, the crystallizations of modernities were continually interwoven with internal conflict and confrontation, rooted in the contradictions and tensions attendant on the development of the capitalist systems, and, in the political arena, on the growing demands for democratization. All these factors were compounded by international conflicts, exacerbated by the modern state and imperialist systems. War and genocide were scarcely new phenomena in history. But they became radically transformed, intensified, generating specifically modern modes of barbarism. The

ideologization of violence, terror, and war—first and most vividly witnessed in the French Revolution—became the most important, indeed the exclusive, citizenship components of the continuation of modern states. The tendency to such ideologies of violence became closely related to the fact that the nation-state became the focus of symbols of collective identity.<sup>16</sup> The Holocaust, which took place in the very center of modernity, was the extreme manifestation and became a symbol of its negative, destructive potential, of the barbarism lurking within its very core.

## VIII

In the discourse on modernity, several themes developed, none more important than the one that stressed the continual confrontation between more “traditional” sectors of society and the so-called modern centers or sectors that developed within them. So, too, there was an inherent tension between the culture of modernity, the modern “rational” model of the Enlightenment that emerged as hegemonic in certain periods and places and others construed as reflecting the more “authentic” cultural traditions of specific societies. Among the bearers of ideologies of traditional authenticity, and within the more traditional sectors of certain societies, there developed also an enduring ambivalence to modern cultures and their putatively universalistic, exclusivist premises and symbols and a continual oscillation between cosmopolitanism and localism. These themes developed first within Europe itself; they continued, though in a different vein, with the expansion of modernity to the Americas and (especially) to Asian and African countries.

## IX

The first radical transformation of the premises of cultural and political order took place with the expansion of modernity in the Americas.

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<sup>16</sup> Anthony Giddens and David Held, eds., *Classes, Power, and Conflict: Classical and Contemporary Debates* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Imperialism and Social Classes* (Philadelphia: Orion Editions, 1991); Furet, *Rethinking the French Revolution*; François Furet and Mona Ozouf, eds., *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1989); H. Joas, “Die Modernität des Krieges,” *Leviathan* 24 (1996): 13–27.

There, distinctive modernities, reflecting novel patterns of institutional life, with new self-conceptions and new forms of collective consciousness, emerged. To say this is to emphasize that practically from the beginning of modernity's expansion multiple modernities developed, all within what may be defined as the Western civilizational framework. It is important to note that such modernities, Western but significantly different from those in Europe, developed first not in Asia—Japan, China, or India—or in Muslim societies where they might have been attributed to the existence of distinct non-European traditions, but within the broad framework of Western civilizations. They reflected a radical transformation of European premises.

The crystallization of distinct patterns of modernity in the Americas took place, as Jürgen Heideking's essay shows, through a confrontational discourse with Europe—especially with England and France. While it was not common to couch these arguments in terms of differing interpretations of modernity, they were indeed focused on the advantages and disadvantages of institutional patterns that developed in the United States, distinctly different from those in Europe. Moreover, in this discourse the major themes relating to the international dimension of modernity were clearly articulated. Such confrontations became characteristic of the ongoing discourse about modernity as it expanded through the world. While this was also true of Latin America, there were important differences between the Americas, especially between the United States and Latin America. In Latin America, “external”—even if often ambivalent—reference points remained crucial, as the essay by Renato Ortiz in this volume makes clear. The enduring importance of these reference points, above all in Europe—Spain, France, and England—and later the United States, were critical to the self-conception of Latin American societies. Such considerations became gradually less important in the United States, which saw itself increasingly as the center of modernity.

## X

The variability of modernities was accomplished above all through military and economic imperialism and colonialism, effected through superior economic, military, and communication technologies. Modernity first moved beyond the West into different Asian societies—Japan, India, Burma, Sri Lanka, China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia,

Indonesia—to the Middle Eastern countries, coming finally to Africa. By the end of the twentieth century, it encompassed nearly the entire world, the first true wave of globalization.

In all these societies the basic model of the territorial state and later of the nation-state was adopted, as were the basic premises and symbols of Western modernity. So, too, were the West's modern institutions—representative, legal, and administrative. But at the same time the encounter of modernity with non-Western societies brought about far-reaching transformations in the premises, symbols, and institutions of modernity—with new problems arising as a consequence.

The attraction of many of modernity's themes and institutional forms for many groups in these societies was caused first by the fact that it was the European (later the Western) pattern, developed and spread throughout the world by Western economic, technological, and military expansion, that undermined the cultural premises and institutional cores of these ancient societies. The appropriation of these themes and institutions permitted many in non-European societies—especially elites and intellectuals—to participate actively in the new modern universal (albeit initially Western) tradition, while selectively rejecting many of its aspects—most notably that which took for granted the hegemony of the Western formulations of the cultural program of modernity. The appropriation of themes of modernity made it possible for these groups to incorporate some of the Western universalistic elements of modernity in the construction of their own new collective identities, without necessarily giving up specific components of their traditional identities (often couched, like the themes of Western modernity, in universalistic, especially religious terms). Nor did it abolish their negative or at least ambivalent attitudes toward the West. Modernity's characteristic themes of protest, institution-building, and the redefinition of center and periphery served to encourage and accelerate the transposition of the modern project to non-European, non-Western settings. Although initially couched in Western terms, many of these themes found resonance in the political traditions of many of these societies.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Eisenstadt, "The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics"; Eisenstadt, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial-Age Civilizations*.

## XI

The appropriation by non-Western societies of specific themes and institutional patterns of the original Western modern civilization societies entailed the continuous selection, reinterpretation, and reformulation of these imported ideas. These brought about continual innovation, with new cultural and political programs emerging, exhibiting novel ideologies and institutional patterns. The cultural and institutional programs that unfolded in these societies were characterized particularly by a tension between conceptions of themselves as part of the modern world and ambivalent attitudes toward modernity in general and toward the West in particular.

In all these societies, far-reaching transformations took place. These transformations, shaped in each society by the combined impact of their respective historical traditions and the different ways in which they became incorporated into the new modern world system, are admirably interpreted in Sudipta Kaviraj's essay. He analyzes the impact of Indian political traditions and of the colonial imperial experience in shaping the distinctive features of modernity as they crystallized in India. Similar analyses of China or Vietnam would indicate the specific modes allowing for "alternative," revolutionary universalistic notions of the modern program of modernity to spring forth from their civilizational contexts. The case of Japan is different; there, the conflation of state and civil society, the weakness of utopian orientations, the absence of principled confrontations with the state among the major movements of protest, and the relative significance of universal and particular components all contributed to the creation of a modern collective identity different from that of all other societies.<sup>18</sup>

## XII

The multiple and divergent instantiations of the "classical" age of modernity crystallized during the nineteenth century and above all in the first six or seven decades of the twentieth into very different territorial nation- and revolutionary states and social movements in

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<sup>18</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative View* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).



Europe, the Americas, and, after World War II, in Asia. The institutional, symbolic, and ideological contours of modern national and revolutionary states, once thought to be the epitome of modernity, have changed dramatically with the recent intensification of forces of globalization. These trends, manifested especially in the growing autonomy of world financial and commercial flows, intensified international migrations and the concomitant development on an international scale of such social problems as the spread of diseases, prostitution, organized crime, and youth violence. All this has served to reduce the control of the nation-state over its own economic and political affairs, despite continuing efforts to strengthen technocratic, rational secular policies in various arenas. Nation-states have also lost a part of their monopoly on internal and international violence, which was always only a partial monopoly, to local and international groups of separatists or terrorists. Processes of globalization are evident also in the cultural arena, with the hegemonic expansion, through the major media in many countries, of what are seemingly uniform Western, above all American, cultural programs or visions.<sup>19</sup>

The ideological and symbolic centrality of the nation-state, its position as the charismatic locus of the major components of the cultural program of modernity and collective identity, have been weakened; new political, social, and civilizational visions, new visions of collective identity, are being developed. These novel visions and identities were proclaimed by a variety of new social movements—all of which, however different, have challenged the premises of the classical modern nation and its program of modernity, which had hitherto occupied the unchallenged center of political and cultural thinking.

The first such movements that developed in most Western countries—the women's movement and the ecological movement—were both closely related to or rooted in the student and anti-Vietnam War movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. They were indicative of a more general shift in many countries, whether “capitalist” or communist: a shift away from movements oriented toward the

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<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural Identity and Global Process* (London: SAGE Publications, 1994); Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); George E. Marcus, ed., *Perilous States: Conversations on Culture, Politics, and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); “The Road to 2050: A Survey of the New Geopolitics,” *The Economist* (31 July 1999); J. Smolicz, “Nation-States and Globalization from a Multicultural Perspective: Signposts from Australia,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 4 (4) (1998): 1–18.

state to movements with a more local scope and agenda. Instead of focusing on the reconstitution of nation-states, or resolving macro-economic conflicts, these new forces—often presenting themselves as “postmodern” and “multicultural”—promulgated a cultural politics or a politics of identity often couched as multiculturalism and were oriented to the construction of new autonomous social, political, and cultural spaces.<sup>20</sup>

Fundamentalist movements emerged somewhat later within Muslim, Jewish, and Protestant Christian communities and have managed to occupy center stage in many national societies and, from time to time, on the international scene. Communal religious movements have similarly developed within Hindu and Buddhist cultures, generally sharing strong antimodern and/or anti-Western themes.<sup>21</sup>

A third major type of new movement that has gathered momentum, especially in the last two decades of the twentieth century, has been the particularistic “ethnic” movement. Witnessed initially in the former republics of the Soviet Union, it has emerged also in horrific ways in Africa and in parts of the Balkans, especially in former Yugoslavia.

All these movements have developed in tandem with, and indeed accelerated, social transformations of the most important kind, serving to consolidate new social settings and frameworks. To mention just two of the most important, the world now sees new diasporas, especially of Muslims, Chinese, and Indians, some analyzed in this issue by Stanley J. Tambiah. Following the collapse of the Soviet empire, Russian minorities have emerged as vocal forces in many of the successor states of the Soviet Union and in the former communist East European countries.

In these and many other settings, new types of collective identity emerged, going beyond the models of the nation- and revolutionary

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<sup>20</sup> Marcus, ed., *Perilous States*.

<sup>21</sup> Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions*; Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family and Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Comprehended* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

state and no longer focused on them. Many of these hitherto “subdued” identities—ethnic, local, regional, and transnational—moved, though in a highly reconstructed way, into the centers of their respective societies, and often into the international arena as well. They contested the hegemony of the older homogenizing programs, claiming their own autonomous place in central institutional arenas—educational programs, public communications, media outlets. They have been increasingly successful in posing far-reaching claims to the redefinition of citizenship and the rights and entitlements connected with it.

In these settings, local concerns and interests are often brought together in new ways, going beyond the model of the classical nation-state, choosing alliances with transnational organizations such as the European Union or with broad religious frameworks rooted in the great religions of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or the Protestant branches of Christianity. Simultaneously, we see a continuing decomposition in the relatively compact image offered by belief systems concerning styles of life, defining the “civilized man”—all connected with the emergence and spread of the original program of modernity.<sup>22</sup> No one can doubt that significant and enduring shifts are taking place in the relative position and influence of different centers of modernity—moving back and forth between West and East. This can only produce increased contention between such centers over their degree of influence in a globalizing world.<sup>23</sup>

### XIII

All these developments attest to the decomposition of the major structural characteristics and the weakening of the ideological hegemony of once-powerful nation-states. But do they signal the “end of history” and the end of the modern program, epitomized in the development

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<sup>22</sup> Dale F. Eickelman, ed., *Russia's Muslim Frontiers: New Directions in Cross-Cultural Analysis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Eickelman, “Changing Interpretations of Islamic Movements,” in *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning*, ed. William R. Roff (London: Croom Helm, 1983), 13–30; Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, eds., *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); R. Hefner, “Multiple Modernities: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in a Globalizing Age,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27 (1998): 83–104.

<sup>23</sup> Edward Tiryakian, “Three Meta Cultures of Modernity: Christian, Gnostic, Chthonic,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 13 (1) (1996): 99–118.

of different so-called postmodernities and, above all, in a retreat from modernity in the fundamentalist and the communal religious movements, often portrayed by themselves as *diametrically* opposed to the modern program?

A closer examination of these movements presents a much more complex picture. First, several of the extreme fundamentalist movements evince distinct characteristics of modern Jacobinism, even when combined with very strong anti-Western and anti-Enlightenment ideologies. Indeed, the distinct visions of fundamentalist movements have been formulated in terms common to the discourse of modernity; they have attempted to appropriate modernity on their own terms. While extreme fundamentalists promulgate elaborate, seemingly anti-modern (or rather anti-Enlightenment) themes, they basically constitute modern Jacobin revolutionary movements, paradoxically sharing many characteristics (sometimes in a sort of mirror-image way) with communist movements of an earlier era.<sup>24</sup> They share with communist movements the promulgation of totalistic visions entailing the transformation both of man and of society. Some claim to be concerned with the “cleansing” of both. It is the total reconstruction of personality, of individual and collective identities, by conscious human action, particularly political action, and the construction of new personal and collective identities entailing the total submergence of the individual in the community that they seek. Like communist movements they seek to establish a new social order, rooted in revolutionary, universalistic ideological tenets, in principle transcending all primordial, national, or ethnic units. In the case of earlier communist regimes, the proclaimed goals were to produce collectivities of “workers” and “intellectuals” that would embrace all mankind; in the case of Islamic fundamentalist regimes, the realm of Islam, as a new conception of the *ummah*, transcends any specific place, having broad and continually changing yet ideologically closed boundaries. Both the communist and the fundamentalist movements—mostly, but not only, the Muslim ones—are transnational, activated by intensive, continually reconstructed networks that facilitate the expansion of the social and cultural visions proclaimed by these groups. They are at the same time constantly confronted with competing visions. In all these ways, both their movements and their programs constitute part and parcel of the modern political agenda.

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<sup>24</sup> Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions*.

There are, 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. In their analysis of the basic antinomies of modernity, and in their interpretation and rejection of different components of the cultural and political programs of classical modernity, Muslim fundamentalists share, as Nilüfer Göle's essay shows, a pre-occupation with modernity. It is their major frame of reference.<sup>25</sup>

#### XIV

Attempts to appropriate and interpret modernity in one's own terms are not, however, confined to fundamentalist movements. They constitute part of a set of much wider developments that have taken place throughout the world, as Dale Eickelman's essay shows with respect to Muslim societies. Continuing the contestations between earlier reformist and traditional religious movements that developed in these communities, the tensions inherent in the new modern program, especially between pluralistic and universal values, are played out in new terms. Between utopian and more open and pragmatic attitudes, between multifaceted and closed identities, they all entail an important, even radical, shift in the discourse about the confrontation with modernity, in reframing the relationship between Western and non-Western civilizations, religions, and societies.<sup>26</sup>

It is possible to identify significant parallels between these various religious movements, including fundamentalism, with their apparently extreme opposites—the various postmodern movements with which they often engage in contestation, arguing about hegemony among the different sectors of society. Thus, within many of these “post-modern” or “multicultural” movements, there have developed highly totalistic orientations manifest for instance in different programs of political correctness. Ironically, because of their great variety and their more pluralistic internal dynamics and pragmatic stance, we have also seen certain “postmodern” themes emerge within fundamentalist movements. Beyond this paradox, these movements share

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<sup>25</sup> Nilüfer Göle, *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

<sup>26</sup> Eickelman, ed., *Russia's Muslim Frontiers*.

an overarching concern about the relationship between the identities they promulgate and the universalistic themes promulgated by other hegemonic programs of modernity, above all the relationship between their purportedly authentic identities and the presumed Western, especially American cultural hegemony on the contemporary scene. Significantly, fear of the erosion of local cultures from the impact of globalization has led these movements to be suspicious of the emerging centers of a globalizing world, giving rise yet again to a continuous oscillation between cosmopolitanism and various “particularistic” tendencies.<sup>27</sup>

## XV

The continuing salience of the tensions between pluralist and universalist programs, between multifaceted as against closed identities, and the continual ambivalence of new centers of modernity toward the major traditional centers of cultural hegemony attest to the fact that, while going beyond the model of the nation-state, these new movements have not gone beyond the basic problems of modernity. They are all deeply reflexive, aware that no answer to the tensions inherent in modernity is final—even if each in its own way seeks to provide final, incontestable answers to modernity’s irreducible dilemmas. They have reconstituted the problem of modernity in new historical contexts, in new ways. They aim for a worldwide reach and diffusion through various media. They are politicized, formulating their contestations in highly political and ideological terms. The problems they face, continually reconstructing their collective identities in reference to the new global context, are challenges of unprecedented proportions. The very pluralization of life spaces in the global framework endows them with highly ideological absolutizing ideas, and at the same time brings them into the central political arena. The debate in which they engage may indeed be described in “civilizational” terms, but these very terms—indeed the very term “civilization” as constructed in such a discourse—are already couched in modernity’s new language, utilizing totalistic, essentialistic, and abso-

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<sup>27</sup> Friedman, *Cultural Identity and Global Process*; Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity*; Marcus, ed., *Perilous States*; “The Road to 2050”; Smolicz, “Nation-States and Globalization from a Multicultural Perspective.”

lutizing terms. When such clashes in cultural debates intersect with political, military, or economic struggles, they can quickly become violent.

The reconstructions of the various political and cultural visions across the spectrum of collective identities on the contemporary scene entail a shift in the confrontation between Western and non-Western civilizations, religions and societies, and also in the relationship of these confrontations to the Western cultural program of modernity. As against the seeming if highly ambivalent acceptance of modernity's premises and their continual reinterpretation characteristic of the earlier reformist religious and national movements, most contemporary religious movements—including fundamentalist and most communal religious movements—seem to engage in a much more intensive selective denial of at least some of these premises. They take a markedly confrontational attitude to the West, indeed to anything conceived as Western, seeking to appropriate modernity and the global system on their own, often anti-Western, terms. Their confrontation with the West does not take the form of wishing to become incorporated into a new hegemonic civilization, but to appropriate the new international global scene and the modernity for themselves, celebrating their traditions and "civilizations." These movements have attempted to dissociate Westernization from modernity, denying the Western monopoly on modernity, rejecting the Western cultural program as the epitome of modernity. Significantly, many of these same themes are also espoused, though in different idioms, by many "postmodern" movements.

## XVI

The preceding analysis does not imply that the historical experience and cultural traditions of these societies are of no importance in the unfolding of their modern dynamics. The significance of their earlier traditions is manifest not least in the fact that among modern and contemporary societies, fundamentalist movements develop above all within the societies that took shape in the ecumene of monotheistic religion—Muslim, Jewish, and Christian civilizations. In these contexts, the political system has been perceived as the major arena for the implementation of transcendental utopian visions. In contrast to this, the ideological reconstruction of the political center in a

Jacobin mode has been much weaker in civilizations with “other-worldly” orientations—especially in India and, to a somewhat smaller extent, in Buddhist countries. There, the political order is not perceived as a forum for the implementation of a transcendental vision.<sup>28</sup>

It is a commonplace to observe that the distinct varieties of modern democracy in India or Japan, for example, may be attributed to the encounter between Western modernity and the cultural traditions and historical experiences of these societies. This, of course, was also true of different communist regimes. What is less well understood is that the same happened in the first instance of modernity—the European—deeply rooted in specific European civilizational premises and historical experience.<sup>29</sup> But, as in the case of Europe, all these “historical” or “civilizational” influences did not simply perpetuate an old pattern of institutional life.

Nor is it happening on the contemporary scene, as if nothing more than a continuation of respective historical pasts and patterns is being perpetuated. Rather, these particular experiences influence the continual emergence of new movements and networks between different actors—judges, experts, parliamentarians, and others—cutting across any single society or civilization, maintaining a flow between them. The political dynamics in all these societies are closely interwoven with geopolitical realities, influenced by history, and shaped mostly by modern developments and confrontations. They make impossible any effort to construct “closed” entities.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, the processes of globalization on the contemporary scene entail neither the “end of history”—in the sense of an end of ideological confrontational clashes between different cultural programs of modernity—nor a “clash of civilizations” engaging a secular West in confrontation with societies that appear to opt out of, or deny, the program of modernity. They do not even constitute a return to the problems of premodern axial civilizations, as though such a thing were possible. Rather, the trends of globalization show nothing so clearly as the continual reinterpretation of the cultural program of modernity; the construction of multiple modernities; attempts by var-

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<sup>28</sup> Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions*.

<sup>29</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *European Civilization in a Comparative Perspective* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1987).

<sup>30</sup> “The Road to 2050: A Survey of the New Geopolitics,” *The Economist* (31 July 1999).



ious groups and movements to reappropriate and redefine the discourse of modernity in their own new terms. At the same time, they are bringing about a repositioning of the major arenas of contestation in which new forms of modernity are shaped, away from the traditional forum of the nation-state to new areas in which different movements and societies continually interact.

Not only do multiple modernities continue to emerge—by now going beyond the premises of the nation-state—but within all societies, new questionings and reinterpretations of different dimensions of modernity are emerging. The undeniable trend at the end of the twentieth century is the growing diversification of the understanding of modernity, of the basic cultural agendas of different modern societies—far beyond the homogenic and hegemonic visions of modernity prevalent in the 1950s. Moreover, in all societies these attempts at interpreting modernity are continually changing under the impact of changing historical forces, giving rise to new movements that will come, in time, to reinterpret yet again the meaning of modernity.

While the common starting point was once the cultural program of modernity as it developed in the West, more recent developments have seen a multiplicity of cultural and social formations going far beyond the very homogenizing aspects of the original version. All these developments do indeed attest to the continual development of multiple modernities, or of multiple interpretations of modernity—and, above all, to attempts at “de-Westernization,” depriving the West of its monopoly on modernity.

## XVII

These considerations bear closely on the problems raised in the beginning of this essay, which constitute the central foci of the essays gathered in this issue of *Dædalus*. They all contend, from a variety of perspectives and through a great range of cases, with the core characteristics of modernity. At the same time, the studies presented here attest to the continually expanding range of possibilities in ideological interpretations, in constructions of the meaning of modernity, in institutional patterns of political and social life. All of this makes plain, as Nilüfer Göle shows, that one of the most important characteristics of modernity is simply, but profoundly, its potential for self-correction, its ability to confront problems not even imagined in

its original program. The most important new problems today are probably those relating to the environment, to gender, and to the new political and international contestations discussed above. In coping with these problems, different contemporary societies can draw in ever more varied ways, as Tu Weiming notes, on the cultural resources of their respective civilizational traditions. At the same time these very developments—above all the tendency toward constant self-correction characteristic of modernity—make all the more pressing the great difficulty of how to answer the question about the limits of modernity. It is not that such limits do not exist, but the very posing of this question puts the question within the discourse of modernity.

Illuminating and describing the essentially modern character of new movements and collective identities, charting courses somewhere beyond the classical model of the territorial, national, or revolutionary state, does not necessarily lead us to take an optimistic view. On the contrary; the ramifications are such as to make evident the fragility and changeability of different modernities as well as the destructive forces inherent in certain of the modern programs, most fully in the ideologization of violence, terror, and war. These destructive forces—the “traumas” of modernity that brought into question its great promises—emerged clearly after World War I, became even more visible in World War II and in the Holocaust, and were generally ignored or set aside in the discourse of modernity in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Lately, they have reemerged in a frightening way—in the new “ethnic” conflict in parts of the Balkans (especially in the former Yugoslavia), in many of the former republics of the Soviet Union, in Sri Lanka, and in a terrible way in such African countries as Rwanda and Burundi. These are not outbursts of old “traditional” forces, but the result of the ongoing dialogue between modern reconstruction and seemingly “traditional” forces. So, also, fundamentalist and religious communal movements developed within the framework of modernity, and cannot be fully understood except within this framework. Thus, modernity—to paraphrase Leszek Kolakowski’s felicitous and sanguine expression—is indeed “on endless trial.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Leszek Kolakowski, *Modernity on Endless Trial* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

# BARBARISM AND MODERNITY: THE DESTRUCTIVE COMPONENTS OF MODERNITY

### I

Barbarism is not a vestige of premodern times, a survival of “dark ages.” It is inherent in modernity, it epitomizes the dark side of modernity. Modernity bore within itself not only the various great emancipatory visions, not only the great promises of continuous self-correction and expansion, but also very destructive possibilities—violence, aggression, war and genocide. While barbarism as manifest in genocides and wars can be found, at least potentially, in all human societies, it developed in modernity in some distinct—possibly its most gruesome—ways. The Holocaust, which took place in the very center of modernity, has been the most extreme manifestation and symbol of the negative, destructive potentialities of modernity, of the barbarism lurking within the very core of modernity.

### II

Barbarism is rooted in some basic characteristics of human nature, in the construction of human society and culture, of social order, and above all in the ambivalence to social order which is inherent in its very construction.<sup>1</sup> Such ambivalence is rooted in the relatively open biological program which characterizes the human species;<sup>2</sup> in the consciousness or awareness—however dim—of such openness and of the closely related consciousness of death, of human finality manifest among others in the uniquely human traits of construction of burial places and memorials; such consciousness gives rise to existential uncertainty or anxiety.

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<sup>1</sup> These analyses are based on S.N. Eisenstadt, *Power, Trust and Meaning*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995, esp. chs. XII and XIII.

<sup>2</sup> E. Meyer, “Behavior Programs and Evolutionary Strategies,” *American Scientist*, Vol. 62, 1984, p. 651.

The attempts to overcome such existential anxiety that become focused in the construction of institutional and symbolic boundaries of collectivities and of systems of meanings are closely interwoven with the exercise of power—giving rise to the problem of legitimation of social order; and making this problem a central component in such existential anxiety.

The construction of such boundaries entails both constructive and destructive possibilities. The constructive dimension of such construction lies in the fact that it is such construction that generates trust without which no continuous human interaction can be assured and creativity take place. The destructive potentialities lie in the fact that any such construction—connected as it is with the exercise and legitimation of power, generates consciousness of the arbitrariness of social order and of its fragility, and gives rise to strong ambivalence to social order. Such ambivalence generates strong tendencies to violence and aggression—manifest above all in tendencies to exclusion of others, making them the foci or targets of such ambivalence, of their depiction not only as strange but also as evil.

### III

The tensions and confrontations between the more constructive and the more destructive potential inherent in the very construction of social order, of collective identities and systems of meaning and of their boundaries, develop in all human societies—albeit in different ways.

In modern societies such constructive and destructive tendencies developed also in modern societies and they were closely connected to a very distinct shift in the conception of human agency, of its autonomy, and of its place in the flow of time as they crystallized in the cultural project of modernity. The modern project, the cultural program of modernity as it developed first in the West, in Western and Central Europe, entailing a very distinct shift in the conception of human agency, of its autonomy, and of its place in the flow of time, exacerbated the tensions between the constructive and destructive potentialities of the construction of social orders, highlighting the challenge of human autonomy and self-regulation and of consciousness thereof.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The analyses of the cultural program of modernity and of the different his-

The central core of this cultural program has been most successfully formulated by Max Weber. To follow James D. Faubian'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 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. . . .<sup>4</sup>

It is because of the fact that all such responses leave the problematic intact, that the reflexivity which developed in the program of modernity went beyond that which crystallized in the Axial Civilizations.<sup>5</sup> The reflexivity that developed in the modern cultural program focused not only on the possibility of different interpretations of the transcendental visions and basic ontological conceptions prevalent in a society or civilization, 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 multiplicity of such

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torical experience of modernity, especially European societies, are based on S.N. Eisenstadt, *Paradoxes of Democracy: Fragility, Continuity and Change*, Baltimore, Maryland, The Woodrow Wilson Center Press and the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999; and idem, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, where full bibliographical references are given.

<sup>4</sup> James D. Faubian, *Modern Greek Lessons. A Primer in Historical Constructivism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 113–115.

<sup>5</sup> On the Axial Age Civilizations, see S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics," *European Journal of Sociology*, 23/2, 1982, pp. 294–314; idem, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial-Age Civilizations*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986.

visions and patterns and of the possibility that such visions and conceptions can indeed be contested.

Concomitantly, closely related to such awareness and central to this cultural program were the emphasis on the autonomy of man; his or her—but in this, in its initial formulation, program certainly “his”—emancipation from the fetters of traditional political and cultural authority and the continuous expansion of the realm of personal and institutional freedom, of human activity, creativity and autonomy. Parallely, this program entailed a very strong emphasis on autonomous participation of members of society—in the construction of social and political order and its constitution; on autonomous access, indeed of all members of the society to these orders and their centers. The program entailed a conception of future in which various possibilities which can be realized by autonomous human agency, or by the march of history are opened.

Out of the conjunctions of these different 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 program. The first such tendency was that the program as it crystallized above all in the Great Revolutions and later in a sort of mirror way in the Romantic movements, 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 legitimacy of multiple individual and group goals and interests and of multiple interpretations of the common good.

#### IV

The basic characteristics of the modern program, the combination of open future with autonomy and of the belief in the possibility of active formation of society by conscious human activity, shaped also the premises of modern political order and of collective identities and boundaries. The core of the political program of modernity was the breakdown of traditional legitimation of the political order; the

concomitant opening up of different possibilities of construction of such order and of contestation about the ways in which political order was to be constructed. It combined orientations of rebellion, protest, and intellectual antinomianism, together with strong orientations to center-formation and institution-building, giving rise to social movements, movements of protest as a continual component of the political process.<sup>6</sup> It entailed the combination of the charismaticization of the center or centers with the incorporation into the centers of themes and symbols of protest which became components of the modern transcendental visions as basic and legitimate components of the premises of these centers. Themes and symbols of protest—equality and freedom, justice and autonomy, solidarity and identity—became central components of the modern project of emancipation of man. It was indeed the incorporation of such themes of protest into the center which heralded the radical transformation of various sectarian utopian visions into central components of the political and cultural program.<sup>7</sup>

Parallely the construction of the boundaries of modern collectivities and collective identities was continually problematized in reflexive ways.<sup>8</sup> Collective identities and boundaries were not taken as given or as preordained by some transcendental vision and authority, or by perennial customs. They constituted foci not only of reflexivity but also of contestations and struggles, often couched in highly ideological terms, promulgated above all by different—above all national or nationalist—movements. Such contestations focused first on the relative importance of the basic components of collective identities—the civil, primordial and universalistic and transcendental “sacred” ones; and around the modes of their institutionalization. Second, such contestation focused on the extent of the connection between the construction of political boundaries defined more and more in territorial terms and those of the cultural collectivities; and third, on

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<sup>6</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, *Paradoxes of Democracy*, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> Eric Voegelin, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, edited by John H. Hallowell, Durham N.C., Duke University Press, 1975; A. Seligman (ed.), *Order and Transcendence*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1989; and S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolution*, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> See E. Shils, “Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties,” in idem, ed., *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1975, pp. 111–126; see also S.N. Eisenstadt and B. Giesen, “The Construction of Collective Identity,” *European Journal of Sociology*, Volume 36, No. 1, 1995, pp. 72–102.

the relations between the territorial and/or particularistic components of these collectivities and broader, potential universalistic ones.

## V

All these contestations were focused around the basic internal antinomies and contradictions which were inherent in the cultural and political programs of modernity. The tension which was the most critical from the point of view of the development of the destructive potential of modernity, both in ideological and institutional terms has been that between on the one hand absolutizing totalizing and on the other more pluralistic multifaceted visions and practices—between the view which accepts the existence of different values, commitments and rationalities as against the view which conflates such different values and rationalities in a totalistic way, with strong tendencies to their absolutization.

In the cultural ideological dimension of the modern program, the most important such confluences of different rationalities has been the one which was often identified as the major message of the Enlightenment—that 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 the modern political discourse and practice these tensions crystallized around the relations 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 social order, and on the other hand of totalizing ideologies which denied the legitimacy of such pluralities.

One major form of such totalistic ideology that developed in modernity emphasized the primacy of collectivities perceived as distinct ontological entities based on common primordial and/or spiritual attributes—i.e., above all national collectivities. 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.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt and B. Giesen, *ibid.*



In the construction of collective identities and collectivities, these tensions were manifest in the contradictions between, on the one hand, tendencies to the absolutization of primordial and/or Jacobin universalistic components of collective identities as against a more open or multifaceted approach to such construction; between the closely related tendencies to homogenization of social and cultural spaces as against construction of more multiple spaces allowing for heterogeneous identities.

Whatever the differences between these collectivistic and absolutizing ideologies they all shared first deep suspicion of the open political process and institutions, especially of the representative institutions and of open public discussion, and second strong autocratic tendencies and tendencies to exclusion of others and to the demonization of those excluded.

## VI

It was within the framework of these tensions and above all those between pluralistic multifaceted and absolutizing totalizing visions that there crystallized the specific modes of the destructive potentialities inherent in the modern program. These destructive potentialities became most fully manifest in the ideologization and sanctification of violence, terror and wars which became first apparent in the French Revolution and later in the Romantic movements and in the combination of such ideologization with the construction and institutionalization of the nation states; with the fact that the nation states which became the most important agent—and arena—of constitution of citizenship and of collective identity; with the crystallization of the modern European state system and of European expansion beyond Europe especially under the aegis of imperialism and of colonialism, which were very often legitimized in terms of some of the components of the cultural programs of modernity—all of which became reinforced by technologies of war and communication.

These destructive forces, the “traumas” of modernity which undermined great promises thereof, emerged clearly after the First World War, became even more visible in the Second World War, above all in the Holocaust, all of them shaking the naive belief in the inevitability of progress and of the conflation of modernity with progress. These destructive forces of modernity were paradoxically

ignored or bracketed out from the discourse of modernity in the first two or three decades after the Second World War. Lately they have reemerged again in a most frightening way on the contemporary scene, in the new “ethnic” conflicts in many of the former republics of Soviet Russia, in Sri Lanka, in Kosovo, and in a most terrible way in Cambodia and in African countries, such as Rwanda.

## VII

The extent to which such tendencies to barbarism, to the radical exclusion of others, their demonization and possible annihilation, did actualize in modern Europe was greatly influenced by the ways in which the tension between totalizing, absolutizing tendencies as against the more open multifaceted visions and tendencies, above all—but not only—by the ways in which modern collectivities and political orders were constructed, first of all especially by the ways in which the continual tension between the primordial components of identity, reconstructed in modern terms as nationalism and ethnicity, and the various sacred, more traditional religious or secular, universalistic, and civil ones became resolved.

It was insofar as the primordial components were relatively “peacefully” interwoven in the construction of their respective collective identities with the civil and universalistic ones in multifaceted ways—that the kernels of modern barbarism and the exclusivist tendencies inherent in them were minimized.<sup>10</sup> In England, Holland, Switzerland and in the Scandinavian countries, the crystallization of modern collective identity was characterized by a relatively close interweaving—even if never bereft of tensions—of the primordial and religious components with the civil and universalistic ones, without the former being denied, allowing a relatively wide scope for pluralistic arrangements. Concomitantly in these countries there developed also relatively weak confrontations between the secular orientations of the Enlightenment—which often contained strong deistic orientations—and the strong religious orientations of various Protestant sects. As against situations in these societies, in those societies (as was the case in Central Europe, above all in Germany and in most countries of

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<sup>10</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Paradoxes of Democracy*, op. cit.

Southern and Central Europe) in which the construction of the collective identities of the modern nation-state was connected with continual confrontations between the primordial and the civil and universalistic, and as well as between "traditional" religious and modern universalistic components, there developed a stronger tendency to crises and breakdowns of different types of constitutional arrangements. In the more authoritarian regimes, such primordial components were promulgated in "traditional" authoritarian terms—in the more totalitarian fascist or national-socialist movements, in strong racist ones—while the absolutized universalistic orientations were promulgated by various "leftist" Jacobin movements.

France constitutes a very important—probably the most important—illustration of the problems arising out of continual confrontations between Jacobin and traditional components in the legitimation of modern regimes—even within the framework of relatively continuous polity and collective identity and boundaries. The case of France illustrates that under such conditions, pluralistic tendencies and arrangements do not develop easily, giving rise to the consequent turbulence of the institutionalization of a continual constitutional democratic regime.

## VIII

The construction of different modes of collective identity has been connected in Europe—and beyond Europe—with specific institutional conditions; among them the most important have been the flexibility of the centers, the mutual openness of elites, and their relations to broader social strata. There developed in Europe, and later in other societies, a close elective affinity between the absolutizing types of collective identity and various types of absolutist regimes and rigid centers, and between the multifaceted pattern of collective identity in which the primordial, civil, and sacred components were continually interwoven with the development of relatively open and flexible centers and of mutual openings between various strata. It was the concomitant development of relatively strong but flexible and open centers, multifaceted modes of collective identity, and autonomous access of major strata to the center that was of crucial importance in the development of a distinct type of civil society—a society that was to a large extent autonomous *from* the state but at the same

time autonomous *in* the state and had an autonomous access to the state and participated in formulating the rules of the political game; and it was such conditions that made possible the minimization of the tendencies to barbarism and exclusion.

## IX

It was in so far as such multifaceted modes of construction of collective identities and of strong but flexible centers faltered that the two major forms of absolutizing tendencies, bearing within themselves the kernels of barbarism, of destruction, of drastic exclusion, demonization and annihilation of others—the Communist and the extreme fascist, especially the National Socialist movements and regimes—triumphed.

Within each of these movements and regimes instituted by them there developed strong tendencies to exclusivism and to barbarism—as has been recently stressed in the discourse around Alan Besançon's theses about the equivalence of Communism and National Socialism in and around the publication *The Black Book of Communism*.<sup>11</sup> But contrary to the claim to a total equivalence of the barbaric tendencies of these two types of regimes, and despite many similarities between them, there was a crucial difference between them. This difference, as Leszek Kolakowski and Martin Malla have shown in their comments on Besançon,<sup>12</sup> was rooted in the attitudes of these respective movements and regimes to the universalistic and the concomitant potentially—even if only potentially—inclusivist components of the modern cultural and political program. The socialist and communist movements were fully set within the framework of the cultural program of modernity, above all of the Enlightenment and of the Revolutions, and their criticism of the modern capitalist bourgeois society was made in terms of non-completeness of the modern program—entailing the potentiality of continual inclusion—even if these potentialities were strongly counteracted by the barbaric exclusivist practices of these regimes rooted in their absolutizing tendencies. Hence within the Communist movements and regimes with all

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their destructive annihilating forces there could develop tendencies of resistance which could at least potentially challenge the barbaric and exclusivist practices of the regimes.

The extreme fascist or national-socialist regimes, aimed above all at the reconstruction of the boundaries of modern collectivities, negated the universalistic components of the cultural program of modernity and promulgated ideologies and praxis of total exclusion, total barbarization without possibilities of challenge from within to the total demonization of the excluded. It is indeed when these two absolutizing tendencies come together—as in Cambodia—that they give rise to some of the most gruesome aspects of modern barbarism.<sup>13</sup>

All these destructive potentialities and forces are inherent potentialities in the modern program, most fully manifest in the ideologization of violence, terror and wars, and the total ideological exclusivity and demonization of the excluded are not outbursts of old “traditional” force—but outcomes of modern reconstruction, of seemingly “traditional” forces in a modern way. Thus indeed modernity is, to paraphrase Leszek Kolakowski’s felicitous and sanguine expression—“on endless trial.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ben Kiernan, “Le communisme racial des Khmers-rouges: Un génocide et son négationnisme: le cas du Cambodge,” *Esprit*, Mai 1999, 17:93–128.

<sup>14</sup> L. Kolakowski, *Modernity on Endless Trial*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990.

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PART FOUR

THE HISTORICAL AND CIVILIZATIONAL  
FRAMEWORK OF WESTERN MODERNITY

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## INTRODUCTION TO SECTION IV ON HISTORICAL AND CIVILIZATIONAL FRAMEWORKS OF WESTERN MODERNITY

The chapters in this section take up the problematique of Multiple Modernities by having a look at the first “original” modernity—the European one. The conception of Multiple Modernities entails the view that although obviously the first modernity developed in the West, in Europe, and that this modernity was presented by its bearers as the “natural” modernity and was for long periods of time often conceived in this way also by many groups in other societies, yet in fact from the very beginning of the modern era there developed throughout the world, with the expansion of modernity, distinct patterns thereof. Accordingly, contrary to the assumption of many theories of modernization and of converging of industries—the European or Western pattern need not be repeated elsewhere, especially as these latter modernities were no longer “first” modernities and developed already in periods and situations in which European and later Western modernities were already fully established and acquired a hegemonic status in the new, modern, international systems. Just because of this, it is important to analyze yet again the specific civilizational and historical frameworks of European modernity and some of the distinctive characteristics thereof.

The first chapter in this section, “The Origin of the West,” takes up this problematique through the re-examination in a comparative framework of Weber’s Protestant Ethic. The second chapter by a comparative analysis of the historical and civilizational frameworks of the Great Revolutions—the harbingers of political modernity. In both these chapters following Weber but also going to some extent beyond this, the crucial importance of religious sectarian ideologies and activities in the formation of modernity is emphasized. This problem is taken up frontally in the chapter on the Sectarian Origins of Modernity in which it is shown how the sectarian origins are important not only for the understanding of the origin of European modernity, but also for some of its basic, continual characteristics.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

# ORIGINS OF THE WEST. THE ORIGINS OF THE WEST IN RECENT MACROSOCIOLOGICAL THEORY. THE PROTESTANT ETHIC RECONSIDERED

### A. THE ORIGINS OF THE WEST IN RECENT MACROSOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

#### I

The origins of the West, of the modern world, the question why was it that the modern world—or rather the general trends to the development of a rational world order manifest in the capitalist civilization in the rise of the modern bureaucratic state and society—developed only in the West, have constituted the major concerns of sociological analysis in general, of comparative macrosociological analysis in particular from their very inception. It is therefore no surprise that they have been recently taken up in a series of researches which have signalled the revival of comparative macrosociological analysis. It is also no surprise that in these works the major controversies which have dominated the scholarly discussion on this problem—especially those between the Marxism and the Weberian interpretations of the origin of Capitalism—have become also revived—albeit in more sophisticated ways, becoming also closely interwoven with those around major theoretical issues in sociological analysis. They became closely connected with the issues related to the relations between culture and social structure and in all of these works the evaluation of the Protestant ethic thesis has constituted a major and continuous focus of discussion.

#### II

Among these works—articles, books, and symposia—the most important are probably those by Jean Baechler (1971, 1986, 1987), Daniel Chirot (1985), John Hall (1985, 1986a), Randall Collins (1986), and Michel Mann (1986, 1987), as well as Bryan Turner's evaluations (1981, 1987) of Weber's work (especially his recent study of Weber's

analysis of the emergence of modern science, as well as the series of Weber symposia organized by W. Schluchter, in which many aspects of the major civilizations analyzed by Weber—Ancient Judaism, Confucianism and Taoism, Hinduism and Buddhism, early Christianity, and Islam (1981, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1987)—were reexamined), and Schluchter's own work (1981, 1984).

All these works confront the “classical” problems of such analysis: namely, how to explain the origin of the modern world in general and of capitalism in particular, and the uniqueness of the West. They all attempt to reopen such macrosociological analysis with a vision of world history. Unlike the early studies of modernization, these works are naturally also very much interested in the expansion of modern civilization and they deal not only with the fact that many dimensions of modernity have expanded beyond the West, but also with the diversity of the dynamics of these “modern” or post-traditional or even post-modern social and cultural orders.

These works also share many common analytical themes arising out of recent major theoretical controversies, at the same time, however, they differ from them with respect to some central theoretical issues. When taken together, they point to the possibility of a reconsideration of some of these theoretical problems and of their relation to sociological research, especially to macrosociological analysis viewed in the perspective of world history.

First of all, these works do not accept any simple evolutionist view—a charge often made against the earlier studies of modernization and convergence of industrial societies—although some of the problems posed by that view (especially what may be called the expansive capacities—whether in the cultural, political, or economic spheres of societies or civilizations) are addressed in many of them. Second, most of these works do not accept the “closed systemic” view of societies so heavily emphasized by the structural-functional school. Some of them explicitly criticize this view, stressing instead groups and networks that carry various “material” and “ideal” interests of different actors. In other works (especially in the Weber symposia), such criticism or nonacceptance of the closed systemic view is more implicit. Third, these studies share a strong emphasis on comparative and historical institutional analysis. They all focus on the analysis of relatively similar institutions, such as cities, political centres, religious institutions, and classes in different societies—although there are significant differences among them with regard to some

central aspects of such analysis. Finally, all of them place a systematic emphasis on civilizations as important arenas of macrosociological analysis and on intersocietal or intercivilizational relations. They not only attempt to analyze different societies in isolation, they also combine such an analysis with that of some major patterns of intersocietal dynamics of societies as they are interconnected through population movements, wars and conquests, the encounters of nomad peoples with settled ones, migrations, trade, and cultural and religious movements. Moreover, these works lay heavy emphasis on the importance of broader civilizational units or frameworks—Judaism, Islam, medieval Europe—not just of seemingly self-centred (political) societies, as the major focus or arena of comparative sociological analysis.

In most of these works the combination of the anti-evolutionist attitude with a strong emphasis on historical, institutional, and intercivilizational perspective is connected with a strong emphasis on the importance of various contingent historical trends for explaining the development of different institutional formations.

### III

The theoretical differences among these views can already be discerned with respect to the mode of analysis of these international relations, as well as to the relative importance of different contingent factors. There are rather important differences between the two groups of these works—those of Hall, Baechler, and Chirot on the one hand, and the Weber symposia as well as Schluchter's own work on the other (with Collins and Mann standing somewhere in the middle).

The first group of works stresses such intersocietal or intercivilizational geopolitical factors as migrations, invasions, and trade. To some extent these analyzes follow in the footsteps of the Chicago historian W. MacNeill (1963, 1983). At the same time, the various Weber symposia laid a much stronger emphasis on what can be called interreligious or intercultural relations, with little systematic emphasis of the international geopolitical dimensions or aspects of such interrelation.

These differing emphases on various aspects or dimensions of intersocietal or intercivilizational relations and the interpretation of importance of contingent forces are closely related to what constitutes the

major theoretical or analytical differences among these works. This difference is centred in the relationship between culture and society or, as it has been often and not very felicitously put, on the “role of ideas” in institutional dynamics.

All these works address this problem through an examination of Weber’s analysis of the role of ideas in world history, and especially his analysis of the Protestant Ethic and the “ethics” of the other great religions or civilizations. It is here that the major difference between the two groups of works is most prominent.

#### IV

The common denominator among the members of the first group—including Daniel Chirot, Jean Baechler, and John Hall (and to some extent also Randall Collins and Michael Mann)—is the emphasis on the importance of the continuous development and conjunction of demographic, technological, and structural processes, especially a certain type of political decentralization, for understanding the rise of Western capitalism. They emphasize the importance for the emergence of the modern world of the existence in Europe of multiple and closely interconnected centres of power, within common and relatively cohesive civilizational frameworks, with no single strong centre able to monopolize the flow of resources.

At the same time the Weber symposia emphasize much more the importance of basic religious orientations and civilizational premises—not as distinct ontological causes of social processes—but rather as central constitutive components of such processes.

All these scholars analyze multiple and relatively autonomous institutions (cities, the Church, and the like) and the continuous competition between them rooted in the inability of any of them, or of the state, to monopolize power and resources in marked contrast to the situation in China, India, or Islam, where either the state or some coalition of political and religious elites was able to monopolize the control of some resources, often undermining each other. (For a parallel list see Gellner, 1988, pp. 154–170) where he examines the different “structural” or institutional approaches and reappraised also on the Protestant ethic thesis. It is such structural pluralism, continuously spurred by technological and demographic growth, that permitted the far-reaching reconstruction of many aspects of European

society, and ultimately led to the rise of capitalism, bureaucracy, the nation-state, and the like.

Hall's analysis, taking off from Ernest Gellner's conception of agrarian politics, focuses on several central institutional aspects of the place of religion in such societies—namely, on the relations between the political and the religious elites, and the degree and mode of autonomy of the latter, as against the former, and on the mode of co-operation between them and the ways in which they organize “civil” society and allow for some independent developments from within it.

In these works the emphasis on structural pluralism is strongly connected with the analysis of various geopolitical factors—especially the weakness in Europe of any compact political boundaries, and the continuous restructuring of such boundaries through intersocietal or intercivilizational relations, such as migrations and trade—between Europe and Asia as well as within Europe itself.

## V

Although some important differences with respect to their attitude towards the relationship between culture and social structure or towards the role of ideas in shaping the dynamics of societies can be identified within these works, they nevertheless seem to share—very much in line with some of the theoretical currents of the last two decades—the view of religion (or culture) and social structure as distinct ontological entities, and the closely related view of religious groups as just another group, with specific power, status, or economic interests that compete with other such groups.

With the partial exception of Collins and Mann, they seemingly deny the possibility that the contents of the beliefs or visions articulated by the intellectuals may in some way be related to how they exert their influence on institutional formations. Collins and Mann accept the importance of ideas or beliefs in the dynamics of civilizations, in a variety of ways. For Mann, ideas are one possible source of social power; transcendental religions—*e.g.*, the monotheistic religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, as against, according to him, Confucianism—did have a significant influence as such an independent source of power on the course of world history. Collins admits the importance of religion as one element or component in

the development of the contingent forces that led to the rise of the West. Moreover, in general he distinguishes between the social and political impact of two different types of religion, the moralistic and the mystical—and of the orthodoxies and the heterodoxies that develop within them.

## VI

A radically different look is taken in the symposia edited by Schluchter, and in Schluchter's own work. Their starting point is the Weberian problematic of different patterns of rationalization of the major religions—a starting point that entails a strong emphasis on the role of religion or ideas in institutional dynamics. The basic difference between the works of the first group of scholars and those of the Weber symposia is perhaps most evident in the fact that the symposia (as well as other works that have attempted to apply a Weberian perspective to the analysis of civilizations) emphasize one type of group or institution that is almost entirely absent in the other studies (with the partial exception of Collins)—namely heterodoxies—as a crucial factor in civilizational and also, potentially, intercivilizational dynamics.

This difference among the institutional analyses of the different scholars is not accidental. It does not indicate just a quantitative difference from the works of the first group with respect to the “relative weight” of ideas as against different material forces. It rather points to an entirely different way of looking at the relationship between “ideas” and “beliefs”—culture in general—on the one hand, and social structure on the other. It is closely related to the at least implicit recognition in the Weber symposia, as well as in other comparative works inspired by the Weberian vision, of the analytical distinction between those aspects of religious activities and beliefs that are akin to other specialized activities—economic, technical, administrative, and the like—and those aspects of such activities which can indeed be seen as constitutive of social order. Gellner's latest exposition (1988) does also come close to such a conception.



## B. THE PROTESTANT ETHIC THESIS CONTROVERSY IN RECENT THEORIES

### VII

In order to explicate more fully the implications of the preceding analysis of different contemporary approaches to macro-sociology, we shall take up briefly the locus classicus of most of the controversies about the relations between culture and social structure, namely—the controversy around Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis.

As is well known this thesis has provided a focus for controversies which have been renewed in each generation. It would be beyond the scope of our discussion here to survey and analyze the history of this controversy. (For a fuller exposition of this controversy through the sixties see S.N. Eisenstadt, 1968; Besnard, 1970).

We shall rather take it up as it was addressed to in some of the more recent works—especially those of Hall, Baechler and Collins which we have analyzed above.

The major assertion of most of these works, with the partial exception—as we have seen—of Collins (1986) was that Protestantism, its beliefs and tenets, did not constitute a crucial component in the development of capitalism, and that this development can be best explained in terms of the basic structural characteristics (especially structural pluralism) of European civilizations and of various historical contingencies that developed in Europe—which we have briefly mentioned above.

Collins does attribute some casual role to Protestantism in the rise of Capitalism. In his view “the religious factor operates both as a direct influence on the creation of an economic ethic and as a final level of casualty implicated in the rise of the rational-legal state of legal citizenship.”

But he does not face up to what is Weber's main problematic—namely that of the principled place of “ideas” or religion in the construction of social order, and in institutional dynamics.

### VIII

Given the limitation of cases in any comparative macro-sociological analysis, it is of course difficult to provide a clear cut comparative laboratory case which could replicate all the structural conditions that have been identified in Europe.

Japan, which has been used by Baechler (and before that in a somewhat different vein by Marc Bloch) does not, because of its small size and relative isolation fully qualify as such a full fledged comparative case.

It is probably India, with its combination of the existence of a broad civilizational framework, continuous structural pluralism and structural changes, that comes—seemingly rather paradoxically—closest to Europe.

Recent research has indeed identified many interesting parallels, even if certainly not identities, in the characteristics of medieval India and European political and economic structure. Yet, the differences in their overall dynamics, are, of course, immense. In the explanation of these differences the caste system was usually given—most recently by Baechler (1987) and to a smaller extent by Hall—pride of place.

Unlike many other scholars—and above all, of course, Weber—Baechler and Hall did not attempt to connect the structural aspects of the caste system which are crucial for the understanding of the spectrum of the dynamics of Indian civilization with some components or aspects of Hinduism, of Hinduism beliefs, world view or the like.

It is interesting to note that the overall picture of the caste system that can be found in their works is much more static than the one that, in recent historical sociological and anthropological research. Significantly enough they stress above all the fact that within India there did not develop full fledged modern capitalism, and do not pay enough attention to the specific dynamics of Indian civilization. Above all they did not pay sufficient, perhaps any attention to the role of heterodoxies—or rather sects—in these dynamics.

It is here indeed the comparison with Protestantism—originally an heterodoxy or sect from within Catholicism—that is most appropriate and interesting.

### C. PROTESTANTISM IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EUROPEAN MEDIEVAL CIVILISATION

## IX

In order to approach the problem of the possible impact of Protestantism, of the Protestant Ethic, on the dynamics of European civilization

in general, and on the rise of capitalism in particular—in comparison with for instance the impact of different Indian sects on the dynamics of Indian civilization, it is first of all necessary to put Protestantism in the context of the basic framework of Christian civilization.

The most important aspect of Protestantism within the framework of Western Christianity lied of course in the symbolic and institutional redefinition of the relations between man and the sacred—as embodied in the figure of Christ. It is with respect to such redefinition that there have also developed the basic differences between on the one hand the Lutheran (or Anglican) Protestantism and, on the other hand, the Calvinism and the various sects of the radical Reformation (Hillebrand, 1987, Troeltsch, 1912, 1931).

The crux of this redefinition was the denial in sectarian Protestantism—somewhat weaker in Lutherianism and very strong in Calvinism and in the radical Reformation—of the specific modes of symbolic and institutional mediation of Christ, as they developed in Catholic Christianity.

The two crucial symbolic aspects of such mediation were the interpretation of the ritual of the Eucharist and of the figure of Mary in such mediation—both of which were greatly changed in Protestantism. The central place of Mary was almost entirely abolished in almost all the branches of Protestantism.

These changes have not, of course, abolished the sanctification of Christ as a central, basically semi-mediatory human and godlike figure to the Sacred—one of the major tenets which have originally divided Christianity—especially Pauline Christianity—from Judaism (Eisenstadt, 1985).

But Protestantism—especially Calvinism and the radical reformation—did abolish any single symbolic representation of Christ as the major mode of confrontation and meeting of man with God, and created a situation in which man was thrown back, as for instance in the construction of Protestant Church chapels in contrast to the Catholic ones attest to, on his own internal resources.

But even more far-reaching—especially in the social arena—was the abolishment of institutional mediation to the sacred which constituted one of the major characteristics of the Catholic civilization—namely the monopoly of such mediation, above all through the monopoly of administration of sacraments by the Church and the Pope, and of the concomitant distinction between different degrees of religiosity as appropriate for different sectors of society.

The denial of the different degrees of religiosity of different sectors of society and the consequent claim of the potentially equal religious standing of all such sectors and of all spheres of human activity were of course most clearly seen in the principled negative attitude that has developed in Protestantism to monasticism—the very embodiment of such distinction and the abolishment of monasteries constituted, of course, the most forceful expression of this assertion.

## X

All these developments that took place in Protestantism have, of course, very strong roots in the original paradigms of the original “classical” Christianity.

Truly enough, the emphasis on mediation—especially through Christ—constituted one of the major forms of differentiation of Christianity from Judaism with its very strong emphasis on ritual, study and prayer; and from Hellenism with its emphasis on reason as the mode of access to the sacred (Eisenstadt, 1985). Yet, except for the strong emphasis on the figure of Christ and on other-worldly orientations in general, the special mode of such mediation—or of the relative weight of other-worldly orientations—was not given in the original paradigm of early Christianity. Neither was the mode of distribution of religiosity among different sectors of the population.

Indeed, from its very beginning, there have developed within Christianity several basic tensions—namely the tensions between hierarchy and equality in the religious sphere—with respect to the symbolic and institutional access to the great mediatory figure of Christ; between the relative emphasis on this-worldly and other-worldly orientations (Harnack, 1962, Fliche, 1934–61, Marrou, 1963, 1985). All these tensions persisted naturally in different forms and in different degrees of strength in different parts of Christianity, throughout different Christian societies or civilizations.

Protestantism reinforced, transformed and articulated in a new way several of these basic ideological tendencies or potentials which were inherent within Christianity from its very beginning.

The ability of Protestantism to bring out these potentialities, indeed possibly the very rise and especially impact of Protestantism, could probably not have become realised without the structural pluralism of medieval European civilization to which we have referred above.

But some of the major characteristics of this pluralism—as distinct

from those of the Indian one, cannot be understood without reference to the specific religious orientations and world-view of Christianity and to the structure of the major elites which carried them—as against basic world-view of Hinduism and the structure of the caste system in general and the Brahmins in particular.

## XI

The mode of decentralization and centre construction (Eisenstadt, 1976, 1987; Rokkan, 1975) that developed in Europe was characterized first of all by a certain type of structural pluralism. This pluralism, differed from mere decentralization, as well as from the type of structural differentiation that develops in ecologically compact, above all Imperial, systems.

This type of pluralism differed greatly from the one that developed, for instance, in the Byzantine Empire which shared many aspects of its cultural traditional models with Western Europe. Within the Byzantine Empire this pluralism was manifest in a relatively high degree of structural differentiation within a rather unified socio-political framework in which different social functions were apportioned to different groups of social categories. The structural pluralism that developed in Europe was characterized, above all, by a strong combination between low, but continuously increasing, levels of structural differentiation on the one hand, and continuously changing boundaries of different collectivities, units and frameworks on the other.

This mode of structural pluralism was very closely related to the tendency to a continuous restructuring of the boundaries of the major collectivities—the primordial, political, religious civilizations—and of the relations between them, giving rise to continuous tensions and conflicts. These patterns of legitimation and of structuring of collectivities were also closely related to the structure of centres and centre-periphery relations that developed in Western and Central Europe. These centres shared with Imperial societies probably—because, as Otto Hintze has shown long ago, they emerged from within civilizations with Imperial past and aspirations—the symbolic and to some degree the organizational distinctiveness of the centre.

In common with Imperial societies, those of Western and Central Europe have also been continuously characterized by a high degree of commitment by centres and periphery alike to common “ideals”

or goals, the centre permeating the periphery in attempts to mobilize support for its policies and the periphery impinging on the centre in order to influence the shaping of its contours.

But these characteristics of centres and of centre-periphery relations developed in European Imperial-feudal systems in rather distinct forms. Unlike in purely Imperial societies—or in purely decentralized ones—such as those developed in the Ancient Near East, in South East Asia and in many other places—the most important of these characteristics have been the existence of a certain type of multiplicity of such centres—political, religious and others—as well as of different regional ones.

But the mere existence of a relative multiplicity and especially political centres is not unique to Europe. It can indeed also be found in India. What distinguishes the European experience is not just the multiplicity of centres, but rather some specific characteristics of this multiplicity. These different centres did not coexist—as in India and to a smaller degree in Islam,—in just a sort of adaptive symbiosis—the religious legitimizing the political, and the political providing the religious with protection and resources, and battling with each other over the relative terms of such adaptation.

Rather in Europe these multiple centres and subcentres—as well as the different collectivities—tend to become arranged in a rather complicated but never unified rigid hierarchy in which none of the centres was clearly predominant. Moreover, the different centres tended, as was the case with the collectivities, to struggle about their relative standing in such hierarchy, and there developed, not only changed, but also continuous restructuring of such centres. Naturally enough, the activities of the more central (“higher”) centres are of a wider scope than those of the local ones, but these centres did not have the total monopoly over any one of the components of “central” activities. Each of the local centres and of the functional subcentres had some degree of independent dominance over some of its resources, over some “central” activities, as well as over its access to the more “central” centres.

## XII

These types of centres and subcentres and of centre-periphery relations were unique to Europe. They can be explained, at least in part, by the prevalence of many autonomous elites—political, reli-

gious, and economic—often not confined to their specific activities. Thus the religious elites were oriented, not only towards the religious arena, but also towards the social and political-economic arenas and the same was true of the other elites. These were characterized by: the predisposition of secondary elites, relatively close to the centre, to be the major carriers of religious heterodoxies and political innovations; a relatively close relationship between these secondary elites and broader social strata, and hence also to movements of rebellion; and a concomitant predisposition on the part of those elites and groups to develop and often combine activities oriented towards centre-formation with those of institution-building in the economic, cultural, and educational spheres.

Some of the most important aspects of medieval and early modern European society developed from the combination of the basic cultural orientations and premises that were prevalent in the society and of their institutional implications. The most important among these aspects were: a multiplicity of centres; a significant permeation of the peripheries by the centres, and impingement of the peripheries on the centres; a relatively small degree of overlapping of the boundaries of class, of ethnic, religious, and political collectivities, of their respective centres; as well as a strong tendency to the continuous restructuring of these boundaries; a comparatively high degree of autonomy of groups and strata and a high degree of their autonomous access to the centres of society; significant overlapping among different status units, along with a high level of country-wide status (“class”) consciousness and political activity; a multiplicity of cultural and “functional” (economic or professional) elites; a high degree of cross-cutting between them, and a close relationship between them and broader and more ascriptive strata; a relatively autonomous legal system; and significant autonomy of cities as centres of social and structural creativity and identity-formation.

### XIII

Of special interest in this context is the place of the monastic orders in the dynamics of European society.

It was the different monastic and semi-monastic orders and organizations that provided, as Weber correctly saw, one of the major arenas for the working out in Medieval Catholicism in Europe (as also in other parts of Christianity) of many of the basic tensions

mentioned above, as were of course also the very closely connected heterodox movements which have abounded here.

The connection between monastic orders and organizations and potentially heterodox orientations are probably common to all Axial-Age civilizations, certainly of all Christian ones. But the modes and intensity of such connections, as they have developed in Western Europe, did develop some rather specific characteristics (Troeltsch, 1912 (1931); Drijven, 1985; Workman, (1913) (1927) 1962; Hussi, (1926) 1987; Leclerc, 1961).

First, was the generally very strong connection between these two—the like of which cannot be found except perhaps in some periods of the Byzantine Empire.

Second, and in close relation to the former, there developed, in many arenas of the monastic orders in Medieval Europe, very strong tendencies to go beyond the hierarchical mediatory organization of the Church, to more open types of organizations. Sometimes, even the elitist orientations of the monastic order became combined with strong anti-intellectual, anti-structural and anti-Church tendencies.

Thus, in a sense, Luther's dictum of opening up the monasteries, of turning the whole world into a monastery, did indeed find some very important antecedents in the dynamics of medieval monastic institutions, heterodox movements and the connection between them, as they developed in medieval Europe.

Last, was also their very crucial role in the conservation of the literary traditions of Antiquity and the spread of learning and of literacy.

Thus, Weber's insights about the crucial role of monasteries and heterodoxies—and of the connections between them—in the playing out of the different basic themes and tensions and in the transformative problematic of Western Christian civilization, were in principle indeed correct.

It was not that many monastic orders—the Cistercian, Clunian or others—were in some way the direct ideological or organizational precursors, direct lineages, of Protestantism. Weber might indeed have erred with respect to the specific historical relations between the development of such different orders and Protestantism.

But the central point here is that first, the monasteries and heterodoxies provided one of the most important arenas within which the different tensions inherent in the Christian paradigm were played out in general; and second, that one forceful direction of such work-



ing out was that of growing rationalization, of patterns of life, behaviour and social organization, as well as of cultural and religious orientations and premises, *i.e.*, the growing questioning and problematization of such premises.

#### D. POST-REFORMATION PROTESTANTISM AND COUNTER-REFORMATION CATHOLIC COUNTRIES

#### XIV

The impact of Protestantism on the dynamics of European civilizations reinforced and transformed many of the ideological and institutional tendencies or potentialities which were inherent in these general characteristics of medieval and early modern European civilizations and which cannot be understood without reference to basic cultural orientations and premises of these civilizations and the closely related structure of elites.

In order to understand the nature of this impact the comparison between Catholic and Protestant countries in the post-Reformation era is very appropriate. Such comparison does indeed touch on the very heart of the controversy around Protestant Ethic—especially with respect to those criticisms of Weber which accuse him of not having taken into account the fact that extensive capitalist enterprises have existed in pre-Reformation Catholic Europe, and have further developed in Post Reformation countries.

Such a comparative look at Catholic and Protestant Post Reformation and Counter Reformation development, is very instructive because of the—always relative of course—structural similarities between the developments in Protestant and Catholic countries. Thus, in most of these countries there have developed new, modern state formations, bureaucratic organizations, and economic capitalistic enterprises. (Castro, 1954; Rops, 1961a, b; Elton, 1958).

Yet, the continuous modern economic and political dynamics of these countries have, as is well known, developed in different ways, influencing the course of modern European history, and some of the most important of these differences can indeed be attributed to the impact of Protestantism.

These most important and far-reaching effects of Protestantism were evident particularly in the development of new types of roles, role structures, and role sets of the motivations required for the

adoption and performance of such roles, and in the legitimation of the new types of institutional formations.

It is, of course, obvious that many of the elements necessary for this development existed before and even after the Counter Reformation to some extent in Catholic countries (Godinho, 1961). But it is also true that in the period after the Counter Reformation these elements—no matter how similar quantitatively to factors that favoured economic growth in the Protestant countries—could not be freed, as Luthy's work on the Protestant bank shows (Luthy, 1957–61), from their dependence, in terms both of goal orientation and legitimation, on the political centre. It was largely in Protestant countries or in sectarian communities that the economic entrepreneur acquired a new type of autonomy which in turn fostered the development of relatively independent and more differentiated economic organization. It was also largely in the Protestant communities that another crucial change took place—namely, the development of intense motivation for the undertaking the new roles and goals and for identifying with them (Bellah, 1963).

Such new developments occurred not only in the economic sphere but in a great variety of institutional spheres. New roles and concomitant institutional frameworks evolved in the political sphere proper, giving rise to new types of active political participation and organizations, in Scotland, The Netherlands, and France, in the form of parties, community organizations, and public services (Burrell, 1960). They also evolved in the cultural, and especially the scientific and educational, realm (Merton, 1938; Feuer, 1963; Hooykass, 1956; van Gelder, 1961; Rabb, 1962; Kearney, 1964; Ben-David, 1965, 1983). In the economic sphere itself they could develop in other ways distinct from capitalist-mercantile or industrial entrepreneurship. The transformation of the economic activities of the gentry is a case in point (Stone, 1965). In all these spheres the beginnings of such new roles existed before Protestantism, but in the Protestant countries the roles—and the new institutional formations—achieved more autonomy in terms of goals, organizational structure, and legitimation than in the Catholic countries.

The Protestant Reformation did have, of course, a great initial impact on the central political institutions and symbols. This effect was not necessarily intended by the rulers who adopted Protestantism. Yet, their adoption of reform did have important symbolic and structural effects which greatly facilitated the further development of a

more flexible and dynamic social system. Two factors are relevant here. The first was the need of the Protestant rulers to find new sources of legitimation. The second was their need to forge new symbols of national identity. On both levels there developed, initially through the religious impact of the major Protestant groups and then through their transformation, the possibility of a reformulation of relations between rulers and ruled, of patterns of political participation, and of the scope and conception of the political community (Lindsay, 1943). The activities of the Protestant rulers also led to a restructuring of central legal institutions. This restructuring was based on the idea of covenant and contract and on the reformulation of many concepts of natural law (Little, 1967). Its results were a more differentiated view of the law and the freeing of voluntary and business corporations from the more restricted view of the political sphere inherent in the traditional understanding of natural law. And, indeed, both in the first Protestant societies (in England, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands) and later in the United States, there occurred, through the incorporation of Protestant orientations into law, a transformation of the basic interrelationship between the political and social spheres. The change took place perhaps even before new economic motivations and scientific activities fully evolved. It has not only reinforced the relative autonomy of these spheres but created new, more flexible political symbols, new bases of political obligation, and more flexible institutions.

The ways in which such orientations influence the shaping of new institutional roles has been recently analyzed in several works—those by Poggi (1983), Zarett (1985), and Ben-David (1983) in his re-examination of the Merton thesis. These works analyzed the importance, in the formation and functioning of new institutions, of the development of new patterns of motivation to undertake different activities, as well as of the legitimation of new broader institutional complexes. They have shown how such new patterns of motivation and legitimation, inculcated through the promulgation of new ontological vision, have crystallized in different types of social contexts—for instance, in congregations or schools—and were effected by secondary intellectuals—preachers and teachers—who serve as the major agents of socialization and communication and play important roles in the various coalitions and counter-coalitions and the process of control effected by them.

Here a comparison with Catholic countries, especially during and

after the Counter Reformation, is indeed extremely instructive. The seeds for almost all the changes—new bases of legitimation, new national symbols, and autonomy of religious institutions (as evident, for instance, in the Gallican Church)—existed in most of these countries on the eve of the Reformation and even to some extent throughout the Counter Reformation. And yet in the Catholic countries—in Spain, France, and even earlier in the Italian states of the Renaissance in which modern statecraft first developed—these potentially diversifying tendencies were stifled. Here at least two factors played a part. First were various external exigencies, such as the warfare among the small Italian principalities and the deflection of trade routes from them. Second was the fact that the older Catholic symbols of legitimation were maintained, as were the traditional relations between Church and state. Both were viewed as natural or preordained mediators between the individual and the larger community on the one hand and the sacred and natural orders on the other (Castro, 1954; Elliott, 1963; Lindsay, 1957).

## XV

Such transformative potentials of Protestantism did not develop automatically, and in the same way, in all social settings. In principle their effects were greater insofar as they built on that type of structural and symbolic pluralism which was characteristic of the European civilization, and insofar as the development of Protestantism itself did not minimize such tendencies to pluralism.

The development of the specific transformative potentials of Protestantism were greater insofar as they took up the elements of autonomy and pluralism and helped recrystallize them in a more differentiated setting. In Catholic countries such as Spain and France the potentially pluralistic impact of various modern trends, including Protestantism itself, was inhibited by the formation of the Catholic state during the Counter Reformation.

Even within the Protestant countries, however, there was great variation. The transformative tendency of Protestantism did not necessarily develop fully or in the same direction among all Protestant groups in all countries, though to some extent it probably existed in most of them. The concrete development and institutionalization of such tendencies depended to no small extent on the interaction between the attitudes and influence of the major Protestant groups

on the one hand and, on the other, the pre-existing social structure, especially on the potential openness or flexibility of political and cultural centres and of the broader groups and strata, and on their initial reaction to religious innovation. The exact scope of such institutionalization varied greatly in accordance with the nature of the groups (that is, whether aristocracy, urban patriciate, various "middle" groups, urban proletariat, or peasantry) who were the bearers of Protestantism as well as their placement within the broader social structure, with particular regard to the political and cultural centre.

The transformative capacities of Protestantism were smallest in those cases in which Protestant groups attained full powers (as, for instance, in the case of South Africa) (Loubser, 1968)—when their more totalistic and therefore restrictive impulses became dominant—and in situations in which they became downtrodden minorities. Conversely, the scope of the new activities and the extent to which they were successful in transforming society were most far-reaching in those cases in which the various Protestant groups were in a position of what may be called very broadly "secondary" elites, close to, but not identified with, the central elites. They were also successful insofar as they became integrated into wider national communities which developed on the basis of the prior autonomy of the estates without becoming the only bearers of such new political or national identity (Eisenstadt, 1968; Little, 1967 see also Gellner, 1988, pp. 100–118 and 145–170).

## XVI

Also it might be worthwhile here to take yet a brief look at other criticisms of the Weber theses, namely that of entrepreneurial, innovative activities of Protestants which were not very different from those of other minorities (as, for instance, of the Parsus in India, of the Chinese in South-East Asia) and hence that they should be attributed not to the tenets of Protestantism but to their minority status.

While this criticism may seem to be partially valid with respect to the development of discrete economic enterprise, it is not valid if we take into account the overall institutional aspect of Protestants, *i.e.*, the generation of new overall institutional frameworks in the economic political and cultural arenas alike.

The same point may be made following the preceding brief analysis of the different impact of Protestantism as against Catholicism

and of Protestantism in different countries with respect to one of the major criticisms which have been made against Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis. This criticism, repeated again and again throughout the years, said that capitalist enterprises existed, and were continuously expanding in Catholic countries both before and after the Reformation—and that whatever advantage Protestant countries might have had, it was mostly due to the influx of Protestant refugees.

This criticism does not take into account two points. One is the difference—so brilliantly analyzed by Herbert Luethy in his *Banque Protestante* (1957–1961)—between the basic premises according to which these enterprises were often run. Luethy distinguished quite sharply between the French system of “finances” and the Protestant one of “banque”—the first being characterized by the predominance of etatist consideration, while the second being more oriented to profit making.

It may of course be claimed—and truthfully enough—that not all Catholic enterprises were guided by consideration of “finances”. It is here, however, that the second—and probably more important caveat against this type of criticism—comes in. Luethy's analysis deals to a large extent with banking institutions closely related to the State. Thus indeed it is not just—or perhaps even mainly—with respect to the conduct of single enterprises, that the major impact of Protestantism is of crucial importance, but rather with respect to formation and premises of different types of national political economies. It is here that the strong differences between Protestant and Catholic countries—as well as between various Protestant countries, to some of which we have alluded above, come out.

#### E. A COMPARATIVE VIEW—SECTS AND HETERORODOXIES IN INDIAN CIVILIZATIONS

### XVII

Here it might be worthwhile to compare Christian—especially Protestant—and Indian sects and their impacts on the dynamics of their respective civilizations.

As Weber did already indicate, these various sects did indeed have far-reaching impact on the dynamics of Indian civilization, but this impact was indeed very different from that of heterodoxies and sects

in Medieval Europe and early Modern Europe in general, and of Protestantism in particular.

Sectarianism developed continuously and intensively in both Hinduism and Buddhism. These sects—Bhakti, Jainism, Buddhism itself, and other minor sects in Hinduism, and the different sects that developed in Buddhism—had a far-reaching influence on the civilizational framework of these societies. Nevertheless, the impact of these sectarian movements on the institutional dynamics of their respective civilizations, and the degree of crystallization of full-fledged orthodoxies, differed in these other-worldly civilizations from those that can be identified in the Christian, especially European civilization.

The most important of these sects—Bhakti, Jainism, originally Buddhism itself—all closely connected with the traditions and orientations of the renouncer—emphasized the pristine other-worldly orientations. But they developed not only as intellectual or ascetic exercises as elaborations of esoteric doctrines, but as full-fledged sects, each of which offered its own interpretation of the proper way to salvation and gave rise to far-reaching innovation in different social arenas.

The most dramatic among these innovations could be found, as indicated above, in Jainism and Bhakti cults, and above all in the rise of Buddhism itself. These various Hindu sects and Buddhism itself, originally a sectarian movement within Hinduism, had a far-reaching impact not only on the religious sphere, but on the entire institutional framework of this civilization. (Carman, 1987; Gaillat, 1987; Glassenap, 1964; Gonda, 1970; Hardy, 1981; Jaini, 1985; Lele, 1981; Padmanabh, 1979; Schormer & McLeod, 1985; Schubring, 1935; Zelliott, 1976).

The orientations of many of these sects often focused on attempts at more universalistic definitions of the religious communities, and on greater equality within them, rooted in a pure unmediated devotion to the Absolute, taking them beyond any ascriptive communal and above all caste setting.

Buddhism created a new world civilization; later the different Buddhist sects had a far-reaching impact on the institutional spheres of their respective civilizations.

The dynamics generated by these sects in coalition with other social groups differed greatly from those of other Axial-Age civilizations, whether from China, in which this-worldly orientations were predominant, or from the monotheistic ones where this-worldly orientations

were closely interwoven with other-worldly ones. These dynamics were to some degree unique in human history. They led to the restructuring and continuous expansion of the civilizational, political, and religious frameworks and collectivities, as well as organizational settings—to the redefinition of the scope of political and economic units, to changes in policy, but not, as we have seen above, to the reconstruction of political centres or of the basic premises of the political regimes.

### XVIII

Common to them—beyond the great differences between which, given the limitation of time, we cannot discuss here—was the continuous restructuring of ascriptive-primordial categories and collectivities and the continuous subsumption of most (usually piece-meal) institutional changes within the framework of such restructuring which was not, however—unlike in the case of Europe—mainly oriented to the reconstruction of the political centre.

The restructuring of the new collectivities facilitated the expansion of different social organizations. All these developments often engendered new organizational settings, a continuous redefinition of political and economic units and changes in policies, as well as changes in the religious sphere manifested above all in the development of new movements and sects.

These developments were often accompanied by the redefinition of the boundaries of the collectivities and of access to them, together with periodic attempts at imbuing them with a strong emphasis on equality. But, unlike in the West, they were not oriented to the reconstruction and transformation of the political centre and its relations to the civilizational and religious centre.

Unlike in the West or—as we shall yet see—in China these dynamics were not ideologically focused on the possibility of principled reconstruction of the political centre or, for that matter, of other institutional “mundane” sphere—such as above all the economic one, or of the family and kinship structure.

Any reorganization of mundane institutional spheres that occurred in them took place mostly on the organizational level, with only weak restructuring of their levels of symbolic articulation and without imbuing them with new autonomous meanings. Thus, for instance, in the political sphere these processes did not give rise—as in China



and in monotheistic civilizations—to autonomous political centres, distinct from the periphery, with strong Imperial orientations (Dumont, 1970a, 1970b; Heesterman, 1957; Ingalls, 1954; Kolenda, 1976; Nandy, 1980; Richards & Nichols, 1976; Sinha, 1938; Smith, 1978.).

The political centres that developed—for instance in the Gupta or Mauryan Empire—were stronger, and the territorial scope of the polities could be wider than the polities that existed before them. Similarly, the central and provincial administrations had strong centralizing tendencies. Yet these centralizing tendencies retained strong patrimonial characteristics—and did not lead to the restructuring of the relations between the centre and the periphery, to the creation of new links between them, or to breaking through the ascriptive premises of the periphery. The rulers of these political entities were not able, even on the rare occasions when they attempted—like Ashoka, the most important illustration of such attempts—to do so, to imbue the political sphere with new and broader meaning which could go beyond the existing premises.

A rather similar picture emerges in the economic sphere. Within the framework of Indian civilization, relatively far-reaching economic developments occurred: the broadening of internal markets; the extension of the scope of mercantile and, in some periods, of agricultural activities and production; and technological innovation, which gave rise to new institutional complexes.

Yet the restructuring of economic activities did not lead towards the development of more autonomous economic roles and autonomous economic regulatory complexes, to the definition of the arena as a distinct, autonomous one, or of the principles of control over the access to markets and of conversion of resources. Many new economic units tended to be incorporated mostly as external enclaves with but little impact on the structure of the internal economic markets.

In Buddhist societies, given their relatively stronger orientation to the political arena than in Hinduism, the major direction of such impingement of the religious groups on the political arena—in addition to serving, in periods of crisis, as the moral conscience of the community—was usually that of reinforcement of the ‘galactic’ tendencies of these rulers and of the construction of national Buddhist communities (Tambiah, 1976; Keys, 1989).

## XIX

The distinctive nature of the impacts of these sects on the institutional formations of their respective civilizations were closely related to the alternative social and cultural models that developed within them, as well as to the nature of their linkages with different types of political struggle and rebellion—*i.e.*, the nature of the coalitions into which they entered and their place in and impact on the central ruling coalitions (Bechert, 1966–8; Bunnag, 1973; Eisenstadt, Kahane & Shullman, 1984; Harper, 1964; Malik, 1973; Mus, 1967, 1968; Obeysekere et al. 1972; Rao, 1982; Reynolds, 1977; Stern, 1968; Tambiah, 1976; Thapar, 1978).

The basic definition of ontological reality and the strong otherworldly conceptions of salvation that developed in these civilizations did not generate strong alternative conceptions of the social and especially political orders. True, many of these visions and movements tended to develop a strong emphasis on equality—especially in the religious and cultural fields, and to some extent also in the definition of membership in the various collectivities. Similarly, some of the heterodoxies or sectarian movements that developed in these civilizations, and which sometimes became connected with rebellions and political struggle, articulated millenarian orientations. But these were not characterized by strongly articulated political goals, nor linked with attempts to restructure the political regimes. Only in some popular uprisings against alien or “bad” rulers were such goals crystallized briefly.

The impact of these sects on the dynamics of Hindu civilization was closely related to the fact that, while the various sectarian “religious” groups, organizations, or conglomerations continued to be autonomous in the cultural-religious arena, in the more “mundane” sphere they were mostly embedded in various ascriptive and political groups.

Hence, while the leaders of these sects were able to form many new coalitions, with different social groups and movements, these coalitions were of the same nature that existed in the major arenas of their respective societies and were mostly confined to the prevalent organizational networks, and did not generate markedly different principles of social organization, and above all of the political arena.

Hence these civilizations—unlike the monotheistic ones—have but rarely witnessed—as we have seen above—attempts, articulated by

various elites and movements, to reconstruct the political centres, their symbols, and the criteria of access to them.

The socio-political demands voiced in these movements were focused on attempts to change the concrete application of existing rules and to persuade the rulers to implement more benevolent policies. Such demands were not usually seen as new principles of political action or of accountability of rulers to different sectors of the population, but rather as an articulation of the latent moral premises of legitimation inherent in the existing regimes.

## XX

The best way to understand these characteristics of the construction of other-worldly civilizations is to analyze the nature of the most extreme pristine manifestations of the other-worldly ideal—the so-called Indian renouncer (Sanyassin), and the Buddhist monk, especially the forest monk, (the bhikku)—which epitomize the most extreme renunciation of the world (Gunawerdana, 1979; Silber, 1981, 1985; Tambiah, 1981, Thapar, 1976).

These renouncers may appear similar to—even at most more extreme than—the Christian holy men of ancient antiquity and the medieval monks, the Muslim sufis, some of the Jewish sectarians in the period of the Second Commonwealth, and the Jewish Hasidim of the early Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the Indian Sanyassin and Buddhist bhikku differ greatly from their apparent counterparts in the monotheistic civilizations—not to mention their rather more obvious differences from the Confucian scholar who denounced officialdom and became a sort of “privatgelehrter.”

The specific characteristics of the Hindu Sanyassin and Buddhist bhikku can best be understood by analyzing the relationship between their ideal of renunciation and the mundane, lay world. Here we encounter a rather paradoxical situation: this extreme ideal of renunciation also contains a strong de-facto interweaving with the mundane world and lay life, as can be seen in two crucial aspects of their respective roles.

The Indian renouncers (and the Buddhist, especially Theravada, bhikku) were defined not only as a distinctive role, differentiated from other roles of mundane, lay life, but also as a distinct stage—the last one, after that of the householder, in each man’s life cycle. They were not entirely discontinuous with lay life; they were usually

the culmination of this life. At the same time there existed also the possibility—more evident in the Bhuddist monasteries, but existing also in the Hindu complex—of continuous entry, exit and reentry into the organizations that emerged around the renouncers.

It is the lack of such a sharp break and differentiation between the role of the bhikku and lay life—which is, paradoxically, closely related to the total devaluation of the mundane world, but a devaluation which is not based on a conception of radical, ontological evil within it (even if it contains a conception of life as suffering)—that did not enable these renouncers or the bhikkus to find an archimedal point outside this world from which they could try to change it, as has been the case in the monotheistic civilizations in general and in Western Christianity in particular.

This definition of the role of the renouncer and the consequent ways in which the different sects and movements were interwoven in the institutional dynamics of Hindu (and Buddhist) civilization has been also closely related to the fact that the strong other-worldly emphases prevalent in these civilizations and their conception of ontological reality generated a tendency to a relatively weak relationship between the rules defining the ontological reality and the sharp cognitive and ideologized structuring of doctrines, and above all their application to the regulation of mundane arenas.

We see thus that the differences in the structure of Indian sects and European heterodoxies, including Protestantism, and their impact on the dynamics of their respective civilizations, cannot be understood without taking into account the specific cultural premises of the Indian and European civilizations and the closely related structure of their major elites—the caste system in India and the multiple relatively open elites in Europe.

#### F. ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS: CULTURE, SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND HISTORY

### XXI

The preceding comparative indications about the role of sectarianism in different civilizations indicate the possibilities of a new approach to the relationship between culture and social structure and their implications for comparative macrosocietal analysis.

They go beyond the definition of culture and social structure as

distinct ontological entities and beyond mutually exclusive deterministic and reductionist “materialist” or “idealist” modes of explanation of sociological phenomena.

The most important such indications are the specification of the analytical dimensions of beliefs of cultural visions that are constitutive elements of the construction of social order and institutional dynamics, and of the social processes through which these aspects are transformed into such constitutive elements and become connected with institutional formations and dynamics.

With respect to the first problem, of crucial importance is the recognition that beliefs or visions become such constitutive elements of social order, of institutional formations, by the transformation of their contents into the basic premises of different patterns of social interaction, *i.e.*, into systems of rules that address themselves to the basic problem of such order. The most important of these problems are those already emphasized by the Founding Fathers of Sociology, namely, the organization of the social division of labour, the construction of trust (or solidarity), the regulation of power, and the construction of meaning. Such sets of rules specify the principles that regulate different arenas of social interaction, the boundaries and criteria of membership in communities and collectivities, and the basic contours of the social centres and major institutional formations. Such premises constitute a distinct and crucial analytical aspect of “culture”—different from “beliefs,” “contours,” and even ideologies.

One of the major processes through which beliefs are transformed into such regulative principles is the crystallization of codes—very much akin to Weber’s concept of “economic ethics.” A *Wirtschaftsethik* does not connote specific religious injunctions about proper behaviour in any given sphere, nor is it merely a logical derivative of the intellectual contents of the theology or philosophy predominant in a given religion. Rather, such a *Wirtschaftsethik* (just as a “status” or “political” ethic) is a code, a more general “formal” orientation, which specifies how to regulate the frameworks of concrete social organizations and of institutional settings, and the patterns of behaviour and the range of major strategies of action appropriate in these different arenas (Eisenstadt, 1981). Such “codes” or “ethics” which are constitutive of the construction of social order have been effected—as has been indicated by a series of investigations of the social processes through which the great religions have crystallized into the Great Civilizations (Eisenstadt 1986, 1986a)—through the activities

of visionaries who were themselves transformed into new types of autonomous elites. These elites formed coalitions with rulers who were transformed from “god-kings” into earthly rulers governing under some heavenly mandate, and with other groups as well, at the same time also forming the nuclei of countercoalitions in which heterodoxies played a crucial role.

It is such coalitions and countercoalitions, and their continuous interaction with broader strata of the society, that activated the different processes of control through which different “visions” are transformed into civilizational premises and institutional formations. The ways in which such orientations or codes influence the shaping of new institutional formations has been analyzed in several recent works to which we have referred already above—especially those by Poggi (1983), Zaret (1985), and Ben-David (1983: his reexamination of the Merton thesis).

As we have seen these works analyzed the importance, in the formation and functioning of new institutions, of the development of new patterns of motivation to undertake different activities, as well as of the legitimation of new broader institutional complexes. They have shown how such new patterns of motivation and legitimation, inculcated through the promulgation of such codes, are crystallized in different types of social contexts—for instance, congregations or schools—and are effected by secondary intellectuals—preachers and teachers—who serve as the major agents of socialization and communication and play important roles in the various coalitions and counter-coalitions and the process of control activated by them.

All such processes are not limited to the exercise of power in the “narrow” political or coercive sense. As even the more sophisticated Marxists, especially Gramsci, have stressed, they are much more pervasive, and include many relatively autonomous symbolic aspects, and represent different types of “ideal” and “material” interests. It is such processes of control, this continuous reinterpretation by different social sectors, as well as the challenges to control—often carried by heterodoxies—that develop among other elites and broader strata, that shape class relations and modes of production. It is also such processes, and the place of heterodoxies within them, that explain some of the specifics of revolutions, as against the breakdown of regimes, and above all what Said Arjomand has called their moral dynamics or teleologies (Arjomand, 1984; see also Eisenstadt, 1978).

## XXII

But different new types of civilizational settings and social organizations—*e.g.*, those that ushered in capitalism in the West, or the Great Revolutions—are not “naturally” caused by the basic tenets of any religion or premises of interaction. They arose out of a variety of contingent constellations, economic and political trends, and ecological conditions, albeit in their interrelation with religious tenets or beliefs, with the basic civilizational premises, and their institutional implications and carriers.

The visions, codes, and “ethics” carry within them some of the potential developments of the societies or civilizations in which they become institutionalized. But the types of social organization that develop in different civilizations were certainly not merely the direct result of the basic inherent tendencies of any culture or located in its basic premises.

Many such historical changes and constructions of new institutional formations were probably the outcome of the factors listed recently by James G. March and Johann Olsen (1984) in their analysis of changes in organization—namely, the combination of basic institutional and normative forms: processes of learning and accommodation and different types of decision making by individuals placed in appropriate arenas of action—necessarily responding to a great variety of historical events. But relatively similar types of contingent forces could have different impacts in different civilizations, even if these shared many concrete institutional or political-ecological settings, because of the differences in their premises.

The rise of new forms of social organization and activities entailed new interrelations of many basic tenets of the religious beliefs and institutional premises. These new interpretations greatly transformed many of the antecedent basic tenets and institutions of these civilizations.

The importance of such institutional forces brings us back to the major point of the first group of works in contemporary macro-sociology, mentioned in the beginning of this essay, with their strong emphasis on institutional formations, power relations, intersocietal relations, and historical contingencies. At the same time we have learned, however, that it is only by combining these insights with the new way of looking at the relations between culture and social structure that their full implications and impact can be understood.

The crucial problem of such analysis is how the relatively similar historical factors interacted in different situations, and above all how they have been influenced by their premises or by the model of social order, and impinged on such models, changing some aspects of their basic tenets and core symbols. One of the most interesting of such comparisons is that between Europe and India—also characterized by multiplicity of centres of power and decentralization—to which we have referred to above (Eisenstadt 1987). This comparison indicates that the full impact of multiple centres on the dynamics of different civilizations can be understood only if some aspects of the cultural dimension are taken into account as well, and, needless to say, many more illustrations can be given.

It is the combination of the strong points of the different approaches analyzed here that makes it possible to point in new directions.

### XXIII

Interestingly enough, it is only through such combinations of these different perspectives, with all their principled analytical implications, that an additional drawback of most works in the first group of works in macro-sociology referred to in the beginning of this essay can be overcome: namely, their inability to encompass in their analyses the problems of the expansion of modernity beyond the West. Most of these works stress the uniqueness of the West as the single case of “real” modernity or at least of capitalism, as did the founding Fathers, who of course did not have to deal with the expansion of modernity beyond the West and the consequent possible development of different types of modern societies or civilizations.

The only exception here is Japan, which some of these works recognize as being similar to Europe in developing a full-fledged modern capitalist system. This similarity is explained—especially by Baechler (1986; also Mutel 1986), who confronts this problem head-on in terms of parallel structural functional factors—the pluralism of centres of power, subsumed under the common rubric of “feudalism” (*feodalité*). But no attention is paid in this work to the possible specific characteristics of Japanese modernity.

These analyses pay even less attention to, or are unable to deal with, the expansion of several crucial aspects of modernity, such as the ideological tenets of egalitarianism and participation and the ways in which they have been incorporated into the premises and dynam-



ics of these new modern societies. This is because these works have thrown out the baby (the fact of the expansion of many aspects of modern ideology throughout the world, the different modes of its reinterpretation in different civilizations, and the emergence of several different modern societies) along with the bath water (the older theories of unilinear evolution or of the convergence of industrial societies).

In order to explain the multiple patterns of modernity, however, we have to take into account some recent works, such as Lucian Pye's analysis (1986) of the political culture and dynamics of different Asian societies, as well as a more recent general reappraisal of political development (Weiner and Huntington, 1987). These works have indicated the importance for understanding the dynamics of different modern or "modernizing" societies, of the interaction of the different cultural premises, basic ontological conception prevalent in the respective societies; the common ideological dimension of modernity—such as those of equality, of participation, of some belief in technology, as well as different economic, political, demographic, and ideological international systems—and not only the international capitalist system with its hegemonic and dependent units.

Such an approach may indeed make it possible to analyze a variety of modern societies, as well as, in a different vein, historical societies, from a vantage point which does not assume that they are all moving in the same direction, but which at the same time allows us to indicate the nature of some common future they may share, and the different interpretation of the future that will develop within each of them.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

# FRAMEWORKS OF THE GREAT REVOLUTIONS: CULTURE, SOCIAL STRUCTURE, HISTORY AND HUMAN AGENCY\*

### I

The past two decades have witnessed the re-emergence of comparative historical sociological studies after a period of relative neglect. These have raised some of the basic questions of macro-sociological analysis, especially those of the relations between structure and history and between social structure, history and human agency, between culture and social structures as well as problems of the validity of the evolutionary perspectives predominant in many of the classical studies as in those of modernism and the consequences of industrial societies conducted in the 1950s.

The crux of this great debate is whether human activities and the course of history are shaped by 'deep' rules which regulate human activity, either those of the human mind (as claimed by the structuralists) or those governing social relations and the modes of production (as the Marxists claim). If so, what about human creativity? What about the individual as an autonomous agent? A closely related problem is whether laws or patterns of change common to all human societies exist, or whether different societies or civilizations develop in their own ways.

More recently, studies of relations between human agency and structure and between structure and history have focused on the controversy between emphasis on deep structure versus negotiated order

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as the key to understanding social interaction and institutional formation.

This question arises from the theoretical controversies in contemporary sociology, especially those related to the structural-functional school. They stressed that the institutional contours of any social group or setting of social interaction or institutional formation should not be taken for granted, neither can these contours be explained in terms of systemic needs or levels of structural differentiation, but instead should be investigated as to the conditions and processes through which such contours emerge, function, are reproduced and change.<sup>1</sup>

Two major theoretical orientations have emerged out of the discussions. The first is an attempt to analyse how such frameworks are constructed, either through the activities of different social actors—through some process of negotiation, struggle and conflict between them—or, to use Anthony Giddens' term, through 'structuration' rather than 'structure'.<sup>2</sup>

The second approach—because it removes the active subject from the picture—has developed above all among the structuralists, starting with Levi-Strauss<sup>3</sup> and continuing in other approaches, especially Marxist ones, as in the work of Althusser and semiotic and semiological writers. All these approaches stressed that any institution or pattern of behaviour must be explained as a manifestation of some principle of deep structure of the human mind, of forces of production or the like.<sup>4</sup>

Closely related is the problem of how to conceive relations between culture and social structure. Above all it was related to the classic problem of the order-maintaining as against the order-transforming functions of culture, as well as the degree to which social structure determines culture, or vice versa—that is, the extent of mutual determination of culture, social structure, and social behaviour. As Renato

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<sup>1</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt and Curelaru, *The Form of Sociology: Paradigms and Crises*. New York: Wiley, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> A. Giddens, 'Functionalism—après la lutte?' *Studies in Social Political Theory*. London: Hutchinson, 1979, pp. 96–129.

<sup>3</sup> C. Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, 1963; idem, *The Savage Mind*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1966.

<sup>4</sup> See Rossi, *From the Sociology of Symbols to the Sociology of Signs: Towards a Dialectical Sociology*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.



Rosaldo (1985)<sup>5</sup> has put it, what is the degree to which culture is a cybernetic feedback mechanism controlling behaviour and social structure, or is there a possibility of choice and inventiveness in the use of cultural resources?

Here also two opposing trends can be distinguished. One, found mostly among structuralists, tends to emphasize a rather closed static and homogeneous view of these relations, with heavy emphasis on culture as programming human behaviour or social organization.

On the other hand, recent social science discourse has thrown up the opposite view, presenting the relations between culture and social structure as a process of almost endless reconstruction and reinterpretation of cultural visions and symbols of meaning concomitantly with changing patterns of behaviour, structure, power and other resources. In its extreme formulation such a view can be interpreted as presenting the culture of a society (as suggested for instance by Ann Swidler), as a reservoir or tool-box of strategies<sup>6</sup> of action, which can be activated in different situations according to the interests—'material' and 'ideal'—of social actors.

A different but closely related set of problems, rooted in the evolutionary perspective of large parts of classical sociology—and of the studies of modernization and of the emergence of industrial societies—was thrown up in the 1940s and 1950s. The most important problem here was whether any directions of change are inherent in the development of societies, to what extent such directions may be common to all human societies and what is the role of historical contingencies, different ecological conditions, intersocietal relations and human actors.

## II

All these problems have informed the recent comparative and historico-sociological studies and most works share many common analytical themes arising out of recent major theoretical controversies, at the

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<sup>5</sup> R. Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989; idem, 'While Making Other Plans'. *Southern California Law Review*, 1985, No. 58, pp. 19–28.

<sup>6</sup> A. Swidler, 'Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies'. *American Sociological Review*, 1986, No. 51, pp. 273–86.

same time as they differ from each other with respect to certain central theoretical issues.<sup>7</sup>

First of all, these works do not accept any simple evolutionist view, a criticism often made of the earlier studies of modernization and convergence of industrial societies, although some of the problems posed by that view (especially what may be called the expansive capacities, whether in the cultural, political, or economic spheres of societies or civilizations) are addressed in many of them. Second, most of these works do not accept the 'closed systemic' view of societies so heavily emphasized by the structural-functional school. Third, all of them place a very strong emphasis on civilizations as important arenas of macrosociological analysis and on intersocietal or intercivilizational relations. They not only attempt to analyse different societies in isolation, but also combine such an analysis with that of certain major patterns of intersocietal dynamics as they interconnect through population movements, wars and conquests, the encounter of nomad peoples with settled ones, migrations, trade and cultural and religious movements. Moreover, these works lay heavy emphasis on the importance of broader civilizational units or frameworks—Judaism, Islam, medieval Europe—not just of apparently self-centred (political) societies, as the major focus or arena of comparative sociological analysis. In most of these works the combination of an anti-evolutionist attitude with a strong emphasis on historical, institutional and intercivilization perspectives is connected with great emphasis on the importance of various contingent historical trends to explain the evolution of different institutional formations.

The major theoretical or analytical differences among these works are centred in the relationship between culture and society, or as it has often and not very felicitously been put, on the 'role of ideas' in institutional dynamics.

### III

In the following discussion, we shall take up these problems as related to historical and comparative analysis by a re-examination of the

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<sup>7</sup> See, for greater detail, S.N. Eisenstadt, 'Macro-Sociology and Sociological Theory—Some New Directions'. *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 16, No. 2, September, 1987, pp. 602–9.

characteristics and conditions of the 'great', 'classical' revolutions: the English Civil War, the American and French Revolutions, and later, the Chinese and Russian ones, also others such as the Turkish or the Vietnamese Revolutions. These were closely connected with the emergence of the modern world, of modern civilisation; since revolutionary ideologies, the revolutionary image and movements have become a basic component of the modern perspective.<sup>8</sup>

Revolutions or revolutionary change, have become the epitome of 'real' social change and the revolutionary phenomenon has become a central topic and a focus of great interest and fascination in modern intellectual, ideological and scholarly discourse.

Large portions of the literature on revolutions and social change have assumed that revolutions are true, pristine, 'real' social change, other processes being judged or scaled according to their proximity to some ideal type of revolution. In this way the specificity of both these 'great' revolutions and of other processes and types of change was often lost.

Accordingly, we shall first attempt to indicate the specific characteristics of these revolutions as distinct from other processes of change, especially of drastic changes of political regimes. Second, we shall turn to the perennial question of the causes of revolutions and re-examine the wide-ranging literature on this subject. Throughout our analysis we shall attempt to understand the specificity of revolutions by comparison with other, somewhat similar cases of political and social change.

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<sup>8</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolutions and the Transformation of Societies*. New York: Free Press, 1978. On the image of revolution in modern social thought, see M. Lasky, 'The Birth of a Metaphor: On the Origins of Utopia and Revolution', *Encounter*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 1970, pp. 35-45, and No. 3, 1970, pp. 30-42; idem, *Utopia and Revolution*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976; K. Marx, *On Revolution*, S.K. Padover (ed.), New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971; G. Landauer, *Die Revolution*. Frankfurt am Main: Rutten, 1912; A.T. Hatto, 'Revolution: An Enquiry into the Usefulness of an Historical Term'. *Mind*, Vol. 58, No. 232, 1949, pp. 495-517; idem, 'The Semantics of Revolution' In P.J. Vatikiotis (ed.), *Revolution in the Middle East*, London: Alien & Unwin, 1972. Among useful surveys of the literature on revolutions, see H. Wassmund, 'Revolutionforschung', *Neue Politische Literatur*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1973, pp. 421-9; idem, 'Revolutionforschung', *ibid.*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 1975, pp. 425-33; K. Lenk, *Theorien der Revolution*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1973; C. Lindner, *Theorien der Revolution*. Munich: Wilhelm Goldmann, 1972; G.P. Meyer, 'Revolutionstheorien Heute: Ein kritischer überblick in historischer Absicht'. In H.U. Wehler (ed.), *200 Jahre amerikanische Revolution und modern Revolutionsforschung*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976, pp. 122-76; T. Skocpol, *State and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

## IV

Revolutions, of course denote first of all radical change in the political regime far beyond the deposition of rulers or even the replacement of ruling groups. They denote a situation in which such deposition and change—usually very violent—results in a radical transformation of the rules of the political game and the symbols and bases of legitimation, a change closely connected with novel visions of political and social order.<sup>9</sup> It is this combination that is distinctive of revolutions. In other words, such revolutions tend to spawn (to use Said Arjomand's term) certain distinct cosmologies, certain very marked cultural and political programmes.<sup>10</sup>

The combination of violent changes of regime with a very strong ontological and political vision happened not only in 'great' revolutions. The crystallization of the Abbasid caliphate, often called the Abbasid revolution, is a very important—even if possibly only partial—illustration of such a combination in an earlier historical period. What is characteristic of modern revolutions is the nature of their ontologies or cosmologies; certain central aspects of the revolutionary process that developed within them and the relations between the changes and regimes and in major institutional arenas of the affected societies.<sup>11</sup>

The cosmologies promulgated in these revolutions were characterized first of all by an emphasis on themes of equality, justice, freedom and the participation of the community in the political centre. These were combined with 'modern' themes such as the belief in progress, and with demands for full access to the central political arenas and participation in them. Second, what was new was the combination of all these themes with an overall utopian vision of the reconstruction of society and of political order, not just with millenarian visions of protest.

<sup>9</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, 1978, op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> S. Arjomand, 'History, Structure and Revolution in the Shi'ite Tradition in Contemporary Iran'. *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2, April, 1989, pp. 111–21.

<sup>11</sup> M. Lasky, 'The Birth of a Metaphor on the Origins of Utopia and Revolution', *Encounter*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 1970, pp. 34–35; S.N. Eisenstadt, op. cit.; A. Seligman (ed.), *Order and Transcendence—The Role of Utopias and the Dynamics of Civilizations*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989; J.A. Goldstone, 'Revolutions dans l'histoire et histoire des révolutions', *Revue Française de Sociologie*, 1983, pp. 405–30.

Third, in all these revolutions, society was seen as an entity to be remoulded through political action according to the visions. These also entailed the reconstruction of society, including far-reaching institutional change, radical restructuring of class and status relations, doing away with traditional ascriptive criteria of stratification, unseating or destroying old and upper classes and shifting the relative hegemony to new ones, be it the bourgeoisie or the proletariat.

Fourth, these visions emphasized dissociation from the preceding historical background of societies, a denial of the past, an emphasis on a new beginning, and the combination of such discontinuity with violence.

The fifth major characteristic of these revolutions was their universalistic and missionary vision. Although each set up a new regime in a certain country, a regime which, especially in its later stages, proclaimed strong patriotic themes, and although such regimes always bore an ineradicably national stamp yet the revolutionary visions were projected in different degrees, as universal, extendable in principle to all of humanity. This universal message became most strongly connected with a missionary zeal reminiscent, as Maxine Rodinson has shown, of the expansion of Islam. As in the case of Islam, the spread of this vision was supported by revolutionary armies ready to carry it abroad. As in the case of Islam, again, such missionary zeal did not necessarily make for greater tolerance or 'liberalism' but certainly bore an unmistakably universalistic stamp.<sup>12</sup>

The specifically 'national', primordial or patriotic revolutionary themes were usually secondary to the more general, universalistic ones which constituted the core of the revolutionary vision and of nations as bearers of their universalistic relevance.

## V

The central institutional change was, as Michael Walzer has pointed out, that in the first revolutions (the English and the French and, in a different, less personal way, in the American one) the rulers were not just driven out, exiled or killed, but deposed through a legal

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<sup>12</sup> M. Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World*. London: Lend Press, 1979; *Europe and the Mystique of Islam*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1989.

procedure.<sup>13</sup> Even if the rulers themselves did not accept its legality or legitimacy, the fact that such a legal procedure was undertaken at all is of immense significance; it indicated very serious attempts to find a new institutional grounding for the accountability of rulers.

This idea itself was not new. It was part and parcel of the basic premises of the Axial civilizations within whose frameworks these revolutions occurred, though it became transformed in very far-reaching ways.

Closely related were the distinct characteristics of the political process that arose out of these revolutions, first, as Eric Hobsbawm<sup>14</sup> has shown, the direct impact on the central political struggle of popular uprisings through their movement into the centre.

Second was the continuous interweaving of several types of political action (such as rebellions, movements of protest and struggles at the centre) previously to be found in many, sometimes in all societies, within certain common frameworks of political action and a common ideology, however fragile and intermittent. Such currents were contingent on a new type of leadership, one which appealed to various sectors of the population.

Third, and possibly the most distinctive feature of the political processes was the role of autonomous cultural, religious or intellectual groups: heterodox religious or secular groups like the English (and to an even greater extent American) Puritans, the French intellectual clubs analysed by A. Cochin and later by F. Furet, the Russian intelligentsia and the like.<sup>15</sup>

They constituted the crucial element which, to no small degree, shaped the whole revolutionary political process. It is impossible to understand these revolutions without taking account of the ideological, propagandist and organizational skills of such intellectuals or cultural elites. Without them the entire revolutionary movement as it crystallized would probably not have occurred.

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<sup>13</sup> M. Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

<sup>14</sup> E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1964.

<sup>15</sup> A. Cochin, *La Révolution et la libre pensée*. Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1924; A. Cochin, *L'esprit du Jacobinisme*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979; F. Furet, *French Revolution*. New York: Macmillan, 1970; F. Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981; A. Cochin, 1979, op. cit.; F. Furet, 1981, op. cit.; V.C. Nahirny, *The Russian Intelligentsia: From Torment to Silence*. Rutgers, N.J.: Transaction Publications.

Yet another aspect of this revolutionary process was the transformation of the liminal aspects and symbols, especially of peripheral movements of protest. In most cases, the central political arena became, for relatively long periods, shaped in a liminal mode. The centre itself became, perhaps temporarily, a quasi-liminal situation or arena, a series of such situations, or the arena in which liminality was played out. These dimensions are closely connected to the centrality of violence, to its very sanctification, as can be seen in the rise and sanctification of terror.

## VI

Thus these revolutions were characterized not only by three distinct characteristics,—their cosmologies and political programmes, novel overall cultural agendas and the political processes that developed within them—but perhaps above all by their combination, not to be found, even incipiently, in all social transformations.

This can perhaps best be illustrated by a brief consideration of one radical change which has often been compared with 'great' revolutions, the so-called Meiji restoration of 1868 in Japan.<sup>16</sup> It has

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<sup>16</sup> On the Meiji Restoration and its background, see P. Akamatsu, *Meiji, 1868*, New York: Harper & Row, 1972; H. Norman, *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State*. New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940; A.M. Craig, *Choshu in the Meiji Restoration*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961; J. Arnasson, *Paths to Modernity—The Peculiarities of Japanese Feudalism*. In G. McCormack and Y. Sugimoto (eds.), *The Japanese Trajectory: Modernization and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; H.D. Haroutounian, 'Late Tokugawa Culture and Thought'. In M. Jansen, *Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 5, *The Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 168–258; James W. White, 'State Building and Modernization: The Meiji Restoration'. In G. Almond, S. Flanagan and R. Mundt (eds.), *Crisis, Choice, and Change: Historical Studies of Political Development*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1973; James W. White, 'State Growth and Popular Protest in Tokugawa Japan', *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1988, pp. 1–27; Thomas M. Huber, *The Revolutionary Origin of Modern Japan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981; M.B. Jansen and G. Rozman (eds.), *Japan in Transition from Tokugawa to Meiji*. New York: Princeton University Press, 1986; M.B. Jansen, 'The Meiji Restoration'. In *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. V, *The Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, 1989, pp. 308–67; T. Najita and J.V. Koschmann (eds.), *Conflict in Modern Japanese History*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982. On the outcomes of the Meiji Restoration see Akamatsu, *Meiji, 1868*; Norman, *Japan's Emergence*; R.A. Scalapino, 'Japan between Traditionalism and Democracy'. In S. Neumann (ed.), *Modern Political Parties*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965, pp. 305–53; Fairbank et al., *East Asia*, pp. 408–42; R.P. Dore (ed.), *Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan*. Princeton: Princeton University

often been compared with the 'great' revolutions because, like them, it gave rise to far-reaching processes of social, economic and political transformation and because it spawned a new cultural and political agenda which, for all its 'traditionalist' components, constituted a radical break with the preceding Tokugawa shogunate.

And yet, with respect to certain crucial features, especially revolutionary ideology and the nature of the political process generated by it, the Meiji restoration differed greatly from 'great' revolutions. As before the revolutions, three types of political movements—rebellions (especially of peasants), movements of protest and political struggle at the centre—abounded in the pre-Restoration setting and in the process leading to Restoration as well as in the first two decades of the new regime.

Many *ad hoc* contacts were forged naturally between these groups and between them and certain urban groups and rebellious peasants; they all constituted a very important background to the toppling of the Tokugawa regime but were not a basic component of the political aspect of the Restoration.

Significantly enough, however, in the process which toppled the Tokugawa regime no new patterns of political organization crystallized in which such groups would combine for common political action. Nor was there any political leadership which attempted to mobilize disparate social forces for the more central political struggle.

The Meiji Restoration, unlike the 'great' revolutions, was characterized by an almost total absence of autonomous, distinct religious or secular intellectual groups as politically active elements.

It was above all samurai, some of them learned in Confucian lore and the shishi who were most active in the Restoration, but they did not act as autonomous intellectuals bearing a new Confucian

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Press, 1967; R. Ward (ed.), *Political Development in Modern Japan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968; W.W. Lockwood (ed.), *The State and Economic Entrepreneurs in Japan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965; A.E. Barshay, *State and Intellectuals in Imperial Japan—The Public Man in Crisis*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980; W. Davis, 'The Civil Theology of Inoke Tetsurirō'. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3(1), 1978; Peter Duus, *The Rise of Modern Japan*. Boston: Moughton Mifflin, 1976; S.C. Garon, 'State and Religion in Imperial Japan 1912–1945'. *Journal of Japanese Studies*. Vol. 12, No. 2; 1986, pp. 273–302; C. Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths—Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985; T.C. Smith, *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1959.



vision. They acted as members of their respective social and political groups bearing a distinct political vision.

But this vision differed greatly from that of the 'great' revolutions: they were in a way the mirror images of those of the latter. The Restoration was presented as a renovation of a previous archaic system, which in fact never existed, not as a revolution aimed at directing the social and political order in an entirely fresh direction. There were almost no utopian elements in the vision. The whole reversion to the Emperor could be seen, as Hershel Webb has pointed, as an 'inverted utopia'. The message of the Meiji Restoration was addressed to the renovation of the Japanese nation; it had no basic universalistic or missionary dimensions.<sup>17</sup>

Similar processes of radical change in modern times arose in such countries as India, Thailand and the Philippines. Most Latin American countries evolved in ways markedly different from the classical revolutions, but with certain of the distinctive characteristics of the 'great' revolutions.

## VII

How can we then explain this specific combination of such characteristics in the classical 'great' revolutions? Here we come to the analysis of the causes of revolution, a problem of central importance for historical and comparative sociology.

Several broad types of cause have been analysed in the literature. The first concerns structural conditions, the second, the socio-psychological preconditions of revolutions and the third, special historical causes.

Several structural conditions have been singled out. One concerns aspects of internal struggles, such as those between the major classes predominant in pre-revolutionary societies, or inter-elite struggles between components of the ruling or upper class as leading to revolution.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> H. Webb, *The Japanese Imperial Institution in the Tokugawa Period*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.

<sup>18</sup> The literature on the causes of revolutions is too vast to be cited here. A good overview can be found in the readers cited in note 4 above and in L. Stone, 'Theories of Revolution'. *World Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1966, pp. 159-76; L. Kramnick, 'Reflections on Revolution: Definition and Explanation in Recent Scholarship', *History and Theory*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1972, pp. 26-63; and K. Kumar,

A special subtype of such analyses is the emphasis (to be found in the work of Theda Skocpol and other scholars, building on the earlier work of Barrington Moore) on the more general relations between the state and the major social strata, especially the aristocracy and the peasantry.<sup>19</sup>

Second and closely related to such explanations are those which emphasize the weakening or decay of the pre-revolutionary political regimes from internal causes such as economic or demographic trends or through the impact of international forces such as economic trends, through wars or some combination thereof.<sup>20</sup>

Earlier studies were also devoted to the contribution to revolutionary situations of broad economic factors or trends like economic fluctuations and rising inflation with the resulting impoverishment of large sectors of society, not only of the lower strata but also of wide sectors of the middle and even upper classes.

In some of the Marxist literature such economic explanations, together with those of class struggle, were elevated into ineluctable contradictions between old and newly emerging forces of production.

Such studies have often been connected with the third type of explanation, the socio-psychological one. Often, following Toqueville's brilliant analysis, these have emphasized the importance of relative deprivation and frustration arising in bad times following good ones, when the aspirations of large sectors of the population were raised, in generating widespread dissatisfaction which could give rise to rebellions or revolutionary predispositions.

Thus it was inter-class and inter-elite struggles, demographic expansion, the domestic (above all fiscal) and international weaknesses of the state, economic imbalances and socio-psychological frustrations attendant on worsening economic conditions, that constituted the most important items in the causes of revolutions.

The exploration of how these 'causes' coalesce, their relative impor-

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Introduction to *Revolution*, pp. 1-90; C. Tilly, 'Revolutions and Collective Violence'. In F.I. Greenstein and N. Polsby (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975, pp. 483-555; C. Tilly, 'Does Modernization Breed Revolution?'. *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1973, pp. 425-47.

<sup>19</sup> T. Skocpol, 1979, op. cit.; Barrington Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Boston: Beacon, 1960.

<sup>20</sup> Skocpol, 1979, op. cit.; J.B. Gillis, 'Political Decay and the European Revolutions, 1789-1818', *World Politics*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1970, pp. 344-70.

tance and their actual constellations in different revolutions should and will continue. But in themselves such analyses, important as they are, will not provide an adequate answer to the search for 'the causes' of revolution.

It is not that the answers to the questions posed in this literature are sometimes unsatisfactory or controversial, which, of course, is inherent in any scholarly enterprise. What is more important is that the questions asked are not sufficient for the analysis of some of the most important aspects of the problem. For a very simple reason: these causes are not specific to revolutions. The same causes, in different constellations, have been singled out in the vast literature on the decline of Empires.

The fact that these causes can be found in all pre-revolutionary societies, but not only in them, should not be surprising. Revolutions are, after all, first and foremost synonymous with decline or breakdown of regimes and with the results thereof.

Jack Goldstone has recently summarized very accurately the combination of these processes leading to the breakdown of regimes:

The four related critical trends were as follows. (1) Pressures increased on state finances as inflation eroded state income and population growth raised real expenses. States attempted to maintain themselves by raising revenues in a variety of ways, but such attempts alienated elites, peasants, and urban consumers, while failing to prevent increasing debt and eventual bankruptcy. (2) Intra-elite conflicts became more prevalent, as larger families and inflation made it more difficult for some families to maintain their status, while expanding population and rising prices lifted other families, creating new aspirants to elite positions. With the state's fiscal weakness limiting its ability to provide for all who sought elite positions, considerable turnover and displacement occurred throughout the elite hierarchy, giving rise to factionalization as different elite groups sought to defend or improve their position. When central authority collapsed as a result of bankruptcy or war elite divisions came to the fore in struggles for power. (3) Popular unrest grew as competition for land, urban migration flooded labour markets, declining real wages, and increased youthfulness raised the mass mobilization potential of the populace. Unrest occurred in urban and rural areas and took the various forms of food riots, attacks on landlords and state agents, and land and grain seizures, depending on the autonomy of popular groups and the resources of elites. A heightened mobilization potential made it easy for contending elites to marshal popular action in their conflicts, although in many cases popular actions, having their own motivation and momentum, proved easier to encourage

than to control. (4) The ideologies of rectification and transformation became increasingly salient.<sup>21</sup>

These causes of decline and breakdown of regimes, especially of Imperial or Imperial-feudal ones, are also necessarily causes or pre-conditions of revolutions. But they do not explain the specific revolutionary outcome of the breakdown of regimes. Certainly, they constitute necessary conditions of revolutions, but by themselves are not sufficient. For the sufficient causes we must look beyond the breakdown of regimes.

## VIII

One possible direction in the search for such sufficient conditions is the specific historic 'timing' or historical contexts of revolutions. All have taken place in the early modern (though chronologically varying) phases of societies, within the framework of modernizing autocracies, of modern absolutist regimes which created the early modern territorial, often bureaucratic states (Poggi), and provided the strong impetus towards economic modernization, the development of early mercantile and even the beginnings of industrial capitalist economies, and of the rise of a market-based political economy.

It was the internal contradictions in the political systems of early absolutism, situated between traditional monarchical, semi-aristocratic legitimation and new economic cultural and ideological currents challenging such legitimation as well as between these groups and the more traditional ones that provided the motor forces for the breakdown of such regimes. The ideological or symbolic components of revolutions were to no small degree fed by contradictions in the ideological legitimation of absolutist monarchies, especially between traditional or semi-traditional legitimation and components of enlightenment bearing the seeds of a new cultural agenda.<sup>22</sup>

And yet, even this combination is not yet the end of our exploration of the causes of revolutions. Not all such combinations causing the decline of regimes within the historical framework of early modernity have generated revolution and revolutionary outcomes.

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<sup>21</sup> J.A. Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991.

<sup>22</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, 1978, op. cit.; F. Furet, 1981, op. cit.

India, or in a somewhat different mode Thailand, and many provinces of the Ottoman Empire—with the possible exception of Turkey itself where the establishment of the Kemalist regime was sometimes called a revolution (even if one from above) and possibly of Algeria—are among cases of non-revolutionary outcomes in situations of early modernity. Another such 'negative' illustration is provided by the Latin American countries, where the wars of independence were not revolutionary in the sense of promulgating an entirely new socio-political order, and where many of the crucial aspects of the revolutionary process were very weak, especially the continuous, interweaving between political actors and the liminal characteristics of the central revolutionary struggle.<sup>23</sup>

But perhaps the most important case is once again Japan—the downfall of the Tokugawa regime, and the Meiji Ishin.<sup>24</sup>

The Tokugawa regime was characterized by some of the major structural features of early modernity and of its contradictions; by the rise of vibrant new economic (merchant and peasant) forces, by the undermining of older aristocratic 'traditional' forces; by the breakdown of the regulatory economic policies of the older regime. It was also characterized by a very wide spread of education apparently making Japan the most literate pre-industrial society in the world, and by the emergence of a very intensive political discourse.

The Tokugawa regime was weakened by these internal processes as well as by the impact of external forces. It also faced a crisis of legitimization, but one not couched in the ideological terms characteristic of the pre-revolutionary '*ancien régimes*' of Europe and China.

## IX

Note that the explanations referred to above do not address themselves to what is probably the most important distinctive element in the revolutionary process; new ontological visions or cosmologies and bearers of such visions, the autonomous cultural or intellectual groups

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<sup>23</sup> T. Halperin-Donghi, *The Aftermath of Revolution in Latin America*. New York: Harper & Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1971; J. Malloy (ed.), *Authoritarianism and Corporation in Latin America*. Pittsburgh, Penn.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977; H.J. Wiarda, *Politics and Social Change in Latin America: The Distinct Tradition*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974.

<sup>24</sup> See the references in note 16.

which, as we have seen, constitute one of the most important reservoirs of new political leadership and organizations most characteristic of revolutions. Indeed, in large parts of the literature the ideological factors (new ideologies, religious beliefs, ideologies and the like) are rarely analysed as causes of revolution. Usually, even among non-Marxist historians, with the exception of Albert Cochin and Francois Furet,<sup>25</sup> they are seen more as epiphenomena of the 'deeper' social processes or as a general background to revolutionary processes.

It may therefore be worth enquiring under what conditions, or in what societies, such ideologies or cosmologies and the groups which bear them and which unlike rebellions, movements of protest, class and inter-elite struggle are not to be found in all societies, become so central. They tend to develop in very specific civilizations, the so-called Axial civilizations.<sup>26</sup> By this term, we mean those civilizations that crystallized during the period from 500 B.C. to the first centuries of the Christian era, within which new ontological visions, including conceptions of basic tension between the transcendental and mundane orders emerged and were institutionalized in many parts of the world—in ancient Israel, later in Second-Commonwealth Judaism and Christianity, in ancient Greece, very partially in Zoroastrian Iran, in early Imperial China under Hinduism and Buddhism, and, beyond the Axial Age proper, under Islam.

These conceptions were developed and articulated by a relatively new social element: elites that carried models of a cultural order, particularly intellectual elites, ranging from the Jewish prophets and priests, Greek philosophers, Chinese literati, Hindu brahmins, to Buddhist sanha or Islamic ulema. Their activities were centred on belief in the creation of the world according to some transcendental vision or command.

The successful institutionalization of such conceptions and visions resulted in the internal restructuring of these societies and of the interrelations between them.

Thus, there developed first a high level of distinctiveness of societal centres and their perception as symbolic and organizational entities, and a continuous interaction between centre and periphery.

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<sup>25</sup> A. Cochin, 1979, op. cit.; F. Furet, 1981, op. cit.; V. Nahirny, op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1986.

Further, there was the rise of distinct collectivities, especially cultural or religious ones with a very high symbolic component as well as the somewhat ideological structuring of social hierarchies.

Third, and most important for our analysis, there took place a far-reaching restructuring of the relationship between the political and transcendental orders. The political order, as the central locus or framework of the mundane order, was usually conceived of as being subordinated to the transcendental order and so had to be restructured according to the precepts of the latter, above all according to the perception of the right way of overcoming the tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders of 'salvation'. The rulers were usually responsible for structuring the political order.

At the same time, the nature of the rulers was greatly transformed. The king-god—the embodiment of both the cosmic and the earthly orders—disappeared and a secular ruler emerged in principle accountable to some higher order; hence the possibility of calling a ruler to account before a higher authority, be it God or divine law. The first and most dramatic appearance of this conception occurred in ancient Israel, in priestly, especially prophetic, pronouncements. A different conception of such accountability to the community and its laws occurred on the northern shores of the eastern Mediterranean in ancient Greece. The notion of accountability occurred in all these civilizations in different ways.

Fourth is the development of relatively autonomous primary and secondary elites, especially of cultural, intellectual and religious ones which continuously struggled with each other and with political elites.

It was such elites in general—the religious or intellectual ones in particular, many of which were also carriers of strong utopian visions with universalistic orientations—that constituted the most crucial elements in different heterodoxies and in political struggles and movements of protest.

## X

These distinctive ideological and structural components of the political process characteristic of the Axial civilizations gave rise, within their regimes, to very specific political dynamics, in which many kernels of the 'great' revolutions could be found, but not to such revolutions themselves.

The basic cultural orientations and civilizational premises prevalent in them inspired visions of new social orders with very strong utopian and universalistic orientations, while the organization and structural characteristics provided the frameworks within which certain aspects of these visions could be institutionalized. The two became combined through the activities of the different elites analysed above.<sup>27</sup>

The combination of all these characteristics gave rise in these usually Imperial or Imperial-feudal regimes to a relatively higher degree of coalescence than in other Axial Age civilizations between movements of protest, institution-building, articulation and ideological levels of political struggle and changes in the political system.

In some extreme cases such as, for instance, the transition from the Ummayyad to the Abbyside Caliphate this could merge into what may seem like revolutionary processes and the establishment of the Abbyside Caliphate has indeed sometimes been defined in modern scholarship as a revolution. It rode on the wave of a strong sectarian-tribal movement which emphasized the universalistic component of Islamic ideals and in the name of this ideology, in conjunction with the interests of broader sectors, toppled the Ummayyad rulers. But the ideologies of these movements of protest and political upheaval did not contain those components which characterized the modern ones; they were usually oriented to past visions and not to certain crucial future agendas. Nor did they spawn very stable constitutional and institutional formations. The Abbyside revolutions can, in many ways, be seen as one point in the Khaldounian cycles of Islamic political dynamics.<sup>28</sup>

In parallel, although of course greatly differing in details, distinctive dimensions of political process could also be found in other Axial civilizations, by comparison with seemingly similar political regimes which emerged in (sometimes neighbouring) non-Axial civilizations.

But only when these ideological and structural components coincided in periods of early modernity did they generate revolutionary processes in the sense used here. It was only in these historical con-

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<sup>27</sup> A. Seligman, 1989, op. cit.

<sup>28</sup> M.A. Shaban, *The Abbasid Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970; M. Sharon, *Black Banners from the East*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1983; E. Gellner, *Muslim Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, especially pp. 1–185; A.S. Ahmed, *Millenium and Charisma among Pathans*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.



texts that the elective affinities between the political process which developed in the Axial civilizations and the core ideological and organizational characteristics of revolutions were achieved that the major components of change in general and of the political process in particular became transformed in the revolutionary direction.

Such transformation of ideological components and cultural or symbolic themes did not, especially in the first revolutions—the English, American and French ones—usually emerge at the very beginning of the rebellions and upheavals destined to topple various ‘ancient’ regimes. It was only with the intensification of the revolutionary dynamic that such transformation evolved. But this does not mean, as proposed by Goldstone, that ideology became important only in the outcome of revolutions. The comparison between revolutionary dynamics in Axial and non-Axial civilizations as well as between Japan on the one hand and China and the revolutions in the realm of Christianity on the other, indicates that ideological elements, in combination with their institutional settings, were of crucial importance, from relatively early stages, in the transformation of both the ideological and the political process in a revolutionary direction.<sup>29</sup>

Some of the characteristics of the Meiji Ishin which distinguish it from ‘great’ revolutions, especially its predominantly ‘inverse-utopian’ components, the restriction of the Ishin vision to Japan and the lack of universalistic missionary components, are indeed very closely related to certain aspects of the Japanese historical experience. It is especially notable that, throughout its history, structural-institutional formations and dynamics arose in Japan, including, for instance, feudalism and very strong semi-autonomous cities similar to those of western Europe, together with basic non-Axial ontological conceptions. On the other hand there were no autonomous religious and intellectual groups—Buddhist monks and other priests and Confucian scholars became embedded in small ‘familial’ groups—which explains their absence as a factor in the Meiji-Ishin.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See Goldstone, 1991, *op. cit.*; S.N. Eisenstadt, *op. cit.*, Ch. 9.

<sup>30</sup> M. Jansen, ‘The Meiji Restoration’. In *idem* (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan*, *op. cit.*, pp. 308–61; H.D. Haroutounian, ‘Late Tokugawa Culture and Thought’. In M. Jansen (ed.), *Cambridge History of Japan*, *op. cit.*, pp. 168–258.

## XI

The close elective affinity between the political process in many of the Axial civilizations and the central characteristics of the revolutions does not mean (as the cases of India, South Asia, or most Islamic societies clearly indicate) that revolutions occurred with the onset of modernity in *all* Axial civilizations. How can we explain this?

Two additional factors have to be taken into account. One, which applies especially to India and to the Buddhist countries of South Asia, is the nature of the basic ontological visions, especially of conception of salvation within the Axial civilizations.<sup>31</sup> The second factor, which attaches to most Islamic states (and even some European ones) and also to India and the Theravada Buddhist societies, is the nature of their political regimes and political economies.

With respect to the first factor, the major distinction is—to adopt Weber's terminology—that between other-worldly and this-worldly conceptions of salvation. In the other-worldly civilizations the political arena did not constitute a basic focus of salvation, of the implementation of the vision of the civilization and proper ways of religious salvation did not constitute a focus of political struggle. Significantly enough no wars of religion broke out in India until the age of Axial-Age civilizations or in the Buddhist countries until the contemporary era. The numerous sects and potential heterodoxies in these civilizations did not aim at the reconstruction of the political centres but rather at the re-definition of the boundaries between basic ascriptive collectivities.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, 1986, *op. cit.* On certain basic elements of Indian politics, see L. Dumont, *Religion, Politics and History in India*; J.C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration: The Rajasuya Described According to the Yajus Texts*, annotated by J.C. Heesterman, Paris: Mouton, 1957; *idem*, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985; D.C.C. Ingalls, 'Authority and Law in Ancient India'. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (supp.), No. 74, 1954, pp. 34–45; H.N. Sinha, *Sovereignty in Ancient Indian Polity*. London: Luzac, 1938.

<sup>32</sup> On the impact of sectarian religious groups, see J. Bunnag, *Buddhist Monk. Buddhist Layman: A Study of Urban Monastic Organization in Central Thailand*. Cambridge: Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology, No. 6, 1973; E.B. Harper (ed.), *Religion in South Asia*. Seattle, 1964; M. Nash, G. Obeyesekere, H.M. Ames et al., *Anthropological Studies in Theravada Buddhism*. New Haven: Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies Cultural Report Series, No. 13, 1966; P. Mus, 'Traditions anciennes et bouddhisme moderne', *Eranos Jahrbuch*, Vol. 32, 1968, pp. 161–275; P. Mus, 'La Sociologie de Georges Gurvitch et l'Asie'. *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, Vol. 43, December 1967, pp. 1–21; B. Smith, *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Sri Lanka*. Chambersburg,

## XII

It was mainly in those Axial civilizations in which the basic ontology of salvation was this worldly or one which contained a mixture of this-worldly and other-worldly orientations that free resources generated within social sectors could be channelled by the elites into 'this-worldly' political or economic arenas. But the generation of such free resources was not always naturally secured under these regimes. Quite often, historical and politico-ecological conditions, such as relative isolation from major international markets, impeded it. In such cases more patrimonial regimes (whether tribal or centralized kingdoms) tended to be established.

Sometimes, patrimonial regimes could spread especially into distant regions, as in the case of Islam, but can also be identified in the expansion of Christianity to relatively 'undifferentiated' societies by the expansion of an Axial civilization.

Thus in the case of Islam, it was only at the core of the Ottoman Empire—and even there, only to a very limited extent—that the kernels of an autonomous civil society and the concomitant revolutionary potential arose.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, however, given the basic premises of Islamic tradition, there developed throughout the realm of Islam, after the establishment of the first Caliphates, especially after the downfall of the Abbyside Empire, a strong predisposition to revolutionary ideologies and to the rise of autonomous elites, often rooted in tribal traditions. Only rarely could such elites mount a fully revolutionary process or found a revolutionary regime.<sup>34</sup>

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PA: Anima Books, 1978; B. Smith, *Religion and Political Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma*. Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1979; R. Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*. New Dehli, 1978; S.C. Malik (ed.), *Dissent, Protest and Reform in Indian Civilization*. Simla: India Institute of Advanced Study, 1973; see also M.S.A. Rao, in S.N. Eisenstadt, R. Kahane and D. Shulman (eds.), *Social Movements in India*. New Delhi: Mahonar, 1982.

<sup>33</sup> S. Mardin, 'Power, Civil Society, and Culture in the Ottoman Empire'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, No. 11. June 1969, pp. 258–81; K.H. Karpat (ed.), *The Ottoman State and its Place in World History*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974; I.M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; I.M. Lapidus, *Islam, Politics and Social Movements*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988; A. Kazançgil, 'Democracy in Muslim Lands—Turkey in a Comparative Perspective.' *International Social Science Journal*, No. 128, May 1991, pp. 343–63.

<sup>34</sup> B. Lewis, *The Arabs in History*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966; idem, 'Islamic Concepts of Revolution', in idem, *Islam in History*. London, 1985, pp. 253–66.

A rather important difference exists between those Axial civilizations with patrimonial political systems and political economies, mainly because of the basic characteristics of the elites and the ontological conceptions borne by them, and those in which such patrimonial tendencies were due above all to contingent historical, structural or ecological conditions. In the former case the basic structure and orientations of the elites restricted social movements aiming to reconstruct the political arena, although certainly not the participation of the religious elites in the patrimonial political arena.

In the second type of patrimonial regime there existed strong, even if for a long time only latent, orientations towards the reconstruction of the political arena so that, as in the case of Islam, proto-revolutionary tendencies or, as in Russia or China, pre-revolutionary ones could arise.

Thus there exists a close elective affinity between this-worldly' (or a combination of this- and other-worldly) Axial civilizations and Imperial and Imperial-feudal regimes. Although only very rarely did feudal or feudal-Imperial regimes develop into Axial civilizations, it did sometimes happen. The most important instance is, again, Japan, in which, as we have seen, a feudal-absolutist regime did arise within the framework of a non-Axial civilization. Yet, unlike feudal-Imperial regimes in the Axial civilizations, above all the absolutist regimes of early modern Europe, in Japan, as we have seen no autonomous religions or intellectual groups promulgating a universal utopian vision existed. This is the crucial difference between the Meiji-Ishin and the 'great' revolutions.

### XIII

Not all revolutionary attempts under conditions similar to those of the accomplished revolutions have succeeded. Spain, Italy, and Germany are probably the most important locations of failed revolutions, along with those of Central Eastern Europe in 1848. How can we explain such failures?<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See G. Mann, *The History of Germany since 1783*, London: Chatto & Windus; V. Valentin, *Geschichte der Revolution von 1848-9*. Berlin: Herder; A. Dorpalen, *Die Revolutionen von 1848*; T. Schneider (ed.), *Revolution der Gessellschaft*. Freiburg, 1973, pp. 97-116; A.W. Salomone (ed.), *Italy from the Risorgimento to Fascism*. Garden City:

Some scholars attribute these failures to the predominance within the '*ancien régimes*' of Spain, Italy and the Eastern European countries of many patrimonial components explaining the relatively low levels of free resources and weak autonomous elites.

But this is not the whole story, for it certainly does not apply to Germany. At least two additional sets of factors must be taken into account when discussing 'failed' revolutions. The first is the simple fact that all revolutions result from civil war with many contestants and participants and that their success depends on both coherent and efficient behaviour of the revolutionary groups, as well as on the relative weakness of the rulers, on a failure of their nerve or their will. Neither of these conditions is naturally given in a revolutionary situation. In some cases, as in Eastern Europe in 1848, where the autocratic rulers showed a marked strength of will which was reinforced by international circumstances—a sort of 'autocratic international'—revolutionary attempts failed.

Failure was reinforced by divisions within would-be revolutionary forces, above all, in the case of Germany, between the rising bourgeoisie and the lower class, the former being afraid, after the experience of the French revolution, of the latter. Further divisions arose between sectors of the intelligentsia or cultural elites bearing different visions, especially between 'liberals' and constitutionalists, different groups of 'patriots' and nationalists and incipient socialists.

Another factor to be taken into account was the absence of a unified German (or Italian) state and very strong aspirations to the creation of such a state by national movements among many sectors of German and Italian society. Unlike in England, France or Russia, such national entities had yet to be constructed, which competed with the revolutionary agendas. Above all, such agendas could be subsumed, as in Germany and to a lesser extent in Italy, by certain groups and leaders (like Bismarck) closely allied with the *ancien régime*.

#### XIV

We have thus come full circle in our analysis of the causes or conditions of revolutions. As revolutions are, by definition, equivalent to

the breakdown of regimes, it is the causes of such breakdowns, the constellations of inter-elite and inter-class struggles, the rise of new social groups and economic forces which are blocked from access to power; the weakening of regimes through such struggles, through economic turbulence and the impact of international forces that constitute the necessary conditions for the outbreak of revolutions. But it is only insofar as such processes take place under specific historical circumstances, and within the frameworks of specific civilizational premises and political regimes, as well as of specific political economies that they may trigger revolutionary conditions and outcomes.

The specific historical circumstances are those of early modernity when the autocratic modernizing regimes faced the contradictions inherent in their own legitimation and policies and confronted the rise of new economic strata and 'modern' ideologies.

The civilizational frameworks are those of 'this-worldly' or combined this- and other- worldly Axial civilizations and Imperial or feudal-Imperial régimes. If, for various historical reasons, such regimes are not thrown up in these civilizational frameworks the processes of change tend to be deflected from the revolutionary path.

The concrete outcome of these processes further depends greatly on the balance of power between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces and their cohesion.

## XV

The combination of civilizational and structural conditions and historical contingencies that generated the 'great' revolutions has been rather rare in the history of mankind. With all their dramatic importance, these revolutions certainly do not constitute the only, or even the major or most far-reaching types of change, whether in pre-modern or modern times. Where other combinations of structural and institutional factors exist, for instance, in Japan, India, South Asia or Latin America, they give rise to other processes of change and novel political regimes. These are not just 'failed' would-be revolutions. They should not be measured by the criteria of the 'great' revolutions; rather they represent different patterns of social transformation, just as 'legitimate' and meaningful, and should be analysed in their own terms.

Accordingly, this analysis also indicates the relations between cul-

ture and social structure, history and structure, human, agency and structure, as well as between order-maintaining versus order-transforming dimensions of culture.

Beliefs and cultural visions are basic elements of the social orders, of crucial importance in shaping their institutional dynamics. Beliefs or visions become such elements by the assimilation of their content into the basic premises of patterns of social interaction, that is, into clusters of regulative principles governing the major dimensions of social roles. These were classified by the 'founding fathers of Sociology' as the social division of labour, the building of trust (or solidarity), the regulation of power, and the construction of meaning.<sup>36</sup>

One of the most important processes through which beliefs or visions are transformed into such regulative principles is the crystallization of models of cultural and social order and of codes. This closely resembles Weber's concept of 'economic ethics' which specify how to regulate the frameworks of concrete social organizations and institutional settings, the patterns of behaviour and the range of major strategies of action appropriate to different arenas.<sup>37</sup>

Such transformations of religious and cultural beliefs into 'codes' or 'ethics' for a social order is effected through the activities of visionaries, themselves transformed into elites and who then form coalitions and counter-coalitions with other elites. Such dynamics are not limited to the exercise of power in the narrow political or coercive sense. As even the more sophisticated Marxists, especially Gramsci,<sup>38</sup> have stressed, they are pervasive and include many relatively autonomous symbolic aspects; they represent different combinations of 'ideal' and 'material' interests. Such measures of control, as well as the challenges to them among elites and broader strata, shaped class relations and modes of production.

The institutionalization of such cultural visions, through the social processes and mechanisms of control, as well as their 'reproduction' in space and time, necessarily generates tensions and conflicts,

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<sup>36</sup> Eisenstadt and Curelaru, *op. cit.*

<sup>37</sup> M. Weber, *Religion of China*, Glencoe, Ill.; Free Press, 1951; *idem*, *Religion of India*. Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1958; S.N. Eisenstadt, 'Some Observations on Structuralism in Sociology, with Special and Paradoxical Reference to Max Weber'. In P.M. Blau and R.K. Merton (eds.), *Continuity in Structural Inquiry*, Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage, 1981.

<sup>38</sup> A. Gramsci, *The Modern Prince*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1957.

movements of protest and processes of change which offer certain opportunities to reconstruct the premises themselves.

Thus, in principle, the order-maintaining and order-transforming aspects of culture are but two sides of the same coin. Not only is there no basic contradiction between the two; they are part and parcel of the symbolic dimensions in the construction of social order.

The potential of change and transformation is not accidental or external to the realm of culture. It is inherent in the basic interweaving of culture and social structure as twin elements of the construction of social order. Precisely because the symbolic components are inherent in the construction and maintenance of social order they also bear the seeds of social transformation.

Such seeds are indeed common to all societies. Yet the actual ways in which they work out, the configurations of liminal situations, of different orientations and movements of protest, of modes of collective behaviour and their impact on societies within which they develop, vary greatly between societies giving rise to contrasting social and cultural dynamics. But new civilizational settings and social organizations, whether the Axial civilizations, those that ushered in capitalism in the West, or the great revolutions, are not 'naturally' brought about by the basic tenets of a religion. Rather, they arise out of a variety of economic and political trends, as well as ecological conditions, all interrelated with the basic civilizational premises and with specific institutions.

Many general historical changes, especially the constructions of novel institutional orders were probably the outcome of factors listed by J.G. March and John Olsen (1984).<sup>39</sup> These are the combination of basic institutional and normative forms; processes of learning and accommodation and types of decision-making by individuals in appropriate arenas of action in response to a great variety of historical events.

As Said Arjomand has pointed out, the crystallization of any pattern of change is the result of history, structure and culture, with human agency bringing them together.<sup>40</sup> It is also human agency, as manifested in the activities of institutional and cultural entrepre-

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<sup>39</sup> J.G. March and J. Olsen, 'The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 78, No. 3, 1984, pp. 734-49.

<sup>40</sup> S. Arjomand, *History, Structure and Revolutions*, op. cit.



neurs, and their influences on different sectors of society, that shapes actual institutional formations. The potential for the crystallization of such formations is rooted in certain general societal conditions, such as degrees of structural differentiation or types of political economy. But these are only potentials, the concretization of which is effected through human agency.

It is the different constellations or configurations of these factors that are the major objects of comparative historico-sociological analysis and discourse.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

### THE SECTARIAN ORIGIN OF MODERNITY

#### I

Modernity, modern civilization, the cultural and political programmes of modernity, have been often seen as epitomizing a break from religion; as heralding the rise of the secular age in which religion and the sacred have been relegated to the private sphere, or to the margins of society.

While needless to say there is a very strong kernel of truth in such approach, it presents at most only one side of the picture. Not only does it confuse or conflate “religion” as defined in Western discourse with the sacral; beyond such conflation it does not do full justice to the fact that many central and continual dimensions and tensions of the cultural and political programme of modernity and of modern political dynamics are deeply rooted in the religious components of the civilization which they developed, and that these dimensions and tensions constitute in many ways the transformation, even if in secular terms, of some of the basic religious orientations and the tensions that have been constitutive of these civilizations. This is especially true of the Jacobin component of the cultural and political programme of modernity—a component which is at the root of what is probably the most continual dramatic confrontation in the modern political discourse and dynamics—namely, the confrontation between pluralistic and totalistic and totalitarian ideologies, movements and regimes.<sup>1</sup>

It is the major argument of this essay that the roots of modern Jacobinism in their different manifestations are to be found in the transformation of the visions with strong gnostic components and which sought to bring the Kingdom of God to earth and which were often promulgated in medieval and early modern European

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<sup>1</sup> H. Blumenberg, *Die Legitimat der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1987; S. McKnight, *Sacralizing the Secular. The Renaissance Origins of Modernity*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1983.

Christianity by different heterodox sects. The transformation of these visions as it took place above all in the Great Revolutions, in the English Civil War and especially the American and French Revolutions and their aftermaths, entailed their transposition from relatively marginal sectors of society to the central political arena. From then on these visions, especially in their various collectivistic, especially Jacobin guises became a continual component of the modern political discourse and dynamics, in continual confrontation with more "open" pluralistic visions.

Or, in somewhat greater detail, the roots of the continual confrontation between on the one hand an encompassing, totalistic, potentially totalitarian visions with strong Jacobin tendencies, and on the other hand a commitment to pluralistic premises and orientations which constituted a basic component of the modern political discourse and dynamics, are to be found in the tensions inherent in all Axial civilizations in the very premises of these civilizations and in the process of their institutionalization.<sup>2</sup> The most important of these tensions were first that related to the awareness of a great range of possibilities of transcendental visions and of their implementation; second was the tension between reason and revelation or faith or their equivalents in the non-monotheistic Axial civilizations; and third was the tension focused on the desirability of attempts promulgated above all by various heterodox sects to implement such visions in their pristine utopian form, to bring the Kingdom of God to the Kingdom of Man.<sup>3</sup> It was above all this last problematique that constituted the roots of the development of the modern totalistic, especially Jacobin ideologies and movements.

The roots of this problematique were to be found in the very process of institutionalization of the transcendental visions promulgated in these civilizations. Any such institutionalization naturally entailed some compromise of the pristine transcendental vision with mundane, social and political reality; the close interweaving of such visions with the existing political order, with the interests of the

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<sup>2</sup> On the Axial Age Civilizations, see S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics", *European Journal of Sociology*, 23/2, 1982, pp. 294-314; idem, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial-Age Civilizations*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986.

<sup>3</sup> See in greater detail S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolution*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999 forthcoming.

powers-that-be, and the concomitant emphasis on the importance of the maintenance of this order for the maintenance of even the possible partial implementation of the transcendental vision; and the ensuing acceptance of the difficulty, even impossibility, of a total bridging of the chasm between the transcendental and the mundane order.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, any such institutionalization entailed the growing awareness of a great range of possibilities of transcendental visions, of the very definition of the tensions between the transcendental and the mundane order and of the quest to overcome it, i.e. of the implementation of such visions constituted an inherent part of their institutionalization in the Axial civilizations. Historically such process of institutionalization of transcendental visions was never a simple, peaceful one. It was usually connected with a continuous struggle and competition between many groups and between their respective visions. Because of this multiplicity of visions, no single one could be taken as given or complete. Once the conception of a basic tension between the transcendental and the mundane order was institutionalized in a society, or at least within its center, it became in itself very problematic. Thus the very process of such institutionalization generated the possibility of different emphases, directions and interpretations of the transcendental visions.<sup>5</sup>

Such processes of institutionalization have also sharpened the awareness of yet another basic tension inherent in these civilizations, namely that between on the one hand reason and on the other revelation and faith in the monotheistic tradition and some transcendental principle in the Confucian, Hinduistic and Buddhist ones. The premises of these civilizations—and their institutionalization—entailed a high level of reflexivity, including a second order reflexivity about these very premises. Such reflexivity has been, of course, reinforced by the awareness of alternative visions. It necessarily entailed the exercise of reason not only as a pragmatic tool but also as at least one arbiter or guide of such reflexivity—and often gave rise to the construction of “reason” as a distinct category in the discourse of that developed

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Transcendental Vision, Center Formation, and the Role of Intellectuals”, in L. Greenfeld and M. Martin, eds., *Center, Ideas and Institutions*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1988, pp. 96–109; and *idem*, *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*, op. cit. S.N. Eisenstadt, “Heterodoxies and Dynamics of Civilizations”, *Diogenes*, Vol. 120, 1982, pp. 3–25.

in these civilizations. Hence, it may have easily endowed reason with a metaphysical or transcendental dimension and autonomy which did not exist in pre-Axial civilizations—and could generate confrontations between the autonomous exercise of reason and revelation or its equivalents in the non-monotheistic civilizations. Such confrontation was historically very central in the monotheistic civilizations as they confronted the only Axial civilization—the Greek one—which did indeed define reason, “logos” as the ultimate transcendental value.<sup>6</sup> Parallel confrontations—even if, needless to say, couched in other terms and in less confrontational ways developed also in the Axial civilizations.

## II

All these processes and problems attendant on the institutionalization of such visions have sharpened the awareness and problematization of the possibility or desirability of a full implementation of the transcendental visions constitutive of these civilizations. As against the seemingly “natural” quest for the implementation of such visions there developed also in these civilizations the recognition not only of the impossibility but also of the undesirability of such implementation. There also developed within the reflexive traditions of these civilizations doubts, given the imperfectability of man, about the possibility—and even feasibility—of such full implementation of these visions. Such view was not inherently exogenous to the basic conceptions and premises of these civilizations—it was indeed a basic even if controversial components of their premises. The very emphasis on the chasm between the transcendental and the mundane order entailed also the conception of the inherent imperfectability of man. Given such imperfectability, it was often emphasized in the discourse that developed in these civilizations that attempts to a complete overcoming of the chasm between the transcendental and the mundane orders, could be very dangerous, that they would lead to attempts by fragile imperfect to abrogate for themselves divine power. Accordingly there developed within these civilizations strong emphases

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<sup>6</sup> Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Mythe et Société en Grèce Ancienne*, Paris, Francois Maspero, 1979; R. Gordon and R. Buxton, eds., *Myth, Religion and Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, esp. Parts I: Myth and Divinity and Part II: The Human Condition.

on the necessity to regulate mundane affairs without attempts of an extreme, totalistic implementation of pristine transcendental vision. The proper limits of such implementation, the scope of the arenas and aspects of social life which should be regulated according to such vision, as against those in which the more mundane concerns, economic or power ones, should be accepted—but also regulated by mundane means, constituted one of the major concerns of the reflexive discourse in all these civilizations.

Augustine's famous distinction between the City of God and the City of Man is one of the best-known illustrations of this concern—as well as of the resolution of this problem in the direction of the separation of the two cities. Similar discourses can however also be found in other Axial civilizations.

These concerns were closely related to the problem which was central in the discourse of all these civilizations, namely that of the evaluation of hedonistic and anarchic impulses and of mundane interest of people. In the discourses that developed in all these civilizations, there developed a strong preoccupation with the relations between on the one hand these impulses and interests; between the egoistical, hedonistic, and anarchic impulses of individuals and groups within the society and, on the other hand, the upholding of the proper social order.

In close relation to these considerations, there developed in many of these civilizations some kernels of the idea of social contract, of the idea that the actual mundane, especially political order is constituted through some implicit contract between different members of a society or between them and the ruler. Different variations of such idea of social contract could be found in some of the great writings on political and social matters of the Asian civilizations, as for instance of Artashartra of Katyula,<sup>7</sup> in the work of Ibn Khaldoun,<sup>8</sup> or in the work of some of the Chinese thinkers—like Motzu or Hsunt-su.<sup>9</sup> Most of these discussions emphasized that such contract

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<sup>7</sup> J.C. Heesterman, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition. Essays in Indian Ritual, Kingship and Society*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1985.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Khaldoun, *The Muquadimma*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988; B.B. Lawrence, ed., *The Ibn-Khaldoun and Islamic Ideology*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1984; E. Gellner, *Muslim Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

<sup>9</sup> T.A. Metzger, *Escape from Predicament—Neo-Confucianism and China's Evolving Political Culture*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1977; W.T. DeBary, "Introduction",

with the rulers was based on some utilitarian considerations, as well as those of fear. Such considerations were usually seen as being a natural part of the mundane order, rooted in the anarchic potentials of human nature, which had to be regulated by the laws or customs which hemmed in these anarchic potentials and/or by the power of the rulers. The recognition of this necessity was often connected with legitimation of political order based on considerations of power. The contract based on such considerations could be seen as legitimate—but certainly not as entailing the full implementation of the pristine transcendental vision; but its legitimacy could be also connected with the fear of attempts to implement totalistically the pristine transcendental vision. At the same time, however, the possibility was raised in this discourse that the regulation of such impulses could be best assured by the exercise of reason rather than by attempts to implement transcendental visions in a totalistic way.

### III

It was all these problems attendant on the institutionalization of the transcendental visions which were constitutive of Axial Civilizations—i.e., the combination of the awareness of such multiplicity of competing views or of their interpretation together with compromises in which the institutionalization of such visions entailed that constituted the butt of the criticism of various religious cognoscenti and sectos, which promulgated alternative visions presented by their bearers as the pristine visions untainted by any compromise. A crucial component of many of such alternative visions was the emergence in the Axial civilizations of the utopian conception of an alternative cultural and social order which often also contained very strong gnostic and eschatological components or vision.<sup>10</sup> Such utopian conceptions often contained strong millenarian and revivalist elements that can be also found in pre-Axial Age or non-Axial civilizations such as

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in W.T. DeBary and the Conference on 17th Century Chinese Thought, *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1970, pp. 1–3.

<sup>10</sup> E. Voegelin, *Order and History*, op. cit.; N. Cohn, *In the Pursuit of the Millennium*, New York, Harper, 1961; idem, *Europe's Inner Demons*, New York, New American Library, 1977; idem, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993; A. Seligman "The Comparative Studies of Utopias", "Christian Utopias and Christian Salvation: A General Introduction," in idem (ed.), *Order and Transcendence*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989, pp. 1–44; S.N. Eisenstadt, "Heterodoxies and Dynamics of Civilizations", op. cit.



Japan; but these utopian visions go beyond the millenarian ones by combining them with the search for an alternative “better” order beyond the given one, a new social and cultural order which will negate and transcend the given one, an order that will be constructed according to the pristine precepts of the higher transcendental order, and within which the transcendental visions will be fully implemented which would assure the bringing of the Kingdom of God to the Kingdom of Man.

These visions with their very strong antinomian potentialities were usually articulated by social actors who presented themselves as the bearer of the pristine religious and/or civilizational visions of these civilizations. Illustrations of such carriers such are the holy men of antiquity, the Indian or Buddhist renouncers, Christian monks, and the like—in other words, religious virtuosi, who often stood in some ambivalent or dialectic relationships to the existing ways of institutionalizing the transcendental visions, often acting from within liminal situations, and who often coalesce into distinct groups—sectors, orders which could become heterodoxies.

The promulgation of these visions was closely connected to the struggle between different elites—making all these elites—to follow Weber’s designation of the ancient Israeli prophets—into “political demagogues,”<sup>11</sup> who could also develop distinct political programmes of their own.

These actors, these elites often attempted to implement such visions in cooperation or coalition with broader social movements. Accordingly such alternative visions became very often combined with the perennial themes of social protest, with attempts to overcome or supersede the predicaments and limitations of human existence in general and of death in particular, especially the tension between equality and hierarchy; between the complexity and fragmentation of human relations inherent in any institutional division of labor and the possibility of some total, unconditional, unmediated participation in social and cultural orders; and the tension between the quest for meaningful participation in central symbolic and institutional arenas by various groups in the society.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> M. Weber, *Ancient Judaism*, Glencoe, Free Press, 1952.

<sup>12</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Order-maintaining and Order-transforming Dimensions of Culture”, in idem, *Power, Trust and Meaning. Essays in Sociological Theory and Analysis*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995; idem, “Comparative Liminality: Liminality and Dynamics of Civilization”, *Religion*, Vol. 15, 1985, pp. 315–338.

Accordingly such alternative visions, with their strong antinomian potentialities as they were borne by the various actors—especially by religious virtuosi, sects, or potential heterodoxies—were not confined to the purely intellectual realm—they could also have broader institutional and political implications, and they could—under appropriate conditions—could become very forceful challenges to the existing regimes, to the political and religious establishments alike.

Such political potential of these sects and of the alternative visions promulgated by them was reinforced by the conceptions of the accountability of rulers to some higher order which constituted important components of the premises of these civilizations, conceptions according to which the rulers were seen as responsible for the implementation in their respective societies of the transcendental visions,<sup>13</sup> and could also be held responsible, above all by sectarian utopian movements—for the sheer failure of implementation of the transcendental visions and of the construction of a political order which would assure such full implementation, of bringing the Kingdom of God to the Kingdom of Man.

#### IV

Whatever the differences between these Axial civilizations, such various sectarian heterodox groups and visions constituted a continual component in the dynamics of these civilizations, but with some partial exceptions, especially among some Islamic sects, they did not give rise to radical transformation of the political arena, its premises and symbols. In the realm of European-Christian civilizations, they constituted through their transformation in the Great Revolutions a central component in the crystallization of modern civilization, of modernity, in the crystallization of the political programme of modernity with its tensions and contradictions.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "Cultural Traditions and Political Dynamics", in *British Journal of Sociology*, 32, 1981, pp. 155–181; S.N. Eisenstadt, "Heterodoxies and Dynamics of Civilizations", *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> On the Great Revolutions and their background see S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolutions and the Transformation of Societies*, New York: Free Press, 1978; *idem*, "Framework of the Great Revolution", in *International Social Science Journal*, 1992; M. Lasky, "The birth of a metaphor: On the origins of utopia and revolution", *Encounter*, 34, No. 2, 1970, pp. 35–45 and No. 3, 1970, 30–42; *idem*: *Utopia and Revolution*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

On the Revolutions and modernity, see for instance the special issue on "The

The crucial historical step in this process in Europe was the Reformation. The Reformation<sup>15</sup> constituted the crucial point of transformation of “Catholic” sectarianism in a this-worldly direction: Luther’s famous saying of making the whole world into a monastery—while overtly oriented against the existing monastic orders—did denote a radical transformation of the hitherto prevalent hegemonic tendencies towards sectarian activities in Christianity. Such transformation was taken up even more forcibly both by the radical Reformation and by Calvinism—in which there developed very strong emphasis on the bringing together of the City of God and the City of Man. Lutheranism did not on the whole give rise to active autonomous political activities, and it was only in the Reformation and Calvinism that they were successful—and only for relatively short periods in relatively small communities—in Geneva, in some Dutch and Scottish sects and in some of the early American colonies. Contrary to some simplistic interpretations of Weber’s Protestant Ethic Thesis, these sectarian orientations did not give rise, as it were, to capitalism or to modern civilization in general. Rather, under very specific and distinctive institutional and geopolitical conditions, they constituted a very important component in the crystallization of this civilization<sup>16</sup>—a component which entailed both a continuation and a radical transformation of the place of sectarianism and proto-fundamentalist movements in the dynamics of Great Civilizations.

All these processes did provide a very crucial component of the background of the development of the Great Revolutions, and it was the Great Revolutions that in a way constituted the culmination of these processes. The Great Revolutions can be seen as the culmination 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 can indeed be seen as the

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French Revolution and the Birth of Modernity”, *Social Research*, 1989; Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> H. Oberman, *The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in the Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1986; idem, *The Impact of the Reformation: Essays*, Grand Rapids, Mich., William B. Eerdmans, 1994; idem, *The Reformation: Roots and Ramifications*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1994.

<sup>16</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt. “The Origins of the West in Recent Macrosociological Theory. The Protestant Ethic Reconsidered”, *Cultural Dynamics*, E.J. Brill Publishers, Leiden, 1991, pp. 113–147.

first or at least the most dramatic, and possibly the most successful attempt in the history of mankind to implement on a macro-social scale the utopian vision with strong gnostic components. Such transformation entailed the turning upside down—even if ultimately in secular terms—of the hegemony of Augustinian vision, and the concomitant attempts to implement the heterodox “gnostic” visions, and of the sectarian visions which wanted to bring the City of God to the City of Man. It was indeed Eric Voegelin’s great insight—even if he possibly presented it in a rather exaggerated way—to point out to those deep roots of the modern political programme in the heterodox-gnostic traditions of medieval Europe.<sup>17</sup>

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, movements of protest but also with the political struggle at the center and were transposed into the general political movements and the centers thereof, and themes and symbols of protest became a basic component of the central social and political symbolism.

The transformation of the sectarian activities that took place in the Great Revolution was closely connected with the development of a new type of political activists and leadership. The most central component of such leadership, the most central component in these revolutionary processes—and one which probably constitutes their most distinct characteristics—is the place of specific cultural, religious or secular groups of autonomous intellectuals and political activists, among which especially prominent were the bearers of the “gnostic” vision of bringing the Kingdom of God, or some secularized vision thereof, to Earth. The English and to a different extent the American Puritans; the members of the French clubs so brilliantly described by Albert Cochin and later on by Francois Furet,<sup>18</sup> Mona Ozouf, and others and the various groups of Russian intelligentsia,<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> E. Voegelin, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, edited by John H. Hallowell, Durham N.C., Duke University Press, 1975; idem, *The New Science of Politics*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1952; idem, *Die Politischen Religionen*, Munchen, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1996; idem, *Das Volk Gottes*, Munchen, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1994.

<sup>18</sup> A. Cochin, *La Révolution et la libre pensée*, Paris, Plon-Nourrit, 1924; idem, *L'esprit du Jacobinisme*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1979; F. Furet, *The French Revolution*, New York, Macmillan, 1970; idem, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981; idem, *Rethinking the French Revolution*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982.

<sup>19</sup> M. Ozouf, *La Fête Révolutionnaire*, Paris, Gallimard, 1982; V.C. Nahirny, *The*

are the best and best-known illustrations of this new type of social activists. It was usually these groups that provided the distinctive social element that transformed rebellions and/or sectarian activities into revolutions. The essence of this transformation was that as against the suppression or hemming in of the more radical sectarian and heterodox activities and orientations in special, highly controlled, spaces (such as monasteries, that was characteristic of the medieval scene), these activities and orientations were transposed, in the Revolutions and in the subsequent modern political process, into the central political arena.

It was through such transposition of the heterodox utopian totalistic visions into the central political arenas, which took place above all in the Great Revolutions, that the "totalistic" Jacobin orientations became a continual component of the modern cultural and political programme and discourse and in the institutional dynamics of modernity, in continual tensions within other, especially the more pluralistic, components of this programme.

## THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL PROGRAMMES OF MODERNITY

### V

The cultural and political programme of modernity developed and crystallized in Europe, and it was rooted in the distinctive premises of the European civilization and European historical experience—and bore these imprints—but at the same time it was presented and was perceived as being universal, of universal validity and bearing.

This programme entailed, as did any strong cultural or civilizational programme—as for instance those that crystallized in the Axial

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*Russian Intelligentsia: From Torment to Silence*, Rutgers, NJ, Transaction Publications, 1981; K. Riegel, "Der Marxismus-Leninismus als politische Religion," in H. Maier and M. Schafer, (hrsg.) *'Totalitarismus' und 'Politische Religionen'*, Munchen, Ferdinand Schoningh, 1997, pp. 75–139; P. Pomper, *The Russian Revolutionary Intelligentsia*, New York, Rowell, 1970; F. Venturi, *Roots of Revolution. A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983; E. Sarkisyanz, *Russland und der Messianismus der Orients*, Tuebingen, Mohr, 1955.

On the role of groups of heterodox intellectuals in some of the revolutions and in the antecedent periods, see A. Cochlin, *La Revolution et la Libre Pensee*, Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1924; idem, *L'esprit du Jacobinisme*, Paris: Universitaires de France, 1979 and J. Baechler, preface in idem, pp. 7–33; F. Furet, *Rethinking the French Revolution*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Civilizations, entailed a distinct ontological-metaphysical vision or visions; distinct conceptions of social and political order; of the bases of legitimation: of authority and its accountability and of the constitution of collective identities, as well as of its civilizing aspects—i.e., of the promulgation of distinctive attributes of the proper man or woman—“of the civilized person.”<sup>20</sup>

In the background of this program loomed several very powerful, even if sometimes hidden, meta-narratives. The most important among them were—to follow E. Tiryakian’s felicitous expression—the Christian, in the sense of affirmation of this world in terms of a higher, not fully realizable vision, the agnostic which attempts to imbue the world with a deep hidden meaning, and the chthonic which emphasizes the full acceptance of the given word and of the vitality of its forces. These different meta-narratives were closely related to the different historical roots of the modern cultural program, of the cultural program of modernity especially—to the Reformation and counter-Reformation to the constitutional traditions in Europe and in the Enlightenment. The different components of this programme were not obliterated by coming together in the cultural and political program of modernity, as it crystallized above all in the Renaissance, Enlightenment and the Great Revolutions. These components became highly transformed in this programme and provided the starting points for the tensions and antinomies that developed within it—thus attesting to its roots in the different aspects of the European historical experience.<sup>21</sup>

The cultural program of modernity entailed a very distinct shift in the conception of human agency of its autonomy, and of its place in the flow of time. Thus first of all this programme entailed a very strong emphasis on the autonomous access of the major social sectors, indeed of all members of the society to these orders and their

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<sup>20</sup> N. Elias, *The Court Society*, Oxford, B. Blackwell, 1983; idem, *The Civilizing Process*, New York, Urizen Books, 1978–1982; M. Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, New York, Vintage Books, 1973; idem, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1988; idem, *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la Prison*, Paris, Gallimard, 1975; idem, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1965.

<sup>21</sup> See E. Tiryakian: “Three Meta Cultures of Modernity: Christian, Gnostic, Chthonic”, *Theory Culture and Society*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1996, pp. 99–118; Gilbert Durand, *Science de l’homme et tradition*, Paris, Berg, 1979; Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

centers, and then on autonomous participation of members of society—in the constitution of the social and political order. Second it entailed a very strong component of reflexivity about the basic ontological premises of the cosmic order as well as about the bases and legitimations of social and political order of authority prevalent in society—a reflexivity which was shared even by those most radical critics of this program, who in principle denied the legitimacy of such reflexivity. Closely related was development of a conception of future as open with various possibilities which can be realized by autonomous human agency, often in conjunction with the inexorable march of history.

The radical innovation of this cultural program as it developed in Europe lay in several major, often conflicting, tendencies and premises which yet shared a strong common denominator: this was the change of the place of God in the construction of the cosmos and of man, and in their understanding.<sup>22</sup>

The most important components of this program as they crystallized in Europe were first the “naturalization” of man, society and nature; second the promulgation of the autonomy and potential supremacy of reason in the exploration and even shaping of the world; and third the emphasis on the autonomy of man, of his reason and/or will. Man and nature tended to become naturalized, tended to be increasingly perceived not as directly regulated by the will of God, as in the monotheistic civilizations, nor by some higher, transcendental metaphysical principles, as in Hinduism and Confucianism, or by the universal logos, as in the Greek tradition. Rather they were conceived as autonomous entities regulated by some internal laws which could be fully explored and grasped by human reason and inquiry. It was such naturalization of cosmos and of man that constituted the central turning point from the pre-modern to the modern cosmological and ontological visions and conceptions.

The exploration of “natural” laws became one of the major foci of the new tradition. At the same time it was more and more assumed in this new cultural program that exploration of these laws would lead to the unraveling of the mysteries of the universe and of human destiny.

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<sup>22</sup> S. Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, New York, Free Press, 1990. H. Blumenberg, *Die Legitimat der Neuzeit*, op. cit.

Such exploration was not purely passive or contemplative. Indeed a very strong assumption of this modern cultural vision, or at least of large parts thereof, was that through such exploration not only the understanding, but even the mastery of the universe and of human destiny, and a concomitant continuous expansion of human environment, could be attained by the conscious effort of man.

The exploration of nature and the search for potential mastery over it tended also, at least in some versions of this new tradition, especially among some thinkers of the Enlightenment, to extend beyond technical and scientific spheres into the social one. Such a view led almost naturally to the conception, rooted in the belief of the relevance of information and knowledge to the management of the affairs of society and to the construction of the socio-political order that the exploration and investigation of human nature and of society could become connected with the attempts at application of knowledge acquired in such inquiries to the social sphere proper.

Concomitantly, central to this cultural program was the emphasis on the growing autonomy of man; his or hers, but in this program 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, mastery of nature, possibly including human nature and of society.

Out of the conjunctions of these different conceptions there developed, within this modern cultural program, the belief in the possibility of active formation by conscious human activity and possibly also critical reflections of central aspects of social, cultural and even natural orders.

## VI

The programme and civilization of modernity as it developed first in Western Europe and then in the Americas was from its very beginning—as was the case with any great cultural vision of the core civilizational—beset by internal antinomies and contradictions, giving rise to continual critical discourse which focused on the relations, tensions and contradictions between its premises and between these premises and the institutional developments in modern societies.

These tensions and antinomies constituted a transformation of



those inherent in Axial civilizations which we analysed above—namely, first, those focused around the awareness of a great range of possibilities of transcendental visions and of the range of ways of their possible implementation; second, around the tension between reason and revelation or faith (or their equivalents in the non-monotheistic Axial civilizations); and third, around the problematic of the desirability of attempts at full institutionalization of these visions in their pristine form. These antinomies become transformed in the cultural program of modernity into first that between different evaluations of major dimensions of human experience; second, that between on the one hand reflexivity and autonomy, and on the other active construction of nature and society; and third, between control and autonomy, between discipline and freedom; and fourth, that between totalizing and pluralistic conceptions of the major components of this program, especially of the very conception of reason and its place in human life and society, above all as they bear on the construction of nature and society.

Of special importance in the context of the relative importance or primacy of different dimensions of human existence has been the evaluation of the predominance of reason as against the emotional and aesthetic dimension of human existence, often equated with various vital forces, as well as with so-called primordial components in the construction of collective identities.

In the context of the tension between different conceptions of human autonomy and of its relation to the constitution of society and of nature—often in a technocratic engineering way—that was that between on the one hand reflexivity and critical exploration of man, society and nature and of human activity and society. The emphasis on active construction of society and mastery of nature could become closely connected with the tendency, inherent in cognitive instrumental conceptions to emphasize the radical dichotomy between subject and object, and between man and nature—reinforcing that radical criticism of them which claimed the cultural programme of modernity necessarily entailed an alienation of man from nature and from society.

The central focus of the dichotomy between totalizing and pluralistic visions has been that between the view which accepts the distinctiveness of different values and rationalities as against the view which conflates the such different values and above all different rationalities

in a totalistic way. This tension developed first of 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 has shown, even if in a rather exaggerated way, in the difference between the more pluralistic conceptions of Montaigne or Erasmus as against the totalizing vision of reason promulgated by Descartes. Such totalizing visions usually entailed the conflation of different rationalities has been that which attempted to subsume value-rationality (*Wert-rationalität*) or substantive rationality under instrumental rationality (*Zweckrationalität*). Such conflation of substantive and of instrumental rationality was often identified as the major message of the Enlightenment, as epitomizing the sovereignty of reason, of science.

Such conscious totalistic effort could develop in two—sometimes complementary, sometimes conflicting directions. One has been the “technocratic” direction, based on the assumption that those in the know, those who mastered the secrets and arcanæ of nature and of man, of human nature, could devise the appropriate institutional arrangements for the implementation of human good, of the good society. The second such direction promulgated attempts to reconstruct society usually in a very totalistic way according to a cognitive—usually scientific moral or religious vision. These two directions, the technocratic, scientific and the more economical, could become fused, as was the case, for instance, in the Communist ideology.

Concomitant tension developed between totalizing visions as against more pluralistic tendencies with respect to the construction and possible absolutization of other dimensions of human experience—especially the emotional ones. Closely related were tensions between different conceptions of the bases of human morality, especially whether such morality can be based on or grounded in universal principles based above all on reason, on instrumental rationality or on multiple rationalities as well as in multiple concrete experiences of different human communities.

The tension between totalizing and pluralistic conceptions of human existence and social life developed also with respect to the conception of the course of human history—of its being constructed, especially by some overarching totalizing visions guided by reason or by the “spirit” of different collectivities against the emphasis on multiplicity of such paths. The utopian eschatological conceptions inherent in the belief in the possibility of bridging the gaps or chasms

between the transcendental and the mundane orders entailed also some very specific ideas of time, especially as related to the course of human history. Among the most important of these conceptions, many of which have been rooted in Christian eschatology, but constituted also far-reaching transformations thereof, was first a vision of historical progress and of history as the process through which the cultural programme of modernity, especially individual autonomy and emancipation, would be implemented. Such progress was defined above all in terms of universalistic values of instrumental rationality, as of reason, science, and technology. This conception was closely related to a very strong tendency to conflate science and technology with ultimate values, to conflate *Wertrationalität* and *Zweckrationalität* human emancipation with instrumental, even technical rationality. It had as well a strong evangelistic and chiliastic trend, which, together with its "this-worldly" orientations, gave it the very strong impetus to expansion.<sup>23</sup>

As against such totalizing visions of history there developed different visions—perhaps best represented by Vico, and later by Herder<sup>24</sup>—of the existence of multiple paths of histories of different societies. This major opposite (romantic) tendency emphasized the autonomy of emotions and of the distinctiveness of primordial collectivities but it shared with the new major programme many of the strong utopian, semi-eschatological conceptions, even if certainly not the idea of progress.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> S. Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, op. cit.; D. Outram, *The Enlightenment*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995; A. Salomon, *In Praise of Enlightenment*, Cleveland, World Pub. Co., 1963; idem, *The Tyranny of Progress: Reflections on the Origins of Sociology*, New York, Noonday Press, 1955; P. Hulme and L. Jordanova, eds., *The Enlightenment and its Shadows*, London, Routledge, 1990.

<sup>24</sup> M. Lilla, *Making of an Anti-Modern*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993; idem, "Was ist Gegenauflklärung?," *Merkur*, No. 566, 1966, pp. 400–411; I. Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty*, London, Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 118–172; idem, *Vico and Herder*, New York, Hogarth Press, 1976; idem, *Against the Current*, New York, Hogarth Press, 1980; idem, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, New York, J. Murray, 1991; G. Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, Abridged and Rev. Ed., Garden City N.Y., Anchor Books, 1961; J. Herder, *J.G. Herder on Social and Political Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969.

<sup>25</sup> S. Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, op. cit.; J. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Cambridge, Mass, M.I.T. Press, 1987; H. Blumenberg, *Die Legitimat der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1987; S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Post-Traditional Societies*, New York, Norton, 1972; C. Taylor, *Hegel and the Modern Society*, op. cit.; idem, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1989.

## VII

Cutting across these tensions or contradictions in the basic premises of the cultural program of modernity, there developed within it the continual—even if continually changing in their concrete manifestations—contradictions between the basic premises of the cultural and political programs of modernity and the major institutional developments in modern societies.

Among these contradictions of special importance have been those so strongly emphasized by Weber, namely those between the creative dimension inherent in the visions which led to the crystallization of modernity, the visions of the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment and the Revolutions and the flattening of these visions, the “disenchantment” of the world inherent in the growing routinization of these visions and above all in the growing bureaucratization of the modern world; and 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 that between on the one hand the emphasis on human autonomy, the autonomy of man, of the human person and on the other hand the strong restrictive control dimensions, such as were analyzed—even if in an exaggerated way, from different but complementary points of view by Norbert Elias and Michael Foucault,<sup>26</sup> which were rooted in the institutionalization of this program according to the technocratic and/or moral visionary conceptions—or in other words, to follow Peter Wagner’s formulation between freedom and control.<sup>27</sup>

## VIII

Within the framework of this cultural program, there crystallized, above all in the Great Revolutions, the political program of modernity with its specific tensions and antinomies within it. This programme entailed a radical transformation of the parameters and

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<sup>26</sup> See endnote 20.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Wagner, *A Sociology of Modernity. Liberty and Discipline*, London, Routledge, 1994.

premises of the political order, of its legitimation, and of the conceptions of accountability of rulers; the basic orientations to tradition and to authority; as well as the basic characteristics of centers and of center-periphery relations. This political program of modernity combined orientations of rebellion, protest, and intellectual anti-nomianism, together with strong orientations to center-formation and institution building.

The central foci of the transformations of the conceptions of political order that crystallized in the political programme of modernity were the construction of the political arena and center as a distinct autonomous ontological entity; the emphasis on the construction of this arena by human agency; the breakdown of traditional legitimization of the social and political role and the opening up of different possibilities of legitimation.

The construction of the political arena by human agency was characterized by two complementary but also potentially contradictory tendencies. The first such tendency 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 in the mundane orders, in social life, some of the utopian, eschatological visions—through conscious human actions. The second such tendency—also novel, in its extreme foundations, in human history, rooted in the Renaissance and certain groups of the Enlightenment<sup>28</sup>—was rooted in the growing recognition of legitimacy of autonomous individuals' goals and the legitimacy of private and multiple individual interests and multiple interpretations of the common good.

The recognition of such legitimacy of multiple interest constituted a far-reaching transformation of that view of such interests in new Axial civilizations in which they were conceived as related to or rooted in the "lower," "base" human impulses. In the modern cultural and political discourse these impulses tended to become fully legitimized as rooted in the basic human rights and as dimensions of human emancipation. This transformation was also connected with a parallel one in the conception of social contract. Instead of such contract being seen as rooted in or necessitated by these "lower" base aspects of human nature in the modern discourse, it was conceived

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<sup>28</sup> S. Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, op. cit. See also endnote 23.

as possibly the very basis of society, as constitutive of society, of the social order.<sup>29</sup>

## IX

Out of these conceptions of political order that crystallized in the political programme of modernity—i.e., out of the combination of the construction of the political arena and center as a distinct autonomous ontological entity; the emphasis on the construction of this arena by human agency; the breakdown of traditional legitimization of the social and political role, there took place far-reaching transformations in the symbolism and structure of modern political centers as compared with their predecessors in Europe or with the centers of other civilizations. The crux of this transformation was first the development of a strong tendency to charismatization of the center and the major collectivities as the bearers of the transcendental vision promulgated by the cultural program of modernity. Second was the development of continual tendencies to permeation of the peripheries by the centers and of the impingement of the peripheries on the centers, of the concomitant blurring of the distinctions between center and periphery; and second was the combination of such charismatization with the incorporation of themes and symbols of protest which were central components of the transcendental vision which promulgated the autonomy of man and of reason, as basic and legitimate components of the premises of these centers.

Themes and symbols of protest became central components of the modern project of human emancipation—a project which sought to combine equality and freedom, justice and autonomy, solidarity and identity of modern political discourse and practice. It was indeed the incorporation of such themes of protest within the center which heralded the radical transformation of various sectarian utopian visions into central components of the political and cultural program.

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<sup>29</sup> Judith Shklar, *Montesquieu*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987; Q. Skinner, *Machiavelli*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1981; idem, "The Paradoxes of Political Liberty", *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, 1984–85; J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975; idem, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957; idem, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985; B. Fontana, ed., *The Invention of the Modern Republic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994; J. Dunn, *Locke*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984; idem, *Rethinking Modern Political Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, especially part one.

## X

The transformation of the basic premises and legitimation of the social and political order became interwoven with a parallel transformation and institutionalization of the ideology of sovereignty, of citizenship and of representative institutions, and of accountability of rulers.

The radical transformation of the basic concepts of sovereignty which took place above all in the Great Revolutions, was the transfer of the locus of sovereignty to "the people," giving rise to the concepts of popular sovereignty. Concomitantly, "citizenship" was formed from an acclamatory or ratifying act into a participatory one and a concomitant transformation of representation from a virtual into an actual one.<sup>30</sup>

All these changes constituted a far-reaching transformation of the perception of the definition of the accountability of rulers to the community, to the citizens—the crux of which was the full institutionalization of such accountability in specific mundane "routine" especially the representative and juridical political institutions rather than, as in the pre-modern Axial civilizations in ad hoc outbursts in charismatic individuals or in extra-political institutions, such as the Church—all of which claimed to be the authentic carrier of the Higher Law. Later on this conception became transformed into the basic constitutional democratic premise according to which rulers are continuously elected, and in this way presumably continuously responsible to the people, or at least to the electorate.

Out of the combination of the transformation of the conceptions and practice of accountability of rulers, of the incorporation of symbols and demands of protest into the central symbolic repertoire of society, and of the recognition of the legitimacy of multiple interests, the continuous restructuring of center-periphery relations has become the central focus of political process and dynamics in modern societies. The tendency to such continuous reconstruction of center-periphery

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<sup>30</sup> See on this H.G. Koenigsberger, "Riksdag, Parliaments and States General in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", in Nils Stjernquist (ed.), *The Swedish Riksdag in a Comparative Perspective*, Stockholm, The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, 1979, pp. 59–79. M. Walzer, ed., *Regicide and Revolution: Speeches at the Trial of Louis XVI*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1974. P. Rosanvallon, *Le Sacre du citoyen. Histoire du suffrage universel*, Paris, Editions Gallimard, 1992. Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992); idem, "Rhetoric and Reality in the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 23(1), 1966, pp. 3–32.

relations was most fully manifest in the continual developments of social movements, movements of protest which were activated above all by various political activists and intellectuals. The continual processes of structural change and dislocation which continually took place in modern societies as a result of economic changes, urbanization, changes in the process of communication, of the development of capitalism and of the new political formations have led in modern societies not only to the pursuit by different groups of various concrete grievances and demands, but also to a growing quest for participation in the broader social and political order and in the central arenas thereof.

This quest of the periphery or peripheries for participation in the social, political, and cultural orders, for the incorporation of various themes of protest into the center, and for the concomitant possible transformation of the center, was guided both by the various utopian visions referred to above and promulgated above all by the major social movements that developed as an inherent component of the modern political process, as well as by the continuous claims to the legitimacy of individual and group interests, and interpretation of the common good, of the general will, of the *volont générale*.

## XI

This programme entailed also a very distinctive mode of the construction of the boundaries of collectivities and collective identities. The most important dimensions of such construction was first the crystallization of secular definitions, in highly ideological terms, of the major components of collective identity—the civil, primordial and universalistic and transcendental “sacred” ones, and of the strong tendency to their absolutization in ideological terms; second, the growing importance of the civil components thereof; third, the development of a continual tension between such different components; fourth, the promulgation of a very strong emphasis on territorial boundaries as the main loci of the institutionalization of collective identity; and fifth, the promulgation of a very strong connection between the construction of political boundaries and those of the cultural collectivities, and a continual tension between the territorial and/or particularistic collectivities and broader, potential universalistic frameworks.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Construction of Collective Identities. Some Analytical



JACOBIN COMPONENTS IN THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE  
AND DYNAMICS OF MODERNITY

XII

Within the framework of these basic premises of the modern political programme, there developed some distinct tension focused around the interpretation of the self-constitution of society and of the political order and in a consciously reflexive way which were closely related to the more general tensions inherent in the cultural programme of modernity.

The first such tension, was that between a constructivist approach which views politics as the process of active reconstruction of society and especially of democratic politics, to follow Claude Lefort or Johann Arnason's formulations, as active self-construction of society as opposed to a view that emphasizes the continual construction of society in its concrete composition.

The second such tension, closely related to the first one and also rooted in the overall cultural programs of modernity and in the modern transformation of the basic antinomies inherent in the Axial civilizations, was that between on the one hand an overall totalizing, usually utopian and/or communal visions, and on the other hand principled, more pluralistic views. The totalistic views usually entailed a strong constructivist approach, usually rooted in a strong belief in the possibility of bridging the gap between the transcendental and mundane orders. As in the broader cultural program of modernity such totalistic vision could be technocratic, "engineering" or of a moral "cognitive" or religious ones. This orientation was in constant tension with the recognition of the legitimacy of multiple interests of and of multiple conception of common good. Such recognition did not necessarily negate a constructivistic approach to politics, but entailed the acceptance of multiple patterns of life, of interest, of traditions and conceptions of good social order that develop within it;

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and Comparative Indications", *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1998, pp. 229-254; S.N. Eisenstadt and B. Giesen, "The construction of collective identity", *European Journal of Sociology—Archives Europeennes de Sociologie*, Tome 36, No. 1, 1995, pp. 72-102; E. Shils, "Primordial, Personal, Sacred, and Civil Ties", in idem, *Center and Periphery, Essays in Macrosociology*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1975, pp. 111-126.

the recognition and acceptance of society in its continually changing composition in the mundane orders and in social life.<sup>32</sup>

### XIII

The central focus of these tensions in the realm of political discourse of modernity was that between on the one hand the acceptance of the legitimacy of plurality of discrete individual and group interests, and of different conceptions of the common will, of the freedom to pursue such interests and conceptions, and on the other hand of totalizing orientations which denied the legitimacy of private interests and of different conceptions of the common good and which emphasized the totalistic reconstruction of society through political actions.

The mirror image of these pluralistic visions, of the different conceptions of the legitimacy of multiple private individual or group interests, and of different conceptions of the common good, were various collectivistic orientations or ideologies which espoused the primacy of collectivity and/or of collectivistic visions.

Two broad types of collectivistic orientations or ideologies were rooted in the revolutionary ideologies central in the continual cultural and especially political discourse of modernity.

One was some form of ideology emphasizing the primacy of a collectivity based on common primordial and/or spiritual attributes of—above all, but not only—national collectivity. The bearers of such totalistic views tended to emphasize strongly the human-individual and/or collective will as against the emphasis on reason and on the legitimacy of utilitarian goals; and the primacy of the aesthetic, emotional dimension of human existence, very often promulgated in primordial tendencies.

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<sup>32</sup> C. Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988; see also J.P. Arnason, "The Theory of Modernity and the Problematic of Democracy," *Thesis Eleven*, No. 26, 1990, pp. 20–46; J. Dryzek, "Political Inclusion and the Dynamics of Democratization," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 3, 1996, pp. 475–487; J. Dunn, *The History of Political Theory and Other Essays*, Cambridge University Press, 1996; E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991*, New York, Viking Penguin, 1994. H. Lubbe, *Freiheit statt Amanzipationszwang. Die Liberalen Traditionen und das Ende der Marxistischen Illusionen*, Zurich, Edition Interfrom, 1991. For a general view see E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964.

The other form of such modern collectivistic orientation, rooted in the revolutionary ideology, was the Jacobin one. The essence of such Jacobin orientations was the belief in the possibility of transforming society through totalistic political action. It was these orientations, the historical roots of which go back to medieval eschatological sources, developed fully in conjunction with the political programme of modernity that epitomized the modern transformation of the sectarian attitudes to the antinomies of the Axial civilizations. It was this orientation that had its roots in the heterodox-religious orientations as they became transformed in the Great Revolutions.

The Jacobin components of the modern political programme have been manifest in a very strong emphasis on social and cultural activism, on the ability of man to reconstruct society according to some transcendental visions, with the closely connected very strong tendency to the absolutisation of the major dimensions of human experience as well as of the major constituents or components of social order and with the concomitant ideologisation of politics. Such Jacobin orientations tend to emphasize the belief in the primacy of politics and in the ability of politics to reconstitute society.

The pristine Jacobin orientations and movements have been characterized by a strong predisposition to develop not only a totalistic world view, but also overarching all-encompassing ideologies with strong totalitarian orientations, which emphasize a total reconstitution of the social and political order, and which espouse a strong—even if not always universalistic, missionary zeal. These orientations have become visible above all in the attempts to reconstruct the centers of their respective societies; in the almost total conflation of center and periphery, negating the existence of intermediary institutions and association—of what can sometimes be called civil society, conflating civil society with the overall community. The homogenizing tendencies promulgated by most modern nations-states, especially those which crystallized after the Revolutions were strongly imbued by such Jacobin orientations.

The Jacobin component did also appear in different concrete guises and in different combinations with other political ideological components. The Jacobin orientations in their pristine modern form or versions developed in the various “leftist” revolutionary movements which often conflated the primacy of politics with the implementation of progress and reason. Thus indeed, as Norberto Bobbio has

very often emphasized in his works,<sup>33</sup> the Jacobin component has been present in both socialist and nationalistic and fascist movements, these orientations could become closely interwoven as it was in many fascist and National-Socialist movements, with the emphasis on the primacy of primordial communities. The Jacobin components constitute also very strong components of many populist movement.<sup>34</sup> It could also become closely interwoven, as in the fundamentalist movements with the upholding of the primacy of religious authority. This component could also become manifest in more diffuse ways, in, for instance, in the intellectual pilgrimage to other societies, in attempts to find there the full flowering of the utopian revolutionary ideal<sup>35</sup> and in many totalistic attitudes which flourish in different social movements and in popular culture.

#### XIV

The tension between the totalistic and pluralistic conception of the political was also manifest in the construction of collective identities—in the tensions between emphasis on the relative importance of the basic components thereof—the primordial, civil and universalistic ones; and above all between the tendencies to absolutization of such dimensions as against a more open or multifaceted approach to such construction between the closely related tendencies to homo-

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<sup>33</sup> N. Bobbio, *Il Futuro della Democrazia*, Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1984; idem, "Postfazione," in N. Bobbio, *Profilo Ideologico del Novecento Italiano*, Torino, G. Einaudi, 1990; N. Matteucci, "Democrazia e autocrazia nel pensiero di Norberto Bobbio." In *Per una teoria generale della politica—Scritti dedicati Norberto Bobbio*, Firenze, Passigli Editori, 1983, pp. 149–179.

<sup>34</sup> On the Jacobin elements in modern politics see: A. Cochlin. *La Revolution et la Libre Pensee*, op. cit.; idem, *L'esprit du Jacobinisme*, op. cit. and J. Baechler, preface in idem, pp. 7–33; F. Furet, *Rethinking the French Revolution*, op. cit.; J.L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarianism Democracy*, New York, Praeger, 1960; See also J.L. Salvadori e N. Tranfaglia (eds.), *Il Modello politico giacobino e le rivoluzioni*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia 1984 and M. Salvador, *Europe, America, Marxismo*, Torino Einaudi, 1990, chapter VII. See also E. Frankel. "Strukturdefekte der demokratie und deren unüberwindung" and "Ratenmythos und soziale selbstbestimmung", Frankel Ernest, *Deutschland und die Westlichen Demokratien*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990, pp. 68–95 and 95–137, respectively. A very strong statement against the emphasis on "common will" in the name of "emancipation" can be found in H. Lubbe, *Freiheit statt Amantipationszwang. Die Liberalen Traditionen und das Ende der Marxistischen Illusionen*, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "Transcendental Vision, Center Formation and the Role of Intellectuals", op. cit.

genization of social and cultural spaces and construction of more multiple spaces allowing for heterogeneous identities.<sup>36</sup>

## XV

It is these different conceptions of the relation between the individual and the social order, of the different modes of legitimation of modern political regimes, that generated some of the basic tensions in modern political discourse and its dynamics. It was within the basic framework of the political discourse of modernity that the concrete tensions in the political programs of modernity developed—namely those between liberty and equality, between emphasis on a vision of the good social order and the “narrow” interests of different sectors of the society, between the conception of the individual as an autonomous sovereign and emphasis on the community, between the utopian and the “rational” or “procedural” components of this programme; and the closely related tensions between “revolutionary” and “normal” politics, and between different bases of legitimation of these regimes. In the political programme of modernity, these tensions and antimonies coalesced in the form above all, to follow Luebe’s terminology, between freedom and emancipation which to some extent coincides also with Isaiah Berlin’s distinction between negative and positive freedom.<sup>37</sup>

These various tensions in the political programme of modernity were closely related to those between the different modes of legitimation of modern regimes, especially but not only of constitutional and democratic polities—namely between, on the one hand, procedural legitimation in terms of civil adherence to rules of the game and on the other hand in different “substantive” terms; and on the other hand a very strong tendency to promulgate other modes or bases of legitimation—above all, to follow Edward Shils’ terminology, various primordial, “sacred”—religious or secular—ideological components.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Construction of Collective Identities. Some Analytical and Comparative Indications”, op. cit.; S.N. Eisenstadt and B. Giesen, “The Construction of Collective Identity”, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> I. Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty,” op. cit.; H. Lubbe, *Freiheit statt Amantzipationszwang. Die Liberalen Traditionen und das Ende der Marxistischen Illusionen*, op. cit.

<sup>38</sup> E. Shils, “Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties,” op. cit.

## XVI

It was the tension between the totalizing, especially the Jacobin, and the pluralistic orientations that constituted the most radical transformation of the antinomies inherent in the Axial Civilizations as they became most fully articulated in the Great Revolutions.

The Great Revolutions constituted the culmination 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. Such transformation entailed the turning upside down—even if ultimately in secular terms—of the hegemony of Augustinian vision, which promulgated the separation of the City of God from the City of Man and the concomitant attempt to implement the heterodox visions, and of the sectarian visions often imbued with strong gnostic elements which wanted to bring the City of God to the City of Man. Thus as indicated above the Great Revolutions can indeed be seen as the first or at least the most dramatic, and possibly the most successful attempt in the history of mankind to implement on a macro-societal scale utopian visions with strong gnostic components. It was indeed Eric Voegelin's great insight<sup>39</sup>—even if he possibly presented it in a rather exaggerated way—to point out to these roots of the modern political program in the heterodox and gnostic traditions of medieval Europe. Since then the search for the ways in which the concrete social order could become the embodiment of an ideal order became a central component of the modern political discourse and tradition, and it was closely connected with the charisma-tization of the center as the area in which such visions can and should be implemented, a process which fully crystallized in the Great Revolutions.

But at the same time there developed in all these revolutions also the strong emphasis of rights of individual, of citizens which potentially at least entailed the acceptance of the possibility of multiple

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<sup>39</sup> Eric Voegelin, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, edited by John H. Hallowell, Durham N.C., Duke University Press, 1975; idem, *The New Science of Politics*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1952; idem, *Die Politischen Religionen*, Munchen, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1996; idem, *Das Volk Gottes*, Munchen, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1994; J. LeGoff, ed., *Heresies et Societes, Civilisations et societes*, Paris, Mouton and Co., 1968; F. Heer, *The Intellectual History of Europe*, Garden City, Doubleday, 1968.

views about matters political and social, and of the legitimation of multiple patterns of life and interests.<sup>40</sup>

It was indeed already in the Great Revolutions and later in the various modern post-revolutionary constitutional, later democratic, regimes, that the contradiction between on the one hand the emphasis on an encompassing revolutionary or technocratic vision and on the other hand the acceptance of the possibility of multiple views about matters political and social, and of the legitimation of multiple patterns of life and interests, became fully visible in the Great Revolutions.

In the English Civil War (possibly already earlier in the Revolt of the Netherlands) the revolutionary vision was couched in religious eschatological terms which were very closely interwoven with legal and constitutional dimensions. In the American revolution the constitutional component itself became predominant but it was deeply rooted in religious orientations.<sup>41</sup>

It was above all in the French Revolution that the fully secular transformation of the sectarian antinomian orientation with strong gnostic components took place.<sup>42</sup> This transformation was epitomized in the Jacobin orientations which became a central component of the modern political programme—to reappear yet again forcefully, as Raymond Aron has shown in an incisive article in Lenin and in the Russian Revolution, and later in the Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions.<sup>43</sup>

In the former societies, in post revolutionary regimes that crystallized after the Great Revolutions in Europe and in the U.S., it was the constitutional republican option and the recognition of the

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<sup>40</sup> N. Bobbio, *Il Futuro della Democrazia*, op. cit.; idem, "Postfazione", op. cit.; idem, "L'eredità della grande rivoluzione", *L'età dei diritti*, Torino, Einaudi, 1990, pp. 121–142.

<sup>41</sup> C. Hill, *The Origins of the English Intellectual Revolution Reconsidered*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997; J.A. Goldstone, "Revolutions dans l'histoire et histoire de la revolution", *Revue Francaise de Sociologie*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1983, pp. 405–430; J.A. Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, Berkeley, LA, University of California Press, 1991. Special issue on "The French Revolution and the Birth of Modernity", *Social Research*, 1989; Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

<sup>42</sup> On the French Revolution see F. Furet, *The French Revolution*, op. cit.; idem, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, op. cit.

<sup>43</sup> R. Aron, "Remarques sur la gnose leniniste", in idem, *Machiavel et les tyrannies modernes*, Paris, Editions de Fallois, 1993, pp. 405–420.

legitimacy of multiple interests developed—as against the monolithic totalistic and exclusive visions inherent in the revolutionary origins—that won the day.

But in all these societies the Jacobin components, with its sectarian-utopian roots, constituted a continual component of modernity of modern political dynamics. Whatever the concrete manifestations of the various collectivist, especially Jacobin visions and ideologies, they constituted a continual component of the modern discourse, of the discourse of modernity. It is indeed the continual confrontation between this component and orientation and the more pluralistic orientations, as well as between different Jacobin ideologies that constitute one of the central core of the discourse of modernity. The challenge of the contradiction between an encompassing, totalistic, potentially totalitarian vision, primordial collectivity, and/or a commitment to the pluralistic premises constituted an inherent element of these constitutional regimes and a basic component of the political dynamics of the modern era. None of the modern constitutional and/or liberal democracies has entirely done away—or can even possibly do away—with either Jacobin component, especially with its utopian dimension, the orientation to some primordial components of collective identity, or with the claims for the centrality of religion in the construction of collective identities or in the legitimization of the political order. All of these components were inherent in the “Axial” religious roots of the cultural and political programme of modernity in which they became transformed.

## XVII

The preceding analysis indicates that the cultural and political programme of modernity as it crystallized in Europe can be seen as a sectarian heterodox breakthrough in the Christian Axial civilization as it crystallized in Europe.

All these processes attesting to the strong religious sectarian roots of modernity and especially of the tensions between totalistic Jacobin and pluralistic orientations developed initially in Europe, but once they crystallized and became institutionalized in the political programme of modernity, they could, with the expansion of Europe and of modernity, find very strong resonance in the utopian sectarian traditions of the Axial civilizations. In all these civilizations these processes gave rise to different multiple programmes of modernity—



in all of which the tensions between pluralistic and totalistic tendencies constituted a continual component.

It is also the religious roots of the modern political programme that explains the specific modern characteristics of what may be seen as the most anti-modern contemporary movements—namely the various fundamentalist movements which, contrary to the view which defines them as traditionally one, are really modern Jacobin movements which construct tradition as a modern, totalistic ideology.

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PART FIVE

MULTIPLE MODERNITIES

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## INTRODUCTION TO SECTION V-A: THE CLASSICAL AGE OF MODERNITY

The chapters in this section focus on two central aspects of multiple modernities—the central theme about the nature of modern civilizations presented in this volume. Several chapters analyze distinct patterns of modernity as they developed in different non-European societies—in the Americas, in the Soviet regime, in Israel, India and Japan. The chapter on Japan bears also directly on the problem or paradox mentioned already in the section on Axial Civilizations that the first and most continuous non-Western modernity developed in a non-Axial civilization.

Of special importance from the point of view of the thesis on multiple modernities is the chapter on the Americas, which shows that already in the Americas, within the framework of the expanding Western civilization or modernity, and not only in the encounter of this modernity with non-Western—Islamic, Confucian, Hindu or Buddhist civilizations—there developed distinct, Western but non-European modernities.

The last two chapters address the problem of multiple modernities from a different angle—namely that of comparative analysis of movements of protest in modern societies. Theories of modernization and of convergence of industrial societies which have emphasized the similarity or uniformity of modern societies have focused mostly on the analysis of the major institutional formations such as economic organization, industrialization, urbanization and the like. The view of multiple modernities assume, as has indeed been illustrated in the chapters on the different “modernities,” that even with respect to these formations there developed great variations between different modern societies. The two chapters on movements of protest analyze this multiplicity or variety from the point of view not of the hegemonic institutional formations of their respective societies but from its other side—protest. Protest is indeed, as we have pointed out in the chapter on the Modernity as a Distinct Civilization, inherent in modernity, but its concrete contours vary greatly between them—as was recognized already by W. Sombart when he published in 1912 his famous essay on *Why Is There No Socialism in America?*

The first of these chapters analyzes, following indeed in many ways Sombart's question, the distinct characteristics of protest in Europe and the U.S., while the second chapter analyzes the variability of protest on a basic spectrum of modern societies. The last chapter in this section brings together the problematics of incorporation of protest and of the continuity or breakdown of modern regimes—with special emphasis on the constitution of trust and of constitution of collective identities—a problem taken up already in Chapter 3 in the first section.

The thesis on multiple modernities is of course directly related to the analysis of Axial Civilizations presented in Section II B. One of the major upshots of this analysis was the emphasis on the multiplicity of Axial civilizations and of their dynamics, some of which are related to the distinctive characteristics of heterodoxies and sectarianism within them. As we have indicated, this has indeed been closely related to a distinct reading of Weber, which is seemingly contradictory to the ways in which the Protestant Ethic thesis has been interpreted in the recent decades and which emphasized Weber's concern to explain the nature of the specific mode of rationalization that developed in the West.

In the fifties and sixties this concern gave rise also to a search for the possibility of finding some equivalents of the Protestant Ethic in other civilizations—one of the best, and first, of which has been Robert N. Bellah's *Tokugawa Religion*<sup>1</sup>—assuming, even if often only implicitly, that it is only insofar as such equivalents of the Protestant Ethic do develop in these civilizations they will really become modern.

If one emphasizes only this reading of Weber it is seemingly irrelevant or even contrary to the contemporary world of multiple modernities. There is however another reading of Weber's work, which is indeed highly relevant for the understanding of multiple modernities. This is the reading of the *Gesamelte Aufsätze für Religions Sociologies* as studies of the internal dynamics of the various Great Civilizations, in their own terms, in terms of their distinctive rationalities, with a special emphasis on the role of heterodoxies and sectarian movements on these dynamics. Such reading of Weber is reinforced by the fact that these "new" multiple modernities are as it were "late" modernities. Weber focused his analysis on the devel-

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<sup>1</sup> R.N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion*, Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1957.

opment of the first—Western, European—modernity, and did not assume that the later ones will necessary develop under the same conditions. Accordingy reading Weber leads almost naturally to the question of how these dynamics, the specific historical experience of these civilizations may influence—certainly not determine—some of the distinct characteristics of the modernities that develop in these civilizations, and it is this approach that is presented here.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

# THE BREAKDOWN AND TRANSFORMATION OF COMMUNIST REGIMES

### I

The disintegration of the Soviet regime and of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe started with the beginning of the Gorbachev reforms in the mid-eighties, gathered momentum in the late eighties and in the beginning of the nineties with the breakdown of the Eastern European Communist regimes and the disintegration of the “old” Soviet Union in 1991. This disintegration was rooted in stagnative tendencies which became predominant in the Brezhnev era and during which some of the basic contradictions of this regime became more and more visible.

All these dramatic developments were often perceived throughout the world as yet another revolutionary wave, and thus there naturally arises the question in what ways are these changes similar to, and different from the great classical European revolutions? Obviously in one sense, they are revolutions: drastic, dramatic changes of regimes—there can be no doubt about that.

Some of the struggles at the center of these regimes in the last five years or so of their existence were very serious indeed—which is exactly what happened in all the great revolutions. In Eastern Europe they became combined with wider popular uprisings, and together helped to topple the Communist regimes. The regimes have changed very quickly, and new types of regime have been installed. Second, the revolutionary process itself, the social process which brought about these changes, evinces interesting similarities to the classical revolutions. There was a combination of popular uprisings with struggles at the center—struggles which focused around the various attempts at reform which started during Andropov’s short regime. There was also, as in the Great Revolutions, a continuous interweaving of popular rebellions and struggles at the center and the development—in the form of various movements, forums and the like—of some common frameworks of political action. Another element

common to these changes and the great revolutions was the very important role of intellectuals. Intellectuals played a very important role here, seemingly just as the Puritans played a very important role in England, to some degree in America, or like the role which was played by the different clubs of the enlightenment and in the French revolution, or by the Russian intelligentsia. Some great intellectual figures, like Havel, or a variety of East German priests, Catholic priests in Poland, various intellectuals or religious groups were very important in these processes, seemingly just like in the classical "great" revolutions. Often the claim was made that these revolutions were indeed revolutions of intellectuals.

Yet, while the various intellectual groups were obviously important in the breakdown of the Eastern European regimes, the mode of their activities, as well as their basic orientations, developed in a somewhat different way from the classical revolutions.

The potentiality of such combinations of political activities of different groups attests to a strong historical and phenomenological relationship to the Great Revolutions. Such potentiality as well as the centrality of intellectuals in such processes did start, as we have seen, with the great revolutions and has since become a central part of modern political life. The participation of intellectuals in the processes of breakdown of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe intensified the element of principled protest in these revolutions. It was not just popular protest, not just protest against the wrongdoing of the authorities, and demands for redress, for better behavior on the part of the authorities, that was characteristic of many of these movements or uprising. In addition to such demands, highly principled statement in the name of liberty—in the name of what they themselves often called civil society—were promulgated by many such intellectuals. Just as in the classical great revolutions, this principled protest was important in bringing down the regimes.

## II

Similarly, the processes which brought about the demise of these regimes were also to some extent similar to those which gave rise to the classical revolutions—namely a combination of economic weakening of these regimes, together with a deterioration of their international standing, and with the growing awareness among large

sectors of the population of the sharp contradictions between the bases of their legitimation and their performance. As in the case of the Great Revolution the demise of those regimes was not “just” a breakdown of political regimes—was the demises of a civilization of what K. Jowett and others have designated as the Leninist civilization, even if comparatively speaking, a short-lived one, that presented itself as a new approach in the history of mankind. It signalled the breakdown of the confrontation between this civilization and the capitalist-democratic one—the two major children of the Great Revolution which occupied the center-stage of the international scene after the Second World War—if not before.

These similarities with the Great Revolutions are very striking and they are, as I have hinted above, not accidental. But at the same time some very important differences can be observed between the “classical” revolutions and the breakdown of the Eastern European regimes. Some of these differences are obvious, especially those related to new types of technology, especially the technology of communication—as evident in the great role that television played in all these revolutions—or to the levels of economic development.

Yet even with respect to the technology of communication, it should be remembered that the situation in Eastern Europe is in principle not so different from that of the classical revolutions. Of course, in the Great Revolutions, there was no television, not even radio, but the invention of printing and the use of printing for political purposes, played a crucial role in the form of pamphlets in the great revolutions.

Of greater importance is the fact, to which we shall return later on, that the economic structures against which and from which the revolutions in the Eastern European regimes developed were characterized by a relatively modern, industrialized political economy—namely that these revolutions do not constitute a rebellion or protest against the traditional authoritarian ancien regimes, a protest in the name of enlightenment, against the divine right of kings.

### III

Beyond these differences between what may be called the background or causes of these and of the classical revolutions, and between their respective concrete historical settings, there were also far-reaching

differences in the revolutionary process itself. First of all it is of course quite clear that it would be very difficult to say whether these were bourgeois or proletarian revolutions. True enough, as we have seen above, even with respect to the classical revolutions, these connotations are not always very helpful or enlightening, but with respect to the European ones they are certainly meaningless. If there was any social sectors that were predominant in bringing down these regimes, it was indeed above all some sectors of intellectuals, of potential professionals, sometimes in connection with sectors of workers, but they certainly were not bearers of any very strong class consciousness.

There is another difference between the classical revolutions and the contemporary Eastern European ones with respect to the process of change and the downfall of the regimes. With the exception of Romania, this process was in all these countries a relatively—indeed actually—a very bloodless one. There was protest, there were violent demonstrations, but comparatively speaking the violence was very limited. Not only was the violence relatively limited, but it was not sanctified or sacralized as was the case in most of the classical revolutions.

There has been very little of such sanctification in the current breakdown of regimes in Eastern Europe—and even in the U.S.S.R. itself, whether during the periods of glasnost and prerequisites or during the aborted August 1991 coup. If anything, it has been the other way around—namely, there often developed among those opposed to these regimes the accusation that the regimes themselves used the sanctification of violence to suppress their opponents. Although ethnic and national tensions were very strong in these societies, ethnic violence—violence between different ethnic groups—was not central, except in Yugoslavia, in the processes which broke down these regimes. It was only later, after the downfall of these regimes that these conflicts were going to become much more central.

Another very interesting aspect of the process of change in Eastern Europe, is that the old rulers, again except in Romania, were pushed out in a relatively bloodless way. They were but rarely punished, or even until lately brought to court. In East Germany there was talk of bringing Honneker to court, but even when lately he was brought back in Russia in 1992, it is clear whether he will be tried, and only lately have Eastern German officials been brought before a general (not Eastern) German court. Zhukov is being tried now in Bulgaria,

and some developments in this direction may occur, but they have not so far. There will be some court cases, but it is doubtful whether there will be anything like the trials of Charles I or Louis XVI, or the "semi-trial" of George III in America, the execution of the Czar, and so on.

Moreover, the ruling elites of these regimes did not on the whole fight—they gave up, abdicated relatively easily. There can probably be no doubt that many of the rulers would have tried to hold on had they been able to depend on Soviet tanks to back them up. And yet the relative ease with which the rulers, not only those at the top, but the middle echelons of the party, the bureaucracy, gave up, or were willing as in Hungary or Bulgaria to try their fortunes in new open parliamentary elections, is rather surprising. Of special interest is the fact that the middle echelons of the security forces of the armies no longer protected the rulers or the regime and gave up quickly and that they did not give up because they had lost a war. This is indeed a very intriguing fact, especially when one remembers that many of these middle echelons benefitted greatly from the regime—that the security organization and the armies were very important avenues of social mobility. The people who manned them often came from lower classes and advanced through these organizations, and yet strangely they gave up—willingly or unwillingly—very quickly.

The third highly interesting fact from a comparative point of view, is that almost all the changes of regime were made within the framework of the existing political institutions and even constitutions. Even the initial constitutional changes, the most dramatic of which was the abolition of the monopoly of the communist party, were effected or at least ratified in the legislative frameworks of the preceding regimes, in the various Parliaments. There was no need to change the whole structure of the *Etats Generaux*, or to create entirely new constitutional frameworks, in order to do this. Most of these changes were worked out within the existing frameworks, to no small degree through processes which were prescribed by the existing constitutions—or by some extra-parliamentary consultations usually later ratified by the parliaments.

True enough in all these countries new constitutions are being negotiated and in all of them some types of constitutional commissions have been set up—and the very search for such new constitution

does of course underline the break with the former regimes. But such discontinuity is effected relatively peacefully within the framework of the existing constitutional institutions.

The same is true of the very important changes that were effected in some of the symbols of state, as when for instance, in Hungary the communist symbols were removed from everywhere—the name of the state, the flag—or as in Poland where, I was told, they will probably put back the crown, which had been taken away by the communist regime, on the Polish eagle. The name of the Czechoslovak Republic was changed to the Republic of the Czechs and Slovaks, and many other important symbolic changes were instituted—and probably will continue to be instituted. Yet all or most of these changes were effected within the existing constitutional frameworks and through the existing constitutional procedures and processes—or at least were ratified by these procedures. Very few changes were made in other ways. These facts point out, of course, to far-reaching differences from the classical revolutions,—differences which to my knowledge have not received enough attention in the discussions about these revolutions.

These facts point out to the possibility that there developed in these regimes, or at least in the initial phases of their breakdown, some kernels or potentials of transformability, even if it is of course, as yet too early to evaluate, to what extent these kernels can lead in the direction of a relative stable institutionalization of new regimes.

It is indeed very difficult to answer this question at this moment—the picture is, and will continue for long periods of time to be mixed and uncertain. But the very fact that it is possible to ask this question, to post the possibility that what has been happening in the Soviet Union and in Europe does contain some kernels of such transformability, is in itself significant.

#### IV

But it is not only with respect to these aspects of the revolutionary process, of the breakdown of regimes, that great differences between the occurrences in Eastern Europe and the classical revolutions can be identified. Beyond this, the very political, social and cultural program promulgated by these revolutions has been radically different from those of the classical ones.

One of the most important differences is the weakness of the charismatic and utopian elements found in the great revolutions. There were of course ideological demands for freedom and for the market economy, which contained rather strong utopian components non realistic expectations, but market economy was not sanctified in the same way in which the rights of man were sanctified in the French revolution. What is even more important, there was no totalistic, utopian vision rooted in eschatological expectations of a new type of society. The vision or visions promulgated in Eastern Europe was one in which the freedom from the repressive totalitarian or authoritarian regimes, was combined with various pragmatic adjustments. As against this, eschatological visions, the idea of creating a new order—total, cultural, social—according to some utopian prescription, oriented to the future was very weak throughout the contemporary events in Eastern Europe.

Or, in other words, the Jacobin element, which was so crucial in all the Great “classical” revolutions, certainly in the Puritan (English) one, milder in America, very strong in the French and even more so in the Russian and Chinese revolutions, and which constituted a central core in the totalitarian communist regimes, was almost entirely missing, even if its head reappeared here and there from time to time.

The weakness of this utopian or eschatological component was very closely related to yet another crucial difference between the classical revolutions and the ones which occurred in the Eastern European countries, namely, with respect to the attitude of the revolutionary groups to the center, to the construction of the new center. In all the classical revolutions, there developed in connection with the utopian and eschatological visions promulgated in them, and with the sanctification of violence, a very strong tendency to the charismatization of the center, especially of the political center. The classical revolutionaries believed that politics could change society; that through the charismatic reconstruction of the political center, a total change of society could be effected. There is very little of such charismatization of the center in these Eastern European revolutions, even if some elements can be found among various groups. Similarly, any tendencies to the reconstruction of the center into a continuous liminal arena have also been very weak. Such tendencies emerged to some extent through the media, during the few days of the actual breakdown of the older regime. But they did not continue beyond

that initial stage of the breakdown of the regime. Indeed, it is “anti-politics”—the flight from central politics as espoused by Gyorgi Konrad and many others—that seems to be much more in vogue today in Eastern and Central Europe. Even if such anti-politics contain a very strong utopian element—it is an utopian directed from the center, not toward it.

Yet another component of the classical revolutions that was missing or at least very weak in Eastern Europe was the universalistic visions and missionary expansion of these visions. True enough the breakdowns of the current regimes in Eastern Europe were seen by many of the participants in them, as well as by others, as being of universal significance. This significance was continuously emphasized by the media, especially by the television. But these occurrences did not entail missionary missions—they were not borne by missionary zealots. There was of course the great influence of the occurrences in one place or another. There were continuous contacts between the different movements of protest and common consultations, but there did not develop a missionary universalistic vision which was characteristic of the French and Russian Revolutions, or of the Puritans. There were no revolutionary armies walking from one place to another to reshape their respective societies. When Havel came to Poland he did not bring an army to reshape Poland—he spoke before the Polish Sejm. No new revolutionary Internationale developed there. There was a very strong emphasis on common themes, on civil society, on freedom, on constitutional democracy, on—to some extent—the free market, but no strong missionary universalistic push, which had been a core element in the Great Revolutions, especially in France and Russia, can be identified. Accordingly, the future is much more open here. As there is no utopian sanctification of politics, the future is not prescribed by utopian visions, or by missionary orientations. The weakness of the utopian and missionary elements, especially those directed to the center, was closely related to the basic character of intellectuals, of the “Kulturtrager,” who were active, very often central in these upheavals and in their role. The role of the intellectuals has changed in comparison with the great revolutions and with many of the major modern social movements. It is not that they did not have an important place in the revolutionary process—as we have seen it is they who constituted a central factor in the revolutionary process. But the vision which they represent has changed from the “classical” revolutionary



ones, as have many of their own activities. Most of these intellectuals grew up and were active—even if often suppressed and certainly highly regulated—in the frameworks of modern academic or literary institutions which were seen by them as betraying some of their own premises. These intellectuals often rebelled against the totalistic utopian visions in the name of which the Communist regimes legitimized themselves. Some of them are very pragmatic, others talk in the name of freedom, in the name of ideals of civil society, but they are no longer bearers of the strong Jacobin eschatological visions which used to be characteristic of many of the classical revolutionary intellectuals.

At the same time other elements which were, in a sense, secondary in the great revolutions—above all the national, ethnic and to some extent religious elements, have become more important. Primordial and religious elements played a crucial role, not only in Poland, where the Church was always strong, but also in other places. Even some of the churches in East Germany played a very important role in the overthrow of the regimes—even if not such a dramatic role as in Poland.

## V

How can one even start to explain these specific characteristics of the revolutionary changes in Eastern Europe? Perhaps the best way to understand the nature of these characteristics is, first of all, to look closer at the contradictions of the Soviet and Communist regimes.

On the most general level, these contradictions were rooted in the fact that the Soviet regime, as it has developed since its institutionalization in the early twenties, has been characterized by a unique combination of features of “traditional” (historical, patrimonial, bureaucratic) empires, especially, of course, the Czarist one, with those of a modern mobilizational regime rooted in a monolithic revolutionary movement and ideology.

Thus, the Soviet regime has changed, as we have seen above, some of the basic parameters of center-periphery relations that developed under the Czarist empire—especially the rather delicate balance between commitment to the imperial system and the relative political passivity of the periphery. The crux of the change lay in the fact that the revolutionary center mobilized and activated the periphery

to a very high degree, but at the same time attempted to control it tightly in the name of the Communist selectionist vision as borne and promulgated by the ruling elite and its cadres. These contradictions became more and more apparent after the first, Stalinist era, the great institutional expansion.

The focal point of these contradictions was rooted, as Ernest Gellner has pointed out, in the exigencies of the routinization of this regime. The first arena in which these contradictions became more and more apparent was the economic one—in the failure of the planned economy to deliver, after the Khrushchev era, its premises. It was the growing stagnation of the Brezhnev era that constituted the turning point in the articulation of the economic problems of the Soviet regime.

This stagnation was due to several reasons inherent in the Soviet system. The first was the general inefficiency of the central planning in regulating relatively routinized economy.

Second was the extremely heavy burdens of the military expenses—rooted in the strong military orientations of the regime, in the growth of the military as an autonomous sector of the Soviet society and economy.

Third was the growing tendency of the regime to buy off various, especially upper sectors of the general society through various subsidized privileges. The failure in the economic arena touched on the very central nerve of this regime—as it was the economic arena in which the salvationist vision of the regime was to be implemented, and it was the economic arena that provided the simplest test of this vision.

These general contradictions of the Soviet or Soviet-type regimes explain the “revolutionary” potentialities within them, while the specific timing of the breakdowns of these regimes was related to the combination of international and internal processes—economic stagnation, internal weakness, and loss of faith on the part of large sectors of the ruling groups. These general characteristics and contradictions of the Soviet regime do also explain some of those characteristics which they shared with breakdowns of regimes in general, as well as with the classical revolutions. They do not explain, however, the differences from these revolutions which we have pointed out above, especially the relatively small extent of violence; the abdication of the ruling classes; the absence of utopian and missionary orientations.

In order to be able to explain these differences, it is necessary to

have a closer look at some additional dimensions of the specific contradictions of these regimes—especially those contradictions that were at the very core of their legitimation, at the very core of the revolutionary transformation of an Imperial system. Here again we touch on some of the kernels of transformability that might have developed in these regimes.

## VI

The most far-reaching, the most encompassing and crucial contradictions that developed in these regimes, were those rooted in the bases of legitimation of these regimes, in the nature of the vision according to which this mode of legitimation combined the basic premises of modernity, together with far-reaching strong revolutionary mobilizational orientations and policies. The most important of these contradictions were those between the participatory and democratic components of the legitimation of these regimes and the totalitarian ones; between the high level of social mobilization effected by these regimes and the attempts to control totally all the mobilized groups. In common with other modern regimes, this legitimation was rooted in the earlier “classical” types of revolutionary experience (the English, American and French ones). The legitimation of the new center was couched in new terms which entailed far-reaching transformations of center-periphery relations. There developed a growing permeation of the center into the periphery and impingement of the periphery on the center, often culminating in the obliteration of at least the symbolic differences between center and periphery, thus making membership in the collectivity tantamount to participation in the center.

Thus these regimes constituted a part of the unfolding of modern civilization—and the Jacobin element which predominated in them constituted part of modernity, part of the cultural programme of modernity. The periphery was activated in a highly controlled way, but it was still activated far beyond what could be envisaged in any ancien regime. One was not allowed not to participate, and—paradoxically—this meant that the impingement of the periphery on the center could potentially become much stronger. Any autonomous expansions of the periphery were suppressed, but potentially such expressions were there.

Among these contradictions of special importance were those with respect to nationalities, to which we have referred above. The entire dynamics of the question of nationalities were, as we have seen, completely transformed under the Soviet regime—giving rise in 1991–2 to the transformation of the former Soviet Union into the Confederation or Commonwealth of Nationalities. Earlier the Baltic states have left the Union completely, and later on separate Slavic (Ukrainian and Byelorussian) as well as many Asian—mostly Muslim, some Christian (especially Armenian and Georgian) states, have declared their independence within the framework of the New Commonwealth.

Among some of them, especially in Armenia, Georgia, continuous ethnic conflicts have erupted—to no small degree due to the earlier policies of transplantation of population undertaken by the Soviets. But at least till now the process of dismantling of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the Commonwealth were relatively peaceful. The same seems to be true of the dismantling of Czechoslovakia into Cheks and Slovak Republics—but the story was very different in Yugoslavia. Here the combination of all ethnic and religious entities, intensified by the policies of transfer and settlement of population under Tito, gave rise to one of the most terrific inter-ethnic or inter-national conflict.

The contradictions inherent in these policies could be suppressed by a strong totalitarian regime—but at the same time the consequence of such suppression could weaken many aspects of the system. Once the totalitarian lid had been taken off—as happened under Gorbachev—these contradictions exploded, threatening the very existence of the system.

## VII

It was also these contradictions of these regimes that explain some of the major characteristics of the civil society that developed within them.

The institutional kernels of such civil society were rooted in the very processes of economic development and social mobilization that developed in these regimes.

The ideological carols of such civil society were rooted in some of the basic premises of these regimes—especially in the very emphasis on freedom as participation in the political arena, on emancipa-

tion. While these emphases were repressed by the Jacobin components of the Communist regimes, the latter could not entirely negate or obliterate these themes.

Some institutional ideological kernels of the civil society could also be found in the very existence of formal, seemingly legal procedures in many of the institutions and organizations. Even though these procedures were often only formally acceded to, yet their very existence could serve as a sort of signal about the proper ways of proceeding in the public arena.

Thus civil society was not allowed any autonomy, but some of the nuclei of civil society and some of the nuclei of the ideology of the access of civil society to the center were there. Thus, on the one hand, the totalitarian control effected by the Soviet regime had almost entirely eroded all the bases of autonomy of civil society that existed—albeit for relatively restricted groups, such as the aristocracy, some intellectual groups or the Church in Czarist Russia. At the same time, however, the continuous processes of social mobilization, the expansion of education, the growth of numerous professional groups and organizations, had all created in Soviet Russia a much greater range of nuclei or kernels of civil society—which could be potentially reinforced by the formal adherence to parliamentary procedures in most Soviet, and to some orderly procedures in many institutions, such as the academic and journalistic ones and the like.

Such kernels of civil society were even stronger in Eastern Europe, where totalitarian communist rule was of a much shorter duration, and where the institutional traditions of civil society were stronger—even if not very strong in comparison with Western Europe.

These nuclei or kernels of civil societies started to burgeon, to develop with the growing visibility of some of the effects of the basic contradictions of these regimes, and with their consequent weakening.

The growing attempt on the part of the regime to buy off large sectors of the more educated and professional sectors of society gave rise to one of the major initial directions of the development of civil society in Russia, the Soviet Union, and even more so in Eastern Europe—namely the creation of wider spaces in which these sectors were permitted some semi-autonomy—but not in the central political arena.

With the continuous weakening of the regimes and with the growth of awareness, within the ruling sectors, of the necessity to reform, more active demands on the central political arena started to develop.

Needless to say, given the shorter span of Communist rule, the stronger traditions of parliamentary regimes and the existence, as in the case of the Catholic Church in Poland, of some autonomous sectors, all these developments were much stronger in the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe than in Russia—and it is in these countries that they became central in the breakdown of the Communist regimes.

## VIII

It is these specific characteristics of the contradictions of the Soviet and Communist regime that provide the starting points for some possible explanations of the Eastern European revolutions or changes of regime which distinguish them from the “classical” revolutions. The crux of such explanation is that these revolutions were not oriented against “traditional” premodern or even modernizing regimes.

These revolutions did not constitute a rebellion or protest in the name of enlightenment against traditional authoritarian ancient regimes, against the divine right of kings. Rather they constituted a rebellion or protest against what was more and more perceived by large sectors of the Eastern European societies as the blockage and distortion of modernity that were effected by these totalitarian regimes.

These regimes blocked and distorted modernization and development, but in some of their very basic, symbolic and institutional aspects, they were modern societies. The fact of their modernity is most evident in the fact that all these regimes promulgated elections. It is of course true that these elections were a sham, but one must ask oneself why the Czars opposed having elections while the Soviet leaders imposed them. They imposed the elections because the regime's legitimacy was couched in modern political terms, especially in the name of political participation, and no longer in the name of the divine right of kings. It was, if you will, the divine voice of the people, or of a secular eschatological vision borne by the people or by an imaginary sector thereof—by the proletariat or the like. Accordingly, these regimes promulgated modern constitutions, even if in practice these were as much a sham as the elections. Yet, the fact that the rulers of such regimes insisted on having elections at all meant that the whole mode of their legitimation was totally different from those of the anciens regimes. Both the constitutions and the elections attested to the fact that these totalitarian regimes were—in their

mode of legitimation, in their mode of relations between center and periphery, and also in the sense of their overall cultural and political programme—modern regimes; that their cultural and political programme was part of the cultural programme of modernity.

The specific political and cultural programmes developed out of the tensions that were inherent in the cultural programme of modernity—especially out of the tensions between the Jacobin and liberal or pluralistic elements of this program. But such Jacobin orientations, with their belief in the transformation of society through totalistic political action, are very modern, even if their historical roots go back to medieval eschatological sources.

The Jacobin element exists, as we have seen, even if in many different guises, such as in many of the populist, fundamentalist or fascist movements—in all modern, including the democratic, constitutional societies.

In the pluralistic, constitutional societies—in the United States, in England, or France—this Jacobin element is hemmed in and it constitutes only one component in the overall pluralistic constitutional arrangements. In the totalitarian regimes the pluralistic elements were repressed almost totally—but they were not entirely obliterated. But the very fact of such repression meant that there developed in these regimes severe contradictions, not only with respect to their economic performance, but also with respect to their basic political premises.

It is these contradictions that created the framework with which the moral collapse of the regime took place. It is these contradictions that have generated the moral crisis which, as Daniel Chirot has correctly pointed out, constituted distinct characteristics of the collapse of the Communist regimes.

## IX

Similarly, from the point of view of their social and economic conditions or institutions, these societies were not traditional or underdeveloped societies in the sense in which the term is used to designate the so-called Third World—in itself a highly heterogeneous entity. The economic structures of the Eastern European regimes were already those of a relatively industrialized and urbanized political economy. Moreover, there developed here a very distinct mode of industrialization

which became connected in these societies, unlike for instance in Korea—not to speak of other Third World countries—with widespread social mobilization and education. Moreover, there developed also a pretense of some—very often shabby—equality.

These institutional developments—the expansion of education, the controlled yet potentially meaningful political participation, and their connection to industrialization—were generated by the regime itself. They were not just external to the regime, and it is they which generated the major contradictions in these regimes to which we have referred above.

Thus, the Soviet and Communist societies were not simply backward, underdeveloped societies aspiring to become modern ones. Rather, these were modern or modernizing countries which, in the process of catching up with the more developed ones, selected and emphasized and totalized the Jacobin ideological and institutional elements of modernity.

So, the revolutions in Eastern Europe and against the totalitarian regime in Russia are to be seen as rebellions against certain types of modernity which negated, in practice, the other, more pluralistic elements of modernity, yet which, at the same time, officially instituted central components of their premises. It is because of this that the Eastern European revolutions, as well as the various attempts at reform and the new social and political movements in the U.S.S.R., have been rebellions or protests against a misrepresentation of modernity, against a certain interpretation of modernity, but not against traditional ancien régimes. They constitute an unfolding of the dynamics of modern civilization.

## X

It is these specifically modern contradictions of these regimes that may perhaps provide the beginning of an explanation of the fact that the various ruling groups of these regimes—not only the upper rulers, but also the middle echelons of the bureaucracy, army and security forces—gave up so easily. All these groups were highly mobilized and they underwent very intense processes of political socialization. They were, in one sense, politically the most socialized groups of the regime; but they were socialized in the name of two components or orientations. One was the Jacobin, the eschatological ele-



ment transformed into a totalitarian regime. But second they were also socialized in the name of freedom and participation and democracy—even if these elements had become subverted and suppressed in these regimes. It is difficult to know how seriously these groups took these ideals; it is something to be researched. But it seems that once things started to change, once the impact of foreign television became greater, the more democratic themes found easy resonance—not despite, but perhaps paradoxically also because of, the political socialization which they had received in these regimes. Thus this very political socialization could have intensified their awareness of the contradictions between the premises of these regimes and their performance. It is this fact that does at least partially explain the strong predisposition of large sectors of the societies in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union to listen to radio and television messages from the West—and the great impact of these messages.

## XI

Thus it is possible to understand the differences between the downfall of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the classical revolutions in terms of the former constituting a reaction against one interpretation of modernity in the name of other components of modern civilization.

But this also explains some of the similarities with the “classical” revolutions to which we have referred above. It does explain the close relations between popular protest, struggles in the center, and intellectual groups in these occurrences—as happened also in the great revolutions—as well as the place of principled protest, and the emphasis on the legitimacy of principled protest. These characteristics which the Eastern European revolutions share the classical ones, which in many ways ushered in the political programme of modernity, are not accidental, and the differences between them are differences in interpretation or in working out the basic themes of modernity. Now the Eastern European regimes face now one of the great challenges of constitutional democratic regimes, namely how to incorporate protest without breaking down.

Thus, in many ways the developments in Eastern Europe, and possibly also in the very epicenter of Soviet regimes—however tumultuous they are—can be seen not as a total break, but rather as the

unfolding—albeit combined with a very strong element of discontinuity—of some elements or themes of modernity.

Here, from the point of view of the development of such themes, there seems to have developed a rather interesting parallelism— together with great differences in concrete details—with respect to the parallel developments in the West. The most important such common characteristics have been the de-charmatization of the centers; the weakening of the overall society-wide utopian political vision and of the missionary-ideological component—even if both the belief in democracy and in the free market do sometimes share such elements.

It is perhaps no pure accident that one of the most powerful—even if possibly naive, almost semi-utopian negation of modernity, in its original bourgeois version, and a declaration of what can be easily interpreted as a post-modern declaration, which was also very prominent in the Communist regimes—came from the most influential humanistic statement to arise from Central Europe—Vaclav Havel.<sup>1</sup> To quote one of his most succinct pronouncements on this problem, published on March 1, 1992 in the *New York Times*:

The end of Communism is, first and foremost, a message to the human race. It is a message we have not fully deciphered and comprehended. In its deepest sense, the end of Communism has brought a major era in human history to an end. It has brought an end not just to the 19th and 20th centuries, but to the modern age as a whole.

The modern era has been dominated by the culminating belief, expressed in different forms, that the world—and being as such—is a wholly knowable system governed by a finite number of universal laws that man can grasp and rationally direct for his own benefit. This era, beginning in the Renaissance and developing from the Enlightenment to socialism, from positivism to scientism, from the Industrial Revolution to the information revolution, was characterized by rapid advances in rational, cognitive thinking.

This, in turn, gave rise to the proud belief that man, as the pinnacle of everything that exists, and of processing the one and only truth about the world. It was an era in which there was a cult of depersonalized objectivity, an era in which objective knowledge was amassed and technologically exploited, an era of belief in automatic programs brokered by the scientific method. It was an era of systems, institutions, mechanisms and statistical averages. It was an era of ide-

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<sup>1</sup> Vaclav Havel, the President of Czechoslovakia, spoke at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Feb. 4.

ologies, doctrines, interpretations of reality, an era in which the goal was to find a universal theory of the world, and thus a universal key to unlock in prosperity.

Communism was the perverse extreme of this trend. It was an attempt, on the basis of a few propositions masquerading as the only scientific truth, to organize all of life according to a single model, and to subject it to central planning and control regardless of whether or not that was what life wanted.

The fall of Communism can be regarded as a sign that modern thought—based on the premise that the world is objectively knowable, and that the knowledge so obtained can be absolutely generalized—has come to a final crisis. This era has created the first global, or planetary, technical civilization, but it has reached the limit of its potential, the p. . . . . beyond which the abyme begins. The end of Communism is a serious warning to all mankind. It is a signal that the era of arrogant, absolutist reason is drawing to a close and that it is high time to draw conclusions from the fact.

Communism was not defeated by military force, but by life, by the human spirit, by conscience, by the resistance of Being and man to manipulation. It was defeated by a revolt of color, authenticity, history in all its variety and human individuality against imprisonment, within a uniform ideology.

This powerful signal is coming at the 11th hour. We all know civilization is in danger. The population explosion and the greenhouse effect, holes in the ozone and Aids the threat of nuclear terrorism and the dramatically widening gap between the rich north and the poor south, the danger of famine, the depletion of the biosphere and the mineral resources of the planet, the expansion of commercial television culture and the growing threat of regional wars—all these, combined with thousands of other factors, represent a general threat to mankind.

The large paradox at the moment is that man—a great collector of information—is well aware of all this, yet is absolutely incapable of dealing with the danger. Traditional science, with its usual coolness, can describe the different ways we might destroy ourselves, but it cannot offer us truly effective and practicable instructions on how to avert them. There is too much to know; the information is muddled or poorly organized; these processes can no longer be fully grasped and understood, let alone contained or halted.

We are looking for new scientific recipes, new ideologies, new control systems, new institutions, new instruments to eliminate the dreadful consequences of our previous recipes, ideologies, central systems, institutions and instruments. We treat the fatal consequences of technology as though they were a technical defect that could be remolded by technology alone. We are looking for an objective way out of the crisis of objectivism.

If everything would seem to suggest that this is not the way to go. We cannot devise, within the traditional modern attitude to reality, a

system that will eliminate all the disastrous consequences of previous systems. We cannot discover a law or theory whose technical application will eliminate all the disastrous consequences of the technical application of earlier laws and technologies.

What is needed is something different, something larger. Man's attitude to the world must be radically changed. We have to abandon the arrogant belief that the world is merely a puzzle to be solved, a machine with instructions for use waiting to be discovered, a body of information to be fed into a computer in the hope that, sooner or later, it will spit out a universal solution.

It is my profound conviction that we have to release from the sphere of private whim such forces as a natural, unique and unrepentable experience of the world, and elementary sense of justice, the ability to see things as others do, a sense of transcendental responsibility, archetypal wisdom, good taste, courage, compassion and faith in the importance of particular measures that do not aspire to be a universal key to salvation. Such forces must be rehabilitated.

Things must once more be given a chance to present themselves as they are, to be perceived in their individuality. We must see the pluralism of the world, and not bind it by seeking common denominators or reducing everything to a single common equation.

We must try harder to understand than to explain. The way forward is not in the mere construction of universal systemic solutions, to be applied to reality from outside; it is also in seeking to get to the heart of reality through personal experience. Such an approach promotes an atmosphere of tolerant solidarity and unity in diversity based on mutual respect, genuine pluralism and parallelism. In a word, human uniqueness, human action and the human spirit must be rehabilitated.

The world today is a world in which generally, objectivity and universality are in crisis. This world presents a great challenge to the practice of politics, which, it seems to me, still has a technocratic, utilitarian approach to Being, and therefore to political power as well. Many of the traditional mechanisms of democracy created and developed and conserved in the modern era are so linked to the cult of objectivity and statistical average that they can annul human individuality. We can see this in political language, where cliché often squeezes out a personal tone. And when a personal tone does crop up, it is usually calculated, not an outburst of personal authenticity.

Sooner or later politics will be faced with the task of finding a new, post-modern face. A politician must become a person again, someone who trusts not only a scientific representation and analysis of the world, but also the world itself. He must believe not only in sociological statistics, but also in real people. He must trust not only an objective interpretation of reality, but also his own soul; not only an adopted ideology, but also his own thoughts; not only the summary reports he receives each morning, but also his own feeling.

Soul, individual spirituality, first-hand personal insight into things,

the courage to be himself and go the way his conscience points, humility in the face of the mysterious order of Being, confidence in its natural direction and, above all, trust in his own subjectivity as his principal link with the subjectivity of the world—these are the qualities that politicians of the future should cultivate.

Looking at politics “from the inside,” as it were, has if anything confirmed by belief that the world of today—with the dramatic changes it is going through and in its determination not to destroy itself—presents a great challenge to politicians.

It is not that we should simply seek new and better ways of managing society, the economy and the world. The point is that we should fundamentally change how we behave. And who but politicians should lead the way? Their changed attitude toward the world, themselves and their responsibility can give rise to truly effective systemic and institutional changes.

## XII

These specific characteristics of the breakdown of the Eastern European regimes, including the breakdown of the Soviet Union, point to a very interesting—even if rather paradoxical—similarity to some of the developments which we have identified in the constitutional-pluralistic regimes—namely to the capacity for some internal transformability.

There exist, of course, some very crucial differences between the mode of transformation of the constitutional-pluralistic and totalitarian regimes. In the constitutional-pluralistic regimes, there was no transformation of the basic constitutional framework. Rather, such transformation took place, on the one hand, with respect to the bases of their legitimation, and on the other hand in the modes of the political economy.

In the Eastern European case, there was first of all a far-reaching break in the constitutional framework and in the basic contours of political institutions—even if these were effected, at least initially, within the existing constitutional frameworks.

It is not easy to explain this capacity for transformation which is almost unprecedented in the history of mankind, but some preliminary conjectures may perhaps not be out of place. On the symbolic level, this capacity for transformability may perhaps be noted in the basic legitimacy of protest and of change that was part of the basic constitutional and ideological premises of both types of regimes.

This legitimacy of protest is an inherent part of the cultural programme of modernity, and the themes of accountability of rulers, of legitimacy of protest, of equality and participation, constituted part of this programme and of the political socialization of both these regimes—even if they did, of course, unfold in different, even opposing, ways in these two types of modern regimes.

True enough, in the Soviet regime such legitimacy was seemingly but an external, often sham-cosmetic component, yet the symbols of protest were, as we have here seen, rather important components of their legitimation, and hence of the political socialization.

The institutional capacity for such transformability of modern regimes is probably rooted in the continuous tendency to the decoupling of the connection between different components—the major components of social action and bases of power—the economic, the ideological, that of prestige and solidarity.

The fact that the breakdown of these regimes seems to lead to the institutionalization of new and on the face of it constitutional-democratic regimes—more modern societies—does not mean that such institutionalization will be easy. It is now fully recognized that the transition is fragile. Many economic pitfalls, great social turbulence and dislocations attendant on the transition from the Communist command economy to some free market type, weakness in East European countries of constitutional and democratic traditions, and the continuous threat of the upsurge of primordial, ethnic loyalties, become increasingly apparent. There is always the possibility of economic collapse and general anarchy, to, in Ken Jowett's works "Movements or Rage" or "Nihilistic political responses to fact".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In D. Chirot (ed.), "The Crisis of Leninism and Leninism and Decline of the Left: The Revolutions of 1989," Seattle, Washington Univ. Press, 1989, p. 90.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

# THE FIRST MULTIPLE MODERNITIES: THE CIVILIZATIONS OF THE AMERICAS<sup>1</sup>

### I

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the development of the distinct institutional and cultural patterns in the Americas as crystallization of distinct modern civilizations. The major assumption of this chapter is that in the Americas there developed not just local variations of the European model or models, but radically new institutional and ideological patterns. These patterns were derived and in many ways brought over from Europe, but they became not just changed through adaptation to local conditions but radically transformed. In all or at least most of the settings of the Americas we can trace the crystallization of new civilizations, and not just, as Louis Hartz claimed, of “fragments” of Europe.<sup>2</sup> It is quite possible that this has been the first case of the crystallization of new civilizations since that of the Great “Axial” Civilizations and also the last to date. At the same time the crystallization of modernity in the Americas attests to the fact that even within the broad framework of modern Western civilization—however defined—there developed not just one but multiple cultural programmes and institutional patterns of modernity.

It was indeed in the Americas—in the English colonies in the

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on a programmatic statement prepared for the conference on the Americas which was convened at the University of Erfurt in 1996 as part of the program on “Collective Identities, Public Spheres and Political Order: Cultural Foundations and Institutional Foundations of Contemporary Societies,” undertaken by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, The Max Weber Kolleg at the University of Erfurt, and the Scandinavian Center for the Advanced Study of the Social Sciences in Uppsala. This program statement was prepared by the author and Prof. L. Roniger. A different complementary statement is to be found in the collection of the papers of the Erfurt Conference: L. Roniger and C. Weisman (eds.), *Multiple Modernities, Comparative Perspectives on the Americas*, Brighton, Surrey Academic Press, 2001, forthcoming.

<sup>2</sup> Hartz, L. *The Founding of New Societies*, New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1964.

North which later crystallized into the U.S.; in Canada where French and English settlements became interwoven; and in the Latin Americas in the Spanish and Portuguese Empires as well as in the Carribean—that such distinct clear patterns of modernity which differed not only from one another but also from Europe, first crystallized.

Alexis de Tocqueville, of course, clearly saw this: it was indeed the thrust of his analysis of *Democracy in America*.<sup>3</sup> Latin America did not have a De Tocqueville, but Alexander von Humboldt<sup>4</sup> in the nineteenth century, and such literary figures and scholars as Octavio Paz, Richard Morse, Howard Wiarda, Tulio Halperin Donghi, Roberto de Matta and others in the twentieth century,<sup>5</sup> have provided many important indications concerning such a crystallization of new civilizations in Latin America. Similarly, the work of Harold Innis in his studies of staple and communication, of Seymour Lipset on the *Continental Divide* and the contributions of Canadian historians and political scientists clearly attest to the singularity of the English Canadian and the Quebecois cases.<sup>6</sup> Finally, some of the Caribbean

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<sup>3</sup> Tocqueville, A. de, *Democracy in America*. New York: Vintage Press, 1966. On Axial Age, see S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Civilizations*, Albany: Suny Press, 1988; Eisenstadt S.N., "The Axial Age—The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics." *European Journal of Sociology*, 23:294–314, 1982. On some discussions about the unity and diversity of the historical experience of the America's see: L. Hanke (ed.), *Do the Americas have a Common History?*, A critique of the Bolton Theory, New York, A. Knopf, 1964. The tendency to analyze the Americas—especially but not only Latin America—in terms of European experience has indeed been prominent in the literature, and only recently challenged. For such a principled challenge see Miguel Angel Centeno and Fernando López Aeres (eds.), *The Other Mirror: Grand Theory through the Lens of Latin America*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Humboldt, Alexander, Freiherr Von. *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of America during the Years 1799–1804*. Translated and edited by Thomasina Ross. London, G. Routledge and Sons, 1851; idem, *Ensayo Político Sobre el Reino de la Nueva Espana*, Mexico, Compania General de Ediciones, 1953.

<sup>5</sup> See for instance Paz, O. *The Labyrinth of Solitude. Life and Thought in Mexico*. New York: Grove Press, 1961; Morse, R.M., "Toward a theory of Spanish American government." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 15:71–93; idem, "The Heritage of Latin America." In *Politics and Social Change in Latin America: The Distinct Tradition*, edited by Howard J. Wiarda, pp. 25–69. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974; idem, *El Espejo de Prospero: un estudio de la dialectica del Nuevo Mundo*. Trans. Stella Mastrangelo, Mexico, Siglo XXI, 1982; H. Wiarda, *Politics and Social Change in Latin America: The Distinct Tradition*, Amherst, Univ. of Massachusetts, 1974; Octavio Paz, "A literature without criticism", *The Times Literary Supplement*, 1976, August 6, 979–980; R. da Matta, *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes—An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma*, Univ. of Notre Dame, Notre Dame Press, 1991.

<sup>6</sup> S.M. Lipset, *The Continental Divide*, N.Y. Routledge, 1989; R. Douglas Francis,



cases provide further indication of the development of societies and cultures which became set apart both from the European metropolitan model and from the other American modernities.<sup>7</sup>

In this chapter I shall explore, in a tentative way, and in a comparative historical perspective, how there developed, in the Americas and especially in the U.S., and in a different way in what would be called or designated as Latin America, especially in the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, through specific institutional processes, distinct interpretations of modernity, of modern premises of social and political order, of conceptions of collective identity, and in close relation to these distinct modern institutional patterns and dynamics.

## II

Despite the fact that there developed far-reaching differences between these different American civilizations (especially the U.S. and the Latin American ones which in some ways indeed constitute mirror images of one another), they shared also some common characteristics rooted in the processes of European settlement and colonization and in the encounter with the various native populations and the populations of Black slaves translocated from Africa.

One of the most important differences which distinguish the American civilizations from both the European and later the Asian societies was the relative weakness of primordial criteria in the definition of their collective identities. In initial phases of European settlement and colonization in the Americas, the ancestral attachments of the settlers were rooted in the European countries of origin and to a much lesser extent in the new environment. With the passing of time and the consolidation of the new colonies, strong attachments developed to the new territory, but these attachments were defined in different terms from those that had crystallized progressively in Europe. There developed a comparatively weaker combination of territorial, historical and linguistic elements as components of collective identity. By sharing the respective languages with their

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Richard Jones and Donald B. Smith, *Destinies. Canadian History since Confederation*. Toronto, Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Lázara Menéndez, ed. *Estudios Afro-Cubanos*. La Habana, Universidad de la Habana, 1998, 2 vols.

countries of origin and among themselves, the very definition of primordial distinctiveness was unrelated to it in both North American and most of Spanish America (less so in Paraguay and of course in Brazil). Accordingly in all these societies there developed, from the very beginning of colonization, a relative shift to territoriality defined in administrative terms with important implications for the later development of “national” boundaries.<sup>8</sup>

The encounter with the native populations did of course generate new possibilities of reformulation of traditions, languages and communities, and distinct problems of delimitation of boundaries of identity among the settlers in relation to the indigeneous population, developed. At the same time there developed continual tensions between the English, French, Spanish or Portuguese born in the Americas and those who came as representatives of the respective crowns and continued to “represent” the mother country.

Concomitantly, the orientations to the “mother” country, to the centers of Western culture, later to cultural centers in Europe—constituted continual components in the collective identities of those societies, to an extent probably unprecedented in any other society, including the Asian ones in their later encounter with the West. The confrontation with “the West” did not entail, for the settlers in the Americas, in contrast to Asia and Africa, and even Eastern European societies, a confrontation with an alien culture imposed from the outside—but rather a reflexive exercise in coming to terms with their own other origins. Such encounters became often combined with a search to find their own distinct place within the broader framework of European, or Western, civilization.

### III

But beyond these features in them common to most American societies or civilizations, there developed great differences between the patterns of modernity that became crystallized in the different Americas. Within the different American civilizations or modernities, there crys-

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<sup>8</sup> Tamar Herzog, “A Stranger in a Strange Land”: The Conversion of Foreigners into Members in Colonial Latin America”, pp. 46–64 in Luis Roniger and Mario Sznajder, eds. *Constructing Collective Identities and Shaping Public Spheres. Latin American Paths*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1998; and her contribution to this volume.

tallized distinct premises of social and political order, distinctive patterns of collective identity, patterns of political discourse and dynamics, of resistance, of protest. While needless to say these premises and frameworks were themselves continuously changing, yet even the modes of their change—and the ideological and institutional dynamics which developed within them—evinced some distinctive characteristics that set them apart from those that developed in the European societies, and from each other.

A central component of the process of crystallization of these patterns was the transformation of the civilizational premises and institutional patterns of European societies, as these crystallized with the emergence of modern societies and polities after the Reformation into major patterns, especially the absolutist patterns of Counter-Reformation Spain and Portugal and the more constitutional patterns of England and the Netherlands.

The central axes around which these two broad patterns crystallized in Europe were those of hierarchy-equality, of relatively pluralistic “ex-parte” as against homogeneous “ex-toto” conceptions of the social orders.<sup>9</sup> In Protestant Europe such patterns were formed through at least the partial incorporation of heterodox teachings and groups into the center, entailing the introduction of relatively strong—even if continuously contested—components of equality in the religious and political arenas.<sup>10</sup> In Counter-Reformation Catholic Europe, above all in Spain and Portugal, the new regimes formed through the stamping out of such heterodox sectarian groups. These regimes were based on a fundamental denial of the validity of heterodox teachings; on a growing monopolization of the promulgation of the basic cultural premises by Church and state, along with closely related strong emphases on hierarchy.<sup>11</sup> In each of these institutional patterns

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<sup>9</sup> Rainer Baum, “Authority and Identity: The Case for Revolutionary Invariance,” in Roland Robertson and Burkart Holzner, eds., *Identity and Authority*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1979, pp. 61–118.

<sup>10</sup> Eisenstadt, S.N., *European Civilization in Comparative Perspective*. Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1987; A.D. Lindsay, *The Modern Democratic State*, Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, 1962; H. Luthy, Calvinism and Capitalism, in S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *The Protestant Ethic and Modernisation. A Comparative View*, New York, Basic Books, 1988, 87–109; L. Kolakowski, *Chrétiens sans Eglise*, Paris, Gallimard, 1973; Kossmann, E.H., “The Dutch Republic” in *The New Cambridge History*, Vol. V, Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 275–300; idem, *Politik, Theorie en Geschiedenis—verspreide opstellen en voordrachten*, Vitegeverij Bert Bakker, Amsterdam, 1987.

<sup>11</sup> Elliott, J.H., 1969 (c. 1963) *Imperial Spain, 1469–1716*. London: Edward Arnold

the tensions between equality and hierarchy or between autonomous and controlled access to the center were crystallized in different ways and these ways were radically transformed during the "Europeanization" of the Americas, giving rise to new civilizational formations.

The transformation of the different institutional and ideological patterns in the Americas evolved as a result of the characteristics of the settlers; the setting agencies; the politico-ecological conditions of settlement; and the mode of encounter with the native population.

#### IV

In the North American colonies, and later especially in those which became the United States, the process of conquest and settlement was carried out by relatively dispersed, relatively autonomous groups, many of them Protestant sects, various groups of more semi-aristocracy or gentry, like settlers and merchants, with the Anglican Church and the British government playing only a secondary (even if certainly not negligible) role.

The conquest and settlement of Latin America was effected by social agents which were characterized by different social characteristics and with different motivations and cultural orientations. After the first wave of conquest and settlement by the conquistadores, these processes were effected above all under the centralized aegis of the Crown (or Crowns) and the Church which monopolized access to the major resources of the colonies (manpower and land) and in principle denied the settlers any great degree of self-government beyond the municipal level; and it is within such frameworks that there crystallized in Latin America the transplantation and transfor-

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Publ. Ltd.; Dominguez Ortiz, A., 1988 (c. 1976) *Sociedad y estado en el siglo XVIII espanol*. Barcelona: Ariel; Elliot, S.H., *Spain and its World, 1500-1700, Selected Essays*, New Haven, Conn. 1989; Kamen, H., *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century 1665-1700*, Longman, London, 1983; Menendez Pelayo, M., *Historia de los Heterodoxos espanoles*, T.III y V; Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas; Maravall, J.A., *La philosophie politique espagnole au XVII siecle*. Dans ses rapports avec l'esprit de la Contre-Reforme. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1955; Maravall, J.A., *Estado moderno y mentalidad social (Siglos XV a XVII)*. Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1972; Gallagher, Ch.F., "The Shaping of Hispanic Intellectual Tradition." *Fieldstaff Reports*. West Europe Series XII, 1976, 1:1-16; Gallagher, Ch. F., "Culture and Education in Spain, Part II: absolutism and liberalism in Bourbon Spain (1780-1860)", *Fieldstaff Reports*, West Europe Series XII, 1977, 1:1-16.

mation of European premises, social-cultural orientations and institutional patterns.

The basic characteristics and orientations of the settlers in Central and South America also differed greatly from those who went to North America. Many of them were adventurers like the Spanish *conquistadores* or those Brazilian *bandeirantes* that Vianna Moog contrasted with the North American pioneers in his suggestive, even if impressionist, book in the 1960s.<sup>12</sup> The settlers themselves came in search of wealth, improved economic conditions or advancement in the new colonial administration, with the Church and the ecclesiastical orders also playing an important role in the whole process. The major push was usually social and economic—the search for a new, improved economic environment, and a combination of such considerations with a strong urge for prestige and power. Other ideological elements, such as the missionary spreading of Christianity and political importances did, of course, play a not insignificant role especially among the agents of the ???? missionary Christian ideologies by the Church and the different Christian order.

In North America many of the settlers were the bearers of religious and cultural orientations which emphasized exclusivist equality in an unprecedented way and gradually evolved into the premises of North American (especially the later United States) civilization.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately there emerged in North America two major institutional patterns, one in the U.S. and the other in Canada, which involved a dual character in the context of English Canadian and of Quebec. The former developed from the start as a distinct civilization, the latter was initially a “fragment of Europe”.<sup>14</sup>

Latin American civilizations extended from New Spain (later Mexico) to the Rio de la Plata, and to the Portuguese Empire in Brazil, and within it there could be found a great variety of institutional patterns.

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<sup>12</sup> Moog, V., *Bandeirantes and Pioneers, New York, Brasilier*, 1964; R. Morse (ed.), *The Bandeirantes. The Historical Role of the Brazilian Pathfinders*, N.Y., A.A. Knopf, 1965.

<sup>13</sup> Hatch, N.O., *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977; Perry Miller, *The American Puritans*, (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1956); see also A. Heimart and A. Delbanco, eds. *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985); R. Kent Fielding and Eugene Campbell. *The United States: An Interpretative History*, New York: Harper and Row, 1964; Richard Hofstadter, *The Structure of American History*, 2d ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973.

<sup>14</sup> L. Hartz, *The Founding of New Societies*, op. cit.

Yet even within this variety—which became much more pronounced with the Bourbonic reforms in the 18th century and after the wars of independence in the early 19th century—there developed among them certain common basic premises. In place of metaphysical equality it was hierarchy that was emphasized to a much greater extent even than in Counter-Reformation Spain.<sup>15</sup> Even in the open-frontier areas such as the Argentine pampas, Uruguay and Brazilian Rio Grande do Sul regions, in which a much more ‘democratic’ social and economic environment developed, equality was often perceived as part of a problem and not as the solution. The development of such distinct physiognomies continued, even in a transformed way, to predominate for a very long time—possibly until today.<sup>16</sup>

## V

The basic premises of the Northern American, especially the U.S. model, developed out of the transformation of the “messianic” and millennial strands of the early American (later U.S.) socio-political endeavour. A crucial aspect of this new American civilization was the construction of a mould based on a political ideology strongly rooted in the Puritan religious conceptions, in a Lockean political orientation and in the Enlightenment.

It was characterized by the fusion of religious sentiment and religious values with a strong “messianic” and millennial dimension of the early American sociopolitical endeavor, and by the particular combination of solidarity and individualism as central components of collective identity, with strong anti-statist orientation gave rise to a distinct new civil religion.<sup>17</sup>

The Puritan conceptions entailed a strong emphasis on the special covenant between God and the chosen people, a covenant oriented to the creation of a deeply religious polity and yet leading

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<sup>15</sup> B. Siebzehner, “Patterns of Incorporation of the Enlightenment in Spanish America, Mexico and Argentina, 1790–1825”, Ph.D. thesis, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1990; H. Wiarda, *Politics and Social Change*, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> See R. Morse, *The Heritage of Latin America*, op. cit.; H. Wiarda, *Politics and Social Change*, op. cit.

<sup>17</sup> R.N. Bellah, *Beyond Belief*, New York: Harper and Row, 1970, especially Chapter Nine; and idem, *The Broken Covenant*, New York: Seabury Press, 1975; Martin Marty, *Religion and Republic—The American Circumstance*, Boston.

increasingly to the separation of Church from state<sup>18</sup> and around the struggle over equal access to the center.

The polity that developed in the United States was characterized by a strong emphasis on egalitarian, achievement oriented individualism, and on republican liberties, with the almost total denial of the symbolic validity of hierarchy; by the disestablishment of official religion, the weakness of any conception of the "state," by basically anti-statist premises and by the quasi-sanctification of the economic sphere.

A crucial difference between the basic civilizational premises of the United States and those of Europe and many of the Dominions, especially Upper Canada as well as Quebec, has been the former's strong emphasis on the metaphysical equality of all members of the community (brilliantly analysed by de Tocqueville), on egalitarian individualism, and on the almost total denial of the symbolic validity of hierarchy.<sup>19</sup>

Concomitantly, the confrontation between state and society, so central to the European experience, was weakened with society becoming predominant and, in a way, subsuming the state. This was evident for instance in the weakness in the United States of concepts and ideologies of the state (as distinct from those of the people and the republic) or—to use R. Nettl's expression—its very small degree of "stateness," as against the great importance accorded to such conceptions in Continental Europe and in milder form in the British idea of the "Crown" or "Crown in Parliament."<sup>20</sup>

One of the most important aspects of this American civilization has been the openness in principle of the center to all members of the community. Access to the center did not constitute, as in Europe, a focus of ideological and continuous struggle. This had far reaching

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<sup>18</sup> Heimart, A., 1966, *Religion and the American Mind*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Becker, C., 1958, *The Declaration of Independence*. New York: Vintage Press; Haskins, G., 1960, *Law and Authority in Early Massachusetts*, op. cit.; Little, D., 1969, *Religion, Order and Law*. New York: Harper and Row; R. Kent Fielding and Eugene Campbell. *The United States: An Interpretative History*, op. cit.; Richard Hofstadter, *The Structure of American History*, op. cit.; see also A. Seligman, "The Failure of Socialism in the United States, A Reconsideration, in S.N. Eisenstadt, L. Roniger and A. Seligman, *Culture Formation, Protest Movements and Class Structure in Europe and the United States*, London, Frances Printer, 1982, pp. 24–56.

<sup>19</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952.); on the differences between the United States and Canada see S.M. Lipset, *The Continental Divide*, N.Y. Routledge, 1989.

<sup>20</sup> J.P. Nettl, "The State as a Conceptual Variable", *World Politics*, 1968, 20, N.Y.

implications on the structure of protest and consciousness oriented towards the abolition or transformation of hierarchy and the reconstruction of the center which, with the crucial exception of the Civil war, were very weak. Instead a unique combination of highly moralistic and pork-barrel politics emerged, with constant oscillation between them and, in S.P. Huntington's words, the continuous "promise of disharmony"—but a disharmony based on full acceptance of the premises of the center.<sup>21</sup> The reconstruction of the center, in the Jacksonian and New Deal periods, was undertaken through attempts to reestablish such harmony by revising the policies of the center, not its basic premises.

The basic premises of the social order were closely connected with the transformation in far-reaching ways of many institutions brought over from Europe, but also differed, as S.M. Lipset has lately shown in great detail, from the Canadian scene.<sup>22</sup> Thus, to give only a few illustrations, the principles of separation of powers, of checks and balances between the executive, legislative and judiciary, the separation of Church from State, and above all the assumption of popular sovereignty went far beyond what can be found in England or Canada. At the same time, the representative and legal institutions, as well as religious and educational associations acquired an autonomy far beyond that which they enjoyed in the homeland; they became the major arenas in which institutional implications of the values of the new order were played out, with the legal institutions acquiring a central place in the overall framework of the society unparalleled in any European country.

## VI

The basic premises of political order and of collective identity crystallized in Latin Americas in patterns in many ways contrary—in a mirror-image way. In close relation to the characteristics of the settlers and the "settling" institutions, there took place in Latin America—albeit to different degrees in various places—a far-reaching transformation of the hierarchical components prevalent within the premises

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<sup>21</sup> S.P. Huntington, 1981, *American Politics. The Promise of Disharmony*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press.

<sup>22</sup> S.M. Lipset. *The Continental Divide*, op. cit.



of the European societies, including the Spanish and Portuguese ones. In contrast to these European societies, in which even the Counter-Reformation was not able to do away entirely with egalitarian, autonomous, or communal components in the political arena, there developed a strong emphasis on hierarchical principles with at least initial transposition of the egalitarian orientations above all to other-worldly religious spheres. These were almost mirror images of those that took place in North America.

In many ways it was in Latin America that the Thomist hierarchical conceptions become fully institutionalized, not only in the curricula of universities, but also—far beyond the situation in Spain or Portugal—in the overall conception of the social order and in the political realm.<sup>23</sup> Later, as the Spanish empire disintegrated and the wars of independence mobilized wide social strata there did develop, a new combination between the hierarchical and the egalitarian principles, especially following the promulgation of constitutions that recognized formal equality in the independent Republics that however still maintained hierarchical structures in most arenas of social life.

The most important such transformation in limited pattern that developed in the Latin American countries was the crystallization of the patrimonial state characterized by a central contrast and tension between attempts by very great overall administrative centralization, together with de facto decentralization and continuously growing power of local forces. Given the wide geographic spread of the Empires—especially of the Spanish one—and a lack of autonomous access of the active cohorts of the population to the centers of power and of resources, paradoxically there developed within this centralized patrimonial state a *high de facto* measure of local autonomy,<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> H. Wiarda, *Politics and Social Change*, op. cit.; B. Siebzehner, *Patterns of Incorporation of Enlightenment*, op. cit.; J.H. Elliott, *Spain and its World*, op. cit., esp. *Part I*, pp. 7–27; Haring, C.H., 1963, (c. 1947) *The Spanish Empire in America*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.; Parry, J.H., 1973 (c. 1966), *The Spanish Seaborne Empire*. London: Penguin Books.

<sup>24</sup> M. Gongora, *El Estado en el derecho Indiano. Epoca de fundaci?n*. Santiago: Universidad de Chile, 1951; Wiarda, 1964, op. cit.; Sc. H.M. Harrell, *The Hidalgo Revolt*, Westpoint, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1966; B.R. Hannef, *Roots in Insurgency. Mexican Regions 1750–1824*. Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1986; W.B. Taylor, *Banking, Homicide & Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages*. Stanford, Cal.” Stanford University Press, 1979; J.L. Phelan, “Authority and Flexibility in the Spanish Imperial Bureaucracy,” *Administrative Science Quarterly*, V. 6, pp. 730–60, 1960; S.A. Zavala, *Las Instituciones juridicas en la conquista de America*. Mexico, D.F.: Editorial Porrua, 1971

but without any principled autonomous access to the center in the form, for instance, of representative institutions. Rather, access was built on connections and clientelistic avenues that developed across class lines in highly stratified communities.

Concomitantly there developed in the Latin Americas some very important changes, in comparison with Spain and Portugal, in the nature and relative importance of the major institutional arenas. Thus one of the major European political institutions, namely the representative ones, which were replaced by a combination of royal *audiencias* and various local arrangements was abolished.<sup>25</sup> A highly legalistic culture resulted, in which the legal institutions were embedded in the hierarchical patrimonial structure and conceptions. Legal, cultural and educational institutions such as the universities were brought under royal control in the Spanish Empire to a much greater extent than in Spain itself to become among the most important promoters of absolutist doctrines.

## VII

In parallel to the differences in the premises of social order and to the differences in institutional dynamics that developed in these societies, redeveloped also far-reaching differences in the patterns of collective identity that developed in the Americas.

The new collective identity that crystallized in the U.S. around a political ideology rooted in a combination of religious conceptions of the Puritans (especially their ideology of the covenant) and the premises, especially the legal premises, of natural law and of common law, of the English tradition of the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the radical thought of the Commonwealth.<sup>26</sup> This ideology transformed these conceptions and premises into components of a new collective identity, of a new constitutional order, and ultimately of a new "civil religion." It was such transformation that constituted the crux of the American revolution and distinguished it from other wars of independence, not only the later ones in Europe or Asia in

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(c. 1935); T.E. Anna, *The Fall of the Royal Government in Mexico City*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978.

<sup>25</sup> S.A. Zavala, 1971, op. cit.; M. Gongora, *Studies in the Colonial History of Spanish America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (trans. by R. Southern).

<sup>26</sup> See B. Bailyn 1967 White 1978 Ball and Pollock 1988.

the nineteenth and especially the twentieth century, but even from the Latin American ones.

Truly enough within this American creed, the conception of territory and of peoplehood were indeed very strong—promulgated very much in Biblical terms of “Promised Land” and “Chosen People.” But unlike in the Jewish tradition and in the Zionist movement those terms were couched mostly in religious-ideological and not in primordial terms. The new land was not the land of the Fathers to which one returned. The very constitution of this new political order was conceived by the settlers as an act of great innovation of universal significance—not as continuation of the former history of their countries of origin.

The construction of this collective identity entailed the delineation of very sharp and rather exclusivist boundaries of the collectivity, structured according to the basic premises of the American civil religion. Primordial (“ethnic”) orientations or hierarchical principles could be permitted in secondary informal locations, but not as components of the central premises and symbols of the society. Thus, the U.S. civil religion could not easily accommodate native Americans, with their overwhelming primordial identity, completely unrelated to the new ideological framework, and claiming a totality of its own. Hence the Indians basically remained outside the new collectivity.

The patterns of collective identity that developed in the Latin Americas differed greatly from the one in North America. Although originally the Spanish (and Portuguese) Empires aspired to establish a unified homogeneous Hispanic (or Portuguese) collective identity focused on the motherland, in fact, in Latin America, a much more diversified situation developed.<sup>27</sup> Already from relatively early on there developed multiple components of collective consciousness and identity—the overall Spanish, the overall Catholic, different local “Creole,” and “native” ones.

At the same time, the strong hierarchical statist orientation that developed in most Latin American countries was not, significantly

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<sup>27</sup> Elliot, J.H., “Introduction: Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World”, pp. 3–15; Schwartz, S.B., “The Formation of Colonial Identity in Brazil”, pp. 15–51; Pagden, A. “Identity Formation in Spanish America”, pp. 51–95; in Canny, N. & Padgen, A. (eds.), *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World*, Princeton Univ. Press, N.J. 1987; see also S.N. Eisenstadt, The U.S. and Israel, a Chapter in Comparative Analysis in, idem, *Jewish Civilization—The Jewish Historical Experience in a Comparative Perspective*, Albany, N.Y. Press, 1992.

enough, connected with the development of a strong commitment to the political realm as a major focus of implementation of the premises of the transcendental order or of collective identity. Hence, side by side with the formal hierarchical principles, there developed multiple social spaces structured according to different principles and identities, such as the local frameworks and identities, with relatively shifting boundaries and with the possibility of the incorporation of many of these identities into the central arena. Such possibility was due to the fact that this mode of construction of collective identity entailed a wide-ranging inclusiveness which has made it possible not only to incorporate wide sectors of the Indian population in the overall Catholic and local identities, but also enabled them to develop, at least in countries such as Mexico, Brazil and to a smaller extent Bolivia and Colombia, a rather special type of cultural resurgence and even reintegration into the center after the traumatic experiences of the conquest.

In this context it is, of course, necessary to point out, even if only as starting points for further systematic research, the great differences among the Latin American societies themselves. A good point of departure would be a differentiation in terms of the ethnic and cultural composition of their populations. In such terms, significant differences exist between the countries of Indoamerica such as Peru, Mexico, Ecuador and Bolivia, with highly hierarchical compositions that included Indian lower classes, mestizo middle classes and predominantly Spanish and in some cases mestizo elites; the Euroamerican countries such as Argentina and Uruguay that attracted immigration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; the more homogeneous mestizo countries such as Chile and Colombia; and the complex multiracial societies with a pronounced Afro-American element, such as in Brazil, Cuba and some of the Caribbean areas.

## VIII

The central institutional focus of the crystallization of these different characteristics of the premises of social and institutional patterns epitomized the distinctive features of these modern civilizations, of those distinct multiple modernities, was related to the structure of elites and of ruling groups that developed in the Americas, in conjunction with the process of settlement in them and their colonization. In

North America—in the colonies as in the United States—different, usually highly autonomous elites could become the bearers of the major cultural orientations and premises in all arenas of social life and the access to elite activities was open in principle to all members of the community. All social actors had the potential to become elites; ascriptive bases of status were weak, and later became almost totally delegitimized. Moreover there developed there a strong populist tendency which minimized the distinctiveness of elite positions and emphasized the potential “elitism” of all members of the community; and there developed only a weak distinction between central and peripheral elites, and a continuous interpenetration between them.

As against this, in Latin America there took place a very far-reaching “deautonomization” of major elites; in place of aristocracy with some autonomous rights of access to the center, as was the case in Europe, it was different oligarchies, dependent in principle on the state—not only for official, legitimate access to “material” resources but above all to prestige and to centers of power—that became predominant. The major elites were internally weak—as evident above all in a relatively low degree of internal solidarity and in the symbolic and sometimes also organizational autonomy of the centres, the major elites, and broader groups of the society. Few fully autonomous political or professional and cultural elites developed here. Most such elites tended to be strongly embedded, especially in mundane affairs, in broader ascriptive groups with little autonomous self-definition and orientation, even when they were already very specialized (e.g., professors or administrative echelons). The professional or guild-like occupational groups envisaged themselves as bearers of a special social standing with regard to some important attributes of the social order, as upholders of distinctive life styles and tradition that were ascriptively defined. Their status perception was often limited to local settings. These groups tended to segregate themselves even from occupationally similar groups as well as from most spheres of social life and participation therein, and to use most of their resources for maintaining their traditional goals and lifestyles.

It was the combination of different definite patterns of elites with the radical transformation of the premises of social order as they developed in the different Americas that does also explain the transformation of the institutional arenas in them—namely, as we have seen, with the growing importance and autonomization of the representative and legal institutions, as well as religious and educational

associations in the U.S., and with the replacement in Latin America as the representative ones by a combination of royal audiencias and various local arrangements, embedded in the hierarchical patrimonial structure and conceptions.<sup>28</sup>

## IX

While it was the combination of their respective European backgrounds and the characters of the settlers that accounted to a large extent for the specific institutional premises and conceptions of political and social order that developed in the American societies, the social and political dynamics that developed within them were greatly influenced by other factors as well. The most important among these factors was the encounter and continual interaction between the European settlers, the native Americans, and the slave population of uprooted Africans. Of special importance in this context was the mode of incorporation of the "native" populations in the colonial frameworks: the place of the imported slaves and the patterns of plantations that developed in these societies. In the Northern American States the Northern American colonies, the "native" Americans did not play a very significant economic role, and slavery was of relatively small importance, but in the Southern states where plantations based on slave labor were crucially important. The economies of most regions of the Spanish Empire in their formative period, though showing important differences, their economies were based on forced labor, where slavery was of relatively small importance. The Portuguese empire, and the Caribbean plantation societies, show yet different characteristics.

The composition of these populations, especially the relations between the representatives of the mother countries, and the white settlers who settled in these new territories; the Indians, and the Africans, developed in markedly different ways in these societies. These differences have greatly affected the development and political dynamics of different American societies, in particular the patterns of formation and transformation of the criteria of membership into, and exclusion from, the national communities; changes in the

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<sup>28</sup> S.A. Zavala, 1971, op. cit.; M. Gongora, *Studies in the Colonial History of Spanish America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (trans. by R. Southern).

patterns of class and ethnic stratification, of social and political inclusion and exclusion.

## X

The egalitarian ethos, rooted in deep religious Puritan orientations in the United States was closely related to a strong linear conception of relations between social roles and spaces, rooted in the more rationalistic traditions of Enlightenment approach to ontological and social reality.<sup>29</sup> This ethos entailed very sharp delineation of basic boundaries of social spaces—the public and the private, family and workplace, etc., strongly formal-legal definitions of social relations and institutional arenas and the full institutionalization of the general abstract concept of citizenship, all very closely attuned to a highly utilitarian individualism and pragmatism.

The hierarchical ethos of Latin America was based on a combination of totalistic, hierarchical principles, with strong tendencies to what may be called topological, as against purely linear, ways of constructing social spaces. Consequently there arose a strong tendency to overlapping between such spaces and to blurring the boundaries between many them, to relational as against formal, legal definitions of the social nexus. Formal legal definitions were embedded in interpersonal relations; formal relations, while disembedded from, for instance, citizenship, had a markedly negative connotation, as in the Brazilian adages, “Everything for friends, for my enemies—the law”; “And do you know to whom are you talking?” Between the formal and informal definitions, between the “relational” hierarchical criteria and the egalitarian and individualistic ones, formally espoused in the constitutions and the legal systems, there existed a continuous unresolved tension, sometimes evolving into a disjunction between the formal underpinnings and the practical ground rules of society.<sup>30</sup>

Looking at these differences in the construction of collective identities in the Americas from the vantage point of Brazil, anthropologist

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<sup>29</sup> S. Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, New York, The Free Press, 1990.

<sup>30</sup> See L. Roniger, *Hierarchy and Trust in Mexico and Brazil*. New York: Praeger, 1990; L. Roniger and Mario Sznajder, *The Legacy of Human-Rights Violations in the Southern Cone*. Oxford University Press, 1999.

Roberto Da Matta presents the following contrast, which is worth quoting at some length:

In both countries [U.S. and Brazil], blacks, whites, and Indians played important roles in territorial conquest, colonization, and creation of a national conscience; but, in the United States social identity was not constructed upon a fable of the three races that shows blacks, whites, and indians to be symbolically complementary. In fact, America was founded on the ideology of the white element. Thus, in order to be an American one must be encompassed by the values and institutions of the "Anglo" world, which retains hegemony and operates in terms of a bipolar logic founded on exclusion. In Brazil, the experience of slavery and of the diverse Indian tribes that occupied the territory colonized by the Portuguese generated a radically different mode of perception. This view is based on the notion of an "encounter" among the three races that occupy differentiated but equivalent positions on an ideological triangle. It divides the Brazilian totality into three complementary and indispensable units, allowing for complex interaction among them. In Brazil, therefore, "Indians," "whites" and "blacks" relate via a logic of inclusion that is articulated on planes of complementary opposition. In this fashion, Brazil can be read as being "white," "black," or "Indian," depending on the aspects of Brazilian culture and society one might wish to accentuate (or negate). Brazilians can say that on the plane of happiness and rhythm, Brazil is "black"; it is "Indian" with respect to tenacity and synchronization with nature; and all of these elements are articulated by a language and social institutions of the "white" element (the Portuguese) that, within this ideological conception, acts as the catalyst that combines them . . . [In Brazil] the values of complementarity, inclusion, and hierarchy are emphasized. Racial ideology follows the same logic as other social institutions, in which an ideological pact hides or disguises differences, thereby making the ideology complementary. But in the United States, the difference is undisguisable and produces a real dilemma, as Gunnar Myrdal taught us. In other words, in the society with an egalitarian credo, race relations reintroduce hierarchy by way of a natural ("racial") code. But in a society whose daily life is founded on inequality, the experience of different ethnicities does not spill out of the personal and quotidian sphere and thus allows for the creation of a fable that treats the three races as complementary.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> R. Da Matta, *For an Anthropology of the Brazilian Tradition. A virfunde esta nomeian, The Wilson Center, Latin American Program, Working Paper*, Washington, D.C. 1990; See also his *Carnivals, Rogues and Heroes*. And Merquior J.G., *On the Historical Position of Latin America*, op. cit. pp. 153-154.



## XI

The basic premises of the political order which have crystallized in the different Americas have also greatly influenced the political dynamics, especially the development of non-hegemonic models of social and political order, patterns of resistance and modes of struggle over the definition of collective identities, political order and public spheres.

These differences were closely related to the some major aspects of the political dynamics, especially of the processes of incorporation of different social sectors within the public sphere and of movements of protest that developed in the different Americas. To give just a few illustrations: In the U.S. elections began from early on as well as the bottom up network of associational life constituted continual and relatively orderly components of the constitutional-democratic order. As against this, in Latin America elitist and populist parameters crystallized that later on were transformed into corporatist patterns and into popular, massive participative waves that destabilized the politics and generated recurrent waves of repression and democratization in these societies. In Canada, we find a pattern of elitist and rather ultramontane shaping of political order in Quebec at least until the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s as well as a distinctive pattern of elitist but responsible representative government in English Canada, especially in Ontario and West Canada, and more traditional and clientelistic-prone patterns in the provinces of the Maritimes.

Related to the above, the orientations and characteristics of the major movements of protest and the conceptions and practice of revolutions have differed greatly in the various American civilizations. The North American (U.S.) model was shaped along lines that reduced the appeal of Leftist "socialist" ideas of revolution and dynamized the potential of incorporation of protest through established institutional patterns, as was clearly identified by Wernert Sombart's question in his essay 'Why there is no Socialism in the United States?'. At the same time the social movements that developed in the U.S. were characterized by very strong religious and moralistic orientations. Within most of these movements there could develop, especially in periods of great turbulence, building on the more general potentialities inherent in the American political discourse, very strong utopian orientations, with strong totalistic absolutizing tendencies and potentially very strong restrictive tendencies.

Witch hunting had of course a long tradition in America, and it constituted a continual component in American political life and discourse, which could indeed easily flourish in many of the fundamentalist and populist movements.

Such totalistic tendencies were not legitimated in the U.S.—as in Europe—in primordial or national terms; or in terms of revolutionary universalistic Jacobinism as was the case in France, but rather in some version of utopian Jacobinism, with a major emphasis on the danger of pollution of the utopian state epitomized by the American Commonwealth. Indeed such totalistic tendencies developed continually in American life, especially in the public arena, and they could give rise to strong legalistic-moralistic fundamentalistic orientation and activities in the central political arena.

By contrast, in the Latin American context with the continual tensions between the hierarchical mode of political order and the strong egalitarian pressure in the public sphere, the appeal of socialism and other radical leftist ideologies was great, especially among intellectuals and the young generations, influencing the specific modes of incorporation of protest and of repression. In sharp contrast to the North American pattern of continuity of the constitutional democratic order, the Latin American patterns were characterized by recurrent political openings followed by subsequent breakdowns of democratic regimes and the installment of authoritarian governments led either by personalist leaders or by the heads of the armed forces. Interestingly enough, the elitist, hierarchical traits of the Canadian pattern allowed for the emergence of left-wing protest and third-force parties that mobilized grievances and elicited programs of reform based upon a class consciousness of Canadian society. But to the extent that “leftist” conception has had an important effect on the political sphere, this influence has been articulated by political forces and parties such as the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation and the NDP that muted very early their radical critic of Canadian society and have seldom offered a radical challenge to the Canadian political order. As such, they did not affect the basic institutional stability of that society, in spite of thorny inter-provincial conflicts and recently, constitutional crises.

Of special interest in this context is the comparative study of populism, of populist movements and themes in the political dynamics of the different Americas. In this respect, while the Latin American variants followed hierarchical orientations that stressed the central

place of presidential or quasi-presidential leadership in the mobilization of masses and a state-centred pattern of mobilization and redistributive policies. In many Latin American countries populist movements and leaders constituted very important agents in the incorporation of social sectors and in the restructuring of public order, very often under the auspices of authoritarian styles of government and regimes. In contrast to them, the North American and the Canadian counterparts appeared as more egalitarian and, in some cases, more oriented to the enlargement of civil liberties.

Closely related to these differences in the political dynamics have been the transformation in the Americas of meanings of social and political concepts originated in Europe such as "left" and "right"—liberalism; conservatism and socialism. Illustrative in this context is the comparatively strong elitist nature of "liberal" forces and policies in most Spanish America, where republican elites promulgated a liberal program that sought the replacement of native populations by European immigrants, in an effort to modernize their societies according to their own vision of the European and North American models. In this context, the meaning of liberalism became contrary to the European or the North American settings, and was not connected with the formation of a strong civil society but rather with corporatist, praetorian and conservative patterns of political control. At the same time in the U.S. conservatism developed in a marked anti-statist direction, as against its strong relation to paternalistic states in Europe.

## XII

Concomitantly there developed in the different Americas distinct discourses of modernity, closely related to the cultural self-conceptions of these societies. Of central importance in the discourses of modernity that developed in the settings of the New World from the colonial period through the periods of Independence and the concomitant movements of protest and political dynamics, was their orientations to the mother country and to the centers of Western culture. Such orientations constituted in most of these societies models and reference points to an extent unprecedented in other societies, including later those in Asia. In the Americas, the elites' confrontation with modernity, with the West, did not entail a confrontation with an

alien culture imposed from outside, but a confrontation with their own origins. Such encounters were often combined with a search to find their own distinct place in the broader framework of European or Western civilization. But here also, there developed far-reaching differences between these several societies, which have greatly influenced their perceptions of each other. Here the main distinction is between the U.S., which very quickly developed a self-conception in which the (U.S.) American society was distinct, in a way a self-sufficient center of modernity, and the Latin American societies where the orientation to external centers and the concern with the extent to which they were indeed modern often combined with strong ambivalence to these centers and with searches for alternative modernities, constituted a continual component of their self-conceptions.

In Latin America, such “external”—even if often ambivalent—reference points remained crucial. The enduring importance of these reference points, first in Europe—Spain, France and England—and later, periodically perhaps, the United States, were critical in both associative and reactive terms to the self conception of Latin American societies, as promulgated by intellectuals and by social and political actors. Such considerations became gradually less important in the United States, which saw itself increasingly as the center of modernity and bearer of models to be emulated by other Western societies.<sup>32</sup>

The preceding indications, tentative as they may be, about the distinct characteristics of the major American civilizations provide illustrations of the cultural and institutional parameters around which different modernities crystallize and the processes through which they are crystallized—in principle not only in the Americas but also in other parts of the world.

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<sup>32</sup> See for instance Vivian Schelling (eds.), *Through the Kaladisep: The Experience of Modernity in Latin America*, London: Verso Press, 2000.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

# MIRROR-IMAGE MODERNITIES: CONTRASTING RELIGIOUS PREMISES OF JAPANESE AND U.S. MODERNITY

### COMPARING U.S. AND JAPAN—INTRODUCTION

#### I

Throughout his scholarly career Robert N. Bellah has focused on the analysis of two major societies or civilizations—the Japanese and the U.S.—to the understanding of which he has made seminal contributions.<sup>1</sup> These analyses have been greatly inspired by his overarching and continual concern with religious evolution, with respect to which these two societies stand at opposite extremes. The United States constitutes probably a crucial—if not *the crucial*—illustration of one of the fullest developments from within Axial civilizations—especially that from within which modernity initially emerged; while Japan seemingly constitutes a very close approximation to an almost archaic religion. But at the same time Japan is not just a remnant or survival of an “old” or tribal religion but a dynamic modern society—constituting the great puzzle or paradox of a non-Axial modernization.<sup>2</sup> Hence the comparison between these two societies is of great interest from the point of view of the relations between religious evolution and the comparative analysis of different modern societies or civilizations, and it is to some aspects of such a comparison that I want to address myself in this paper honoring Robert N. Bellah.

Such a comparison is based on a view which explicitly assumes the existence in the contemporary world of multiple modern civilizations.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial*, New York, Seaburg Press, 1975; idem, “Civil Religion in America,” *Daedalus* 96(1), 1967, pp. 1–21; idem, *Tokugawa Religion: The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan*, Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1957; idem, *Tokugawa Religion: The Culture of Modern Japan*, New York, The Free Press, 1985; idem, *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World*, New York, Harper & Row, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative View*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996.

It is a view which goes to no small extent against both the “classical theories” of modernization of the 1950s, as well as to some extent also indeed the classical sociological analyses of Marx, Durkheim and to a large extent even of Weber—or at least one reading of him. These analyses have implicitly or explicitly conflated the different dimensions of modernity. They have assumed, even if only implicitly, that the basic institutional constellations which came together in European modernity and the cultural program of modernity as it developed in the West will “naturally” be ultimately taken over in all modernizing societies. Implicit in all these approaches was the assumption that the modes of institutional integration attendant on the development of relatively autonomous, differentiated institutional spheres, which constitutes the crucial core of modernity, would on the whole be similar in all modern societies.<sup>3</sup>

But the reality that emerged proved to be radically different, calling for a revision of at least some of the assumptions of these studies raising the problem of the nature of the common core found possibly in all modern societies and of the range of variability of the different cultural and institutional patterns that may develop around this common core. It is the contention of this paper that in the explanation of such variable dynamics two aspects of social order, closely related to the religious dimension of social order and culture, are of crucial importance. These aspects have not been fully enough worked out in the social sciences, especially in the analysis of modernization and modern societies: first, the conceptions of basic premises of social and political order and of accountability of authorities rooted in basic ontological conceptions prevalent in the different modern societies; and second, the construction of patterns of collective identity in different modern societies. In this paper I shall analyze the importance of these aspects in two modern societies, one with a seemingly “bronze age” religion or symbolism, and the other possibly most modern one in terms of religious evolution. I shall explore

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<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of these theories see for instance S.N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change and Modernity*, New York, J. Wiley, 1973, 1977; and for a principled view on Multiple Modernities see S.N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities in an Age of Globalization,” In Claudia Honegger, Stefan Hradil and Franz Traxler, *Grenzlose Gesellschaft?*, Opladen, Lesche & Burdrich, 1999, pp. 37–50; and idem, *Die Vielfalt der Moderne: Heidelberger Max-Weber-Vorlesungen*, 1997, Velbruck Wissenschaft, Berlin 2000.

this problem by analyzing a very central aspect of modern political dynamics—namely the structuring and ideologies of movements and themes of protest.

## THE PLACE OF SYMBOLS AND MOVEMENTS OF PROTEST IN MODERNITY

### II

Protest is indeed a central component of modernity, of the modern political programme as it crystallized in the aftermath of the Great Revolutions, incorporating the utopian component that was inherent in these revolutions. This utopian dimension was rooted in the strong eschatological orientations promulgated by the major sects or groups active in the revolutions which attempted, as it were, to bring the Kingdom of God to Earth.<sup>4</sup>

The prevalence of this component gave rise in post-revolutionary modern societies to far-reaching transformation in the symbolism and structure of modern political centers as compared with their predecessors or with the centers of other civilizations. The crux of this transformation was the charismatization of the center as the bearer of the transcendental visions inherent in the cultural program of modernity and the combination of such charismatization with the incorporation of themes and symbols of protest as basic and legitimate components of the premises of these centers, and of their relations with the peripheries of their respective societies.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast with almost every previous civilization, themes and symbols of equality, participation, and social justice became not only elements of protest oriented against the existing center, but also an important component of the political legitimation of *orderly* demands by the periphery on the center.<sup>6</sup> Protest and the possibility

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<sup>4</sup> Eric Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1975; S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies: A Comparative Study of Civilizations*, New York, Free Press, 1978.

<sup>5</sup> H. Blumenberg, *Die Legitimat der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1987; S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Post-Traditional Societies*, New York, Norton, 1972; John W. Meyer, John Boli, Georg Thomas, "Ontology and Rationalization in the Western Cultural Account," in G.M. Thomas, J.W. Meyer, F.O. Ramirez and J. Boli (eds.), *Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society and Individual*, Beverly Hills, Sage, pp. 12–37.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macro-Sociology*, Chicago, University

of transforming some of society's institutional premises were no longer considered illegitimate or marginal aspects of the political process. They become central components of the transcendental vision which promulgated the autonomy of man and of reason. They became central components of modern political discourse and practice. It was indeed the incorporation of such themes into the centers of modern societies that epitomized their status as central components of the transcendental vision of modernity and which heralded the radical transformation of the sectarian utopian visions of earlier times into central components of the political and cultural program. Concomitantly, there developed continual tendencies to permeation of the peripheries by the centers and impingement of the peripheries on the centers, often blurring the distinctions between center and periphery, and incorporating the symbols and demands of protest into the central symbols of the society.

In Europe, where the first major constellations of modern protest crystallized, the revolutions and the numerous movements of protest which developed in the post-revolutionary societies were focused above all around the continual reconstruction of two poles that defined the centers of European societies—namely the tension between equality and hierarchy which was most fully articulated by the various socialist movements, and the construction of the boundaries of collectivities which was carried out by national movements.

Given the fact that it was in Europe that what can be called the drama of modernity was first played out, it has often been assumed (in line with the general emphasis on the convergence of modern societies that was predominant in historical and social science discourse of the fifties and sixties) that these themes constituted the “natural” or “real” types of protest—the yardstick against which protest in other societies should be measured. And yet this was not true either of Japan or of the U.S.—the two modern societies which as we have seen could be perceived as standing at the two ends or poles of religious evolution. In a paradoxical way most of the movements of protest that developed in the United States and Japan shared, in comparison with Europe, a common characteristic—namely, they rarely (with the exception of small groups of intellectuals or

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of Chicago Press, 1975; S.N. Eisenstadt, L. Roniger and A. Seligman, *Centre Formation, Protest Movements, and Class Structure in Europe and the United States*, London, F. Pinter Pub., 1987.



activities) challenged the basic premises of the centers and of the collective identities of their respective societies. But they affirmed the basic premises of their respective societies for different, indeed contrary reasons, constituting as it were mirror images of one another.

How can this fact be explained, and what can such an explanation tell us about the comparative analysis of modern societies and about the development or crystallization of multiple modernities? And what is the bearing of such explanation on central problems of sociological analysis?

### SOME DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS OF PROTEST IN THE U.S.

#### III

Protest was indeed built in into the very premises and the institutional framework of the American political program as promulgated in its "myth" or creed—to use Robert Bellah's famous term, in its "civil religion."<sup>7</sup> But the concrete movements of protest that developed in the U.S. differed greatly from those that developed in Europe or in Japan.

The major visible difference of the American from European (and to some extent Japanese) movements of protest was the fact that the two major types of social movements that developed in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—the socialist one, with its very strong class symbolism, and the various nationalist ones—did not, despite many attempts, especially by different groups of intellectuals and to some extent workers' groups, occupy the center-stage of the political arena as they did in Europe, or develop into full-fledged parties of the European type.

True enough the development of industrial capitalism gave rise to many movements of workers or of farmers who saw themselves pushed out by the processes of industrialization, to the development of national capital markets, and to continual intensive industrial conflict.<sup>8</sup> But these movements, as well as the various socialist groups

<sup>7</sup> Bellah, *Civil Religion in America*, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Frank Dobbin, *Forging Industrial Policy: The United States, France, and Britain in the Railway Age*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994; F. Dobbin, John Sutton, John Meyer, Richard W. Scott, "Equal Opportunity Law and the Construction of Internal Labor-Markets," *American Journal of Sociology*, 99, 1993, pp. 396-427.

which mushroomed, especially after the Civil War, didn't give rise to European-type "class-movements." While there developed a continuing alliance between union organizations and the Democratic party, this was of a different nature than the almost total integration of unions in social democratic (and Labor) parties in Europe and the promulgation of clear socialist programmes by the latter.

Class consciousness did indeed develop among many sections of the working classes but it did not fully burgeon into a central component of a full-fledged country-wide political movement. Significantly enough the numerous socialist programs or movements that developed in this period, especially among intellectuals, tended to promulgate the more "utopian" type of socialism rather than class-oriented and/or social-democratic ones.<sup>9</sup> It was indeed this failure that constituted the central theme of Sombart's famous book *Why is there no socialism in the United States?*<sup>10</sup>

In a parallel way, no national or nationalist movements developed in the U.S. Truly enough already throughout the nineteenth and at least the first half of the twentieth century, distinct American (U.S.) collective identity, which can be designated as a national one; with strong emphasis on American "manifest destiny" later disqualified as the American way of life was continually promulgated by the major socializing agencies—schools, churches, various associations, and by many agencies designed to Americanize immigrants. But all these emphasized the common American identity and no distinct potentially separatist national movement, the likes of which burgeoned in Europe, developed.

True enough the late nineteenth century was a period of growing racial tension, reinforced by the industrialization of the South and the flow of Black workers to the North, and accompanied by growing racial ideologies promulgated by the Ku Klux Klan and by fascist movements in the thirties. At the same time in the U.S. ethnic organizations and associations developed from the middle of the nineteenth century, possibly even before, and by the twentieth cen-

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<sup>9</sup> Dorothy Ross, "Socialism and American Liberalism: Academic Social Thought in the 1880s," *Perspectives in American History*, 11, 1978, pp. 7–79.

<sup>10</sup> W. Sombart, *Why is there no Socialism in the United States?*, White Plains, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1976; Kim Voss, *The Making of American Exceptionalism: The Knight of Labor and Class Formation in the Nineteenth Century*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993; Dobbin, *Forging Industrial Policy*, op. cit.

tury they were quite visible on the American scene. In several cases, such as the Irish, Italian and the Jewish ones, the ethnic and religious dimensions coincided. But even these ethnic or ethnic-religious associations, however important they might have been in mobilizing support for any party, or in influencing its policies, have not succeeded in occupying the center-stage of the political scene in the U.S. or in creating a distinct political party or becoming a central and continuing organizational component of any party<sup>11</sup> (although, of course, they have been a continual component of especially the Democratic one).

As against socialist, class-oriented, and national movements and themes of protest, there developed in the U.S. a multiplicity of political movements of reform and populist movements such as the Progressive ones (1890–1920), the Populists in the 1890s, and the Prohibitionists in the second and third decades of the 20th century, as well as religious movements, out of which later developed the fundamentalist movements.<sup>12</sup>

## PROTEST AND THE AMERICAN VISION

### IV

As in Europe, and as we shall see in contrast to Japan, these movements were imbued with very strong transcendental and utopian orientations, according to which they measured social and political reality—and found it wanting. But unlike in Europe, and seemingly as in Japan, these movements were not oriented to the reconstruction of the center or of the basic premises of American social order, but rather to their purification—to bringing them up to the fuller realization of the basic utopian vision of the American community, of some of the basic components of the American collective consciousness and political creed—especially the covenantal republican or communitarian ones.

The major themes of protest that developed in the U.S. were set

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<sup>11</sup> Nathan Glazer, *The Limits of Social Policy*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1988.

<sup>12</sup> Paul S. Bayer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820–1920*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1978; Voss, *The Making of American Exceptionalism*, op. cit.

firmly within the basic parameters of the American political and constitutional discourse. These parameters and the tensions that were inherent in the American political tradition also provided the basic framework of protest that developed from very early in the U.S. on and which were very closely interwoven with the continual political discourse.<sup>13</sup>

The groups and individuals promulgating these themes saw themselves as the bearers of the pristine American vision, of its political tradition and discourse, and thus the discourses of protest were continually imbued with highly moralistic themes and tones. Most of these movements upheld the basic premises of the American cultural programme: messianism, this-worldliness, emphasis on active participation in the social order, and commitment to it, and strong future orientation.<sup>14</sup>

These movements were oriented against those aspects of social life which were seen as contaminating the purity of American life: against the pollution of this purity by various evil forces, and against the possible pollution of the original vision of a utopian America. These movements all epitomized, in Huntington's phrase, the "promise of disharmony"—the possibility that reality will not adhere to the pristine vision of American community inherent in the American political system. The most important common denominator of all these movements was that, as Richard Hofstadter and others have pointed out, they did not espouse distinctive competing ideologies. There did not develop a deep polarization between them; they all developed within the basic common American ideology, emphasizing different variants within it.

The two most important polluting forces perceived by these movements were unbridled individualism and the concomitant corruption or dissolution of community life, and the concentration of power and wealth which could exclude large sectors of American society from active and equal participation in political life.

Thus the most prevalent theme in American reform discourse was the criticism of the extremes of selfish individualism, the perception

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<sup>13</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, Luis Roniger and Adam Seligman, eds., *Centre Formation, Protest Movement and Class Structure in Europe and the United States*, London, Frances Printer, 1987.

<sup>14</sup> See I. Arieli, *Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1964.

of such individuals as amoral and as giving rise to the atomization of society. The other such outcry was against the concentration of power and wealth and the inequality generated by such concentration. Such inequality was seen not in class terms but in moralistic terms such as producers against “parasites.” Later on in the twentieth century the attack on monopoly was framed in terms of denial of access to the possibilities of competition, and to the fruits of good life.

Such criticism did not deny the legitimacy of the individual pursuit of wealth but rather described the corrupting effects on the possibility of such pursuit of concentration of wealth or power. The concentration of wealth and power was depicted in individual or organizational terms and not in society-wide structural ones, and denounced as special privilege. It was bigness (of business, of bureaucracy, especially of government) that was the focus. Wealth, power, and bigness (especially of government, of business, of bureaucracy) were the predominant focus of protest, in partial contrast to European political and social discourse in which these categories, while fully recognized, for instance, by G. Mosca, were usually subsumed under such categories as class and to a lesser extent under national or ethnic ones.<sup>15</sup>

These protest movements, the various movements of protest, did not entail negation of the basic individualistic premises of the American ethos, or of inequalities resulting from economic achievement. They entailed only the negation of the excesses of such inequalities—of the claims of the successful to be better—and hence strong ambivalence, but not negation of differences in wealth or power. Both these themes and criticisms could develop from republican constitutional points of view, from a deeply conservative viewpoint as well as within deeply religious or communitarian ones, and they could also become very closely connected with populist themes.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> G. Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, New York, McGraw Hill, 1939.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History*, New York, Basic Books, 1995.

## THE UTOPIAN COMPONENT IN PROTEST MOVEMENTS IN THE U.S.

## V

Very significant for the specificity of the development of themes of protest in the United States was the structure of the utopian visions depicted and promulgated in the "classic" American literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth century—in the works of Thoreau, Melville, Walt Whitman, Emerson and Henry Adams.<sup>17</sup>

Many of these works were inspired by the awareness—often acute—of the contradictions between the pristine, religious or aesthetic ideals of Republican or Protestant individualism and the realities of the extension and growing autonomy of market relations—since the Jackson era and beyond; between "America" the bearer of the American ideals of the American Way—independence, enterprise, opportunity, individualism, expansionism, as against the "United States"—the mundane reality of the nitty-gritty of daily government.

It was the anguished recognition of these contradictions that permeated the works of these authors—and gave rise among them to a search for a utopian "overcoming" [Aufhebung] of this contradiction. But significantly enough these utopian visions did not postulate either a historical process or a metaphysical dimension through which the contradiction could be resolved or transcended—as has been the case in most of the great works of European literature.

All these utopian visions came back to the basic premises of the American Way, to pristine, republican communal visions of "America." This America has been analyzed in recent literary criticism as a highly ideological, middle class vision. But significantly this middle class was not fettered as was European bourgeoisie's confrontation with a strong feudal, aristocratic tradition—and it was this middle class that promulgated visions of the transhistorical fulfillment of a pristine utopia which could be portrayed as the bearer of "spiritual" forces in danger of being contaminated by the market and by community—eroding individualization. As Leo Marx has indicated, the visions of pastoralism which was a central theme in this utopia contributed to its transhistorical conception.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> S. Berkovitz—"Afterword" in S. Bercovitch and M. Jehy (eds.), *Ideology and Classic American Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987-1996.

<sup>18</sup> Leo Marx, "Pastoralism in America," in S. Bercovitch and M. Jehlen (eds.), *Ideology and Classic American Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994,

## MOVEMENTS OF PROTEST IN THE U.S.

## VI

These themes, which were very often couched in terms of the basic premises of the American creed and of American constitutional discourse, animated almost all the movements of protest that developed in the U.S.—with each movement naturally emphasizing different themes and combining them with different concrete social and economic ones, which naturally greatly varied in different periods.

There developed of course many differences among these movements—differing symbolic credos oriented to upholding the utopian purity of the American community, and giving often rise to highly acrimonious relations among them, even if not—at least not until lately—to the questioning of the image of this purity, of the basic utopian vision of America, of the premises of the American order.

Especially in periods of great turbulence, these movements could develop very strong utopian orientations, with strong totalistic absolutizing tendencies and potentially very strong restrictive orientations which could lead to witchhunting—which of course had a long tradition in America. These tendencies to totalistic orientations and witchhunting constituted a continual component in American political life and discourse, which could indeed easily flourish in many of the fundamentalist and populist movements.

MOVEMENT OF PROTEST IN JAPAN—A BRIEF COMPARISON  
WITH EUROPE

## VII

The movements of protest that developed in modern Japan under the impact of modernization were on the face of it very similar to those that developed in Europe. This is especially true of movements for citizens' rights to greater participation in the political arena, and the various labor and socialist movements. National or ethnic movements were of much less importance—due above all to the relative success of the Meiji state building on previous developments under

the Tokugawa, in promulgating and institutionalizing the conception of the Japanese nation as a national collectivity constructed in primordial terms, and made easier by the relative—indeed only relative—ethnic homogeneity of large sectors of Japanese society.<sup>19</sup>

It was above all in the period after the Second World War, given the democratization of the regime, that numerous movements of protest emerged into the open. In this period the various oppositional movements—especially the communist and socialist ones, which were illegal in the earlier periods—became fully legitimized and could openly participate in the political process. In this period there emerged in the public sector relatively strong connections between socialist politicians and intellectuals and working class organizations. There was also a rise in class consciousness among large sectors of industrial workers, and political class movements developed with some trade unions playing an important role in them.<sup>20</sup>

These movements and parties were more prominent than their counterparts in the United States. In contrast to the United States, the Marxist and Socialist parties and a fairly radical Communist party were able, throughout the post-war period, to mobilize around a third of the votes (36% in 1958, and 32% in 1992).<sup>21</sup> But they certainly did not follow the European pattern. Only in the 1993 elections did the socialist party emerge as a strong and potentially innovative force attempting to transform the center.<sup>22</sup>

The most intensive development of various movements of protest took place in the late forties and early 50s. It was also in this period that many such movements—especially labor ones—became both radical and relatively widespread, in many ways reminiscent of European socialist and labor movements. It was also in this period that labor and socialist parties became fully legalized, signalling the

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<sup>19</sup> S. Vlastos, "Opposition Movements in Early Meiji, 1869–1885," in M.B. Jansen, ed., *Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 5, *The Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 369–431; Y. Sugimoto, "Structural Sources of Popular Revolts and the Tobaku Movement at the Time of the Meiji Restoration," *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 34, No. 4, 1975, pp. 875–890.

<sup>20</sup> R. Scalapino, *The Early Japanese Labor Movement*, Berkeley, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1983.

<sup>21</sup> J. Livingston, J. Moore, and F. Oldfather (eds.), *Postwar Japan. 1945 to the Present*, New York, Random House, 1973.

<sup>22</sup> To some extent this was made possible by the differences between the electoral systems of the two societies. The Socialist and Communist parties did not become, except for a very short period, part of the ruling coalition.



possibility of a social-democratic, if not socialist, order emerging in Japan.<sup>23</sup>

At the same time throughout this period there developed many other movements on the local as well as, to some extent, on the national scene—numerous citizens and ecological movements, women's movements, and numerous movements of local opposition. Such movements have continued to sprout and have become an integral part of the Japanese political scene. Some of these movements were also connected with opposition political parties which were often very prominent locally.<sup>24</sup> In the late sixties and early seventies, the worldwide wave of student unrest swept through Japan, giving rise to intensive student radicalism.<sup>25</sup>

There also burgeoned in Japan a rather special type of religious movements with strong roots in the Tokugawa period—the so-called New Religions which played a very central role in the cultural and political life in Japan in that period.<sup>26</sup>

Within many of these movements—especially perhaps among the student radicals—and later on among the extreme terrorist groups, there also developed a growing tendency to confrontations, sometimes violent, with the authorities, and to litigation, undermining the picture of a society based on harmonious consensus. Such confrontational themes were usually expressed in terms of denial of the moral legitimation of the authorities, among them of having abandoned the trust with which they had been endowed.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> R. Scalapino, *The Early Japanese Labor Movement*, op. cit.

<sup>24</sup> See in G. Bernstein (ed.), *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600–1945*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990, especially the following articles: L. Dasplcia Rodd, "Yosano Akiko and the Taishō Debate Over the 'New Women'," pp. 175–198; B. Molony, "Activism Among Women in the Taishō Cotton Textile Industry," pp. 217–238; M. Silverberg, "The Modern Girl as Militant," pp. 239–260.

See also O. Kasza, "The State and the Organization of Women in Pre-War Japan," *The Japan Foundation Newsletter*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1990, pp. 9–13; V. Buckholter-Traschel, *Different Modes of Articulation of Social Protest: Social Movements in Japan*, Kyoto, Kyoto International Student House, 1984.

<sup>25</sup> E. Krauss, *Japanese Radicals Revisited: Student Protest in Post-War Japan*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1974; idem, K. Steiner and S. Flanagan (eds.), *Political Opposition and Local Politics in Japan*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980.

<sup>26</sup> S.H. Neill McFarland, *The Rush Hour of the Gods: A Study of New Religious Movements in Japan*, New York, MacMillan, 1967; Shiseyoshi Murakami, *Japanese Religion in the Modern Century*, trans. H. Byron Earhart, Tokyo, University of Tokyo Press, 1983; C. Blacker, "Millenarian Aspects of the New Religions in Japan," in D. Shively, ed., *Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1971.

<sup>27</sup> T. Ishida, "Conflict and Its Accommodation: Omote-Ura and Uchi-Soto

There developed also a wide range of highly critical social discourses and artistic activities—as for instance the new “proletarian” theatre that developed especially in the period after the war, or many “critical” films. In many cases, intellectuals participated in movements of protest, or in protest demonstrations, such as those connected with the Peace Treaty, and much later on, towards the end of the Showa period, in for instance the behavior of the Meiji Gakuin University on the occasion of the death of the Sh\_wa Emperor—when it initiated a series of open lectures and discussions on the emperor system and did not fly the flag at half-mast.<sup>28</sup>

But however great the similarities between the political, labor and social movements in Japan and Europe, there were some very important differences between them. These differences can be identified both in the aims of these movements and in the nature of their impact on the broader society.

The Japanese movements were not able to attain that type of prominent role in politics that such movements did in Europe.

The socialist and Communist movements were not able to form the government or after 1955 even to participate in it or to shape its policies. These movements—especially the socialist party—did not undermine, at least until 1993, the hegemony of the LDP, and even in 1993 the LDP lost its majority through the defection of many groups from within it, and not through the challenge of the socialists.

From about the mid-fifties the socialist and labor movements split, and its central core, the socialist party, lost its original impetus and became seemingly domesticated by the evolving Japanese political system. The same may be claimed for the latter movements.

These movements could not restructure the premises of the center in terms of some universalistic or transcendental principles, in the way socialist movements were able to do so in Europe, where they imbued the center with their symbols, influenced its politics directly and participated in the formulation and implementation of these policies. Nor were they able to change the modes of decision making, or to give rise to a more autonomous civil society and pub-

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Relations,” in E. Krauss, T. Rohlen, and P. Steinhoff, eds., *Conflict in Japan*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1984, pp. 16–38.

<sup>28</sup> See Yoshikaru Sakamoto, “The Emperor System as a Japanese Problem, The Case of Meiji Gakuin University”, *Prime Occasional Papers*, No. 5, 1989, Yokohama, Japan.

lic arena—even if they did broaden the range of public discourse.<sup>29</sup>

True enough, many intellectuals and leaders of these movements espoused such principles, but they were not very successful. Repression of course played a very important role in their lack of success—but repression was not unique to the Japanese state; it could be found in all modern capitalist constitutional regimes. What was more characteristic of Japan was how difficult many of these leaders found it to mobilize support for such principled confrontation.

#### MOVEMENTS OF PROTEST IN JAPAN AND THE CREATION OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SPACES

### VIII

As against their relative weakness in direct confrontations with the center, most of these movements were quite successful not only in achieving their concrete aims but above all in the creation of social and cultural spaces. They have also opened up new spaces of public discourse, new types of associations, and new lifestyle possibilities—as for instance for women in many middle and upper middle sectors.<sup>30</sup> As was also the case in earlier periods with respect to the impact of Confucianism and Buddhism in Japan, they also succeeded in constructing areas of social action and cultural creativity in which the hegemonic rules were not predominant—even if these spaces were segregated from the central ones. In these spaces new types of sophisticated discourse and new levels of reflexivity were generated. Here many of the seemingly repressed, rebellious and subversive themes, like equality and commonality, have been able to find expression, and many different new life styles with some liminal potentialities have developed.

One of the most fascinating illustrations of this process is the development of the many New Religions which have burgeoned since the late Tokugawa period. Those which were to some extent suppressed in the early Meiji period and during the military regime, but have

<sup>29</sup> J.V. Koschmann, ed., *Authority and the Individual in Japan: Citizen Protest in Historical Perspective*, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1978.

<sup>30</sup> M. Hamabata, "Ethnographic Boundaries: Culture, Class and Sexuality in Tokyo," *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1986, pp. 354–371; R. Smith, "Gender Inequality in Contemporary Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1987, pp. 1–26.

again flowered after the Second World War. While many of these movements evinced very strong millennialian tendencies, utopian orientations were very weak, if present at all. These movements—even when they have become engaged in politics—have but rarely challenged the existing order. They have evinced very strong this-worldly orientations, without developing critical orientations rooted in some transcendental universalistic visions or principles transcending the given order.<sup>31</sup>

Even beyond the creation of such spaces, these movements have greatly broadened the scope of the political agenda and political discourse in Japan. Even when in the Meiji and Taisho eras and in the mid-fifties, many themes or demands were suppressed in the public arena of discussion, it did not mean that they went into total oblivion. The fate of the various themes promulgated by the Taisho liberals provides a good illustration. The themes they articulated had far-reaching impact, as Sharon Nolte has shown in her recent study of Liberalism in Japan, and as has been even more fully illustrated in a recent collection of studies on “Culture and Identity” edited by T. Rimer, which deals with Taisho intellectuals.<sup>32</sup> Themes of liberalism, freedom of the press, women’s rights, social problems and the like, and a general, if diffuse, emphasis on equality remained on the public agenda in one way or another, and were not entirely removed from political, literary or ideological discourse.<sup>33</sup> Rather, they were discussed and debated orally and in specialized publications among intellectual groups as well as in more general publications. Through them very wide arenas of new discourse were generated in Japanese society.

Second, many of these themes were incorporated into the predominant ideology, the carriers of which often portrayed themselves as having solved the issues raised by these themes in the “proper” Japanese way. Throughout these periods new types of discourse and social consciousness as continuously developed, including potentially subversive themes promulgated in the name of an “autonomous” mature anti-statist view. Some of these could merge with the roman-

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<sup>31</sup> H. Harootunian, “Late Tokugawa Culture and Thought,” in M.B. Jansen, ed., *Cambridge History of Japan*, op. cit., pp. 168–259.

<sup>32</sup> T. Rimer, ed., *Culture and Identity*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990.

<sup>33</sup> S. Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1987.

tic stances of the folklorists, others developed in a more “rational” or humanistic direction.

## THE DOUBLE-PRONGED IMPACT OF MOVEMENTS OF PROTEST IN JAPAN

### IX

The preceding analysis attests to the double-pronged impact of movements of protest—as indeed of broader movements of change in modern and contemporary Japan. Such double edged process has generated new modes of discourse and has given rise to many “segregated” sectors of action as well as to a growing reflexivity, in which new types of cultural and social activities have flourished, and the awareness of many alternative cultural and social possibilities has been heightened. Above all, new social spaces have been created in which many new patterns of economic and social activities, modes of cultural creativity and patterns of discourse could develop. On the other hand, however, these movements were not able, or willing, to aim at the reconstruction of the center of the basic premises of Japanese collectivity in terms of transcendental and/or universalistic principles transcending the given reality.

## PROTEST IN THE U.S. AND IN JAPAN—COMPARATIVE INDICATIONS

### X

We face thus a very interesting and complex picture. In both Japan and the U.S. there developed dynamics of protest markedly different from the “classical” European picture. In both these modern societies—at different poles of religious evolution—the intensive movements of protest that developed were not oriented to the reconstruction of their respective centers or the boundaries of their respective collectivities, but for almost entirely obverse reasons. In Japan such limitations were rooted in the lack or at least weakness of utopian orientations while in the U.S. these movements of protest were imbued as in Europe with very strong utopian orientations, the limitation derived from the association of the utopian ideal with the core principles of the American cultural center, and the widespread belief that the Americas constituted an already achieved utopia. Accordingly,

despite their shared contrast to European societies, manifest in the lack, in both cases, of attempts at the reconstruction of the center, the modes of confrontation of these movements with with their respective centers differed greatly.

These differences were, of course, of great importance from the point of view of the dynamics of the respective political systems of these two societies. In Japan there developed, to use Muramatsu's expression, "patterned pluralism,"<sup>34</sup> which entailed a relatively "weak state"—a state which does not command but whose working is based on continual consultations with various groups, and in which various consultative bodies play a very crucial role.<sup>35</sup> But such patterned pluralism and weak state did not entail an open public arena. One central aspect of this type of responsive decision making (which necessarily entails continuous negotiations between different participants in such networks) is that it is not easy to identify the one person or group responsible for a decision. Another aspect of such a process is that the deliberations are not easily brought out into the open; also, the relation between any open discussions, for instance in the parliament (Diet) and the considerations guiding the decision making, are tenuous—even more so than in other modern political systems. Similarly, changes in policies, even when undertaken in response to various demands, need not be directly connected with some broad, principled, political issues; they may more often be connected with breakdowns in relations between different networks. The process is, as Gary Allinson indicates, based on a fragmented citizenry, on multiple consultative bodies and on multiple contests between different groups and the authorities.<sup>36</sup>

As against this, in the United States there developed political

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<sup>34</sup> Gary D. Allinson, "Citizenship, Fragmentation, and the Negotiated Polity"; Michio Muramatsu, "Patterned Pluralism under Challenge: The Policies of the 1980s"; Margaret A. McKean, "State Strength and the Public Interest", in Gary D. Allinson and Yasunori Sone (eds.), *Political Dynamics in Contemporary Japan*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 15–105.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

See also Frank Schwartz, "Of Fairy Cloaks and Familiar Talks: The Politics of Consultation," in Gary D. Allinson and Yasunori Sone (eds.), *Political Dynamics in Contemporary Japan*, *ibid.*, pp. 217–242.

T. Ishida, "Emerging or Eclipsing Citizenship? A Study of Changes in Political Attitudes in Postwar Japan," in Miyoei Shinohara (ed.), *Japan Developing Economies*, Institute of Asian Economic Affairs, Tokyo Japan, 1967.

<sup>36</sup> G. Allinson, "Citizenship, Fragmentation and the Negotiated Polity", *op. cit.*

dynamics based on distinct attitudes to authority and to the basic institutional frameworks especially as embodied in the constitution. The strong religious utopian dimension of the American cultural and political programme and the overall ideological format of this programme gave rise to one of the most important aspects of American life—a combination of, on the one hand, a very strong and emphatic acceptance of the basic institutional, especially constitutional framework, with, on the other hand, a very strong suspicion of those in authority and a distrust of government. This generated a very specific combination of moralism and pragmatism in political life. The overall community—the Republic or Commonwealth—and its basic institutional-symbolic frameworks could easily become the embodiment of the charismatic-utopian search for the pure unpolluted community, while the concrete political process, including both political institutions and office-holders, became the focus of mistrust. Such mistrust was closely connected to the very strong populist orientations prevalent in America and could give rise to the search for participatory politics undiluted by the political process—a theme promulgated lately for instance by Ross Perot with his emphasis on symbolic electronic town meetings.

This attitude to authority was also closely related to the great concern about distribution of power, manifest not only in the separation between the executive, the legislative and the judiciary—important as they were—but also in discourse about the “spatial” locus of sovereignty—epitomized in the problem of federalism, of the relation between the central and the state governments, especially between the Union and the States. This problem, which constituted a continuous focus of American political discourse about the “separation of powers,” was not really about the appropriate technical arrangements for the distribution of resources and authority between the central, federal power and the local level. It has basically been an argument about the locus of sovereignty, the nature and scope of political participation, and the nature of the national community.

This attitude to authority was very closely related to a more general characteristic of American politics and political discourse—a continual oscillation between a pragmatic, “realistic” attitude most fully epitomized in pork-barrel politics and in the very unsentimental, sometimes brutal attitude to the political game, and a highly moralistic, often missionary, self-justifying and sanctimonious attitude.

Such a combination of absolutizing idealism and pragmatism and

the oscillation between the two also characterized the conduct of foreign affairs and even of wars—and of attitudes to them.

Thus we see that while the movements of protest that developed in the U.S. and in Japan shared—in contrast to those in Europe—the absence or at least weakness of attempts to reconstruct the centers and collective boundaries of their respective societies, yet they differed—in a mirror-image way—in their basic orientations to these centers and in their impact on them. The movements in the U.S. frequently confronted the center, in highly principled transcendental terms, by claiming that it did not live up to its basic premises, but did not aim to reconstruct these premises or those of the American collective identity. In Japan it was not the attempt to confront the center—but the creation of new cultural and social spaces—that characterized most of the movements of protest.

#### PROTEST AND THE PRIMORDIAL COMPONENT IN CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES IN MODERN SOCIETIES—JAPAN

### XI

How can we explain the distinct characteristics of the movements of protest and their impact on the political dynamics that developed in the U.S. and Japan, their commonalities and differences, and their differences from Europe?

It is, as has been indicated above, the major claim of this paper that such an explanation can be found in two dimensions of the construction of social order and which are closely related, albeit in different ways, to central aspects of religion and of religious evolution. These are, first, the modes of the construction of modern collective identities, especially of the place of primordial components in them and second the basic premises of social and political order, especially the conceptions of equality and hierarchy, and of the accountability of authorities.

Such modes of construction of collective identities and premises of social and political order are, in all societies, rooted in the basic cosmological and ontological conceptions promulgated in the respective religions. Such conceptions differ greatly, perhaps above all between non Axial and Axial religions of which Japan and the U.S. constitute prime illustration.



Contrary to the, often implicit, assumptions of theories of modernization, these dimensions of social order cannot be subsumed under the general category of structural differentiation. While always interwoven with the structural one, these dimensions exhibit strong autonomous tendencies which are of crucial importance in shaping the dynamics of different modern societies.

With respect to the place of primordial components of collective identity, conceptions of equality and hierarchy, and the accountability of authorities, Japan and the U.S. stand at two extreme poles closely related to their contrasting religious premises.

In Japan the mode of construction of collective identity and conceptions of authority have in common the weakness of any transcendental criteria and of utopian visions according to which the existing reality can be judged. These are rooted in the basic non-Axial ontological conceptions prevalent in Japan.

Japanese collective identity as it became crystallized throughout Japanese history was above all characterized by principled primordiality, in combination with some weaker elements of civility. Such a conception of collective identity crystallized relatively early (probably in the 8th century) out of Japan's encounter with other societies or civilizations—especially the Chinese one, but to some extent also the Korean one—and with two Axial civilizations, Buddhism and Confucianism, with their universalistic premises. However, the outcome of Japan's encounters with Axial civilizations was the construction of a mode of collective identity which was certainly distinct for instance from the Korean or Vietnamese ones—both of which also came under heavy Buddhist and Confucian pressure. Unlike in the latter cases, where the “local,” “national” identities were, in principle at least, subsumed under the broader Confucian and Buddhist ones, Japan reacted to this encounter by a *principled* denial of these universalistic orientations, and the concomitant principled emphasis on primordial elements.

This conception of a nation under the protection of the deities differed from the Jewish conception of a chosen nation, for instance, and its later transformation in Christianity. The Japanese conception of a divine nation, while it obviously emphasized the sacrality and uniqueness of the Japanese nation, did not characterize its uniqueness in terms of a transcendental and universalistic mission, as was the case in the monotheistic civilizations. In Japan such particularity

did not entail the conception of a responsibility to God to behave according to universalistic precepts or commitments.<sup>37</sup>

The Japanese conception of particularistically sanctioned polity involved commitment to the existing divine-order and its embodiment—the Emperor—but did not entail the possibility of a critical challenge of this order or of the authorities in name of some (transcendental) criteria beyond it.

A closely related pattern developed with respect to the definition of the relations of the Japanese collectivity to other collectivities. Many Japanese intellectuals, elites or influentials acutely sensed the necessity to define the relation of the Japanese nation to others—especially the Chinese—and later in nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the Western civilizations. The conceptions of the Japanese collectivity that developed in such periods entailed very intensive orientation to “others”—China, India, the West—and an awareness of other encompassing civilizations claiming some universal validity. This awareness constituted a central continuous focus of Tokugawa Neo-Confucian discourse.<sup>38</sup> Such orientations, however, did not give rise to a conception of the Japanese collectivity as part of such broader civilizational frameworks, structured according to the universalistic premises prevalent in them. Japan was not seen as one component—even a central one—of such a universalistic framework. At most the Japanese collectivity was held to embody the pristine values enunciated by the other civilizations and which were wrongfully appropriated by them or attributed to them.

Such claims about the superiority of Japan, claims that the Japanese collectivity embodies the pristine virtues proclaimed by “foreign” universalistic religions, were promulgated especially under the Meiji, often together with claims for Japanese hegemony on the East Asian scene. But again these claims did not entertain the possibility that Japan was one—possibly the leading—country in terms of the tran-

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<sup>37</sup> Waida, M., *Buddhism and the National Community*, in: Reynolds, F.E. and Ludwig, T.M. (eds.), *Transactions and Transformations in the History of Religions*, London, E.J. Bailly, 1980.

See also Blacker, C., *Two Shinto Myths: The Golden Age and the Chosen People*, in Henny, C. and Lehman, J.-P. (eds.), *Themes and Theories in modern Japanese History*, Atlantic Highlands, N.J., Athlone Press, pp. 64–78; and Werblowski, J.R., *Beyond Tradition and Modernity*, Atlantic Highlands, N.J. Athlone Press, 1976.

<sup>38</sup> Nosco, P., *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984.

scendental and universalistic orientation in which all the others could equally participate. Rather, these claims were based on the assumption—already promulgated by the schools of nativistic learning under the Tokugawa—that it was the primordial character of the Japanese collectivity that represented these universal pristine values.<sup>39</sup>

This conception of particularity did provide the background to the different “schools” of Japanese uniqueness as they developed in the modern period—e.g. the emphasis on the uniqueness of Japanese language, race or culture in the later development of *Nihonjinron* literature. These conceptions veered between a strong emphasis on the incomparable uniqueness of Japan, often taking the direction of rabid nationalism, and the claim that the Japanese people or culture embodied the pristine values promulgated by all humanity.<sup>40</sup>

## CIVILITY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY IN JAPAN

### XII

Civility constituted the second major component of Japanese collective identity. But the emphasis on civility did not entail the recognition of civility as an autonomous dimension of legitimation of the social order, but stressed its contribution to the collectivity define mostly in primordial terms. The central focus of civility that developed in Japan was that of loyalty. It was closely related to the legitimation of political authority and accountability of rulers that developed

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<sup>39</sup> K. Wildman Nakai, “The Naturalization of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan: The Problem of Sinocentrism” *Harvard Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 40, 1980, pp. 157–199. P. Nosco, “Introduction: Neo-Confucianism and Tokugawa Discourse—An Idea”, in: P. Nosco, *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984.

<sup>40</sup> A very interesting illustration of the persistence of such conceptions of the Japanese collectivity can be found in the attitude of some very distinguished Japanese leftist intellectuals in the 20th century to Marxism. In common with many Chinese intellectuals of such disposition, the Japanese ones like Kotoku or Kawakawi Hajime attempted to de-emphasize the “materialistic” dimension of Marxism and infuse them with “spiritual” values, with values of spiritualistic regeneration. But while most of such Chinese intellectuals tended to emphasize the transcendental and universalistic themes of “classical” Confucianism, the Japanese ones emphasized the “*kokutai*”, the Japanese national community or essence. Cf. Hoston, G.A., *A “Theology” of Liberation? Socialist Revolution and spiritual Regeneration in Chinese and Japanese Marxism*, in: Cohen, P.A. and Goldman, M. (eds.), *Ideas Across Cultures—Essays on Chinese Thought in Honor of Benjamin J. Schwartz*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990, pp. 165–194.

in Japan—both of which entailed a far-reaching transformation of the “original” Confucian conceptions of political authority prevalent in China and later transferred to Korea or Vietnam.<sup>41</sup> Especially in the Tokugawa period, Japanese intellectuals grappled with Chinese concepts of authority, especially with the concept of the “mandate of Heaven,” which became a focus of very intensive intellectual and ideological discussion. Japanese interpreters minimized the principled accountability of rulers and the transcendental and universalistic dimensions or principles of legitimation, emphasizing instead loyalty to the Emperor.<sup>42</sup>

Such loyalty, focused on the “lord”—up to the Emperor—and on the group or collectivity of which individuals formed a part or with the fate of which they were embroiled, could not be questioned. Contrary to the case in China, as universalistic principles borne by a higher, transcendental authority justified such loyalty or legitimated the lord’s authority. The nativistic scholars saw the very possibility of such questioning as anathema to the Japanese spirit or culture.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> See also Rozman (ed.), *The East Asian Region, Confucian Heritage and its Modern Adaption*, op. cit.

<sup>42</sup> As P. Nosco has put it:

For example, in a Confucian-inspired history of Japan, Hayasi Razan’s (1583–1675) son, Hayuashi Gtraho (1618–1680) cast Tokugawa Yesaka in the classical guise of the newly appointed recipient of the mandate of heaven, equipping him both morally and spiritually for the task of human rulership. However, the obverse side of this issue—that heaven might withdraw its mandate from any specific regime—was of necessity skirted by all Tokugawa Confucian thinkers until the very last years of Tokugawa era.

In: “Introduction”, op. cit., 1984. Hsu, F., “Filial Piety in Japan and China: Borrowing Variations and Significance,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Spring 1971, pp. 57–74; Webb, H.F., *The Japanese Imperial Institution in the Tokugawa Period*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1968.

<sup>43</sup> H. Watanabe makes a similar observation:

This relationship of samurai and his lord is extremely different, in any phase, from that of the Chinese scholar-official and emperor. And of course it is dissimilar to the Neo-Confucian ideal of this relationship . . .

. . . A disciple of Zhu Xi wrote in the biography of his master. The master worried about the affairs of state all the time. When he heard the defects of the current administration, he was distressed. When he spoke of the deteriorated situation of the state, tears would at last drop from his eyes. However, he respected the ancient manner, *Li* that a virtuous man hesitates to serve. Therefore whenever he was offered an official position, he tried hard to decline it. He made much of the ancient manner, *Li* that a good vassal does not hes-

True enough, this very reformulation of the concept of loyalty contained within itself the possibilities for an extension of family loyalty beyond any given setting, potentially in a universalistic direction. But in fact such extension always took place within the confines of the Japanese collectivity, emphasizing strong particularistic orientations, ultimately developing in the Meiji state in a distinctive restorative direction focused around the concept of loyalty to the Emperor as the living embodiment of the Japanese collectivity. These conceptions of loyalty as they developed in Japan—negated or at least marginalized—the confrontation between equality and hierarchy in terms of any transcendental principles.

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itate to resign. Therefore whenever his opinion did not coincide with the lord's he resigned immediately. He dared not impair the Way to get and keep his official position. He dared not compromise with vulgar opinions, because he had sympathy with the people . . .

. . . This is a very rationalistic relationship. There is no emotional attachment to the lord. He shied away from serving, because he respects the principle more . . .

. . . We can see the rationalistic, normative character of Zhu Xi's image of the lord-vassal relationship here. The contrast with samurai's relationship and his lord is really remarkable. And yet the Japanese Confucianists thought of samurai's relationship when they read Neo-Confucian teachings on the scholar-official's relationships. They must have been embarrassed sometimes. They understand that what they were talking about was quite different from what Chinese philosophers had talked about.

. . . So here too was a big task for Japanese Confucianists. It seems to me that most of them accepted or compromised with the samurai version of the loyalty relationship.

. . . Unlike in China, in Japan a vassal's duty to the lord often came to be regarded as prior to this duty to his father, as many scholars have pointed out. And Confucianists almost unanimously applauded the deed of Ako masterless samurai, the heroes of the famous play *Chushingura*, though there were a few conspicuous exceptions.

Watanabe, H., "The Transformation of Neo-Confucianism in Early Tokugawa Japan." Paper presented at the conference on Confucianism of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cambridge, Mass., 1992.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY IN THE  
U.S.—POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

## XIII

As against these characteristics of Japanese conceptions of collectivity and authority, those which crystallized in America (U.S.), strongly rooted in the potentialities of Axial civilizations, were characterized by the weakness of primordial components. The United States was perhaps the first great civilization (with possible very partial exception of the Roman Empire) to construct collective identity essentially without primordial ties. But unlike in the case of the Roman Empire, the premises of social order that developed within it were based instead on the conception of metaphysical equality which in principle negated the symbolic legitimacy of hierarchy and which entailed the possibility of continual challenge to authority.

The American revolution was the only one from among the Great Revolutions that created a new collectivity, a new Republic, and a new nation—"The First New Nation".<sup>44</sup> But paradoxically it shared with all the other revolutions the relative disinterest in primordial symbols. Out of this paradox there developed the unique way in which the modern American (U.S.) political and national community was constructed. The collective identity of this national society was not based, as in Europe and later in the "third world," on primordial components—common territory, history, fictive kinship, language and the like. True enough, within this creed, conceptions of territory and of peoplehood were indeed very strong—promulgated very much in Biblical terms of "Promised Land" and "Chosen People." But unlike in the Jewish tradition and in the Zionist movement those conceptions were couched mostly in religious-ideological and not in primordial terms. The new land was not the land of the Fathers to which one returned. The very constitution of this new political order was conceived by the settlers as an innovative act of universal significance—not as continuation of the former history of their countries of origin.

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<sup>44</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, *The First New Nation. The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, New York, Basic Books, INC. Publishers, 1963 and idem, *American Exceptionalism. A Double-Edged Sword*, New York, W.W. Norton and Company, 1996.

This new collective identity crystallized around a political ideology rooted in a combination of Puritan religious conceptions (especially their ideology of the covenant) and the premises, especially the legal premises, of natural law and of common law, including the English tradition of Enlightenment rationalism and the radical thought of the Commonwealth.<sup>45</sup> The process of the crystallization of this ideology transformed premises into components of a new collective identity and a new constitutional order, ultimately forming, as Robert Bellah has shown, a distinct “civil religion.” This transformation constituted the crux of the American revolution and distinguished it from other wars of independence, not only the later ones in Europe or Asia in the nineteenth and especially the twentieth century, but even the Latin American ones.

The American myth of political order proposed not only legal but metaphysical or ontological equality, even if *de facto* such equality had strong implicit, sometimes explicit racial or “ethnic” undertones. In principle it negated the legitimacy of hierarchy in the political order and any sort of “*ex-toto*” conception of social and political order—i.e. of conception of this order as derived from some totalistic vision promulgated by (usually a hierarchical) center. The picture was of course different in the South where some conceptions of hierarchy and of aristocratic deference prevailed. There were, of course, quite strong hierarchical undertones in the republican components of the American political tradition but they were transposed into the emphasis on virtue and obligations of citizenship which in principle—if only in principle—was within the reach of all citizens. There also existed in America, as R.G. Smith has recently shown,<sup>46</sup> very strong hierarchical ascriptive themes and orientations—based on different conceptions of race, gender or even ability—insofar as the bases of ability or achievement could be explained in “biological” racial terms. But however important these themes and orientations were in certain sectors of American society in different periods of its history, they never attained a fully legitimate and hegemonic

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<sup>45</sup> Terence Ball and J.G.A. Pocock, eds., *Conceptual Change and the Constitution*, Lawrence, Kansas, University of Kansas Press, 1988. B. Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1992.

<sup>46</sup> Rogers M. Smith, “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions In America”, in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 3, 1993, pp. 549–566.

standing. After sometimes prolonged struggles, these hierarchical themes were subsumed under the dominant more egalitarian-constitutional premises, and were usually justified and legitimated in terms of these premises. It was the problem of race, especially of African-American slavery that continuously loomed large on the American scene, challenging the myth of equality and constituting a continual negative reference point for the conception of citizenship<sup>47</sup>—especially with respect to voting. But the very fact that it was seen by many sectors of American society as such a challenge or as a negative reference point attests to the strength of the myth of equality as the core of the new political order, even if often subverted in reality and even if this emphasis on equality did not always imply, as we shall see, a high level of toleration, and contained many exclusivist components.

Closely related to the metaphysical emphasis on equality was the radical transformation of concepts of representation and of sovereignty. The transition from virtual to actual representation—i.e. from citizenship manifest above all in the acclamation of the rulers to active participation in the political process—totally negated the vesting of representation in any hierarchically or ascriptively defined category of people or groups,<sup>48</sup> even if there prevailed sometimes a yearning for a “natural” aristocracy. Concomitantly there took place the invention of “the people” as the bearers of sovereignty—a radical and very potent new conception which transformed the concept of sovereignty.<sup>49</sup> True enough, the conception of the sovereignty of God, rooted in sectarian Protestantism, was very strong in many sectors of American society.<sup>50</sup> But as no specific institutions—but rather the community of all believers—was seen as the loci of this sovereignty, it joined with the conception of the sovereignty of the people in the radical denial of the legitimacy of any hierarchical or traditional authority.

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<sup>47</sup> Judith Shklar, *American Citizenship. The Quest for Inclusion*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1991.

<sup>48</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of American Revolution*, New York, Vintage Books, 1993.

<sup>49</sup> J. Shklar, *American Citizenship*, op. cit.

<sup>50</sup> Wendy F. Naylor, “Some Thoughts upon Reading Toquevilles Democracy in America”, paper for Prof. Edward Shils seminar on Ideas on Social Solidarity, University of Chicago, May 1995.



As against any such authority it was the free or spontaneous self-organization of society—even if de facto often constructed along lines of power and hierarchy—that was emphasized (as was so acutely analysed by de Tocqueville, and later on by Lord Bryce and many other observers). Closely related was the strong emphasis on the dignity of labor—of “producers” as against aristocratic idleness—as an important component or “prerequisite” of citizenship<sup>51</sup>—even if such emphasis often served as a defence against the actual economic situation. All these conceptions emphasized the idea of self-rule by the people. Such a transformation also took place, of course, in the French Revolution. But in contrast to the conception of the Republic or “Patrie” in the French Revolution, the conception of the people in the American Revolution and later on in the American political tradition was a markedly anti-statist, highly voluntaristic one.

Many Europeans visiting the United States all emphasized the “rudeness” and “vulgarity” of public life in America. They remarked on the volatility, the tumultuousness of new political activities in America, the emphasis on self-government, the fragility of authority and above all the lack of respect for authority.<sup>52</sup> Indeed as Elina H. Gould has lately shown, the confrontation with the American independence and with the premises of the American Revolution generated a related strong “conservative” counterrevolution in British political discourse.<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, the distinctive conception of individualism that developed in the U.S., accentuated by such writers as Emerson, Thoreau, or Henry Adams, even in their critical stances toward many aspects of American reality, was strongly oriented against the restrictive “Stände” or “estate-bound” European conceptions.<sup>54</sup> The foundations of this individualism could already be found in the earlier colonial period, to some extent in Puritan conceptions of individuals bearing

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<sup>51</sup> J. Shklar, *American Citizenship*, op. cit.

<sup>52</sup> Robert H. Wiebe, *Self-Rule. A Cultural History of American Democracy*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995, and idem, *The Search for Order 1877–1920*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1992.

<sup>53</sup> E.H. Gould, “American Independence and Britain’s Counter-Revolution,” *Past and Present*, No. 154, 1997, pp. 107–141.

<sup>54</sup> George Kateb, “Democratic Individuality and the Meaning of Rights”, in Nancy L. Rosenblum, ed., *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1989, pp. 183–206 and Olaf Hansen, *Aesthetic Individualism and Practical Intellect. American Allegory in Emerson, Thoreau, Adams, and James*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990.

the vision of God—i.e., of individual conscience determining religious truth and of the individual as bearer of the obligation to glorify God on earth, and in the Lockean emphasis on individual rights, and in the widespread republican-contractual tenets.

These conceptions of equality and individualism shaped conceptions of sovereignty of the people, which in turn had institutional implications for the conception of the State in the U.S. The most important of these implications has been the principled predominance, as Daniel Bell has emphasized, of civil society as against the state—and not just against bad or tyrannical or despotic government.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, it is significant that this tradition did not develop a concept of the State—or rather a conception of the State as a distinct ontological entity. American egalitarianism and individualism made the European conception of the State, with all its hierarchical overtones, a focal point for the break with European tradition.<sup>56</sup> In the American conception, to no small degree rooted in Protestant tenets, society was seen as continually recreated through the activism and moral commitment of the people.<sup>57</sup>

#### “NEWNESS” IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF AMERICAN COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

#### XIV

Indeed, the founding myth of the American political program as promulgated in the Revolution and the Constitution did strongly emphasize the discontinuity from the European past. The American creed transformed the premises of social and political order, especially with respect to conceptions of equality and individualism, and thus also concepts of sovereignty, the closely related attitude to the State, and the relations between state and civil society.

This myth emphasized the “newness,” the pristine purity of America, its sacredness. As Adam Seligman has put it, the mythical impor-

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<sup>55</sup> Daniel Bell, “‘American Exceptionalism’ Revisited. The Role of Civil Society, *The Public Interest* 95, 1989, pp. 38–56.

<sup>56</sup> Massimo L. Salvadori, *Europa America Marxismo*, Torino, Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, 1990.

<sup>57</sup> Ann Swidler, “Inequality and American Culture: The Persistence of Voluntarism,” in G. Marks and L. Diamond, eds., *Reexamining Democracy*, London, Sage, 1992, pp. 294–314.

tance of American newness was felt not only in the symbolism inscribed in its political and social consciousness; it stretched back in time to the virgin new world, where man lived in a state of nature. The first settlers already saw America as a pristine state of existence, related to the Biblical imagery of Eden and paradise.<sup>58</sup> The conception of the new American Adam constituted a central component of the American ideology.<sup>59</sup> The American wilderness was viewed either as the 'Promised Land,' the 'New Canaan,' 'paradise,' or as Robert N. Bellah has noted, in a more Hobbesian light, as an 'unfruitful desert, abode of death'.<sup>60</sup> In either case, the image of the land was tied to a paradigmatic image of the new American "Adam"<sup>61</sup>—a combination of individualism and millennial expectations which developed among many of the Protestant sects. The tension with the wilderness, the vision of the conquest thereof when combined with that of man's own fall, reform and redemption, became a profound, dominant cultural idiom in American society.

Closely related was a firm belief, to be found already among many of the Protestant groups settled in the colonies that the American settlers were a 'chosen' people, with a special mission. They thus imposed, in Sacvan Bercovitch's words, a 'sacred *telos* on secular events'.<sup>62</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, the destiny of the American republic was firmly identified with "the course of redemptive history." America had become "both the locus and instrument of the great consummation." This equation between the "Kingdom of God" and the Nation in essence replaced the idea of the Church with that of the nation, and became the central tenet of the 'religion of the republic.'

Significantly enough the emphasis on "newness," on breaking with the past and freeing oneself from its shackles, persisted as a central

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<sup>58</sup> A. Seligman, "The Failure of Socialism in the United States: a reconsideration", op. cit.

<sup>59</sup> R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam. Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1955; T. Ball, *Reappraising Political Theory: Revisionist Studies in the History of Political Thought*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995.

<sup>60</sup> Robert N. Bellah, "On Civil Religion in America", in *Daedalus*, Winter, 1967 and idem, *The Broken Covenant*, New York, Seabury Press, 1975.

<sup>61</sup> R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam. Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century*, op. cit.; T. Ball, *Reappraising Political Theory*, op. cit.

<sup>62</sup> Sacvan Bercovitz, "New England's Errand Reappraised", op. cit.

theme in many sectors of American society—for instance, as Joyce Appleby has shown, among many of the new economic entrepreneurs of the early nineteenth century<sup>63</sup> or later on among the second generation of many immigrant groups.

## CIVIL RELIGION IN THE U.S.

### XV

It was out of the fusion of these varied themes that there emerged what Robert N. Bellah calls the American “civil religion,” in which “the nation emerged as the primary agent of God’s meaningful activity in history.” Civil religion interprets historical experience “in light of transcendent reality,” seeking to transfigure reality so that it provides moral and spiritual meaning. It is this interpretation that provides the core of the American myth or creed.<sup>64</sup>

This interpretation of the American historical experience and the closely related conceptions of social and political order contained a very strong utopian component derived from the combined heritage of the Enlightenment and of sectarian Protestantism. This utopian orientation was rooted in European eschatological traditions, but it became greatly transformed in the United States. In the United States the utopian orientations which were so prominent in Europe lost their historical orientation, their connection with the unfolding of a historical process. These utopian eschatological components became as it were detemporalized and dehistoricized, relocated in a continually “future-oriented” present. The American collective identity was future oriented in its orientation to the continual formation of the perfect utopian state, but not in the sense of attaining this state through the unfolding of historical processes carried by distinct social actors.

The combination of Protestant themes and those of the Enlightenment gave rise in the colonies, and even more strongly later in the United States, to the conception of a timeless, already historically

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<sup>63</sup> Joyce Appleby, “New Cultural Heroes in the Early National Period”, in Thomas L. Haskell and Richard F. Teichgraber III, eds., *The Culture of the Market. Historical Essays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 163–188

<sup>64</sup> Robert N. Bellah, “On Civil Religion in America”, op. cit. and idem, *The Broken Covenant*, op. cit.

achieved Utopia. Thus utopian orientations became embedded in the continual present, albeit with strong orientations to an open future in which the U.S. embodied the Christian eschatological utopia or that of the Enlightenment. This attainment could be polluted, but there was no further unfolding, through actual historical process, of some future utopian end-point.

In the civil religion that developed in the U.S. several different conceptions of the social and political order coexisted, sometimes in complementary sometimes in contradictory modes. These were first the contractual conception, with its strong emphasis on rights, on the contractual relations between individual and society; second the republican one; and third the covenantal ones. It was not only the liberal and republican values that coexisted in continual tension in the American vision. The covenant, usually conceived in religious terms binding together all members of the community<sup>65</sup> constituted, as R. Bellah strongly emphasizes, yet another component of this vision which could be in tension or harmony with the other ones.

Several far-reaching tensions between these different conceptions did indeed develop. One was between the republican and the liberal (Lockean) orientations, and the closely related but not identical tensions between the contractual and the covenantal conceptions of social order. True enough, the Lockean emphasis on individual rights—very often with a very strong legalistic overtone—contained a moral vision. It offered a vision of the common good, which grounded moral obligations within it. As against this Lockean view, or in continual tension with it, was the civic republican one, which could be expressed either in constitutional terms, i.e. in terms of the upholding of the constitution, or in religious terms as the upholding of the community's covenant with God. Such vision could be promulgated in a religious way rooted in the country's Protestant heritage with a strong covenantal component, or in a more secular way, rooted in the "scientific" components of the Enlightenment.

It was the continual tension among these different components of the American civil religion, especially as they became related to continually changing social and economic conditions, that made the

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<sup>65</sup> Joyce Appleby, "New Cultural Heroes in the Early National Period", op. cit.; and idem, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination*, op. cit.; P. Johnson, "God and the Americans", in *Commentary*, Vol. 99, No. 1, 1995, pp. 25-45.

“promise of” disharmony an inherent possibility and also shaped the specific orientations of movements of protest in the U.S.

## U.S. AND JAPAN IN COMPARISON WITH EUROPE

### XVI

The two contrasting—yet in a way mirror-image—modes of construction of collective identity and social order that developed in the U.S. and in Japan can be briefly compared, in very broad outlines, with the ones which developed in Europe. One of the most important characteristics of the construction of collective identities in European historical experience has been the continual interweaving of primordial, civil and universalistic components. (Indeed, European countries differ precisely in the mode in which such interweaving took place.)

In all modern European societies there developed a continual confrontation between the primordial components of such identity, continuously reconstructed in such modern terms as nationalism and ethnicity, and the modern universalistic and civil components. The mode of interweaving these different components of collective identity shaped the institutional dynamics of different European societies, especially the scope of pluralism that developed within them. Those societies in which the primordial components were subsumed relatively successfully under the civil and universalistic ones and all were “peacefully” interwoven in their collective identities could allow a relatively wide scope for pluralistic arrangements.

The contrary tendencies to absolutization of the major dimensions of human experience and social order and concomitant principled exclusivity provided a propitious background for the development of various extreme movements with strong Jacobin tendencies, both leftist revolutionary and extreme nationalistic ones. But in Europe all these movements were set within the framework of the basic European conceptions of social order and collective identity, which differed greatly from both the American and the Japanese ones.

## CONCLUSION

## XVII

The preceding analysis of aspects of social and political dynamics in the U.S. and Japan sheds some light on the more general problems of the influences on the crystallization of different modernities. First of all, it shows that however great are the structural similarities between different modern societies, they nonetheless differ greatly in some of the most crucial aspects of their ideological and institutional dynamics.

Second, this analysis indicates that such differences are influenced by two basic dimensions of the construction of social order—namely the construction of collective identity and the premises of social order and authority—closely related to the basic aspects of religion and of religious evolution. In most of the social science literature, these dimensions of social order have been either neglected, or their specific European constellations have been taken for granted in the analysis of modern societies. While these dimensions have, of course, always closely interwoven with the different structural elements which have been central in the development of modern societies, yet they exhibit strong autonomous tendencies. Their close relations to the religious dimensions of human life are of crucial importance in shaping the dynamics of different modern societies, or indeed in more general terms of any pattern of social order.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> See on this S.N. Eisenstadt, *Power, Trust and Meaning*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, esp. Chs. I and XIII.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY

# ISRAELI POLITICS AND THE JEWISH POLITICAL TRADITION: PRINCIPLED POLITICAL ANARCHISM AND THE RULE OF THE COURT

### INTRODUCTION: THE AMBIVALENCE TOWARD CIVILITY IN ISRAELI POLITICAL LIFE\*

#### I

It is common knowledge that Israeli politics have been very turbulent—especially since the so-called Mahapakh (the change in the government which, after about 20 years of rule, brought down the Labor camp as the predominant factor in Israeli politics), resulting from the 1977 elections. This turbulence has been manifest in the eruption of grave conflicts: ethnic conflicts; conflicts between the two major political camps—the Maarakh (Labor) and the Likud, and between religious and non-religious; economic conflicts; and, lately, in the development of more extremist camps, especially on the right—Hatechiya and the Rabbi Kahana “Kakh” movement.

These conflicts have become even more intense throughout the eighties and nineties, when they became closely interwoven with struggles around the reconstitution of the components of Israeli collective identity as well as with the attempts of many sectors of Israeli society to become incorporated in its central frameworks—all of which became focused above all on the great political divide between “hawks” and “doves” with respect to security problems and the relations to the Palestinians.

This turbulence and intensity of conflicts gave also rise to wide

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\* This chapter is based on the Druker Lecture given at Princeton University in 1986 and it necessarily bears the impact of this period. I have added several very brief observations bearing on developments since then, but have not enlarged it systematically except for some general indications at the end of the chapter. A fuller exposition of some of the basic characteristics of the Jewish historical experience as bearing on the problems discussed in this paper are to be found in chapter 15 in this collection.

apprehension about the future of democracy and of the rule of law in Israel, although in fact they have—perhaps miraculously—persisted, and in some way have even become strengthened to some degree.

At the same time another aspect of Israeli political life has become very prominent in that period, namely a continual oscillation between on the one hand the tendency of the special Israeli type of horse-trading, of 'pork and barrel politics'—or more properly beef, especially kosher beef and barrel politics, manifest in attempts of various groups—including religious groups, who often have not fully acknowledged the legitimacy of the state, or other major political camps and sectors—to demand for themselves special allocations from the State; and on the other hand highly ideological, often acrimonious debates between different camps. These ideological disputes were often bitter and characterized by an unwillingness to acknowledge the legitimacy of the opponent; with attempts to place him beyond bounds. Concomitantly, there developed also a continuation, in recent times, of a special type of pendulum move from solidarity—manifest in a readiness for self-sacrifice revealed in time of stress or danger—to a very problematic attitude to the observance of the law. To give one illustration, the behavior of the port workers of Ashdod in the early seventies in support of their leader Yehoshua Peretz is a case in point. These port workers, while on an illegal strike, went out to help border settlements, seeing no contradiction in their activities. Similarly, many people are ordinarily unwilling to maintain many legal injunctions, laws of public order: yet, in times of stress, these same people will give their all.

A common denominator of all these phenomena is a certain weakness of civility, a lack of willingness—whether in the name of some Higher Law (religious, national, or social), or through claims of solidarity which may also be presented as representing some such Higher Law—to accept the law of the land, of the State.

While many of these characteristics of Israeli politics are naturally rooted in the specific historical circumstances and experience of Israeli society, yet at the same time they have deep roots in Jewish political tradition, and it is only if we take into account these roots that the full import of these tendencies can be fully understood.

THE BASIC TENSIONS IN JEWISH POLITICAL TRADITION:  
THE TENDENCY TO PRINCIPLED POLITICAL ANARCHISM

II

One may of course claim that it may sound rather absurd to talk about the political tradition of a people who had no political independence for about two thousand years, who at most had memories of political life—visions and dreams of such life—but no real experience of it. Truly enough even collective memories and visions are, of course, not a negligible factor; they may indeed be very powerful in shaping the perception of reality and the behavior of a people. However, such political traditions did not consist only of memories. They constituted a very strong component of cultural orientations and beliefs, of widely held premises about the nature of communal and political life, of authority and its accountability—orientations and premises with very important institutional implications. These orientations and premises and their institutional implications have been perpetuated, even if in latent forms, throughout the period of the Diaspora and dispersion, in situations of oppression and of lack of political independence—when no tradition and conception of State, of “reason of State” (*raison d’Etat*) could develop.

Among the most important components of such traditions and orientations are: First, the very strong tendency to what may be called principled political anarchism; second, the contrary tradition of the sovereignty of the court (please note I am talking about the sovereignty of the courts and not necessarily of the Law); and last, the element of communal or national solidarity, of a rather principled solidarity often called “*Ahavat Israel*”—The Love of Israel (a term which was in the focus of controversy between Gershom Scholem and Hannah Arendt around the Eichmann trial). This term could apply to the whole Jewish people or—given the concrete situation of life of Jews in the Diaspora—to different communities of sectors thereof.

III

What is meant by principled political anarchism? By this term I do not mean the tendency which may probably be found in most human societies to attempt to avoid the demands of the law, or to develop an instrumental or adaptive relation to it. Such a tendency could have been naturally reinforced among the Jews by the long historical

experience of being an oppressed minority under alien rule. At the same time, however, there has developed among the Jews a counter-tendency to accept and legitimize the Law of the land as their only protector. The famous saying of “Dina DeMalkhuta Dina”—“The rule (or law) of the kingdom is the Law”—has acquired a very important standing in Halakhic pronouncements.

These tendencies are indeed important, but their full import can only be understood when we combine them with other attitudes to law which have developed within the Jewish civilization. One such tendency is that of principled political anarchies which denies the validity of the Law of the land, of the State—above all of any independent State ruled by Jews in the name of some higher, often Divine Law (which, obviously, is represented by groups proclaiming it).

In contemporary Israeli politics this tendency is indeed very visible and vocal—observed first of all in the case of Gush Emunim, the national religious settlers, but also among many of the secular upholders of the ideology of Eretz Israel Hashlema (“the Whole Eretz Israel”), and more recently among the so-called “Jewish underground.” It may also be seen, among the non-Zionist religious groups who deny the validity or legitimacy of the law of the State—though they sometimes take recourse to the courts even in disputes among themselves—when it suits their interests. This tendency has reappeared in a very intensive way in the nineties, especially after the Oslo agreement, culminating in the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin.

It has not always been the “right wing” of the political spectrum, or the extreme religious groups, in which this phenomenon could be found. In the first period of the State, up to about the early fifties, it could be found in the left:—in the intensive controversies about the Palmach and the structure of the army, and of the nature of civilian control of the army; in the controversies about the nature of relations toward Soviet Russia—a controversy also connected with one of the most traumatic events in the early history of Israeli society, the split in the fifties in the Kibbutz movement. Today some shades of this attitude may be found in the “left,” even if in a rather dormant way, for example in the case of some of the groups which opposed the Lebanon war, and which were criticized for their call not to serve in the army even by the major opponents of the war among the “leftist” parties. But in the recent times this tendency was most clearly manifest among groups on the “right” of the political spectrum—especially among different religious groups.

THE TENDENCY TO POLITICAL ANARCHISMS AND THE BASIC  
PREMISES OF AXIAL AGE CIVILIZATIONS

## IV

The concrete expression of this tendency to principled political anarchism is obviously very much dependent on concrete historical internal or external constellations. Moreover, very often such principled expressions may be but an ideological mask for concrete interests and demands. Yet these are not enough to explain the specificity and intensity of these expressions, since in other societies similar circumstances do not necessarily give rise to such extreme expressions. It is my contention that this tendency is rooted in some central components of Jewish civilization, some of which, as for instance the revolutionary orientation against rulers, has been discussed by Michael Walzer in his recent book on *Exodus and Revolution*, have been seen as a very distinct contribution to human civilization.

To some degree this tendency toward an emphasis on a Higher Law and the concomitant tendency to principled political anarchism is not limited only to Jewish civilization: it is a central component of all the monotheistic civilizations, of which the Jewish was the first one; and even of other "Great Civilizations," especially of the so-called Axial Age Civilizations (see ch. 7 in this collection)—a term coined by Karl Jaspers to describe those (great) civilizations which developed in the first millennium before the period between ca. 500 B.C.E. and the Christian era—namely in Ancient Greece, in Ancient China in the early Imperial period, Hinduism and Buddhism and much later, beyond the Axial Age proper, in Islam.

As we have seen in Ch. 7, the specific, distinctive characteristics of these civilizations was the development and institutionalization within them in general, and within their centers in particular, of conceptions of a basic tension, of a chasm between the transcendental and mundane order. These conceptions of a basic tension between the transcendental and the mundane order have developed first of all among new social elements, new types of elites in general and of carriers of models of cultural and social order in particular—above all among small groups of autonomous "intellectuals." But ultimately these conceptions were, in all Axial Age civilizations, institutionalized, i.e., they became the predominant orientation of both the ruling as well as of many secondary elites, embedded in their

respective centers or subcenters, transforming the nature of the political elites, making these intellectuals, relatively autonomous potential partners in the central coalitions. Thus the various disperse groups of intellectuals became transformed into more fully crystallized and institutionalized ones—be it the Jewish Prophets and Priests, the Greek Philosophers, the Chinese Literati, the Hindu Brahmins, the Buddhist Sangha or the Islamic Ulama—some of them being transformed into clerks. The most important repercussion of such institutionalization has been the development of ideological and structural attempts to reconstruct the mundane world according to the basic conception of the revolution of this tension. The given, mundane, order was perceived in these civilizations as incomplete, often as faulty and as in need of being—at least in some of its parts—reconstructed according to the premises of salvation, basically a Christian term the equivalents of which can however be found in other civilizations.

As a part of this process took place, in all these civilizations a far-reaching restructuring of the conception of the relation between the political and the higher, transcendental order. The political order—as the central focus of framework of the mundane order—has been in these civilizations usually conceived as lower than the transcendental one and accordingly has to be restructured according to the premises of the latter. And it was the rulers who were usually held to be responsible for assuming such structuring of the political order. Accordingly there appeared the possibility of calling a ruler to judgment in the name of some higher order, to which the rulers are accountable—a possibility which bore within itself the seeds or potentialities of revolutionary orientations, of principled political anarchies.

THE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF JEWISH CIVILIZATION:  
THE WEAKNESS OF MEDIATION AND THE COVENANTAL RELATIONS  
BETWEEN GOD AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

V

The strength of this tendency to principled political anarchism has been reinforced in the Jewish case by two components of its religion which distinguish it from the other monotheistic religions and civilizations—the Christian and the Islamic—both of which were, of course, historically and ideologically closely related to the Jewish one.

The first such component was the non-recognition in the Jewish religion—as distinct from Catholicism and to some degree Eastern Christianity, but much less from Protestant Christianity, and especially from Calvinism—of the monopoly of any group on the mediation of the access to the sacred. Even in the period of the Second Commonwealth, even the Priests—however high their standing—had only monopoly on rituals but not on the exegesis of law or on prayer, which spread more and more as major modes of religious experience, of access to the realm of the sacred. All the members of the “sacred community” which was constituted by the Covenant of God with the people of Israel, in principle had access to this realm, with the partial exception of access to the ritual of the Temple. Hence, all could claim to be basically equal—at least in this respect. There were no Pope or Church in Israel or Jewish communities (although under appropriate structural conditions of concentration of power, many rabbis or groups of rabbis, or keepers of many “saintly places” would willingly have assumed such a position). Even Maimonides, the towering figure of medieval Jewry, was never fully accepted as the ultimate authority.

The second major component of the Jewish tradition which is of relevance for our discussion is the nature of the relations between God and the people of Israel. In distinction from Islam in which, at least in principle, there are also no mediators, the emphasis in the Jewish faith on the covenant between God and the people of Israel means a different relation to God than total submission (as the very name of Islam connotes). As against such total submission, the Covenant indeed implied some sort of partnership—albeit between obviously unequal partners. Jewish folklore, from the midrashim down to the story of Levi Itzhak of Berditschev who refused to start with the Yom Kippur Prayer until the needs of a poor member of the community will be taken care of, is full of stories in which God is seemingly called to some sort of account.

It is the combination of all these components—the belief in Higher Law, the weakness of mediating groups, or the elements of the covenantal relation between God and the people of Israel—that explain the development, within the Jewish historical experience within the Jewish political tradition, of very strong tendencies to principled political anarchism.

In the Jewish civilization, this tendency to uphold the Higher Law had probably developed already in the period of the First Temple—

the period of the Judges, Priests, Levites, Elders and Prophets. Indeed some of the most prominent, forceful and revered figures in Jewish history—such as the Prophets—have been the exponents of this very strong political—not just purely intellectual—tendency or orientation; or, as Weber has designated them, as political demagogues. This tendency became even more fully articulated during the Second Commonwealth—the period in which a new crucial element came into being: the experts in learning, study and prayer; the precursors of those who were to become the Sages (“Chazal”), as well as the various sects, the future rabbis, the bearers of the mould of the Halakhah. The tendency to principled political anarchism occupied the center of the stage of Jewish public life during the period of the Second Temple and probably also in the immediate period thereafter. But it was also in this period that there developed the second seemingly contrary tendency in the Jewish political tradition—namely that of the rule of the court.

THE SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BASES OF CULTURAL  
ORIENTATIONS AND POLITICAL TRADITIONS: THE CONTINUITY  
OF JEWISH POLITICAL TRADITION

VI

The illustration of the Prophets as well as the Priests, or of the elders of the community, brings us to what is probably the most crucial aspect of our analysis—namely the nature of the social forces or groups through which cultural orientations, intellectual dispositions, ideologies become articulated; of the groups who constitute the bearers of these orientations.

In this context, of special importance are some aspects of the structure of the elites and centers from the Ancient Israelites throughout the ages which throughout Jewish history were—in a way amazingly—persistent or continuous, and which may indeed explain the concretization of these strong tendencies toward principled political anarchism—but also to the emphasis on the sovereignty of the court.

Most important among these characteristics have been: First, the existence of a multiplicity of autonomous elites developed, particularly carriers of models of cultural and social order. Second, the development among all of them very strong orientation to the mundane—especially political and social arenas. The distinction between



religious and other functions was not total, even when they specialized in one, they maintained very strong orientations to the other arenas. Third, although they generally had no permanent single center or organization, they maintained some identity and continuity of orientations and of networks, and they continuously emerged anew, even if in changed organizational constellations. Fourth, within all these elite groups, such as the priests or the prophets, there developed great heterogeneity. Consequently, conflicts and tensions developed between these elites and sub-elites, were connected not only with the representation of different specific interests but also with different interpretations of the tradition and different emphases on its major components—cultic, legal, ethical. Fifth, they all competed for acceptance as the representatives of the higher authority to which rulers and community were accountable.

Out of the combination of these religious-ideological orientations and the historical and political experiences of Jewish history, there developed some of the major structural-institutional characteristics of the ancient Israeli, and later from the period of the Second Temple of the Jewish civilization. The most important of these characteristics have been structural heterogeneity, continuous differentiation and conflict among various social groups and multiple elites—political, social and religious—within a framework of common but not fully crystallized boundaries; the volatility and heterogeneity of centers and the concomitant restructuring of common bonds between the leaders and the people.

These common formal characteristics of the various elites or social groups and of the structural characteristics of Jewish communities have in many ways persisted throughout the different periods of Jewish history, yet naturally their concrete contours have greatly changed through the different periods of Jewish century—from the period of the First Temple to that of the Second, and even greater changes after the loss of political independence, in the period of exile and dispersion.

This continuity in some aspects of the characteristics of the elites and major social actors and of institutional formations was, of course, very closely related to the fact that these elites also continued to transmit, develop and elaborate—through their major educational, cultural, and communal activities—the cultural orientations mentioned above—especially the emphasis on the open, unmediated access to the sacred; the parallel denial of mediation denoting the covenantal

relations between God and His chosen people of Israel, out of which developed the tendency to principled political anarchism.

This type of interrelations between the different leadership elements in the Jewish communities, even when these were no longer political leaderships in the exact definition of the word; no prophets or temple priests or levites. To give just one illustration, the interrelations and tension between the leaders of the community, the rabbis, the tensions between different groups of scholars—mystics, philosophers and the like—as well as between the more oligarchic and the more popular of “democratic” tendencies, all continued with the Jewish communities of the Diaspora.

It was these characteristic, orientations and social characteristics that provided the setting for the constant reconstitution—usually through incorporation of the older symbols within the new frameworks—of Jewish civilization and collective identity, and that made it possible to maintain its continuity. It was indeed within the framework of these institutional frameworks, of the social characteristics of the major elites and social groups that there developed some of the major characteristics of specific Jewish political tradition—including the tendency to principled political anarchism, as well as of the “countertendency” to the emphasis on the rule of the court.

## THE TRADITION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE COURT

### VII

We do not know exactly when this second tendency became fully articulated and institutionalized—possibly only after the destruction of the Second Temple, when the very experience of the former period and the exigencies of the new one reinforced it.

Of course, one can already find in the Bible—especially in Deuteronomy—a very strong emphasis on the upholding of the Law. The very stress on Law was, as we have seen, one of the most distinct aspects of Jewish tradition and civilization, and it was epitomized in the figure of the first original and great prophet and legislator: that of Moses. Indeed, the strong emphasis on law or legislation as a major way of reconstructing social life has been one of the important aspects of Jewish civilization.

But Moses was the only person who was Prophet, legislator, and political leader alike. In (later) reality, when these functions were sep-

arated, this very diversification could easily reinforce the potentialities of principled anarchism. These potentialities could clash with the idea of the sovereignty of the Court—of any Court, of any legislator—just as probably was the case in earlier periods, be it the period of the First or Second Commonwealth (all the stories about the judicial sovereignty of Sanhedrin notwithstanding). I am stressing the tradition of the Court—not of the Law—because with respect to Law there is always the problem of who is its true interpreter.

The idea of the sovereignty of the Court was first of all oriented against the political elites, as exemplified in the case of Alexander Yanaeus (the great Hasmonean King) who intervened for one of his aides when he was brought to court. This interference gave rise to the injunction—and I have some doubts to what degree (especially in its first part) it has indeed ever been upheld—that “King does not judge nor is he judged.” Yet even with the weakening and the ultimate loss of political independence, the challenges to the sovereignty of the Court could possibly arise above all from prophets or sects. The idea of sovereignty of the court was, however, oriented, especially after the destruction of the Second Temple, even more against prophecy, once prophecy had been codified and the end of prophecy (“stimat hachazon”) was declared.

The Talmudic tradition is full of stories of the courts’ opposition to any indication of prophecy; against Bath Kol (“The Echo”) which claims direct, charismatic, authentic relation to the sacred unregulated by the court.

Another, very famous—and in a sense even more dramatic—story is that of the Tannai Rabbi Yehoshua who claimed on the basis of his examination of witnesses (about the apparition of the moon) that Yom Kippur should fall on a certain day; his view was not accepted, and he was ordered by Rabban Gamliel to appear before him with his stick and backpack on the day on which, according to his view, Yom Kippur was due (Mishna—Massekhet Rosh Hashana, Ch. 2, 8–9).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This incident may be interpreted—I owe this remark to Prof. J. Neusner—as an instance of the tension between the political leadership of the “Nessim” and the sectors of the scholars. From the point of view of our discussion it is, however, of crucial importance that those scholars who urged Rabbi Yeshua to accept Rabban Gamliel’s ruling justified it in terms of the danger to the legitimacy of the court.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE HALAKHIC MOULD AND THE  
SOVEREIGNTY OF THE COURT

## VIII

In any tradition, different and often contradictory orientations which are inherent within it become activated in different ways and styles, according to concrete historical and social conditions—although in similar historical circumstances other groups, carrying other traditions, would behave in different ways.

Accordingly, needless to say, the tendency to principled political anarchism became weakened in the long period of exile and Diaspora, when most political activity was limited to the “domestic” realm and took place within territorial boundaries and political and legal frameworks established by the non-Jewish rulers and institutions. However, as we have indicated above in chapter 15 even in that period consensus was not complete, many elements from the earlier period which could potentially challenge the boundaries of Jewish collective identity established by the Halakhah of the Middle Ages—as well as of the many bases of the legitimation of the Halakha—could be found in various semi-sectarian movements such as the philosophical and Kabbalistic or messianic movements.

All of these, as we have seen in chapter 15, could in principle have become nuclei of heretical trends, of potential heterodoxies and secessional movements. Such nuclei had indeed developed in the first centuries after the destruction of the Temple, and continued to exist at least in parts of the Near East, in the Christian and Islamic civilizations and also in the Jewish one. Later on, however, most of them became seemingly marginal to the mainstream of Halakhic Judaism, which emerged probably around the sixth century of the common era, for the first time in the history of Jewish civilization as a full-fledged orthodoxy. Yet, as we have seen, these potentialities for heterodox developments did exist, even if in a latent way, within medieval Judaism as part of its heritage. They were reinforced by the social structure of the Jewish communities, their institutions and the composition of their major elites. These were borne by groups of mystics, pietists or philosophers; there were many schools of law, all of which could have become heterodoxies against the full-fledged orthodoxy of the Halakha. Constant tension existed between the more elitist traditions of learning of different kinds and the more

populist one of prayer with an admixture of mysticism—a tension which later on, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, became explicit in the division between the Hassidim and their Rabbinical opponents.

The principled focus of these potentially heterodox tendencies was, as we have seen in ch. 15, the problem of the ultimate legitimation of the Halakha—whether it was purely internal, i.e. that the Halakha was legitimated in its own terms—or in terms of some transcendental criteria beyond itself, as it were. In more concrete terms, these tensions and controversies focused, beyond technical details, around the relative importance of the different bodies of knowledge and learning in the construction of Jewish tradition, and in the symbolic universe of Jewish civilization. They focused also on concrete details of Halakhic legislation—above all in the sphere of learning and of ritual observance. The major institutional foci of all these conflicts and controversies were first, control of the institutions and curricula of learning, and second, the specification of Halakhic injunctions. These conflicts and tensions often became connected with those more closely related to communal organization and life.

However, as already mentioned above, only a few full-fledged heterodoxies developed within the central fold of Judaism. Most articulate among them were the Karaites who appeared in Eretz Israel and the Near East in the second half of the eighth century, denying the validity of the Oral Law and attempting to go back only to the Written Law—the Torah—the only full fledged heterodoxy to appear in early medieval Jewry, which significantly enough appeared in the period of the crystallization of the hegemony of the Halakha. But on the whole, between the emergence of Karaism and the rise of the Sabbatean movement, such heterodoxies did not fully develop either in the religious and cultural spheres or in communal affairs. Until the Sabbatean Movement and the beginning of Emancipation, these potentially disruptive movements remained, for the most part, underground and marginal.

In this regard, and because of its unique situation as a minority struggling for survival in a hostile environment, Judaism of the Middle Ages (in contrast to that of the Second Temple and even to the period of the Gaonim) was probably less torn by heterodoxies than the other monotheistic religions—or even Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. It is reasonable to suppose that those who were strongly drawn during that period to the various heterodoxies left Judaism.

All these heterodox elements, however, existed potentially within medieval Judaism. But these heretical tendencies were all seemingly encompassed within the relatively broad fold of Rabbinical Judaism, accepting its basic premises and institutional arrangements. Among these the sovereignty of the court was indeed a very powerful component, closely related to the basic assumption of the mould of Halakha that the study and exegesis of law constituted the central—if certainly not the only—arena of Jewish cultural creativity.

But the nature of this sovereignty of the court bears a closer examination from this point of view—and the development of Jewish public communal law in this period is of great interest. Professor Menachem Elon, in his studies of Hebrew Law, has demonstrated that medieval Jewish communities were even able to develop traditions of public law in the form of communal arrangements which had not previously been developed in the Halakha when Jews had maintained some form of political sovereignty—as in the Second Temple period or in the Babylonia of the Geonim.

However, while these communal arrangements and legislation were legitimized by Halakha, they were not—as the late Jacob Katz has shown—a natural part of the Halakha. Public law—as against ritual-religious prescriptions and interpersonal “civil law”—whether dealing with matters of marriage or of commercial relations—was very weakly developed in the Talmudic tradition. Even less developed were, of course, the purely political aspects of such communal arrangements.

Thus indeed these arrangements were more of a communal than of state-political nature. They lacked the political and social framework which goes beyond family and communal frameworks and which is characteristic of periods of political independence. They did not have to face problems related to the running of a State, nor did they bear the ultimate responsibility for enforcement of the law.

Not all of the rabbis and centers of learning wanted to engage in these communal matters, and often left the decisions to the representatives and leaders of the community. Already in the early centuries after the destruction of the Temple, there developed among the heads of the Yeshivot in Babylon and in Eretz Israel a tendency to shy away from participation in the communal-political authority in order to be able to pursue studies in an independent way, and in order not to be dependent on the communal powers or to be entangled in communal conflicts. Other rabbis—especially, but certainly not only in modern times when they felt threatened by the

winds of tolerance and modernity—did engage in such public activities and conflicts as did, of course, many communal courts.

The very existence of these different tendencies, rooted as they were in the basic premises of the Jewish tradition, added to the tensions and dynamics of communal life, yet this strong, although certainly not exclusive, tradition of adherence to the decision of courts in general and of public communal courts and of the various “*takanot kahal*” (the regulations of the community) in particular, developed indeed within the framework of institutions of the Halakha and of communal arrangements, the institutions and network of prayer, study and legislation that provided—together with those of family and community organization—the major mechanisms of the continuity and dynamic of Jewish life and civilization in that period. Thus we encounter here the development of a rather paradoxical situation: public life became more orderly precisely when independent political power was lacking or very weak. This tradition added a strong element of civility, of the acceptance of the legal frame, as against the more anarchic tendencies in the life of the Jewish communities. The authority of the communal courts as well as of the translocal organizations was on the whole upheld, becoming closely interwoven and reinforcing yet another very important component in Jewish political tradition—namely the strong emphasis on Jewish solidarity. Indeed, cutting across these two political orientations—principled political anarchism and sovereignty of the Court—a very strong emphasis on the themes of Jewish solidarity developed in the medieval period. It was not only the natural solidarity of various groups—even of oppressed groups; but also a highly ideologized principled solidarity—based on the need of mutual protection and help among different members of the groups, but legitimized by the fact that the group is the upholder of a special civilizational, religious vision.

#### THE SOCIAL CONDITION OF LEGAL TRADITIONS AND OF CIVILITY IN JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

### IX

There were indeed several factors of crucial importance, in assuring that such containment within the framework of Rabbinical Judaism. One was the close internal cohesion of the Jewish communities, due

to a combination of internal solidarity and the maintenance of basic cultural traditions. This solidarity was rooted in the very strong cohesion of the family, and was extended and reinforced through the close interweaving of all the different leadership elements. Second was the fact that many would-be apostates actually left the fold. Third—and in a way most paradoxical—the very fact of dispersion helped to maintain the internal cohesion of the communities, assisting to preserve the boundaries of the faith and to keep many within the fold. The dispersion and lack of a centralized unified authority provided multiple possible arenas for many of the more independent, autonomous—even semi-anarchic—elements which were inherent, as we have seen, in some of the basic cultural and social orientations prevalent among the Jews. The same was probably true, as we have seen, in the field of learning in its broadest sense, and in the sphere of Halakha proper.

Here also there was no single accepted authority, and different scholars and centers of learning jealously guarded the right of collegial and even individual interpretation and legislation within the common bounds of the accepted—yet also always changing—tradition. Indeed some of the controversy around Maimonides, the Rambam, the most towering intellectual figure of medieval Jewry, was focused not only around his strong philosophical predilections and the concrete details of his Halakhic interpretations and mode of codification, but also against the possibility that he, and later on his work, would attain a sort of monopolistic status in all these fields and would close the gates of interpretation.

The decisions of one court were not necessarily binding on others, although they could serve as mutual reference points and bases of precedents. And on the whole—not only in communal matters but also, as we shall see later in more Halakhic matters proper—there developed a very strong emphasis on the relative autonomy, in matters of interpretation of the law of different courts and scholars. Thus also in this sphere also the fact of dispersion, of the lack of any single ultimate authority, when combined with the numerous contacts that developed between these communities and centers of learning, provided flexible common frameworks which allowed for some heterogeneity and for different types of creativity. Paradoxically enough, these limitations on the power of the courts were in many ways the source of their strength; they allowed for considerable



flexibility and provided legitimate arenas for the development of a relatively high degree of diversity within common frameworks.

Thus we see that the combination of such solidarity and adherence to internal legal prescriptions was continuously borne by the communal institutions in general and of communal courts. It was, however, as we have already indicated above, also rather limited and circumscribed. It was naturally limited to internal community affairs—usually to the respective localities or to such trans-local arrangements as those of the Council of Four Lands, and to some degree to its relations with the authorities. It did not address itself to the political institutions of a sovereign entity. The courts never faced the problems already prominent in the period of the First Temple—which became crucial in the period of the Second Commonwealth and later on in the State of Israel—of a confrontation between the law and the Jewish State and the higher authority of the Halakha. At most they were concerned in this respect with problems of the degree of validity of *Dina Demalkhuta* (the law of the Land), usually stressing the obligations to accept it in all secular matters. Even their ultimate sanction against potential secession—the *Kherem*, through which people could be threatened with ostracization and even with expulsion—was often upheld not by internal forces but by the authorities. Indeed later on, in open modern societies, when the *Kehillot* became voluntary bodies, the secessionist centripetal tendencies often became very strong within them.

#### THE TENSION BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT ORIENTATIONS OF JEWISH POLITICAL TRADITION IN MODERN TIMES AND IN THE STATE OF ISRAEL

### X

These various cultural orientations, with their potentialities for principled political anarchism, were reawakened with greater vigor in the aftermath of the crisis which beset Jewish civilization following the Shabbatean debacle and the opening of the gates of Emancipation. Since then, various movements have arisen within Judaism which have remolded many of the elements and orientations which had been dormant during the Middle Ages, and which have, also, revived the tendencies to principle political anarchism.

Such orientation, it would seem, quickly come to the fore when the situation in Diaspora countries becomes less restrictive, and then there developed in different Jewish communities continuous searches for the ways how to shape the Jewish experience in the modern world. Thus, as Professor Salo Baron has shown how difficult, even impossible, it was for the Orthodox communities of New York in the nineteenth century to impose any uniformity of action. Disputes arose not only between the Orthodox and Liberal or Reform movements, but within the Orthodox movement itself as soon as external conditions changed. Some very significant developments—from the point of view of our discussion—took place within autonomous Jewish organizations in the Diaspora under conditions of partial or complete equality of an open society of civil rights. The creative cultural and social energies inherent within Jewish tradition and Jewish civilization were released—with all the problematics and tensions which had once marked this tradition. The Halakha became only one of many feasible paths, and its adherents formed one of several diverse groups which could come into collusion with other ones, and later on with the various institutions, including the legal one, of the State of Israel. Indeed from the point of view of our discussion, it was the establishment of the State of Israel that was the most important such development in modern times.

## XI

The various contradictory orientations in the Jewish political tradition indeed erupted with greater force with the establishment of the State of Israel—as the State of Israel was created out of revolutionary visions implemented by highly ideological groups with rather totalistic claims, orientations, or tendencies, and given the special conditions in which Israeli society developed. The fact that although rooted in a strong rebellion against the Jewish traditional and assimilationist molds, the Zionist movement was not dissociated from many aspects or dimensions of Jewish history and tradition and reinforced the tendencies to such emphasis.

This rebellion against the reality of Jewish life in the Diaspora not only reinforced, renewed, or brought into the open the basic themes and orientations latent in earlier periods of Jewish history, but also transformed most of them from purely intellectual ones into themes embedded in institutional areas and frameworks. Thus the empha-

sis on civility and the rule of law, and its tensions with populist as well as antinomian and semi-anarchist political tendencies, with their emphasis on a Higher Law, emerged from the narrow intellectual confines and became closely interwoven with the problem of the constitution of a fully-fledged society and polity with the different dimensions of its institutional format and political forces.

## XII

A brief look at the development of the legal institutions and of the attitude towards them in the Yishuv and the State of Israel would be helpful here. The (British) Mandatory period had a strong influence on the development of Israeli legal institutions and on attitudes to them and to the law. The rule of law, upheld by the political limitations set by the British Mandatory government and by British police, was on the whole accepted (in the realm of civil and public as distinct from political matters), reinforcing the strong belief in the rule of law that many of the immigrants had brought from Europe. At the same time, these attitudes were weakened by the growing political tensions between the Zionist movement and the Mandatory government; the emergence of independent defense organizations (the Hagana and the Irgun); and the open violation of British restrictions on immigration and acquisition of land. All of these sanctified the contravention of the law of the land (in this case that of the Mandate) in the name of higher collective aims; they often gave rise to far-reaching evasions and contraventions of the law of the land in daily life as well.

With the establishment of the State of Israel, the basic institutional framework has changed—but often in rather paradoxical directions—rooted in the tensions between the older injunctions of *Dina di-malkhuta dina* versus the potential of non-acceptance of the law of the State with its kernels in traditions or tendencies to political anarchism.

A Jewish state was often seen by many groups as responsible for the implementation of Jewish civilizational vision; different groups and sectors of the population might interpret this vision in different ways, leading to intense political controversy that could not develop with respect to the laws of a non-Jewish state. Precisely because the executive, legislature, and judiciary were all part of a new and sovereign state, they could become the foci of strong potentially principled anarchistic tendencies. Acceptance of the law of the land as

laid down by foreign rulers, and for which the Jews did not have full responsibility, could not be automatically transferred to the institutions of the State when the state authority became Jewish.

Nevertheless, the legal system, especially the Supreme Court and the office of the Attorney General, experienced a continuous yet not uncontested growth of influence. In fact, the authority of the Supreme Court has always been respected, and its *de facto* initiation of many legislative principles has expanded—as have its injunctions against public authorities and the government. At the same time, however, only a rather weak tradition of a conception of “State” or “Raison d’Etat,” as distinct from considerations of security and general public interest, has grown up.

Even within this framework, however, some inherent tensions have arisen with respect to the rule of law. One involved the relationship between the secular court and the religious circles and courts. It was not only that the extreme Orthodox circles did not acknowledge the legitimacy of the secular legal system, and particularly of the Supreme Court. They had little recourse to them—almost exclusively in civil (commercial) matters and even this to a very limited extent—and on the whole tended to use their own internal courts or quasi-legal institutions. Thus there developed a situation that in a sense, paradoxically enough, was rather similar to that of medieval times—namely, the relative segregation of the different courts.

Much more paradoxical and potentially tension ridden was the situation with respect to the official rabbinical courts of the State of Israel. These courts perpetuate the situation of the Mandate, with antecedents in the Ottoman period, when a system of rabbinical courts and (Sephardi and Ashkenazi) chief rabbis was established. The jurisdiction of the rabbinical courts extends to all matters of personal status (marriage and divorce) for the Jewish population (parallel powers are vested in the religious authorities of the Muslim, Christian, and Druze communities) and to supervision of *kashrut*. Thus the basic criterion of membership in the community, as applied in controlling marriage, remained in the hands of religious institutions. In the State of Israel this system has become fully organized; in accordance with Knesset legislation it is part—but a distinct and separate part—of the state court system.

The rabbinical courts are in principle subject to the jurisdiction of the (secular) Supreme Court. This creates the possibility of continuous tension between them. Especially in recent years, religious

groups have frequently denied the legitimacy of this subordination of the rabbinical to the secular court (or of any judicial review of political and administrative actions taken by religious ministers acting in accordance with their view of Halakhah).

### XIII

The institutional mold that developed in Israel was seemingly able to regulate all these tensions and the various tendencies to principled political activities that developed within it. Changes took place within this mold, while at the same time the more anarchic potentials were regulated and held in check both by the development and continuity of the central institutional frameworks of this mold and by the strong internal cohesion of the elites and their solidarity with the broader sections of the population. But this achievement could not be taken for granted; the very establishment of a sovereign state has created the potential for these tendencies to erupt anew, to break through the existing institutional mold, thus generating continual challenges for Israeli society and the political system. Such challenges became especially very acute in periods of drastic change—as for instance the period after the Mahapakh of 1977 to which we have referred in the beginning of this paper. Throughout this period there developed several processes of continual feedback between them generated great challenges to the Israeli constitutional democratic system. The most important of these processes have been the dissolution of the major institutional patterns of the Labor-Zionist mold that were dormant until the Mahapakh; the processes of incorporation of many sectors into the central framework of Israeli society; the impacts of the Six Day and Yom Kippur wars, all of which give rise to the continual reexamination of the different components of the collective identity of major sectors of Israeli society, of the definition of Israeli collectivity to the continual discussions and struggles around them, and to intensive political contestations and division around them.

The continual feedback between these processes intensified the tensions between the different orientations inherent in the Jewish political tradition—the tendencies to principled political anarchism, to the politics of a higher law on the one hand, and those emphasizing distributive allocation, often in the name of solidarity, on the other—these tendencies which were both during the medieval period and the first twenty-five years of the State of Israel hemmed in by

their respective institutional frameworks—could erupt in great force and became more and more visible.

These developments do indeed indicate that the struggle among the basic orientations of the Jewish political tradition continues to be fought out within Israeli society, and it is very difficult to understand Israeli politics without taking them into account. As in times gone by, these tendencies are activated, not by the mere existence of various ideological orientations in the Jewish political tradition, but because such orientations are connected with strong social forces—namely, various social groups, elites, and movements that saw themselves as the carriers of these visions, with these orientations becoming intensified by the processes of crystallization of the new institutional mold of Israeli society and by the changes that took place in this mold. The tensions between the basic themes of the Jewish political tradition play an important role in this process; the resolution of these tensions—in terms of confrontation and accommodation—or the development of a new institutional mold that will be able to regulate these tensions, will influence the outcome of this process and provide an important indication of the directions in which Israeli society will develop.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

### THE PUZZLE OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY

#### I

In this chapter I shall present a brief examination of some aspects of India's modern political experience and from the point of view of the analysis of the dynamics of different constitutional democratic regimes.

The fact that India has remained a democratic constitutional regime since independence in 1947 has confounded many prophets of doom who had predicted the demise not only of the constitutional regime in India, but also of the Union of India as such.

To give only one illustration, in "India, The Dangerous Decades", a very incisive and influential book published in 1960, Selig Harrison made two predictions.<sup>1</sup> One was that the level of conflicts—inter-caste, inter-regional or inter-linguistic would increase in India, and the other was that because of the intensification of conflicts, the Union of India would be put in great jeopardy. The interesting fact is that while the first prediction did come true, the second did not, at least not until now. Moreover, the Union of India continued despite numerous turbulences to be a constitutional democracy—the largest such democracy in the world.

While no one can, of course, guarantee the continuity of Indian constitutional democracy and some of the latest events or processes, such as on the one hand the rise of what is called Hindu Fundamentalists, Hindu nationalist- or semi-fundamentalist Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), the burning down of the Ayodhya temple, and on the other the continual declarations by the President of states of emergency in some Indian states, as well as the continual erosion of many aspects of political institutions—some of which are not entirely dissimilar from what we have observed in other countries, especially in the U.S. and Israel—do indeed point to some of the weak points of

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<sup>1</sup> S. Harrison, *India—The Dangerous Decades*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960.

Indian constitutional democracy. Yet even the fact that India succeeded to continue as a constitutional democracy for about fifty years is certainly worthy of consideration and examination from the point of view of our comparative analysis of the democratic constitutional regimes.

In this chapter I would like to examine these aspects of India's modern political system from the point of view developed in the preceding chapter—i.e. from a comparative civilizational point of view. What do the civilizational premises and the historical experience of what was to become India, tell us, if anything, about these problems? What do they tell us about the astounding fact that in India there developed a hitherto viable democracy which was not only “installed”—under the impact of the British—but also continued to function for more than fifty years—one of the very few such post-colonial societies? How was it possible for such a viable constitutional system to develop in a cultural or civilizational setting so radically different from that of the “original,” “Western” democracies? And are the fragilities of this system related in some way to these premises and experiences?

The starting point of this analysis will be—as was also the case of the societies analyzed above—the characteristics of the major movements of protest that developed in India, their relation to the quest of major social sectors to be incorporated in the central frameworks of the Indian political system, their impact on the Indian constitutional system and the possibilities of its transformability or breakdown.

As was the case to some extent also with respect to the U.S. and Israel, many of these movements of protest constituted a transformation of those which developed in the former—both “traditional” and colonial—periods. The core of this transformation was the fact that the leaders of the major independence movement became the Congress, became after independence the ruling elite of the new country and the different movements of protest that developed were oriented mostly to, or at least at, the new center established by this elite. These movements articulated most fully the numerous conflicts that were endemic in Indian society and which were naturally intensified with the creation of a common centralized framework, and which were destined, according to the various prophets of doom, to become the breakdown of Indian constitutional democracy.



## II

The major movements of protest that developed in India from independence on were indeed very numerous and quite clearly bore a very distinct local colour, promulgated a very great variety of demands. The most important among these were economic demands, especially of peasants and industrial workers; economic conflicts focused on demands for affirmative action, especially with respect to positions in civil service for unscheduled or lower castes; and demands for cultural or linguistic autonomy and recognition for the numerous regional and linguistic groups. Significantly enough most of these movements “local”—i.e., confined to states or parts thereof, with but very few country-wide orientations. They were mostly oriented to local problems, voicing demands either for growing autonomy and/or for allocation of more resources.<sup>2</sup>

It was these movements that articulated most fully the numerous conflicts that were endemic in Indian society and which were naturally intensified with the creation of a common centralized framework, and which were destined, according to the various prophets of doom, to become the breakdown of the Indian constitutional democracy—prophecies which did not at least until now materialize. How then can the failure of these prophecies be explained?

## III

The most important fact from the point of view of our analysis with respect to the political process in modern India is the highly accommodative stance of the center to the potentially conflictual demands

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<sup>2</sup> Brass, Paul. “National Power and Local Politics in India: A Twenty Year Perspective”, in: Chatterjee, Partha (ed.). *State and Politics in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 303–335; Chatterjee, Partha. 1995. “Religious Minorities and the Secular State: Reflections on an Indian Impasse”, *Public Culture*, 18, 1, pp. 11–39; Frankel, Francine R. and M.S.A. Rao (eds.). 1989–1990. *Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of a Social Order. Vol. I, II*. Delhi: Oxford University Press; Sathyamurthy, T.V., (ed.), 1996. *Region, Religion, Caste, Gender and Culture in Contemporary India. Vol. 3. Social Change and Political Discourse in India: Structures of Power, Movements of Resistance*. Delhi: Oxford University Press; Idem, (ed.). 1996. *Class Formation and Political Transformation in Post-Colonial India, Vol. 4. Social Change and Political Discourse in India: Structures of Power, Movements of Resistance*. Delhi: Oxford University Press; Malik, S.C. (ed.). 1977, *Dissent, Protest and Reform in Indian Civilization*. Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies; Pouchepadass, J. et H. Stern (eds.). 1991. *De La Royaute A L’Etat: Anthropologie et Histoire Du Politique Dans le Monde Indien*. Paris: Editions EHESS.

by the numerous social groups and movements—indeed demands rooted in many of the conflicts observed and predicted by Selig Harrison and many other scholars,<sup>3</sup> even if there were important exceptions to this pragmatic attitude—both on the local level as well as at the center, and especially during the premiership of Indira Gandhi,<sup>4</sup> which lies at the heart of India's hitherto continuity as a constitutional state.

This relatively high level of accommodation of the center—based on a very pragmatic attitude to central political issues, with indeed only relatively weak ideological components—was to some extent contrary to the experience of many European states, whether in the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires, or needless to say to the experiences in Eastern Europe in more recent times.

For two reasons, a good starting point for our discussion is a brief analysis, not of the differences, but of the similarities between India and Europe.<sup>5</sup> One is the fact that for many of the “prophets of doom” of Indian democracy, consciously or unconsciously, it was the historical experience of Europe that constituted a conscious or unconscious model of the analysis of the Indian political system.

Second, and from a broader comparative point of view, of special importance are some very interesting parallels between the basic historical experience of these two civilizations—against which the differences, and the bearing of this combination of parallels and differences or their respective political dynamics—is highlighted.

The most important of these similarities is the combination of far-reaching structural and ecological pluralism with a relatively broad common civilizational framework, related to basic cultural-religious visions, and promulgated by the carriers of these visions. Many con-

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<sup>3</sup> Harrison, *India—The Dangerous Decades*.

<sup>4</sup> Frankel, Francine R. “The Personalization of Political Power: A Re-Appraisal of the Indira Gandhi Years.” Paper presented at the India and the Politics of Developing Countries: Essays in Honor of Myron Weiner., University of Notre-Dame, 24–26/09/1999; Kohli, Atul. “Introduction”, in: idem (ed.). *Against the Odds: Fifty Years of Democracy in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 1–16; Idem 1990. *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>5</sup> This follows Eisenstadt, S.N. and Harriet Hartman. “Historical Experience, Cultural Traditions, State Formation and Political Dynamics in India and Europe”, in: Doornbos, Martin and Sudipta Kaviraj (eds.). *Dynamics of State Formation: India and Europe Compared*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 27–55; Pouchepadass, J. et H. Stern (eds.). 1991. *De La Royaute A L'Etat: Anthropologie et Histoire Du Politique Dans le Monde Indien*, op. cit.

crete structural or organizational aspects of such pluralism such as for instance kinship-based, patrimonial, semi-feudal, and semi-imperial regimes; or the structures of cities that developed in India evince similarities with those that developed in medieval Europe. In India, as in Europe, there took place continual institutional changes, entailing the construction of a great variety of economic, political, and religious arenas and organizations. Given these similarities, the differences in their respective overall political dynamics, both in medieval and modern periods; in the structure and construction of the centers; in the nature of the protest movements, their articulation into political conflicts, and the modes of the incorporation of such movements and of their demands into the center or centers are indeed striking and call for an explanation.

One of the most important characteristics of the political dynamics in "historical" and modern India is indeed the relatively high level of their pragmatism, of accommodative stances and relatively low level of contestual ideologization of many of the basic political issues. This pragmatic-accommodative attitude can be contrasted with the experience of many European states in the medieval and early modern period, whether in the modern German, Austro-Hungarian or Russian Empires, or needless to say to the experiences in parts of Eastern Europe in more recent times.

This pragmatic accommodative attitude was manifest in the relatively—needless to say only relatively—widespread acceptance of the demands of various groups' participation in the political arena, and the concomitant—at least hitherto—acceptance by many such groups of the legitimacy of central political institutions, although lately such acceptance was often contested by more extreme groups, and at least from Indira Gandhi's premiership was connected with growing decay of many political institutions.

This relatively widespread accommodative stance of the center (which was to some extent suspended during Indira Gandhi's Prime Ministership in 1966–1977 and 1980–1984 and returned to after her assassination) to the potentially conflictual demands of numerous social groups and movements—be they economic demands of peasants or industrial workers; conflicts focused on demands for affirmative action, with respect to positions in civil service for unscheduled or lower castes; and demands for cultural or linguistic autonomy—that stands out as the hitherto very—probably most—important characteristic of the Indian political system, and which lies at the heart of

India's hitherto continuity as a constitutional democratic regime, belying the many predictions of the disintegration of the Indian system which were made from the early decades of Independence on.

THE CIVILIZATION PREMISES AND HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE OF  
PREMODERN INDIA—THE FRAMEWORK OF PRAGMATIC POLITICS

IV

This pragmatic attitude to politics and the accommodative stance of the center has indeed its roots in some very important aspects of Indian historical experience in the precolonial period—especially in the conceptions and definitions of the political arenas—or rather, as there barely developed a conception or organization of this arena as a distinct autonomous entity—of political activities and organizations, of rulership, and of their relations to other institutional arenas; and second in several aspects of the colonial experience under the British and of the struggle of independence against the British.

The most important single aspect, from the point of view of our discussion, of this historical experience was that the political arena, the arena of rulership, did not constitute in “historical” India—as it did in monotheistic civilizations or in Confucianism—a major arena of the implementation of the transcendental visions predominant in this civilization. The conception of Indian civilization as closely related to these visions and as promulgated by its bearers, was not defined, as in Europe, as in the other monotheistic religions, (Judaism and Islam) and even more so in China, in political terms.<sup>6</sup> It is only lately that there have developed strong tendencies among some political groups to promulgate a specific Hindu political identity and to define the Indian civilization in political terms. In “historical” “pre-modern” India the major arenas of the implementation of such civilizational conceptions and visions were not the political but the religious-ritual—even when borne by military Kshatriya groups. Concomitantly while the political component certainly was not of

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<sup>6</sup> Halbfass, Wilhelm. 1991. *Tradition and Reflection: Exploration in Indian Thought*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press; Idem. 1992. *On Being and What There is: Classical Vaisesika and the History of Indian Ontology*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press; Heesterman, J.C. 1985. *The Inner Conflict of Tradition: Essays in Indian Ritual, Kingship and Society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

negligible importance in the construction of the multiple and multifaceted identities of the different collectivities—local, national or religious and indeed also of caste identities—as they crystallized in India, it did not play a central, and certainly not an exclusive, role in such construction. These centers and arenas with their seeming “other-worldly” emphasis, their wide ecological spread, and their embeddedness in the multiple broad ascriptive units—above all but certainly not only in what has been often designated as the castes or caste systems—were not organized in a homogeneous, unified, organizational setting. Rather, they consisted of a series of networks and organizational-ritual subcenters—pilgrimage shrines and networks, temples, sects, schools—spread throughout the subcontinent, and often cutting across the boundaries of different political units.<sup>7</sup> Even in Moghul India, in which the rulers belonged to a monotheistic civilization, the conception of the political arena as the arena, or one of the arenas, in which the transcendental vision predominant in the civilization was to be implemented, did not prevail, the political arena or rather the arena of rulership was not perceived or defined as an autonomous ontological arena.

This does not necessarily mean that rulership was, in the Indian civilizational complex, only secondary or derivative, as was suggested or at least implied in the classical expositions of Luis Dumont and to a lesser extent of Jan Heesterman.<sup>8</sup> In these expositions, the king’s symbolic authority was in principle derived from the overall Brahmanic cultural-religious vision and was symbolized through religious rituals closely connected to this vision—and accordingly his “sanctity” was

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<sup>7</sup> Eisenstadt, S.N. and Harriet Hartman. “Historical Experience, Cultural Traditions, State Formation and Political Dynamics in India and Europe”, op. cit.; Halbfass, Wilhelm. 1991. *Tradition and Reflection: Exploration in Indian Thought*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press; Bhardwaj, Surinder Mohan. 1973. *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India: A Study in Cultural Geography*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Tambiah, Stanley J. 1998. “What did Bernier Actually Say? Profiling the Mughal Empire”, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 32, 2, pp. 361–386; Malik, S.C. (ed.). 1977. *Dissent, Protest and Reform in Indian Civilization*, op. cit.; Pouchepadass, J. et H. Stern (eds.). 1991. *De La Royaute A L’Etat: Anthropologie et Histoire Du Politique Dans le Monde Indien*, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Dumont, Luis, 1970. *Homo Hierarchicus*. Chicago the University of Chicago Press; Heesterman, J.C. 1985. *The Inner Conflict of Tradition: Essays in Indian Ritual, Kingship and Society*. op. cit. esp. chapters 1 “India and the Inner Conflict of Tradition”, pp. 10–25, 8. “The Conundrum of the Kings Authority” pp. 108–127 and 9. “Kautilya and the Ancient Indian State” pp. 128–140; Bardieus, M. 1968. “Etudes de Mythologie Hindoue”, *Bulletin de l’Ecole Francaise d’Extreme-Orient*, 54.

only derivative. Recent revisionist approaches have emphasized that the king/the ruler played a central and rather complex role in the context of such transcendental visions and the possibility of their implementation. These approaches have suggested that a high level of sacral or semisacral status, distinction and honour accrued to the political ruler or rulers, and that some—sometimes very significant—degree of authority seems to have been attributed to him independently of the “official” Brahminic religious—legitimation. The king was often portrayed as “king of the universe”, his rule extending to the four corners of the earth, his coronation ceremony and annual commemoration and the often accompanying horse sacrifice renewing his powers annually. His claim to universal sovereignty, as “lord of all lords”, and the manifestation of his greatness through temples and monuments attested to his symbolic, indeed semi-sacral power and distinctiveness.

Recent analyses of the meaning of Hindu Kingship in diverse historical contexts have confirmed Gonda’s view that to separate the “secular” aspects of kingship from the “religious” is to misrepresent the nature of Hindu social reality. Or, to put it another way, the dharma or the code-for-conduct of the king is as laden and as culturally specific as the dharma of the Brahman . . .<sup>9</sup>

In Gallait’s words: “My argument, I hope, has shown how little we would gain in dealing with Indian kingship from a political point of view. It is a ritual organization which, along with priesthood and the gods, orders the world in a continuous series of transformations.”<sup>10</sup> Moreover, to follow M.L. Reiniche (private communication):

. . . in stressing (as can be seen in the analysis of sectarian texts, or in the kingly praises in epigraphy) the symbolic identification of the king with the salvation deity (Siva or Vishnu): The latter in its temple, appears as a salvation god incarnated on earth, as well as a king for an earthy kingdom. The figure of the salvation and sovereign god enhanced that of the king—as is particularly evident in South India where many of the medieval temples were royal foundations, even if it is really impossible to separate the brahmanical strata from the devel-

<sup>9</sup> Goodwin-Raheja, Gloria. 1988. “India: Caste, Kingships and Dominance Reconsidered”; Mahapatra, L.K. “Gods, Kings and the Caste System in india”, *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Gallait, R., quoted in: Goodwin-Raheja, Gloria. 1988. “India: Caste, Kingships and Dominance Reconsidered”. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 17, pp. 497–522.

opment of devotional Hinduism, which, while it seems to shortcut the brahmanical social order, respected it.

In close relation to these conceptions of the political arena and of kingship there developed in India two modes of legitimation of rulership which were derived from two axes of sacral values both firmly rooted in the Hindu ontological premises with their distinct approaches to the mundane world—namely those of purity and of auspiciousness. These orientations were always closely interrelated; although purity as borne by the Brahmins was in principle hierarchically higher, it could never be concretely realized without auspiciousness, in which other castes, especially the Ksatriya from which usually the ruler comes, predominated.<sup>11</sup>

One such mode of legitimation was rooted in the conception of dharma. The different sectors' place in the social order was in principle prescribed by their ritual standing in the purity scheme; by the conceptions of dharma which however entailed also the acceptance by the rulers of the legitimacy of many claims made by different groups, not only of the duty of subjects to the rulers but also of the duties of the rulers to take care of the needs of the ruled and listen to the demands or problems of the subjects. The second mode of legitimation was based on the more pragmatic judgement of the performance of rulers according to the auspiciousness they attracted. The very fact that auspiciousness could constitute a criterion or indicator of legitimation of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled meant that kingship not only contained sacral components but that it enjoyed also not only organizational but also an autonomous symbolic space. Such auspiciousness was often, as it were, appropriated by other castes especially those from which the rulers often come and which often, especially in the North, attributed to themselves Kshatriya identity. Moreover, the kings, by virtue of their sacral attributes, acted as crucial mediators between different castes, especially between those of the left and the right hand.

These conceptions of the political arena and of legitimation of rulers were closely related to the theory and practice of sovereignty that developed in India which are of great importance for the understanding of the Indian political dynamics, especially of the pragmatic

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<sup>11</sup> Marglin, Frederique A. "Kings and Wives: The Separation of Status and Royal Power", in: Madan, T.N. (ed.). *Way of Life: King, Householder, Renouncer, Essays in Honour of Louis Dumont*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1982, pp. 155–182.

attitudes and accommodative stances which developed within them. Thus as Wink,<sup>12</sup> the Rudolphs,<sup>13</sup> and others have shown, these conceptions emphasized the multiple rights—very often defined in terms of various duties—of different groups and sectors of society rather than a unitary, quasi-ontological conception—real or ideal—of “the state” or of “society”—giving instead rise to what can be defined as fractured sovereignty.

The organizational dimension of this picture is, on the face of it, of course, similar to the one that prevailed in Europe throughout the middle ages and the early-modern period. The crucial difference is, however, that in Europe the ideal of political unification—symbolized in the ideal of re-establishment of the Holy Roman Empire, however fragile its institutional bases were—constituted an ideal model. In India—at least until recently—such an ideal was at best very weak. While the “fractured” sovereignty that developed in India was often combined with a tendency to far-reaching civilizational expansion, especially on the subcontinent, this tendency did

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<sup>12</sup> Wink, A. 1986. *Land and Sovereignty in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Thapar, Romila. 1984. *From Lineage to State: Social Formation in the Mid-First Millennium B.C. in the Ganga Valley*. Bombay: Oxford University Press; Pouchepadass, J. et H. Stern (eds.). 1991. *De La Royaute A L'Etat: Anthropologie et Histoire Du Politique Dans le Monde Indien*, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Rudolph, Susanne Hoerber and Lloyd L. Rudolph. 1987. *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; Idems. 1984. *Essays on Rajputana. Reflections on History, Culture and Administration*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company; Rudolph, Lloyd I. (ed.). 1984. *Cultural Policy in India*. Delhi: Chanakya Publications. Rudolph, Rudolph, Susanne. 1963. “The Princely States of Rajputana: Ethnic, Authority and Structure”. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 24, 1, pp. 14–31; Kulke, Hermann (ed.). 1995. *The State in India, 1000–1700*. Delhi: Oxford University Press; Kumar, Ravinder. “State Formation in India: Retrospect and Prospect”, in: Doornbos, Martin and Sudipta Kaviraj (eds.). *Dynamics of State Formation: India and Europe Compared*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 395–410; Kulke, Hermann. 1993. *Kings and Cults: State Formation and Legitimation in India and South East Asia*. New Delhi: Manohar; Malamoud, Charles. “On the Rhetoric and Semantics of Purusartha”, in: Madan, T.N. (ed.). *Way of Life: King, Householder, Renouncer, Essays in Honour of Louis Dumont*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1982, pp. 33–54; Shah, K.J. “Of Artha and the Arthasastra”, pp. 55–74; Biardeau, Madeleine. “The Salvation of the King in the Mahabharata”, pp. 75–98; Inden, Ronald. “Hierarchies of Kings in Medieval India”, pp. 99–126; Mayer, A.C. “Perception of Princely Rule: Perspectives from a Biography”, pp. 127–154; Marglin, Frederique A. “Kings and Wives: The Separation of Status and Royal Power”, pp. 155–182; Stein, Burton. 1989. *The New Cambridge History of India. 1–2. Vijayanagara*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Thapar, Romila. 1984. *From Lineage to State: Social Formations in the Mid-First Millennium B.C. in the Ganga Valley*, op. cit.; Pouchepadass, J. et H. Stern (eds.). 1991. *De La Royaute A L'Etat: Anthropologie et Histoire Du Politique Dans le Monde Indien*, op. cit.



not give rise—as in the monotheistic civilizations or in China—to the construction of autonomous, often Imperial, political centers, distinct from the periphery, attempting to impose on the periphery through distinct political activities and organizations, political religious conceptions, a distinct civilizational vision. In India—despite its “empires”—there never developed a conception of statehood as a distinct, absolutised ontological entity, and no absolutist conceptions of politics developed. Although India knew states of different scope, from semi-imperial centers to small patrimonial ones, the overall Indian cultural tradition was never identified with any of them. Indian politics were characterized by predominantly personalistic and for patrimonial characteristics, the rulers relying mostly on the support above all of the various particularistic communities and to some extent, especially in some of the later developments, as among the Mauryas, on personal loyalty and ties for recruitment of personnel and for contacts with different sectors of society. True, the political centers that developed—for instance, in the Gupta or Mauryan empires—were stronger, and their territorial scope wider than those in previous polities. Their administrations often evinced strong centralizing tendencies; yet these tendencies retained strong patrimonial characteristics and did not lead to the restructuring of the relations between center and periphery, to the creation of new links between them, or to any break with the ascriptive premises of the periphery. The rulers of these political entities were not able to imbue the political arena with some meaning beyond the prevalent ontological premises. But except for the ultimately unsuccessful attempt of Asoka,<sup>14</sup> they did not aim at restructuring the basic premises of the political arena, or the basic center-periphery relations, and even here some interpretations of Asoka doubt whether he was really so different from other rulers, except for his very strong support of Buddhist groups more than others. Anyhow such attempts at the restructuring of center periphery relations were certainly successfully counteracted by coalitions of the leaders of various ascriptive—above all, but not only, caste, sects and temples, networks and groups. Moreover, despite the sacral attributes of kingship, and drive for civilizational expansion, few polities achieved anything approaching unity of the subcontinent.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Tapar, Romila. 1973. *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*. 2nd ed. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

<sup>15</sup> See: Lal, Deepak. 1988. *Cultural Stability and Economic Stagnation. India c. 1500*

## V

But the fact that the conceptions of rulership and of sovereignty differed in India from those prevalent in many monotheistic civilizations as well as from China, that they have not been rooted in or based on an ontological absolutization of the political arena does not mean that the political component did not play a very important role in the social realm, in the construction of social identities, including caste identities. Political symbolism and imagery did indeed play a very important role in the construction of the self-perception, collective consciousness of different collectivities on the Indian sub-continent. As Pratap Mehta has put it:

There is considerable evidence, following Dirks, Inden and now Susan Bayly, just to name a few, that politics is at least as central to the constitution of these identities as ritual. To take the example of Rajputs: it is now clear that the caste cluster we have come to designate as Rajput were not descendents of Rajasthan's pre-Mughal elites. Indeed the term Rajput came to be defined as an entitlement to be enrolled in privileged military service within the Mughal imperial system. The point of this example is to suggest that identities in civil society were underwritten by politics through and through.<sup>16</sup>

Such political imagery was especially strong in the South where there often developed, as indicated above, an identification of the king with the salvation deity. In the North these tendencies to the development of strong political imagery were probably reinforced especially in encounters with other, above all Islamic, civilizations. Such encounters have for instance, as Sheldon Pollock has shown, intensified the importance of the cult of Rama in large parts of India since about the twelfth century, and that of the political components in the self-definition of both the Indians and the new—Muslim—"others."<sup>17</sup>

Indeed ironically, given the widely held modern view of caste as a scheme of religious values which are unique to the Hindu cultural

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*BC-AD*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Bayly, Susan. 1999. *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 25 ff; Eisenstadt, S.N. and Harriet Hartman. "Historical Experience, Cultural Traditions, State Formation and Political Dynamics in India and Europe"; Thapar, Romila. 1978. *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*. New Delhi: Orient Longman; Mahapatra, L.K. "Gods, Kings and the Caste System in India", op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> P. Metha—Comments in the Notre Dame Conference.

<sup>17</sup> Pollock, Sheldon, "Ramayana and Political Imagination in India", *Journal of Asian Studies*, 52, 2, May 1993, pp. 261–297.

tradition, non-Hindu as well as avowedly Hindu rulers played a dynamic role in this process. To rule was to name, order and classify; many of the modern caste 'system' were popularised through the usages of the great state-building lords and dynasts of the Mughal and post-Mughal periods.

Yet concomitantly neither in the North nor in the South did these tendencies ever undermine the brahminical order to the extent that it was indeed predominant.

Significantly, even the intensification of the political component did not give rise in the Indian imagination to attempts to impose a distinct Hindu transcendental vision against the other (Islam)—that is, to confront the universalistic civilization with an universalistic exclusivity of its own.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, as Susan Bailey has analyzed in great detail in the post-moghul period it was the rulers that greatly reinforced and formalized the caste system

... In this (postmoghul) period, both kings and the priests and ascetics with whom men of power were able to associate their rule became a growing focus for the affirmation of a martial and regal form of caste ideal. Across much of India, those who embraced these values sought increasingly to establish firm social boundaries between themselves and the non-elite tillers and arms-bearers to whom their forebears had often been closely affiliated. The other key feature of this period was the reshaping of many apparently casteless form of devotional faith (*bhakti*) in a direction which further affirmed these differentiations of rank and 'community'.

... The role of rulers and state power was a central element in these developments. This does not mean that dynasts and their elite retainers in the pre-British kingdoms somehow imposed hierarchical jati and varna norms on their hitherto casteless subjects. Indeed, recognisable versions of caste norms were certainly known and practised to a limited degree in some though no all regions of India many centuries before the age of the Mughals and their contemporaries. Yet the formation of a far more caste-conscious social order took shape at a significantly later point, above all in the proliferating reginal kingdoms of the post-Mughal period. The spread in the dominions of the eclectic men of prowess of whom the seventeenth-century Maratha dynast Shivaji is the prime example. the pale of caste then expanded even

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<sup>18</sup> Pollock, Sheldon, "Ramayama and Political Imagination in India", op. cit. and see also S.N. Eisenstadt, Harriet Hartmann, "Historical Experience, Cultural Traditions, State Formation and Political Dynamics in India and Europe", op. cit.

more rapidly in the realms of the more socially exclusive rulers who exalted themselves as heirs to the scriptural varna ideal of the noble and pious warrior-dynast.

These, above all, were the men of power who set increasingly pervasive standards of dharmic correctness for other Indians, deferring to the pious values of their client merchant and service populations, and exalting norms of conduct which many anthropologists have portrayed as the core values of 'caste society'.<sup>19</sup>

## VI

One of the most important derivatives of this situation was the basic definition of ontological reality and of the political arena prevalent in India there did not give rise to strong alternative conceptions of the political order, and the principled, ideological reconstruction of the political (or economic) arena according to basic transcendental orientations. Attempts at such reconstruction did not constitute, as they did in Europe, a major focus of the movements of protest or the numerous sects that developed in India—be it Bhakti, Jain, Buddhism, and other, movements within Hinduism—even if in many cases segments of such movements participated in the changes of political regimes and in the struggles between different kings and princes.

Many of the visions promulgated by these movements emphasized equality, but it was above all equality in the cultural or religious arena, with respect to access to worship, and only to some extent in the definition of membership in the political community. Such egalitarian orientations promulgated in some of the heterodox movements, which sometimes became connected with rebellions and political struggle, were not characterized by the strong articulation of new political goals, nor were they linked with many attempts to restructure the basic premises of political regimes. Only in some popular uprising against alien or "bad" rulers did such goals crystallize for a short while.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Bayly, Susan. 1999, *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Bayly, Susan. 1985. "The Pre-History of 'Communalism? Religious Conflict In India, 1700–1860", *Modern Asian Studies*, 19, pp. 177–203; Mahapatra, L.K. "Gods, Kings and the Caste System in India", *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Eschmann, Anncharlott. "Religion, Reaction and Change: The Role of Sects in Hinduism", in: Sontheimer, Gunther-Dietz and Hermann Kulke (eds.). *Hinduism Reconsidered*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1997, pp. 108–120; Fuller, C.J. 1979. "Gods,

These movements, oriented toward the reconstruction of ascriptive civilizational symbols and collectivities, could become connected with the extension of the borders of political communities or with the establishment of new ones, with changes of dynasties, but rarely with the reconstruction of the premises of the political centers. Buddhism did give rise to such new premises, but they became fully institutionalized only outside India, in the new Theravada Buddhist polities of southeast Asia and in Mahayana Tibet.

There were of course very important but indeed not absolute exceptions to the relatively weak principled political orientations of the various sectarian movements. Thus on the one hand there developed, as Shulman and Subrahmanjah have shown, in South India, especially in Tamilnadu, a rather distinct type of polity which was characterized by a much greater autonomy of the political arena rooted in the castes of the left hand with strong sectarian tendencies and seemingly without the Brahminic mode being predominant.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, as M.L. Reiniche has indicated, among some of these sectarian movements there developed far-reaching challenges to the Brahmic hegemony, often indeed closely connected to such political endeavours. And yet significantly enough in all these cases, there developed a very strong process of Brahminization of such sectarianism which was originally connected with very significant transporting of the religious orientations beyond the Brahmanic caste order, developed into yet another component of this order. Thus for instance, as David Shulman has shown, the Viraisva movement in the 12th century which started as a protest against this order with its triple pivot of temple, caste, and king, ultimately "The Revolution was in fact transformed."<sup>22</sup>

Parallely in contrast to Europe, the reconstruction of the major collectivities and the development of new types of social organization in India was not, on the whole, connected with radical shifts

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Priests and Purity: On the Relation between Hinduism and the Caste System". *Man*, 14, 3, pp. 459-476; Idem. 1998. "The Hindu Pantheon and the Legitimation of Hierarchy". *Man*. 23, 1, pp. 19-39; Thapar, Romila. 1978. *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*; Mahapatra, L.K. "Gods, Kings and the Caste System in India", op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> Rao, V.N., David Shulman and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. 1992. *Symbols of Substance: Court and State in Nayaka Period Tamilnadu*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

<sup>22</sup> Shulman, David. "The Enemy Within: Idealism and Dissent in South Indian Hinduism", in: Eisenstadt, S.N., Reuven Kahane and David Shulman (eds.). *Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy and Dissent in India*. Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1984, pp. 11-57.

in the modes of their legitimation, or with principled struggles concerning the bases of such legitimation. The bases of legitimation of the various mundane activities—political, economic, and the like—defined in terms of their respective dharmas and auspicious performances, were relatively continuous throughout Indian history, even if their concrete applications were often rather flexible.

Thus, throughout its long history India witnessed far-reaching changes in its political and economic organization, in technology, and in levels of social differentiation—redefinition of the boundaries of political units, some restructuring of the economic sphere, and changes in social and economic policies—all effected by coalitions of entrepreneurs rooted in different caste and sectarian networks and of economic groups such as merchants. But except for the ultimately unsuccessful attempt of Asoka, most of these processes of movements of change did not succeed in—and possibly did not even aim at—restructuring the basic premises of the political arena, or the basic center-periphery relations.<sup>23</sup>

## VII

It is these characteristics of the institutional and symbolic characteristics of the political arena and of the major religious movements that explain one of the most interesting aspects, from a comparative point of view, of Indian medieval and early-modern history, namely the absence of wars of religion such as characterized Christianity and Islam—that is, wars in which political goals were closely interwoven with, and legitimized by, attempts to impose a religion on the community or on the political realm by political fiat in name of its universal claim. While there were many, often brutal struggles and contestations between different religious groups—no wars of religion, i.e. attempts, as in the monotheistic civilizations, to impose a religion on a society by political fiat or coercion, developed. Even if the recent emphasis on the relatively peaceful symbiosism of Muslim and Hinduism groups in the Mughal realm are probably exaggerated, and numerous points of conflict between them continually developed, yet they did not usually acquire a totalistic confrontational characteristics which has been an important component of the situ-

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<sup>23</sup> Lal, Deepak. 1988. *Cultural Stability and Economic Stagnation. India c. 1500 BC-AD.*

ation within and between monotheistic religions.<sup>24</sup> The often very intensive religious conflicts between Muslim and Hindus which developed in the Moghul Empire under Muslim rule did not develop in the direction of a forced conversion or of a total confrontation with the Hindu religion or religions.

## VIII

These conceptions of rulership and of sovereignty were closely related to, indeed rooted or embedded in, the relatively flexible and open Indian social order, especially—indeed paradoxically—of what has been designated as the caste system or orders, or to be more precise in the multiple social, including caste networks as well as in the ideological premises of these orders. These social organizations and networks have not been relatively simple closed units of the kind that can presumably be found in many tribal or nonliterate societies, defined in terms of relatively restricted kinship or territorial criteria. Rather they were continuously constituted—elaborate ideological constructions that imbued the primordial attributes of various local or occupational groups with a relatively high level of symbolization and ideologization and the civil orders. Such orders, seemingly based on a country-wide inflexible ideology, were in fact constructed in multiple local or regional settings, in which they were often interwoven with other settings or organizations such as temples, sects or guilds; which were related, the political arena, but also independent of it. These caste orders were legitimized and interwoven in different settings in multiple, relatively flexible ways.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Wagle, N.K., "Hindu-Muslim Interactions in Medieval Maharashtra", in: Sontheimer, Gunther-Dietz and Hermann Kulke (eds.). *Hinduism Reconsidered*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1997, pp. 134–152.

<sup>25</sup> On Hinduism see: Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi, Gabriela. "The Polyethnic-Prototype Approach to Hinduism", in: Sontheimer, Gunther-Dietz and Hermann Kulke (eds.). *Hinduism Reconsidered*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1997, pp. 294–304; Eschmann, Anncharlott. "Religion, Reaction and Change: The Role of Sects in Hinduism", in: Sontheimer, Gunther-Dietz and Hermann Kulke (eds.). *Hinduism Reconsidered*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1997, pp. 108–120; Fuller, C.J. 1979. "Gods, Priests and Purity: On the Relation between Hinduism and the Caste System". *Man*, 14, pp. 459–476; Fuller, C.J. 1998. "The Hindu Pantheon and the Legitimation of Hierarchy". *Man*, 23, 1, pp. 19–39; Yocurn, G. 1986. "Brahmin, King, Sannyasi, and the Goddess in a Cage: Reflections on the 'Conceptual Order of Hinduism' at a Tamil Saiva Temple", *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 20, 1, pp. 15–39.

The numerous caste networks were characterized by several distinctive features. Organizationally, castes were local or regional units interlocked in many combinations of ritual, economic, and political ways, and they were organized on several distinct levels. One was the local level—the *jati*—the exact composition of which naturally varied greatly between different places. Despite many local variations, the schemata according to which castes and inter-caste relations were constructed and the various networks that bore them, constituted the focus of a broad, potentially continent-wide civilizational identity or identities.

Of great importance in this context was the distinction between the castes of the right as against those of the left—the first being those economically based on land and the second the more mobile castes of merchants and artisans. Significantly, brahmins did belong to both castes of the right and of the left and in this way did, they served as the many mediators or points of interlinkage, often in close relation to the kings as arbiters between different local *jati* organizations.

Inter-caste relations, constructed in terms of either hierarchical principles, of center-periphery relations, or of complementary reciprocal relations between the different *jati*, were usually effected through series of gifts and presentations, often in public displays and ceremonies in which the ritual power and economic relations between the different castes were symbolized.

The interrelations between different castes have been constructed according to schemata rooted in some of the basic ontological conceptions prevalent in Hinduism, probably among the most complicated in the major Axial civilizations. On one level, that of the Brahmanic ideology and symbolism, Hinduism was based on what could be seen, among the Axial Age civilizations, as the most radical definition of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders—the perception that the mundane order is polluted in cosmic terms, because its very creation constituted a breach of the original cosmic harmony. In this pristine ontological concept this pollution can be overcome in two ways, which are at once complementary and contradictory. One such way is through the faithful performance of the ritual and mundane activities ascriptively allocated to different groups—above all caste and subcaste groups. Such hierarchical arrangement of social ritual activities reflects an individual's standing in the cosmic order and his duties with respect to



it. Here we encounter the other dimension or level of the ontological conceptions prevalent in Hinduism—namely that in many ways the mundane activities are, perhaps paradoxically from the point of view of the pristine conception of purity and pollution, endorsed with some sacral elements and transcendent orientations.

At the same time, however, the stress on the pollution of the world also gives rise to attempts to reach beyond it, to renounce it; the institution of the renouncer (*Sannyasa*) has been a complementary pole of the Brahmanic tradition at least since the postclassical period. Such renunciation could be the last stage of one's life-cycle, but it could also entail the breaking out from this-life-cycle. Such breaking out was usually manifest not only in purely individual acts, but also in the development of group processes centered around the figure of the renouncer, which could become the starting points of sectarian formations.<sup>26</sup>

Insofar as the more transcendental other-worldly orientations toward purity prevailed, the Brahman and the renouncers constituted the pivot of the order. Other castes, especially but not only the Ksatriya, were imbued with sacral dimensions rooted in the cosmology of auspiciousness, which was very powerful in its own realms but did not challenge the Brahman's predominance in its own specific contexts.

... As Marriot had earlier suggested, it is not only the Brahman varna that is the source of values in caste society. And in the textual discourses, these images of lordship are, according to Inden, "the fundamental categories of... Hindu social thought". Thus, while the Brahman stands at the apex of the hierarchy of varnas his "purity" or renunciatory capacities do not stand in opposition to a supposedly "secular" Ksatriya power. Both exercised lordship and mastery over their respective ritually defined domains, and caste itself appears to be organized, in Inden's words, in terms of this essentially Ksatriya image of lordship...<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Eschmann, Anncharlott. "Religion, Reaction and Change: The Role of Sects in Hinduism", op. cit.; Stietencron, H. von. "Brahmanen als Integratoren und Interpreten von Regional traditionen", in: Kulke, H. and D. Rothermund (eds.). *Regionale Tradition in Sudasien*. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1985, pp. 23–35.

<sup>27</sup> Goodwin-Raheja, Gloria. 1988. "India: Caste, Kingships and Dominance Reconsidered". See also; Dharampal-Frick, Gita. "Some Shifting Historical Observations: Categories in the Discourse on Caste", in: Dalmia, Vasudha and Heinrich von Stietencron (eds.). *Representing Hinduism: The Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995, pp. 82–103; Reiniche, Marie-Louise. 1998. "Des "brahmens" et des "dieux" en sociologie. Le systeme indien des

... To assume that Brahman cannot be hierarchically preeminent while being, at the same time, in some ways equivalent to Barbers, Untouchables, and other recipients of gifts from the ritually central jajmani, is to fall prey to an unnecessarily reified and concretized notion of social structure and social order. The order lies not in one fixed or internally consistent ranking, but in a pragmatically constituted set of shifting meanings and shifting configurations of castes.<sup>28</sup>

Such openness at the top of the hierarchy, as Pamela Price has shown, made this system very flexible—and allowed different criteria for access to political power to develop, based on various regional traditions of kinship or on mundane criteria of success—military strength, wealth, and articulation of solidarity of local and regional groups or centers.<sup>29</sup> This created an opening for foreign rulers to be accepted and for rivals to try to usurp power, and that political leaders would take office without the appropriate *varna* qualifications. Chandragupta, for instance, came from obscure origins, yet became one of the greatest emperors.

All these tendencies gave rise—to paraphrase M.L. Reiniche again—to

a distinct social morphology and segmentary processes of differentiation, and at times identification, which at every level gave rise to a degree of social flexibility is working at the very root of the society and it is already at this level that we find “pragmatism and accommodation.” In the working of such a society we find variable spaces and times for distinctions and discriminations as well as for some kind of equalitarian behaviour—the frontiers of ascribed status were never fully removed beyond symbolical and ritual moments of cooperation. . . . “... At every level, we find a kind of restricted, localized “public” space as far as it involves an continual action (through publicized religious merits, marriage alliances, assertion of rights or qualifications, occupations, and so on) of individuals or limited regroupings towards differentiation of themselves from the others according to such or such point of view—in other words, we have, as would have claimed L. Dumont, variable networks of relationships and not corporate groups.

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castesc revisite.” *Arch. Europ. Sociol.*, 39, 2, pp. 283–308; Mahapatra, L.K. “Gods, Kings and the Caste System in India”, op. cit.

<sup>28</sup> Price, Pamela. 1986. *Kingship and Political Practice in Colonial India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Malamoud, Charles. “On the Rhetoric and Semantics of Purusartha”, op. cit.; Shah, K.J. “Of Artha and the Arthasastra”, op. cit.; Biardeau, Madeleine. “The Salvation of the King in the Mahabharata”, op. cit.; Inden, Ronald. “Hierarchies of Kings in Medieval India”, op. cit.; Mayer, A.C. “Perception of Princely Rule: Perspectives from a Biography”, op. cit.; Marglin, Frederique A. “Kings and Wives: The Separation of Status and Royal Power”, op. cit.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

These interrelations entailed a rather distinct mode of construction and generalized extension of trust which differed from those that developed in other Axial civilizations. The loci of the more “basic” “primary” or “local” trust was the different jati organizations, and the various sects or sect-like groups. The extension of trust from such groups to broader settings, or between them was effected above all through the various intermediary networks, especially of coalitions of the “left” and “right” hand brahmins, often in connection with the rulers. This extension of trust was rooted in the continual juxtaposition of auspiciousness and purity and often entailed some dissociation between the mundane and the transcendental orientations, the latter being predominant but without necessarily involving also the more mundane activities. Given the overall structure of the Indian center there did not develop within it a continual “mundane” framework which could serve as foci of such broader trust—and hence the civil component in the construction of such trust was relatively weak.<sup>30</sup>

## IX

Several characteristics of this relatively flexible and open social system are of great importance for the understanding of political dynamics in “historical” India.

The first of these characteristics is the *relative* autonomy of the major social sectors and networks, the complex and networks of castes villages, guilds, occupational groups such as those of merchants—an autonomy which was embedded in ascriptive, albeit wide and continuously reconstructed, frameworks. The nature of this autonomy has been captured by R. Inden, who defines the various local and caste groups as both subjects and citizens who, although taxed and controlled by the kings were also allowed a high degree of self-regulation: they “had an inherent, but limited and partial capacity (we might call it rights) to combine within and among themselves and order their own affairs.”<sup>31</sup>

But it was not only the relative autonomy of these networks or groups *from* the rulers that is important. Of great significance is the fact that this autonomy was connected with the possibility of some

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<sup>30</sup> Saberwal, Satish. “On the Diversity of Ruling Tradition”, in: Kaviraj, Sudipta (ed.), *Politics in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 124–140.

<sup>31</sup> Inden, Ronald. 1990. *Imagining India*. Oxford Blackwell Press.

at least autonomous access to the rulers—an access rooted not in a conception of “rights,” certainly not of individual rights, but rather in that of the duties of rulers to listen to the problems raised by the subjects. Moreover at least some attention to the demands of the subjects and their problems or demands was effected not just through petitions and behind-the-scenes bargaining, but in open public occasions such as for instance described by Pamela Price.<sup>32</sup>

It was because of this combination of relative autonomy of such sectors from the ruler; the possibility of autonomous access to the ruler, and the public nature of some at least of the negotiations between them, that these networks can be seen as kernels of an equivalent of civil society—albeit a highly hierarchical one rooted in conceptions of duties, and not of rights and organized in a highly hierarchical and in principles collective ways.

In the context of these relations between the different sectors of society and the political arenas or rather the arenas of rulership the political component played indeed a crucial role in the construction of collective, including caste, identities. Thus to follow Pratep Mehta, “rather than seeing civil society as autonomous from the state, it should be seen as being more state-centered, with social turbulence more or less following the contours of political turbulence.”<sup>33</sup> But given the ontological conceptions prevalent in India, this distinct “civil society” that developed there did not entail, in contrast to Europe, basic ideological confrontations between “state” and “society”—and, as we have noted above, until recent times, under the impact of European modernity—and no wars of religions developed.

Thus indeed the crux of these relations between the different social sectors and the arenas of rulership, rooted in the non-ontologization of the political arena was first the relatively autonomy of the various, continually reconstructed social networks and sectors combined with second their relatively autonomous access to the arena of rulership; third a strong tendency to inclusiveness—i.e., of incorporation of various subsectors into their frameworks; and fourth, non-individualistic grounding of these processes—all of which give rise to very distinct strong dynamics borne above all by numerous political and religious entrepreneurs.

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<sup>32</sup> Price, Pamela. 1986. *Kingship and Political Practice in Colonial India*.

<sup>33</sup> Metha, Pratap—Comments in the Notre-Dame Conference.

It is in the context of these relatively flexible characteristics of the major organizations and networks of Indian society and the modes of legitimation of rulers that there developed the pragmatic, mutually accommodating, relations between the rulers and different sectors of society; the continual intensive political bargaining, and to some, certainly not egalitarian but widespread tendency to power-sharing, with a wide scope for some pluralistic arrangements. Such accommodative tendencies were also reinforced by the fact that the boundaries of different political formations were rather flexible, giving rise to strong inclusivist tendencies with respect to different territorial groups and trans-territorial networks. Significantly enough these features were also characteristics, as Stanley J. Tambiah has shown, contrary to some “Orientalist” views of the Mughal Empire.<sup>34</sup> This does not mean, of course, that the political game in India was peaceful, “nice” or gentlemanly—it was often vicious and manipulative as the Artashastra fully attests to. But it was not “ideological” in the way it was in the monotheistic civilizations or, in a different mode, in China, or in other words the principled ideological dimension did not constitute a central component of the political process and struggle.

## MODERN INDIA—THE COLONIAL PERIOD

### X

Such pragmatic and accommodative orientations could of course have been eroded or changed under “inauspicious” historical conditions, especially those of modern colonial empires and nation states. But contrary to the experience in many other Asian societies, these pragmatic and accommodative orientations were—perhaps paradoxically—reinforced under British colonial rule and even more so in the first decades of independence.

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<sup>34</sup> Tambiah, Stanley J. 1998. “What did Bernier Actually Say? Profiling the Mughal Empire”, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 32, 2, pp. 361–386; Saberwal, Satish. “A Juncture of Traditions”, in: Doornbos, Martin and Sudipta Kaviraj (eds.). *Dynamics of State Formation: India and Europe Compared*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 74–99; Heesterman, Jan. “Traditional Empire and Modern State”. in: Doornbos, Martin and Sudipta Kaviraj (eds.). *Dynamics of State Formation: India and Europe Compared*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 100–124; Pouchepadass, J. et H. Stern (eds.). 1991. *De La Royaute A L’Etat: Anthropologie et Histoire Du Politique Dans le Monde Indien*, op. cit.

The historical processes in the wake of which these pragmatic attitudes developed or became reconstructed in modern India were indeed rather paradoxical. On the one hand as—Sunil Khilnani<sup>35</sup> has pointed out, the very idea of modern India has been constituted through politics, through political activities, first perhaps already in the colonial-imperial periods through the construction of the idea of India as a distinct construction; than further promulgated by the Congress, especially by Nehru in the secular terms of the modern nation state. Even the more recent attempts by the various movements, especially the BJP, to construct a Hindi communal-religious identity is in fact a thoroughly modern political construction. Moreover as in all modern states, within all these contexts there developed very strong tendencies to cultural homogenization, first indeed in secular term, entailing a far-reaching transformation of the constructions of the collective identities that were predominated in “pre-modern” historical India.

Concomitantly the development of the modern Indian polity, which started under the British and fully crystallized with the establishment of the Union of India after the independence in 1947—in tandem with the partition and the creation of Pakistan and the bloody war connected with it—gave rise to a unified political framework in which the possibility of confrontation between different groups became much greater than before, creating the background for the development of the numerous conflicts and of more confrontational stances which could seemingly lead, as predicted by various scholars and observers, to the disintegration of the Indian political system.

Yet in contrast with most other post-colonial countries, India has at least hitherto been able to minimize the overall distinctive political import of these confrontations, and to keep them within the constitutional frameworks—first in the colonial ones, and later in that of the Union of India.

This rather unique, in the context of post-colonial societies, set of characteristics which is of course, at the core of the continuity of

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<sup>35</sup> Khilnani, Sunil. 1997. *The Idea of India*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux; Brass, Paul R. 1990. *The New Cambridge History of India. Vol. IV-1: The Politics of India Since Independence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Kaviraj, Suddipta. “The Modern State in India”, in: Doornbos, Martin and Suddipta Kaviraj (eds.). *Dynamics of State Formation: India and Europe Compared*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 225–250; Pouchepadass, J. et H. Stern (eds.). 1991. *De La Royaute A L’Etat: Anthropologie et Histoire Du Politique Dans le Monde Indien*, op. cit.

Indian democracy can be at least partially explained by the fact that within the framework of these modern developments, the basic conceptions of the relations between rulers, between the political and other institutional arenas were not radically different from these that were prevalent in the previous periods. Naturally, given the basic territorial democratic and constitutional premises and working of the system and its strong homogenizing tendencies, many of these conceptions have greatly changed. Yet such changes notwithstanding, some of the basic conceptions of rulership and of the relations between “state” and “society” which were so central for the development of the pragmatic attitudes to politics in “historical” India did not necessarily totally change from those of the preceding period—even if needlessly to say these tendencies have indeed become greatly transformed by the numerous political entrepreneurs and leaders of various movements working already in the new modern political framework. Of special importance in this context was the relatively strong autonomy of the continually reconstructed social sectors combined with an even more intensive orientation to the state; a strong, even if not unchallenged tendency to inclusiveness; and concomitantly, non-individualistic grounding of these orientations.

These tendencies in pragmatic politics developed in different yet complementary ways in the British colonial and later in the Union of India. Under the British colonial rule, this pragmatic attitude to politics was reinforced by the construction of a central political and administrative framework; the closely connected creation of a professional civil service; and by the development of consultative even if non-representative institutions with which some of that pragmatic negotiations were encouraged although the seeds of more confrontational stances and tensions were sown. Second in the colonial setting these conceptions of relations between the rulers and the various sectors of society were reinforced by the fact that many of the characteristics of the relations between society and the arenas of rulership analyzed above were in a paradoxical way continued when the definition of castes and their relation to governmental authority became constructed by the British in a much more formalized way, derived from modern modes of construction of social categories.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Cohn, Bernard. 1987. *An Anthropologist Among Historians*. Delhi: Oxford University Press; Dirks, Nicholas. *The Conversion of Caste: Location, Translation and*

Truly enough as Pratap Mehta has pointed out,<sup>37</sup> arguably the most important thing about the colonial state is not its incorporation of caste—indeed much further formalization and political definition of caste—(SNE)- but the fact that it incorporated particular castes and consolidates their hold at the expense of others. “. . . Rather than the “open ended” competition—within limits of course—of precolonial India, where you could have say the rise of Shudra kingdom—think of the Nayaks<sup>6</sup> of South India, you have the consolidation of caste society reinforced by the colonial state. “. . .—yet at the same colonial practices of governance, by emphasizing negotiation and informal consultative practices reinforced the pragmatic cast of politics. . . .

At the same the anti-colonial struggle undertaken by the nationalist movement, developed strategies of mobilization that evinced an extraordinary ability to incorporate diverse elements within its fold and blunt the force of polarizing ideologies, be it of the right or the left. During this period there have indeed developed among the major political actors, above all among the major social movements, especially within the framework of the Congress movement, a political culture of bargaining and accommodation. This process of diffusion and of the tradition of political bargaining and power sharing was greatly reinforced by the formation of the Congress, and by first of all Gandhi's ability to coopt outlying mass movements.<sup>38</sup> Of special importance in this context was first of all Gandhi's ability to coopt outlying mass movements, and by his very pragmatic non-exclusivist approach to political and ethnic diversity and identity.

Secular nationalists were not unfamiliar with national heterogeneity. Their case for a secular movement seeking to represent people across ethnic boundaries was based on the notion that an individual is not exhaustively identified by his ethnic markers. They were also sensitive to the crosscutting nature of ethnic identities characterizing the Indians: major religious communities are split into many language communi-

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Appropriation”, in: Van der Veer, Peter (ed.). *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*. New York: Routledge, 1995; Idem. 1987. *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Mahapatra, L.K. “Gods, Kings and the Caste System in India”, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> Metha, Pratap—Comments in the Notre-Dame Conference.

<sup>38</sup> Sisson, Richard, “Culture and Democratization in India”, in: Diamond, Larry (ed.). *Political Culture and Democratization in Developing Countries*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993, pp. 37–66.



ties, which in turn are stratified into caste and class formations. Thus Hindi speakers constituted only about a third of the Hindus, while among the Muslim, Bengali and Punjabi speakers outnumbered the Urdu speakers. Given plural identities, the politically interesting affiliations are rarely derivable from social affinities. In fact, an eagerness to utilize one affinity by a political leadership that seeks an easy constituency of popular support may encourage other leaders to exploit the other affinities of the same individual. Thus, for example, the easier course of exclusive Hindu mobilization, by seizing upon the Hindi language loyalty in northern India, created negative political reactions among Hindus who spoke other languages. Similarly, Muslim nationalists' mobilization using the symbols of Urdu language community often left the much larger number of Muslims cold and uncomfortable. Again, religion, language, caste, and other affinities have to compete with the economic affinities developing among people locked into similar stations of both disadvantage and advantage. . . .<sup>39</sup>

The acceptance of the legitimacy of the claims of the various continually reconstituted sectors, transforming these claims into legitimate political demands, was reinforced by the relative non-ideological highly pragmatic approach to the political arena, providing a very strong push for democratic participation in the political process.

But, Sisson demonstrates, there was more to the emergence and institutionalization of democracy than these elite processes of consensus formation and habituation. Traditional cultural mechanisms merged with the emergent democratic processes to emphasize arbitration as a central mechanism for conflict resolution. And elites reached out to mass society during the nationalist movement, raising the Indian masses to new levels of political consciousness, building a wide array of voluntary organizations, and stimulating democratic awareness and participation. Crucial to all of these processes was political leadership, ideology, and choice, particularly in the person of Mahatma Gandhi, who emphasized the importance of liberty, the consensual resolution of conflict, the ever-widening incorporation of excluded social groups, and nonviolent mass mobilization for independence. The result was the considerable diffusion of democratic culture from elite to mass constituencies.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Das Gupta, Jyotirindra. "India: Democratic Becoming and Developmental Transition". In: Diamond, Larry, Linz, Juan J., and Lipset, Seymour Martin (eds.), *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy*, 2nd ed. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995, pp. 263-321.

<sup>40</sup> Sisson, Richard. "Culture and Democratization in India".

## MODERN INDIA—THE UNION OF INDIA—THE NEHRUAN STATE

## XI

These tendencies—which greatly contributed to strengthening the constitutional—democratic state—were further reinforced in the Union of India through the series of historical contingences. To follow A. Kohli<sup>41</sup> in his introduction to a recent book on *The Success of Democracy in India*.

When trying to understand how and why Indian democracy has taken root, it helps to think of India's recent political evolution in three distinct phases. Institutions and practices of democracy found considerable acceptance during the first (formative) phase of the crystallization of the Unions of India, that was dominated by Nehru and that lasted from, say, about 1950 to mid-to-late-1960s. Aside from Nehru's own commitment to democracy, India benefited in this phase from the presence of two very important institutions: a well functioning civil service, and a popular ruling party, the Indian National Congress. The civil service constituted the heart of the state that India inherited from the colonial period, and India's "new" civil service was essentially built on this colonial base. This civil service contributed to effective government and imparted political stability . . . The Congress, by contrast, has spearheaded a successful national movement and, as result, enjoyed considerable popularity and legitimacy.

National unity was built while incorporating India's considerable multicultural diversity. As a result, India's Congress party, even though a hegemonic party in the early decades, balanced centralizing and regional forces within its fold. This institutional development provided long term "political capital" for crafting a successful federal system. Second, India's constitutional design—though mainly centralist—was also flexible enough to accommodate regional ambitions over time. And third, the evolution of Indian federalism has been helped by the spread of democratic politics. Within the framework of a centralized but accommodating state, democracy has enabled regional forces to successfully press their demands. These successes were manifest early in the area of identity politics, namely, in the reorganization of India along linguistic lines,

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<sup>41</sup> Kohli, Atul. "Introduction", in: Idem (ed.). *The Success of India's Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 1–20; Brass, Paul R. 1990. *The New Cambridge History of India. Vol. IV-1: The Politics of India Since Independence*; Idem. "National Power and Local Politics in India: A Twenty Year Perspective", op. cit.; Cahterjee, Partha. "Introduction: A Political History of Independent India", in: Idem. (ed.). *State and Politics in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 1–40; Pouchepadass, J. et H. Stern (eds.). 1991. *De La Royaute A L'Etat: Anthropologie et Histoire Du Politique Dans le Monde Indien*, op. cit.

and over the last three decades in the struggle to share economic resources between the national and state governments. . . .

. . . Indian democracy was also helped by the fact that Indian political society in this emphasis was not all that mobilized, certainly far less than in the subsequent decades. Political conflict mainly took the form of claims and counterclaims of rival elites, especially regional demanding a greater share of power and resources vis-à-vis the general government. These conflicts could have proven difficult but were successfully accommodated by creating a system that recognized linguistic communities as legitimate political components. Elite versus mass conflict in India in these decades was minimal. What class conflict existed was limited to a few regions.

## XII

It was the combination of these processes that gave rise in the Unions of India to a constitutional democratic order that was characterized, by strong tendencies to power-sharing, with, as Arend Lijphart has shown in his incisive analysis, consociational features. The most important such features were: (1) grand coalition governments that include representatives of all major linguistic and religious groups, (2) cultural autonomy for these groups, (3) proportionality in political representation and civil service appointments, and (4) a minority veto with regard to vital minority rights and autonomy. It was the continual development of these power-sharing characteristics that contributed the major reason for the fact that numerous confrontational possibilities that developed in India did not give rise to continual breakdowns of the modern Indian political system.<sup>42</sup>

It was the prevalence of these tendencies that reinforced the relatively non-ideological, highly pragmatic, approach to the political arena, which facilitated the acceptance of the legitimacy of the claims of the various continually reconstructed sectors of the society. Such claims became transformed into the legitimate political demands based on more autonomous and "open" bases—providing a very strong push for democratic participation in the political process. The attitude of the center to such claims oscillated between attempts at suppression and repression and pragmatic accommodation. Which of these tendencies became predominant varied according first to the cohesion of the center—the more cohesive being on the whole more

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<sup>42</sup> Lijphart, Arend. 1996. "The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation", *American Political Science Review*, 90, 2, pp. 258–268.

accommodative and second according to the nature of the claims—with linguistic and “cultural” being more accommodated, while purely secessionist religious claims much less so.<sup>43</sup>

Das Gupta has drawn some general conclusions from the analysis of these aspects of modern Indian political experience which bear directly on the central problem of our analysis—i.e., on the continuity and transformability of the Indian constitutional democratic system.

... The initial decades of Indian democracy now deserve to be considered as a constructive enterprise of consolidating a political system while socially deepening its political structures. As competing groups canvass the lower depths of this maddeningly heterogeneous society to enlarge their political support, the new political recruits are unlikely to be already well schooled in cherished norms of civility. When inducted into the political process, their initial impulse may move them to seek social mobility or at least to affirm their political rights. These expressions may not necessarily be peaceful or graceful. A part of the first act of engagement in a legitimate public space may be the compression of the accumulated distress of centuries into moments of rage or excess. As one observer put it, in India this is the way freedom has “worked its way down”. Generally and mercifully, these moments have been brief, dispersed, noncumulative, and compatible with the basic rules of reasonable competition.<sup>44</sup>

The pragmatic attitude to the different linguistic and cultural groups in the first decades of the Union of India, was greatly facilitated by the development, in modern India, of multifaceted patterns of collective identity—different in content but similar in structure to the ones that developed in “historical” “premodern” India. This multifaceted pattern of collective identity was manifest in a combination of the definition of India in “secular” terms but combined with the continued constitution of multiple “religiously-defined” identities on local and regional levels which were fully legitimized within the broad

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<sup>43</sup> Weiner, Myron. “Ancient Indian Political Theory and Contemporary Indian Politics”, in: Eisenstadt, S.N., Reuven Kahane and David Shulman (eds.). *Orthodoxy. Heterodoxy and Dissent in India*. Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1984, pp. 111–130.; Idem. “The Struggle for Equality: Caste in Indian Politics”, in: Kohli, Atul (ed.). *The Success of India’s Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Cambridge, 2001, pp. 193–225; Kohli, Atul (ed.). 2001. *The Success of India’s Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Cambridge.

<sup>44</sup> Das Gupta, Jyotirindra. “India: Democratic Becoming and Developmental Transition”, op. cit.

“secular” frameworks of the Indian state, in the highly multifaceted pattern of collective identities. It was indeed also the promulgation of a more monolithic “Hindu” identity by the BJP that constitutes, as we shall see in greater detail later, an important challenge to the system.

### XIII

These characteristics of the modern political system and process that developed in the Unions of India were reinforced by the fact as Myron Weiner has pointed out, that some of the conceptions about the relations between the rulers and the ruled that were predominant and prevalent in historical India, continued to be influential in the new, modern setting.

... In many respects India has moved far away from the kind of state and society prescribed by ancient Indian political theorists. At the same time, however, there are several features of contemporary political institutions, behavior, policies—and, above all, beliefs—that are consistent with the writings of ancient Indian political theorists. . . .

... The classical conceptions of the state and the political order were closely linked to basic concepts around which society was organized— notions concerning equality and hierarchy, rights and duties, the individual’s place in the community and the relationship between the community and authority. The introduction of European institutions and political concepts notwithstanding, India continues to retain a social order that is very different from the one upon which European political institutions were built. Moreover, many of the beliefs that underlie this social order remain intact. The result is not that Indian political institutions do not or cannot work, as some of its critics suggest, but that they work differently. . . .

... Notions about what the state should do and what it ought not to do; what equality means and for whom and how it should be achieved; how the state should go about inducing changes in behavior; what the relationship between the state, religious institutions and religious personal law should be; and what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate behavior on the part of bureaucrats—all these are matters resting on values and assumptions that are deeply rooted in the Indian tradition. . . . “... In summary, ancient Indian political theory as translated, transmitted and interpreted by twentieth-century Indian scholars conceives of the state as both an expression of the social order or hierarchy and as an instrument for maintaining that order. The king, though not divine, is part of a sacred order and it is his *dharma* to protect and preserve that order. To perform this function the ruler is

expected to develop state power, including fortifications, an army and treasury, as well as an administrative system. The king is also charged with raising revenues from his subjects and subordinate rulers with whom he may form alliances. These public revenues are to be used more broadly for the well-being of his subjects, as well as to uphold *dharma*. The preservation of *dharma* also necessitates the use of coercion. Upholding *dharma* does not require that all be treated equally; on the contrary, in a social order based on division and hierarchy, benefits and punishments accrue unequally to individuals by virtue of the orders to which they belong. Finally, Hindu theory postulates that in the absence of the state, anarchy would reign; a strong state is preferable to a weak one and more government is preferable to less.<sup>45</sup>

#### THE DECLINE OF THE NEHRUAN STATE AND THE DISTINCTIVENESS AND VICISSITUDES OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY

#### XIV

It was thus the combination of a strong tendency to power-sharing set within the framework of the continually changing multifaceted identities rooted in interweaving of India's civilizational premises with its historical experience and contingencies facilitated the hitherto continuity and transformability of the Indian constitutional-democratic system.

Both these premises and historical experience and contingencies differed greatly from those of the other societies analyzed above—Europe, Japan, the U.S. and Israel—except that the Union of India shared with the last the establishment of an independent post-colonial (British) system and the immediate granting of full citizenship to all.

Perhaps the most crucial difference from the “Western” (but only partially from the Japanese) cases was that the highly accommodative stance of the centre and the tendencies to power sharing, developed not out of the confrontation between different transcendental visions, between different religions in which the political areas constituted a central focus of cultural identity, but from the relative devaluation in terms of the dominant transcendental vision of the political arena and from the concomitant distinctive conceptions of

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<sup>45</sup> Weiner, Myron. “Ancient Indian Political Theory and Contemporary Indian Politics”, in: Eisenstadt, S.N., Reuven Kahane and David Shulman (eds.). *Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy and Dissent in India*. Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1984, pp. 111–130.

rulership. Accordingly also the potential crises of the constitutional democratic system in India attendant on growing democratization and on the quests of various social sectors to become incorporated into the central political frameworks and on the continually increasing politicization of multiple groups and the concomitant growing confrontations between them, developed in India in some distinct ways.

These processes which developed in India from the late sixties on in close connection with the decline of the hegemony of the Congress party; with the far-reaching economic changes attendant on the green revolution and the growing empowerment of upper and middle classes—created challenges in many ways inherent in any power-sharing system, rooted in the very accommodative stance of the center to the demands of different social movements.

To follow A. Lijphart again:

Generally speaking, the main reason for the decline (and sometimes failure) of power-sharing systems is an inherent deep-seated tension. Political leaders have to perform a difficult balancing act between compromises with rivals and maintaining the support of their own followers, both activists and voters. Pleasing other elites will tend to displease their own supporters, and vice versa, and the search for compromise is a time-consuming task that may lead to a degree of immobilism, which is also likely to discontent supporters, who expect and demand effective and decisive government action . . . This also means that strong pressures from below will increase the elites' tendencies to concentrate and centralize power rather than to share it.<sup>46</sup>

But such cracks in the power-sharing system evince distinct features or characteristics in different societies, generating in each of them rather specific problems and dynamics. In the Indian case the central source of the weakness of power-sharing system which started to become visible from the sixties on, was the series of affirmative action policies of job-reservation in government agencies for different caste groups, sometimes giving rise to a situation in which job reservation was extended to more than 73 percent of the population; and often creating intercaste tensions, as well as of widespread patronage system which often generates declining public involvement—all of which make it especially difficult to maintain broad support for a party that is explicitly committed to power-sharing and minority rights.

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<sup>46</sup> Lijphart, Arend. "The Puzzle of India Democracy".

... (Another) source of weakness is that the pressures from below have specifically included calls for the abolition of crucial consociational rules put in place by power-sharing compromises: separate personal laws, minority educational autonomy, and Kashmir's constitutionally privileged (although no longer actually implemented) autonomous status. Not all of the criticism of the 1986 Muslim Women (Protection of Right on Divorce) Act necessarily entailed a wholesale condemnation of personal law; many critics objected mainly to the specific provisions of the new law, calling it "a primitive anti-woman bill" (Iyer 1987, xvi). But the Supreme Court judgment in the Shah Bano case explicitly called for the elimination of separate personal laws and their replacement by a "uniform civil code," arguing in a clearly anti-consociational vein, that "a common civil code will help the cause of national integrate by removing disparate loyalties to laws which have conflicting ideologies." The reversal of the court's decision gave new ammunition to the foes of separate personal laws.<sup>47</sup>

But the full impact of these processes on the continuity of the Indian constitutional-democratic system can be understood only in conjunction with the transformation within the setting of the modern nation-state of several basic aspects of the Indian historical experience and conceptions of the political arena which we have analyzed above—paradoxically enough some of those very aspects which tendencies in their system were conducive to the initial development of the strong power-sharing system.

Of special importance in this context have been the ways in which first the concept of equality as related to the traditional conceptions of rulership and of the duties of rulers with their strong distributive orientations was transformed in the modern setting; second, the closely related transformations of some crucial aspects of the social structure—especially of the caste system; and third the transformation of the bases of legitimation of the modern Indian state in "secular" terms,—were constituted.

As Sudipta Kaviraj has shown in detailed analysis, there developed in many sectors of Indian society with the growing democratization of modern policies, a rather specific conception of equality and participation.

Slowly, Indian politics underwent a fundamental change towards a newer and deeper form of activation of the common people. The radical rhetoric did not alleviate poverty, but it quickened the process

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



which Tocqueville depicted with incomparable acuity, establishing the principle of political equality and dignity indelibly in the political world. Since the only route of entry to that fund of state resource was through elections, for small politicians elections came to mean a great deal more than they did to 'unprofessional' politicians of Nehru's time. Elections also came to be associated much more directly with the pricing of concessions from the government by the use of bloc votes of various kinds. By introducing the new populist politics, Indira Gandhi also brought in much greater morality of governments, as their entry depended on the promises they made.

In the longer run, therefore, political democracy has had an effect going in the same direction as in the European case . . .

"But it will be wrong to expect a simple reenactment of the episodes of European history . . .

. . . In Indian society, the process of individuation has not remade the entire logic of the social world. Perception of disadvantage often tends to be more collective than individual, but collectivity itself is seen in a non-modern manner, as solidarities that are not interest-based. Disadvantage is seen more as unjust treatment of whole communities, like lower castes, minority religious groups and tribal communities, which are thus seen as potential political actors for social equality. If poverty is defined as a socially unindexed deprivation/inequality, the resentments expressed through democratic means in recent Indian politics are not against poverty . . . Certainly, people who are part of democratic mobilizations are predominantly poor, but the principle of their self-identifying action is not poverty but discrimination. And the relevant unit of social analysis is not the individual, but the community. This makes it possible for them to be acutely conscious of state indifference towards their demands, but completely indifferent towards parallel demand of others.

. . . Democracy has, thus, raised the question of both political equality and majoritarian dominance. Its language has been read, irreversibly, to support both the demand of power-order groups for equality of treatment, and the claim that systematic inequality against some groups, if sanctioned by a large majority, is permissible. The language of democracy has thus exacerbated the sense of disprivilege and discrimination, however disingenuous it is in some cases . . .

. . . As a consequence, these groups press for peculiar brand of social equality which calls for equal treatment of whole groups in a field of communities, and not of individuals in the field of 'civil society.'

. . . Democracy would thus appear to mean very different things to different classes in Indian society. To the more privileged sections of society, it would mean the freedom of enterprise, and the consequent benefits of inequality; to the lower orders, it would mean equality, at least between communities. Between these two contradictory but, in

their own ways, equally plausible readings of what democratic institutions offer, Indian democracy will continue on its paradoxical and surprising history.<sup>48</sup>

## XV

The crystallization of the conceptions of equality analyzed above have been closely connected with the far-reaching changes—indeed transformation—of one of the central nexus of Indian social structure, namely that of caste. This transformation started already under the British and continued very intensely after independence. It has been analyzed very succinctly by D.L. Seth.<sup>49</sup>

... The macrostratification system of traditional Indian society, which did not have a centralized polity, functioned superstructurally as an ideological of *varna* hierarchy. Lacking structural substance, it served as a “common social language” and supplied normative categories of legitimation of status to various substantive local hierarchies of *jatis*.<sup>50</sup> But after India became a pan-Indian political entity governed by a liberal democratic state, new social formations, each comprising a number of *jatis*—often across the ritual hierarchy and religious communities—have emerged at the regional and all-India levels, and these formations have given a structural substantiality to the macrostratification system that it did not have in the past. The nomenclature that has stuck to these formations is the one that was devised by the state in the course of implementing its social and cultural policies, especially that of reservations. As such, in the macrosystem of social stratification, the new formations are identified as the “forward” or “upper castes,” the “backward” castes, the *dalits* or SCs, and the tribals or STs. Over the years, the unitary and hierarchical consciousness of each caste has become diffused; it has expanded to embrace these larger sociopolitical categories, providing a collective self-identification to its members.

Unlike the closed status groups of the caste system, the new social formations function as relatively loose and open-ended entities that

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<sup>48</sup> Kaviraj, Sudipta, “India: Dilemmas of Democratic Development”, in: Leftwich, Adrian (ed.). *Democratic Development*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, p. 126.

<sup>49</sup> Seth, D.L. “Society, in: Bouton, Marshall and Philip Oldenburg (eds.). *India Briefing: A Transformative Fifty Years*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1999, pp. 91–120.

<sup>50</sup> See: Srinivas, Mysore Narasimhachar. “Varna and Caste”, in: Idem. *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962, pp. 63–69; Betelle, Andre. 1996. “Varna and Jati”, *Sociological Bulletin*, 45, 1, March, pp. 15–27; Weiner, Myron. “The Struggle for Equality: Caste in Indian Politics”, in: Kohli, Atul (ed.). *The Success of India's Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Cambridge, 2001, pp. 193–225; Mahapatra, L.K. “Gods, Kings and the Caste System in India”, *op. cit.*

compete with each other for political power and for control over economic and cultural resources. In this competition for power and status in the macrostratification system, members of the upper-caste formation have available to them the resources of their erstwhile traditional higher status, and those of lower-caste formations have the advantages accruing to them from the state's policy of affirmative action as well as from their large numbers, both of which they use politically as well as collectively for upward social mobility. Thus, the new emergent stratification system represents a kind of fusion between the old status system and the new power system. Put differently, the ritual hierarchy of closed status groups has transformed into a relatively more open and fluid hierarchy among the new social groups.

This systemic transformation of the traditional stratification system, particularly the increasing loss of its religious reference and legitimation, is often simplistically perceived as the change from a caste society to a class society. India is far from moving in the direction of a polarized class society: instead, a kind of mass society seems to be in the making in which avast social space has become available to castes detached from the ritual hierarchy for forming themselves into a new macrostratification category that I call the "new middle class."

In this process, the advantages secured collectively by castes in the political arena are used by members of each formation as they compete intensely among themselves and with those of the other formations for entry into the new generic social category of the "middle class." its membership is associated with new lifestyles (modern consumption patterns), ownership of certain economic assets, and the self-consciousness of belonging to the middle class. The ritual purity or impurity of the statuses held by its members in the traditional status system has, for the most part, ceased to be a criterion for their recognition or otherwise as members of the middle class. As such, it is open to members of different castes—which have acquired modern education, have taken to nontraditional occupations, or command higher incomes and greater political power—to enter the middle class.

And yet, the Indian middle class cannot be seen as constituting a pure class category—a construct that, in fact, is a theoretical fiction. It is important to recognize that the Indian middle class carries within it some elements of the antecedent status hierarchy as well as the ethnic and gender divisions that exist in society at large. Further, for the most part, entry to this "class" is dependent on the traditional status resources at one's disposal (as in the case of upper-caste members) or on such modern legal provisions as affirmative action (as in the case of lower castes). So, it seems the Indian middle class will continue to have a caste element to the extent that modern status aspirations are pursued, and the possibility of their realization is seen, by individuals in terms of the cases to which they belong. But crucial to the formation of the middle class in India is not just that members of lower castes are entering it in increasing numbers but that the nature of their

pursuit for upward mobility has radically changed. Their quest is for acquiring modern education, white-collar jobs, wealth, political power, and other such means of modern status, and not for registering higher ritual status.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Sheth, D.L. "Society", op. cit. provided very interesting data on the process of middle class formation in India. The process of middle-class formation in India is empirically illustrated by the findings of a recent all-India sample survey. The survey, based on a stratified random sample (probability proportionate to size) of 9,614 Indian citizens drawn from all the Indian states except the state of Jammu and Kashmir, was conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, in June-July 1996. In concluding this chapter, I present below some *preliminary* findings of the survey.

(1) As we saw earlier, the middle class, which was almost exclusively constituted at the time of independence by English-educated members of the upper castes, expanded to include the upwardly mobile dominant castes of rich farmers during the initial three decades after independence. In other words, this period saw the emergence of a small rural-based middle class.

(2) The survey reveals that even today, the upper and the rich-farmer castes together dominate the Indian middle class. While members of the two upper categories, the *dvija* upper castes and the non-*dvija* dominant castes, account for about one-quarter of the sample population, they constitute nearly half of the new middle class. But this also means that the representation of upper castes has decreased in today's middle class, for the old middle class was almost entirely constituted by them.

(3) The survey conceived the middle class in terms of subjective variables (respondent's self-identification) and objective variables (high level of education, white-collar occupations, ownership of assets such as land, motor vehicles, televisions, water-pumping machines, and houses). Accordingly, 20 percent of the population was identified as belonging to this middle class. About half of this middle-class population came from different lower-caste social formations, namely, the *dalits*, the tribals, the backward communities of peasants and artisans, and the religious minorities. Considering that members of these social formations constituted 75 percent of the sample population, their 50 percent representation in the middle class is proportionately much lower than that of the upper and intermediate castes. But seen in the context of their inherited lower ritual status in the traditional hierarchy, their 50 percent representation is a significant development. Even more significant is the fact that when members of the lower castes acquire modern means of social mobility, such as education, wealth, and political power, their low ritual status does not stand in the way of their entering the middle class and, more important, acquiring the consciousness of being members of the middle class.

(4) Analysis of the survey data also revealed statistically highly significant differences in political attitudes and preferences between the members of the middle class and the rest of the population. More important, on certain crucial political and cultural variables such as support for a political party and belief in the *Karma* theory, respectively, the difference between the lower-caste and upper-caste members of the middle class was found to be much less than that between members of the middle class and others who do not have either the self-image or an actual position in the middle class. Put simply, lower-caste members of the middle class tend to exhibit social and political attitudes more in common with other (upper-caste) members of the middle class than with their caste compatriots.

(5) The Indian middle class today has a fairly large rural component, thanks to its inclusion first of the rural-based dominant castes and now of the members of

## XVI

The continual democratization and political activation of the broader sectors of society, combined as it was with the decline of Congress hegemony, have also brought out to the fore some basic problems of contradiction in the legitimation of India as a secular state. This contradiction is rooted, to follow Ayeshaa Jalal:

in two main strands which informed the construction of the nationalist paradigm of a single nation, cutting across differences along caste, class, religious, linguistic and regional lines—and which aimed at presenting a joint front against colonialism. One based itself on reinterpretations of the Hindu cultural tradition whose assumed historic universality allowed for the blending of differences into overarching unities. The second strand derived from the secular ideas and ideals of European nationalism and while minimizing evocations of a universal Hindu cultural unity also denied the fact of cultural difference and distinctiveness, especially along religious lines. Even those who acknowledged the reality of social identities at least partly fashioned along lines of religious affiliation advocated cross-communal political alliances for the present in the expectation that other common social and economic interests would erase communally-based contradictions in the long run.<sup>52</sup>

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the lower castes participating in the modern economy and in administration. In brief, the middle class in India today is not a simple demographic category comprising sections of different castes and communities. It is a sociocultural formation in which the caste identities of its members survive, but their ritual hierarchical statuses have lost relevance. Individuals from different castes and communities, as they enter this middle class, acquire not only common economic and political interests and modern lifestyles but also a new self-image and social identity as members of a middle class.

To conclude, the nexus of caste and ritual status has broken down. The erosion of the ritual status hierarchy, however, does not mean that castes qua communities have disappeared or will disappear in the foreseeable future. They continue to exist, but as sociocultural entities detached from the traditional hierarchy of ritual statuses. By forming themselves into larger horizontal, as opposed to vertically hierarchical, social groups, their members now increasingly compete for entry into the middle class. The result is that members of the lower castes have entered the middle class in sizeable numbers. This has changed the character and composition of the old preindependence middle class, which was constituted almost entirely by a small English-educated, upper-caste elite. The new and vastly enlarged middle class is becoming, if slowly, politically and culturally more unified and socially more diversified.

<sup>52</sup> Jalal, Ayesha. 1995. *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

But such erosion did not take place. On the contrary there developed a far-reaching transformation of religious identity or identities. To follow Kaviraj again:

... A similar transformation can be seen in the case of religious identity. Traditionally, both Hindu and other religions were deeply segmented, such that the practical religion of people was sects rather than large doctrines like Hinduism or Islam. Pressures of electoral politics have had a similar influence on religious identities as well, producing leaders who appreciate the enormous electoral advantages of the support of an unfractured Hindu or Muslim community.

... This certainly intensifies lines of social division, but these divisions are between vertically integrated communities, like one caste against another, or the peasants against the city-dwellers, rather than the differentiation amongs them on class lines expected by both classical Marxist and liberal thought.<sup>53</sup>

## XVII

All the changes analyzed above went in tandem with a general process of decay of many political institutions in India<sup>54</sup>—a process rooted in the very tendencies to democratization—and reinforced by Mrs. Gandhi in political activation through economic development of many social groups; “in the destructive and self-serving actions of leaders who find institutions a constraint on personal power,” and in the development of “such non-institutional pathways to leadership as political inheritance and other-than-political popularity (as in films) have become significant. There are thus fewer mechanisms intact in India for filtering out the incompetent from the competent in positions of power.”

Thus prior to Mrs. Gandhi, rules for dealing with center-state conflicts had been developed. The institutionalized process during that period favored inclusionary over exclusionary strategies as long as the demands were nonsecessionist, secular in character, and met with the approval of more than one side in conflict. The state’ in other words, attempted during these years to accommodate itself to the diverse and plural nature of Indian society. Mrs. Gandhi, by contrast, came to view accommodative strategies as threats to her personal hold on power. . . .<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Kaviraj, Sudipta, “India: Dilemmas of Democratic Development”.

<sup>54</sup> Kohli, Atul. 1990. *Democracy and Discontent: India’s Growing Crisis of Governability*. op. cit.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

Since then the contravention of norms and rules became indeed very wide-ranging, giving rise to rampant corruption on most levels of government, extending to the police and increasing with the growing decentralization and the devolution of power to the states.

### XVIII

In the wake of all these processes—the political repercussions of concepts of equality and of communal religious identities; the growing importance of group identities and the decay of political institutions which became intensified with the end to the era of Congress' dominance via family rule with Indira Gandhi's assassination in the mid-1980s, and of her son Rajiv Gandhi a few years thereafter—there developed in India a new fully modern political formation, but couched already in new terms beyond those of the initial Nehruvian vision of the modern Indian nation. This state was based on a much more intensive participation of sectors of the society in the political process—a participation in many ways based on new modern premises—but at the same time entailing a reenactment and reconstruction of some of the older patterns—mainly of a relatively weak center—but a center which now constituted more than before a continual reference point for most political activities, and which was based on more open access to it and of participation in it and with growing tendencies to incorporation of new social sectors into it, but also connected with the weakening of the political institutions. This new framework was based, to follow Satish Saberwal, on the interaction of two distinct political traditions—the western one with its strong emphasis on universalism, centralization and adherence to general rules with the more particularistic, polycentric orientations of the Indian political tradition.<sup>56</sup>

Within the frameworks of this new political formation, there developed two major tendencies. “One was the emergence, especially in India's Hindi-speaking “heartland” that comprises many states in north-central and western India, of the *Bhartiya Janata Party* (BJP)—a right-leaning,<sup>57</sup> religious-nationalist party that has mobilized support by simultaneously demonizing India's religious minorities, especially

<sup>56</sup> Saberwal, Satish. “On the Diversity of Ruling Tradition”.

<sup>57</sup> “Who's afraid of the BJP?”, *The Economist*. 4–10 April, 1998, 64, 7 1–72; Hansen, Thomas Blom. 1996. “The Vernacularisation of Hindutva: The BJP and Shiv Sena in Rural Maharashtra.” *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 30, 2, pp. 177–214;

and championing causes that appeal to the majority Hindus; and [the other was] the growing significance of regrouped parties, especially in southern India, but also in such other “peripheral” states as West Punjab and Kashmir . . . (i.e. of local partners SNE).

Regional nationalism has greater appeal than Hindu nationalism in many of Indian “peripheral” regions. A variety of regional parties have thus become quite significant in the last decade or two. Since many of these parties arose in opposition to the Congress, built their power base around intermediate castes—the so-called “backward castes” that the Congress had failed to incorporate. Championing the cause of their respective especially of the middling groups within the region, these parties often tend to be very fickle. When it comes to participating in national politics, they can swing more to the left, or to the right, depending on the political opportunities available, and on the ambitions and convenience of their respective leaders.<sup>58</sup>

## XIX

The development of the new political format and of the new political experiments within it entailed the development of two seemingly contradictory tendencies with respect to the future of its constitutional democratic regime. On the one hand there has been the continual extension of political participation, incorporation of broader sectors into the political framework, and of power sharing. On the other hand there developed the erosion and weakening of many of the basic political institutions, as well as to some extent of the hitherto bases of the legitimation of the system, manifest above all in the growing strength of new parties, in the development seemingly

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Nayar, Baldev Raj. “The Limits of Economic Nationalism: Economic Policy Reforms under the BJP-led Government.” Paper presented at the India and the Politics of Developing Countries: Essays in the Honor of Myron Weiner., University of Notre-Dame, Indiana, 24–26/9/1999; Chatterjee, Partha. 1995. “Religious Minorities and the Secular State: Reflections on an Indian Impasse”, *Public Culture*, 18, 1, pp. 11–39; Brass, Paul R. 1997. *Theft of an Idol*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<sup>58</sup> Basu, A. “Mass Movements or Elite Conspiracy? The Puzzle of Hindu Nationalism”, in: Ludden, David (ed.). *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*. Penn: Philadelphia, 1996, p. 55–80; Idem. “The Dialectics of Hindu Nationalism”, in: Kohli, Atul (ed.). *The Success of India's Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 163–190; Hansen, Thomas Blom. 1994. “Controlled Emancipation: Women and Hindu Nationalism”, *The European Journal of Development Research*, 6, 2, pp. 82–94 Idem. 1996. “Recuperating Masculinity: Hindu Nationalism, Violence and Exorcism of the Muslim ‘Other’”, *Critique of Anthropology*, 16, 2, pp. 137–172; Idem. 1996. “The Vernacularisation of Hindutva: The BJP and Shiv Sena in Rural Maharashtra”.



contradictory but possibly complementary directions, challenging the hitherto premises of the Indian political system.

These—in many ways contradictory developments for the continuity of Indian democracy—have become fully visible in the several elections since 1996 which can in many ways be seen as a watershed in the development of Indian democracy. These elections have indeed highlighted that it is the conjunction of growing democratization, with the weakening of the political institutions, their possible deconsolidation; the weakening of central parties, the greater autonomy of state governments; the growing pressure of different local and caste groups on the center, and with shifts in components of collective identity and the possible erosion of the bases of legitimation of the regime and the development of more monolithic, nationalistic direction, that constitute the major challenges to the continuity of Indian constitutional democracy.<sup>59</sup>

But these developments do also possibly indicate a continuation and indeed extensions of power sharing and its adaptation to new circumstances. Indeed the very high participation in the elections (about 65 percent of the electorate), the relatively few accusations of corruption, the low level of violence seem to attest to the vitality not only of democratic political participation, but to some degree also

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<sup>59</sup> Corbridge, Stuart and John Harriss. 2000. *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy*. Malden, MA: Polity Press; Fainsod, M., Uday Singh Mehta and Usha Thakkar, “The Rebirth of Shiv Sena in Maharashtra: The Symbiosis of Discursive and Institutional Power”, in: Basu, Amarita and Atul Kohli (eds.). *Community Conflicts and the State in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 215–238; Fox, Richard G. “Communalism and Modernity”, in: Ludden, David (ed.). *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*. Penn: Philadelphia, 1996, pp. 235–249; Jaffrelot, Christophe. 1996. *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*. New York: Columbia University Press; Jalal, Ayesha. 1995. *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Katzenstein, Mary, Smitu Kothari and Uday Mehta. “Social Movements Politics in India: Institutions, Interests and Identities”, in: Kohli, Atul (ed.). *The Success of India’s Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 242–263; Ludden, David. “Introduction. Ayodhya: A Window on the World”, in: Idem. (ed.). *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*. Penn: Philadelphia, 1996, pp. 1–26; Sarkar, Sumit. “Indian Nationalism and the Politics of Hindutva”, in: Ludden, David (ed.). *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*. Philadelphia: Penn, 1996, pp. 270–294; Upadhaya, Prakash Chandra. 1992. “The Politics of Indian Secularism”, *Modern Asian Studies*, 26, 4, pp. 815–853; Freitag, Sandria B. 1989. *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India*. Berkeley: University of California Press, esp. intro, ch. 1–2, 7–8, Conclusion; Hansen, Thomas Blom. 1999. *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

of some of the constructive dimensions of the public sphere. It is a rather open question—but crucial for the continuity of the Indian democratic constitutional system is whether these changes denote the breakdown of political institutions in India or their transformability in a more decentralized direction.

It is the ways in which these contradictory tendencies will come together in different situations is of crucial importance for the continuity of constitutional democratic regimes in India.

## XX

In what is probably one of the most systematic presentations of the “optimistic” view, about the viability of Indian democracy, Maya Chadda has pointed out several contrary indications the many scholars<sup>60</sup> who have claimed that the decline of the Congress has brought to the detriment of democracy in India, there are several contrary indications.

... First, the end of the congress and the rise of new political parties able and willing to form alternative governments has meant a wider distribution of political power, office, and responsibilities.

Second, the prime minister’s office has lost the imperial aura and power of the Indira and Rajiv Gandhi days. The post-1990 prime minister of India is truly the first among several equally powerful political leaders within the ruling coalition, cabinet, and parliament. Similarly, the average member of parliament is less sophisticated and less well educated but also closer in background, beliefs, and perceptions to constituents than was the more cosmopolitan and educated parliamentarian in the early decades after independence. A public opinion survey by *India Today* found at the end of the Rao government and amid the Havala scandal that the average voter considered corruption to be a serious problem, but that did not deter some 95 percent of voters from approving of the representative government.

Third, the success of a politician is frequently determined by his/her ability to work the system and build ever-widening networks among the local to the upper echelons of bureaucracy and government. The

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<sup>60</sup> Chadda, Maya. 2000. *Democracy in South Asia*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 173–187. See also: the more cautious but on the whole also optimistic evaluation in: Corbridge, S. and John Harriss. 2000. *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, esp. pp. 200–241; Blomkvist, Hans and Sten Widmalm. 1992. *Uppsala Studies in Democracy, No. 4: Democracy in India*. Uppsala: Department of Government, Uppsala University; Idem. Blomkvist, Hans. 1988. *The Soft State: Housing Reform and State Capacity in Urban India*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.

deeper penetration of the party system and electoral politics is evident from the proliferation of hundreds of parties across India; some among these are confined to a state, others straddle two or three states, and a third kind represent specific constituencies such as the Dalits (the untouchables). Their alliance decisions depend largely on the strength of their immediate opposition in the region and constituency and their connections with the national parties.

Fourth, policymaking under coalition governments has required decision by consensus. This certainly makes decisionmaking slower and more cumbersome, but it also makes a decisions more representative of the will of the nation.

Fifth, the absence of a single dominant party has reinforced the reference to constitutional checks and balances. This is evident in the severe circumscription of the central government's right to use Article 365 to dismiss elected state governments by judicial decisions and pronouncements.

Sixth, ethnic separatism is certainly on the wane, although the incidence of caste and Hindu-Muslim violence fluctuate in response to shifts in the local balance of social power.

Seventh, the civil society is far more vibrant today than ever. There are a huge number of NGOs catering to every cause and need among India's vast problems. The voluntary organizations have received a boost from international NGOs, which are increasingly spearheading the post-Cold War agenda of justice and human rights. Similarly, there is a significant growth of public-interest litigation in Indian courts; several cases have been filed on issues like the environment, corruption, and private land developments that have displaced the poor. The courts have responded with alacrity and dispatch.

Eighth, and last, critics of coalition governments have argued that the end to Congress dominance has led to a vacuum of ideology and an incoherence in politics and that the ascent of the BJP and Sangh Parivar (BJP affiliates) on the one hand and of narrow-based, regionalist forces on the other has endangered Indian democracy. To begin with, the Congress has long ceased to be the focus of a coherent ideology or an issue-based politics. Its progressive thrust ran out of steam in the mid-1970s, and since then its organizational discipline has steadily deteriorated.

The Hindu nationalist vision, projected by the BJP and its affiliates, also advocates integration through centralization, but it has already determined who will occupy the center, that is, the Hindu majority, those who believe Indian nationhood cannot be separated from India's religiocultural Hindu roots. This notion of majoritarianism is radically different from the Congress's ideology. For the Congress, national consolidation had never meant the cultural dominance of the Hindu majority. Rather, it meant a pluralistic and culturally differentiated India in which groups retained their social and cultural identities and entered into local and regional accommodations in their collective capacities.

The state, by virtue of its eminence, played the role of mediator and guarantor. The third vision is a “regionalist” one that shares the pluralism of the Congress but explicitly disavows both the need for and desirability of having a strong center. In the regionalist perspective, the ideal path to national integration is through the decentralization of power. But far from threatening Indian democracy, the existence of these alternative visions has strengthened it. For the remorseless pressure of the simple majority voting system, which forces all parties to woo the center of the political spectrum—by definition, moderate—has forced a gradual convergence of visions upon the Congress, the BJP, and the secular middle-left. This is exemplified by the growing consensus in favor of strong Panchayati Raj institutions.

These parties differ from the caste-based parties on how far they will push the principle of reservation, because both woo and therefore are reluctant to alienate the urban middle-class and upper-class votes. They have, nevertheless, recognized the immense electoral potential of the SC/ST vote.

A third example is the BJP government’s quiet abandonment of the Hindutva program, which had won it millions of adherents in the early 1990s. The BJP has for a long time advocated the notion of one nation, one culture, and one law for India.

In contrast, the Vajpayee government refrained from raising the questions of Article 370, the uniform civil code, and Ayodhya and Mathura temples. It pressed forward with better relations with Pakistan and amicable ties to the West, particularly the United States.

In the real world of Indian democracy, combining imperatives of consolidation with democratization has meant becoming inclusive through bargains to which both the state and its parts (defined by ethnic, caste, and religious identities) had consented. Such bargains were subsequently legitimized by popular elections. Also, the presence of poverty, instability, corruption, and violence did not prevent gradual democratization. Governments were capable of innovative solutions—regional formulas, ethnic compacts, constitutional provisions, and construction of creative structures—to recapture the electoral rhythms. These solutions were not adequate or effective in many instances or were overtaken by economic and political developments over the passage of time. They had been offered, nevertheless, as solutions within the framework of electoral democracy and were sustained by it. Finally, failure of democracy in one part of the country—Kashmir, Punjab, or Northeast (about 2 percent of the total population)—on one issue or at a particular moment did not mean failure of the democratic transformation as a whole. In fact, it was remarkable that such a vast, diverse, and poor country stayed largely secular, federal, and democratic while experimenting with new forms of politics and government, all the while meeting—albeit slowly—the demands of the post-Cold War political economy. India’s democracy is well established and stable; the rules

by which governments are formed and dissolved are also in place; as is the broad consensus on an incremental, gradualist pace of democratic development.

## XXI

As against this optimistic view—which is shared by many others, such as for instance Atul Vasshay or Ashish Naroh or Das Gupta,<sup>61</sup> the more pessimistic view tends to emphasize the decay of political institutions and the growth of more ideological, communal and fundamentalist-like politics; and the constant increase of unmanageable conflicts; the growing repressiveness as manifest in the use of presidential power in suspension of rights; the brutality and unaccountability of the police and the fickleness of the continually reconstituted civil society. Such fickleness is reinforced, as P. Metha has put it,<sup>62</sup> by the fact, that it is not only that the state—but also society have become weak.

If it turns out to be the case that the character of groups is underwritten by politics—and this is very much an open question—then the character of group based mobilization, rather than being a civilizational given, might turn out to be merely a contingent feature of the way in which state power is organized.

Because of this, accordingly to one of the surprising features of Indian politics is not simply that the state often seems to be weakly institutionalized. My hunch is that in India civil society, including caste associations, are equally, if not more weakly institutionalized than the state is. This certainly suggests that, in the face of political turmoil, “communitarian character” of Indian mobilization should be taken with a pinch of salt. This “communitarian character” is itself a product of how political power is constituted; it is not a given of Indian politics. (As an aside, I once asked a politician why institutional life in India has so little continuity: He answered: you get moksha only as an individual, never as part of a collectivity!). My own sense is that political life, though, of dubious value, has an irrepressible quality in India. Every convention is being transgressed, every identity constantly receded, and every value questioned. India has become the most intensely politicized societies in the world. Tocqueville’s always apt words written for France seem apt here, “there is an unspoken intestinal war between permanently suspicious rival powers. The lines between authority and tyranny, liberty and license, right and might seem to

<sup>61</sup> Chadda, Maya. 2000, *Democracy in South Asia*, op. cit.

<sup>62</sup> Metha, Pratap—Comments in the Notre-Dame Conference.

them so jumbled and confused that no one knows exactly what he is, what he can do or should do."<sup>63</sup>

Concomitantly, it is of importance to recognize that, to follow M.L. Reiniche, that such a society is quite receptive to the authoritative and initiative messages coming possibly from within, and, above all, from outside—from government representatives and agencies and political and other leaders, from big men (the former "little kings"), some of them being the traditional, as well as self-instituted, gurus. From that perspective, the working, in between many other factors, of political institutions are at stake for the best or the worst.

It is in this context that the violent confrontations between middle castes and lower ones, as well as against the "other," increased in the contemporary setting, the ascribed low, or "foreign" status, becoming paradoxically a pretence for the legitimation of aggression.

## XXII

The continual confrontation between the "positive" or "negative" tendencies—from the point of view of the continuity and transformability of the Indian constitutional democratic system is closely connected with the transformation of some of the aspects of Indian historical experience in the setting of the modern Indian nation state, indeed with what has been the central point of strength of the power-sharing system—namely the pragmatic-accommodative attitude to politics. Here of special importance is the fact that as this attitude, with the kernels of civility it entails, has only weak roots in any strong transcendental orientations or commitment to broader settings, it may indeed give rise to the rather serious tensions between the various particularistic units and between them and the centers, without providing new channels for the extension of trust among the various sectors of society and without assuring the commitment especially of local leadership and political activists to the center and to the broader national institutions. In this context the fact that under modern conditions there developed a vacuum with respect to the mediating role of the Brahmins is of great importance. While in the first period of independence the Nehruvian leadership and the Congress attempted to fulfill these functions, this became more and more difficult with continual decay of many of the political institutions,

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

further weakening the extremely fragile tradition or ethic of public responsibility.<sup>64</sup>

These developments pose quite sharply the problem whether those aspects of civil society in Indian society, paradoxically rooted in the older social and caste system which sustained the power-sharing tendencies in the political arena will be eroded or transformed in wake of the developments analyzed above.

Or to put it in a somewhat different way, the question here is to what extent all these new developments will enable the continuation in the new settings of those features of the Indian social system which were so important to the development of the accomodative attitudes to politics—namely, first, the relative autonomy of the various, continually reconstructed social networks and sectors combined with, second, their relatively autonomous access to the arena of rulership; third a strong tendency to inclusiveness—i.e., of incorporation of various subsectors into their frameworks—of different political formations; and fourth, non-individualistic grounding of these processes.

The crucial problem here is whether there will develop new forms of association, of territorial groups and trans-territorial networks, and activities which will provide some viable common public frameworks and arenas—even if they are not constructed according to some universalistic principles—or will such frameworks be eroded, giving rise to politics of continual and rather violent confrontations.

The problem here, as in many other democracies, is that of the existence or development of some consensual orientations—of some common text—beyond the rules of the game. While such orientations did exist and were relatively effective in the historical experience of India in the legitimation of the political arena in terms of the basic conception of the dharma, or under Nehru and the Congress rule when a mild but multifaceted secular conception of Indian polity legitimated the coexistence different cultural groups—the maintenance of such common text became more difficult with the continual weakening of both of the political institutions and the hitherto prevailing premises of the regime.

It is as yet too early to judge the outcome with respect to all these problems of democracy in India to which we have referred above, but all the elections since 1996 have indeed highlighted their problems.

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<sup>64</sup> Das Gupta, Jyotirindra. "India: Democratic Becoming and Developmental Transition", op. cit.; Saberwal, Satish. "On the Diversity of Ruling Tradition", op. cit.; Idem. "A Juncture of Traditions", op. cit.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

# CENTER FORMATION AND PROTEST MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

### BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE CIVILISATIONAL APPROACH

In this chapter I would like first to spell out, in somewhat greater detail, the basic assumptions of the sociological approach to comparative civilisations and then apply it to the European and American scene, and to the concrete themes developed in this collection of essays.

The crux of this approach is that the analysis of the formation and dynamics of institutional settings of different societies has to take into account the basic premises of civilisations and their implications on those processes through which social action is structured and a perduring normative order is established. At the same time it is clear that no institutional formation, no system or pattern of social interaction—whether micro- or macro-sociological—is or can be stable. The very processes of control—symbolic and organisational alike—through which such patterns are formed, generate also tendencies to protest, conflict and change. Because every social order contains a strong element of dissent regarding the distribution of power and the values upheld, no institutional system is ever fully ‘homogeneous,’ in the sense of being accepted either fully or to the same degree by all of those participating in it.

Even if, for very long periods of time, a great majority of the members of a given society identify to some degree with the values and norms of a given system and are willing to provide it with the resources it needs, other tendencies develop which may give rise to change in the attitudes of social groups to the basic premises of the institutional system.

Thus, in any society, there exists the possibility that ‘anti-systems’ may develop within it. While anti-systems often remain latent for long periods of time, under propitious conditions they may also constitute important foci of systemic change. That such potential anti-systems exist in all societies is evinced by the potential existence in

all of them of themes and orientations of protest, as well as of social movements and cultural and religious heterodoxies.

Such latent anti-systems may be activated and lead to far reaching changes by the very processes connected with the continuity and maintenance, or reproduction, of different settings of social interaction in general, and of the macro-societal order in particular. The most important of these processes are: (1) shifts in the relative power positions and aspirations of different categories and groups; (2) the activation in the younger generation, particularly in those who belong to the upper classes and the elites, of the potential rebelliousness and antinomian orientations inherent in the very act of socialisation; (3) several socio-morphological or socio-demographic processes through which the biological reproduction of populations is connected with the social reproduction of settings of social interaction; and (4) the interaction between such settings and their natural and intersocietal environments, for example, movements of population or conquest.

The crystallisation of these potentialities of change usually takes place through the activities of secondary elites who attempt to mobilise various groups and resources in order to change aspects of the social order as it was shaped by the coalition of ruling elites. Thus, though every civilisation or social system constructs some specific systemic boundaries within which it operates, the very construction of such civilisational or social systems also generates conflict and contradictions which may lead to transformation or decline; that is, to different modes of restructuring their boundaries. As a result there always exists the possibility that the integrative and regulative mechanisms inherent in any society may fail.

While these potentialities for conflict and change are inherent in all human societies, their concrete development—their intensity and the concrete directions of change and transformation they engender—vary greatly between different societies and civilisations. They differ according to the different constellations of cultural orientations and social factors, i.e., elites, patterns of the social division of labour and political-ecological settings and processes. These constellations shape the different patterns of social conflict, social movements, rebellions and heterodoxy that develop in different societies, as well as the relation of these movements to processes of institution building. They shape the direction of institutional change, the degree to which changes in different aspects of the institutional order coalesce and their consequent transformation patterns.

## THE AXIAL AGE CIVILISATIONS

The comparative approach to the study of civilisations has been developed in Jerusalem in terms of analyses of comparative civilisations in general and of so-called Axial Age Civilisations in particular,<sup>1</sup> of which the Christian and European ones constitute crucial and distinctive cases.

The term Axial Age Civilisations was used by Karl Jaspers to describe those (Great) civilizations which developed in the first millennium before the Christian era—namely Ancient Israel, later on Christianity in its great variety, Ancient Greece, Ancient China in the early Imperial period, Hinduism and Buddhism, and much later, beyond the Axial Age proper, Islam.<sup>2</sup> The specific, distinctive characteristics of these civilisations was the development and institutionalisation within them in general, and within their centres in particular, of basic conceptions of tension, of a chasm between the transcendental and mundane order.

These conceptions of a basic tension between the transcendental and the mundane order have developed above all among small groups of 'intellectuals' which constituted a new social element, a new type of elite in general and carriers of models of cultural and social order in particular. But ultimately these conceptions were, in all these Axial Age civilisations, institutionalised, that is, became the predominant orientation of both the ruling as well as of many secondary elites, fully embodied in their respective centres or subcentres, transforming the nature of the political elites and making the intellectuals into relatively autonomous partners in the central coalitions. Thus the various disperse groups of intellectuals became transformed into more fully crystallised and institutionalised ones, often into clerics—be it the Jewish Prophets and Priests, the Great Greek Philosophers, the Chinese Literati, the Hindu Brahmins, the Buddhist Sangha or the Islamic Ulama. The most important repercussions of such institutionalisation has been the development of ideological and structural

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<sup>1</sup> See in greater detail S.N. Eisenstadt, 'A Sociological Analysis of Comparative Civilisations, The Development and Direction of a Research Programme', Jerusalem, Harry S. Truman Research Institute, 1986. See S.N. Eisenstadt, 'The Axial Age, The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics', *European Journal of Sociology*, 23, 1982, pp. 294–314.

<sup>2</sup> K. Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*, Zurich, Artemis-Verlag, 1949.

attempts to reconstruct the mundane world according to the basic conception of resolution of this tension. The given mundane order was perceived in these civilisations as incomplete, often as faulty and in need of being reconstructed, at least in some of its parts, according to the conception of the resolution of this basic tension, or, to use Weberian nomenclature, according to the premises of salvation—basically a Christian term, the equivalents of which can however be found in other civilisations.

As part of this process took place, in all these civilisations a far-reaching restructuring of the conception of the relation between the political and the higher, transcendental order. The political order, as the central focus or framework of mundane order has been in these civilisations usually conceived as lower than the transcendental one and accordingly had to be restructured according to the premises of the latter. It was the rulers who were usually held to be responsible for assuming such structuring of the political order; and accordingly there appeared the possibility of calling a ruler to judgment in the name of some higher order, to which the rulers were accountable.

At the same time the nature of the rulers became greatly transformed. The King-God, the embodiment of the cosmic and earthly order alike, disappeared, and a secular ruler, in principle accountable to some higher order appeared. Thus there emerged the conception of the accountability of the rulers and often of the community as well to a higher authority—God, Divine Law and the like. Accordingly, the possibility of calling a ruler to judgment emerged. The first most dramatic appearance of this conception took place in Ancient Israel, in the priestly and prophetic pronouncements. A different conception of such accountability, an accountability of the community and its laws, appeared on the northern shores of the Eastern Mediterranean, in Ancient Greece. In different forms a conception of accountability appeared in all these civilisations.

Concomitant to the emergence of conceptions of accountability there began to develop autonomous spheres of law and conceptions of rights, as distinct from ascriptively bound customs. Closely related to these changes in the basic political conceptions there developed far-reaching transformations of the conceptions of personal identity.

The interpersonal virtues such as solidarity, mutual help or the like, were taken out of their primordial framework and combined, in different dialectical modes, with the attributes of resolution of the

tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders. In this way they generated a new level of internal tensions in the structuring of personality, and it was through the appropriate reconstruction of personality that the bridging of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order, i.e. salvation, could be attained. This was closely connected with the development of conceptions of the individual as an independent autonomous entity, very often out of tune with the political order. Both European and non-European Axial civilizations share this combination of the idea of accountability with a conception of the individual personality.

But the nature of these conceptions and of their ideological and institutional implications varied greatly between the European and the other civilisations, as well as to some degree, within Europe. For instance they differed in the specific definitions of the tension between the transcendental and mundane order and in the ways to overcome it that became predominant in these civilisations and societies, in their basic premises of relations between state and society, and in their conceptions of authority, hierarchy and equality.

In the following pages we shall analyse some of the distinctive characteristics of European civilisations in the framework of Axial Age civilisations in general and of their respective patterns of modernity in particular.

### THE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF EUROPEAN CIVILISATION

European civilisation has developed some distinctive characteristics within the broad framework of the Axial Age Civilisations. It was characterised by a very high degree of multiplicity and cross-cutting of cultural orientations and structural settings. The symbolic pluralism of heterogeneity of European society was evident in the multiplicity of traditions out of which its own cultural tradition crystallised—the Judeo-Christian, the Greek, the Roman and the various tribal ones, and unlike the case of Islam, by a great multiplicity of cultural codes and orientations.<sup>3</sup> Most important among these orientations or codes

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<sup>3</sup> F. Heer, *The Intellectual History of Europe*, New York, Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1968; J.K. O'Dea, T.F. O'Dea and C. Adams, *Religion and Man: Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, New York, Harper and Row, 1972; A. von Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, London, Williams and Norgete,

was the emphasis on a high autonomy of the cosmic, cultural and social orders and a high level of mutual relevance between them which was defined in terms of the tension between the transcendental and the mundane order; the multiplicity and complexity of the different ways of resolving this tension, either through worldly (political and economic) or 'other-worldly' activities.

The second cultural orientation prevalent in European civilisation was a high level of activism and commitment of broader groups and strata to these orders. Third, was the conception of a high degree of relatively autonomous access of different groups and strata to these orders—to some degree countered by, and in constant tension with, the strong emphasis on the mediation of access by such bodies as the Church or the political powers. Fourth, was the definition of the individual as an autonomous and responsible entity with respect to access to these orders.

This multiplicity of symbolic orientations became connected with a very special type of structural-organisational pluralism in Europe.<sup>4</sup> This type of pluralism differed greatly from the one that developed, for instance, in the Byzantine Empire which shared many aspects of its cultural traditional models with Western Europe. Within the Byzantine Empire this pluralism was manifest in a relatively high degree of structural differentiation within a rather unified socio-political framework in which different social functions were apportioned to different groups and social categories. The structural pluralism that developed in Europe was characterised, above all, by a strong combination between low, but continuously increasing, levels of structural differentiation on the one hand, and continuously changing boundaries of different collectivities, units and frameworks on the other.

Between these collectivities and units there did not exist a clear cut division of labour. Rather there tended to develop among them a continuous competition over their respective standing with respect to the different attributes of social and cultural order; over the performance of the major societal functions—be they economic, political or cultural—as well as over the very definition of the boundaries of ascriptive communities.

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1908; E. Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, New York, Macmillan, 1931.

<sup>4</sup> M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962.

The combination of these symbolic models and structural conditions generated several basic institutional characteristics particularly in structure of centres and the relation to the periphery, which developed with great variations in medieval and early modern times in Western and Central Europe. These characteristics were an interesting mixture of Imperial and 'real' feudal institutions, as distinct from a simple decentralisation or disintegration of large patrimonial or tribal units. These feudal institutions shared several crucial characteristics with Imperial societies, probably because they emerged from within civilisations with an Imperial past and aspirations as Otto Hintze has shown long ago.<sup>5</sup> The most important of these aspirations was the symbolic and to some degree the organisational distinctiveness of the centre. But unlike purely Imperial societies, the most outstanding characteristic of the structure of the centres in feudal societies is that there existed within them many centres and subcentres, all of which tended to have multiple orientations—political, cultural and economic. These centres and subcentres tended to become arranged in a rather complicated but never in a unified, rigid hierarchy in which none of them was clearly predominant. Naturally enough, the activities of the dominant centres were of a wider scope than those of the local ones, but even these centres did not have a total monopoly on social resources and mechanisms of institutional control. Each of the local centres had some degree of independent dominance over some of its resources, over the mobilisation of its activities, as well as over its access to the dominant centres.

Moreover, these various centres were not completely separated from one another. There existed continuous mutual orientations, as well as structural interrelations among them. In addition, any group with control over some resources necessary for the development of the political or cultural orientation of the centres had some legitimate

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<sup>5</sup> J. Prawer and S.N. Eisenstadt, 'Feudalism', *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, New York, Macmillan and the Free Press, 1968, Vol. V; pp. 393–403; O. Brunner 'Feudalismus—Ein Beitrag zur Begriffsgeschichte', in idem, *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1968; M.M. Cam, 'Medieval Representation in Theory and Practice', in *Speculum*, 29, 1954; E. Lousse, *La Société d'Ancien Régime: Organisations et Représentations Corporatives*, Louvain, Presses Universitaires, 1943; H.E. Hallam, 'The Medieval Social Picture', pp. 28–50 in E. Kamenka and R.S. Neale, (eds.), *Feudalism, Capitalism and Beyond*, London, Edward Arnold, 1975.

and autonomous, even if differentiated, access to such centres. Not only the Church, but also many local or status groups were to some degree autonomous in their ability to convert their resources from one institutional sphere to another and from the periphery to the centres.<sup>6</sup>

In close relation with these orientations the societies of Western Europe have also been continuously characterised by a high degree of commitment by centres and periphery alike to common 'ideals' and goals. Both the traditional—the absolutist and 'estate'—rulers of Western Europe (and, as we shall see later on, the leaders of modern 'nation-states' or class societies) have laid special emphasis on the development of common symbols of cultural and political goals, as well as on a high degree of regulation of the relations among different, relatively independent, groups.

#### PATTERNS OF CENTRE AND STRATA FORMATION AND OF INSTITUTION-BUILDING IN EUROPE

In a parallel manner there developed in Europe several specific characteristics of centre and strata formation, as listed below.

First, the multiplicity of centres in European Societies prevented the development of a closed (caste-like) occupational system, despite the strong tendencies in that direction. Every major autonomous social unit—the church, the court, and various social strata—tended to develop a different scale of evaluation, each with a logical claim of general validity. As a result, a multiplicity of status hierarchies tended to develop. Persons who ranked high in one hierarchy might rank low in another, and vice versa—a phenomenon that sociologists have labelled status incongruity. Thus another result was a gradual blurring of the distinction between free and servile groups.

Second, there was a strong tendency toward a relatively unified class consciousness and class organisation. This was especially evident among the higher strata, but was also found among the middle and even the lower free strata. The fullest expression of this tendency is found in the system of presentation that culminated in the form of estates and parliaments, the roots of which were in the

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<sup>6</sup> Bloch, *Feudal Society*; Brunner, 'Feudalism'; P. Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism, Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London, New Left Books, 1974.



tradition of political participation in the centre available to most groups simply by virtue of their identities as corporate or semicorporate bodies. In sharp contrast to the situation in other societies such as China, countrywide class consciousness and organisation were not confined to the higher status groups, they could also be found among the middle and even the lowest free groups and strata.

Third, unlike Russia and China, but not entirely unlike India, Western and Central Europe tended to develop a close relationship between family and kinship identity on the one hand and class identity on the other. Family and kinship groups were very important agencies, not only for orienting their members toward the attainment of high positions, but also for transmitting these positions to them by ascription. In Western and Central Europe, however, there was a good deal of open conflict over the degree to which each stratum should participate in the centre. Theoretically, at least, this could not happen in India where the levels of differential participation were fixed by ritualistic ascription (although the practice was subject to exceptions).<sup>7</sup>

Fourth, each social stratum, especially the middle ones, tended to encompass a great variety of occupational positions and organisations and link them in a way of life with a common avenue to access to the centre. In this, Europe again resembled India, more than Russia or China.<sup>8</sup>

Fifth, closely related to the four preceding characteristics was the possibility of differential yet common participation in various cultural orders and centres by different groups and strata. This, in turn, made the life styles of different strata overlap. Thus the availability of several channels of access to the same centre—channels that could be used by various social strata—made contact between the strata much easier.<sup>9</sup>

Sixth, with respect to social mobility, we find a high degree of family mobility among strata at all levels of society. This had its

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<sup>7</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Social Differentiation and Stratification*, Glenview, Scott-Foreman, 1971.

<sup>8</sup> R. Mounier, *Les Hierarchies Sociales de 1450 a nos Jours*, Paris, PUF, 1969; Eisenstadt, *Social Differentiation*.

<sup>9</sup> J.O. Lindsay, 'The Social Classes and the Foundation of the State', in J.O. Lindsay (ed.), *New Cambridge Modern History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1957.

roots, as Marc Bloch has indicated, in the feudal period,<sup>10</sup> and it seems to have continued up to the end (or at least the middle) of the absolutist era. Thus the fact that Europe's social strata had a collective consciousness and organisation that embraced the whole society facilitated continuous changes in the family and ethnic composition of various groups. This mobility was, on the whole, more of the so-called contested, than of a sponsored type, although the latter was also present. In sharp contrast to China, but in some ways like India (with its process of subcaste formation), European society developed not only a process of mobility within a relatively fixed system of positions but a process that, in itself, created new positions and status systems. The most obvious illustration of this phenomenon is the development of cities, which occurred, of course, long before the age of absolutism. In the late medieval city especially, new points of contact arose between different groups and strata, serving as foci for the development of new forms of political and social consciousness.<sup>11</sup>

Thus the pattern of class struggle and consciousness that developed in Europe from the late Middle Ages and continuing into the modern era, was based on several assumptions or premises, the most important of which were: (a) a tendency to autonomous access of major groups to those social and cultural attributes which serve as bases of the criteria of status, as well as of autonomous access to the centres of the society; (b) a high degree of status association and perception of common class interests among relatively diversified occupational groups; (c) a relatively high degree of country-wide strata or class consciousness which tends to minimise, from the point of view of strata formation, the importance of ethnic, religious or regional groups, and which are characterised by (d) a high degree of political articulation and expression of their respective class interests and conflicts; (e) continuous attempts by different strata to acquire access to the centre or centres, to participate in them and to change them, and above all to minimise the principles of hierarchy as against those of equality in access to them.

All these tendencies and orientations were based on the assumption, to a very large degree unique to European civilisation, that economic power can be converted directly, not only into prestige,

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<sup>10</sup> Bloch, *Feudal Society*, pp. 283–305.

<sup>11</sup> M. Weber, *The City*, New York, Collier Macmillan, 1957.

but also into political power without losing its autonomous standing and legitimation.

The preceding analysis indicates that the full crystallisation of the structural tendencies, combined with the specific cultural orientations prevalent in Europe, gave rise there to (a) multiplicity of centres; (b) a high degree of permeation of the peripheries by the centres and of impingement of the peripheries on the centres; (c) a relatively small degree of overlapping of the boundaries of class, ethnic, religious and political entities and their continuous restructuring; (d) a comparatively high degree of autonomy of groups and strata and of their access to the centres of society; (e) a high degree of overlapping among different status units combined with a high level of countrywide status ('class') consciousness and political activity; (f) multiplicity of cultural and 'functional' (economic, or professional) elites with a relatively high degree of autonomy, a high degree of cross-cutting between them and close relationships between them and broader, more ascriptive strata; (g) a relative autonomy of the legal system with regard to other integrative systems, above all the political and religious ones; and (h) a high degree of autonomy of cities and autonomous centres of social and structural creativity and identity-formation.

#### PATTERNS OF PROTEST AND CHANGE IN EUROPEAN CIVILISATION

In close relation to these institutional features of 'traditional' European civilisation there developed within it a special pattern of change. This pattern of change was characterised by a relatively high degree of articulation of political struggle and symbolic and ideological structuring of movements of protest, as well as by a high degree of coalescence of change and the restructuring of political regimes and other components of the macro-societal order.

Thus changes within any component of the macro-societal order impinged on one another and above all on the political sphere. These changes gave rise to a continuous process of social restructuring. As compared with the pure Imperial systems, Western Europe was characterised by much less stability of regimes, by continuous changes of boundaries of collectivities and restructuring of centres, but at the same time it evinced also a much greater capacity of institutional innovation cutting across different political and 'national' boundaries and centres.

These changes were activated by: (a) secondary elites, relatively close to the centre, highly predisposed to be the major carrier of religious heterodoxies and political innovations; (b) a relatively close relationship between these autonomous secondary elites and broader social strata; (c) a concomitant predisposition on the part of these elites and broader social strata to develop activities oriented to centre formation and to combine them with those of institution-building in the economic, cultural and educational spheres.

Out of these tendencies there developed a continuous confrontation between the construction of centres and the processes of institution-building. Institution-building in most spheres was seen as very relevant to the construction of centres and judged according to its contribution to their basic premises. At the same time centres were judged according to their capacity to promote just and meaningful institutions, and as such, were subject to the continuous competition on the part of different groups and elites over the terms of access to these centres and the definition thereof.<sup>12</sup>

THE IMPACT OF PROTESTANTISM—THE REVOLUTIONARY ORIGINS  
OF EUROPEAN MODERNITY AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF  
PROTEST ORIENTATIONS IN MODERN EUROPE—THE TENSION  
BETWEEN STATE AND SOCIETY

It was within the framework of these broad cultural orientations and structural features that the specific 'mutation', the heterodoxy of Protestantism, could develop and perhaps above all to have the varied symbolic and institutional impacts which Max Weber and later scholars attributed to it.<sup>13</sup> The most forceful of these impacts could

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<sup>12</sup> C. Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975 (especially the article by S. Rokkan, 'Dimensions of State Formation and Nation Building'); J. LeGoff, (ed.), *Heresies et Sociétés, Civilisations et Sociétés*, Paris, Mouton, 1968; R. Forster and J. Greene, eds., *Preconditions of Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970; A.L. Moote, 'The Preconditions of Revolution in Early Modern Europe, Did They Really Exist?' *Canadian Journal of History*, 3, 1972; V. Rutenberg, 'Revoltes ou revolutions en Europe aux XIV–XV siècles', *Annales E.S.C.*, 27, 1973; M. Cohn, *The Pursuit of The Millennium*, New York, Harper, 1961; P. Anderson, *Passages*.

<sup>13</sup> M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1958; S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Protestant Ethic and Modernization*, New York, Basic Books, 1968.

be perhaps discerned in the revolutionary origins and breakthroughs of European modernity, in the Great Revolutions—the English, American, French, and later on the Russian, which in their turn have generated the specific patterns of modern protest orientations and of their incorporation into the centres in Europe.

The focus of the modern European order has been, as often stressed in sociological literature, that the exploration of continuously expanding human and natural environments and their mastery could be attained by the conscious effort of man in society. The fullest expression of this attitude could be found in the breakthrough of science, that is, in the premises that the exploration of nature by man is an ‘open’ enterprise which creates a new cultural order; that the continuous expansion of scientific and technological knowledge could transform both the cultural and social orders and create new, external and internal environments to be endlessly explored by man, but at the same time, harnessed to both his intellectual vision and technical needs.<sup>14</sup> Science and technological knowledge were only one aspect of European modernity. Other aspects entailed the formation of a ‘rational’ culture, an efficient economy, a civil (class) society and nation-states where these tendencies of ‘rational’ expansion could become fully articulated, and which would also create a social and political order based on freedom.

Thus the new civilisation of modernity, which emerged from this background was based ideologically and politically on the assumption of equality and of growing participation of the citizens in the centre. This was most clearly manifest in the tendency to establish universal citizenship and suffrage and some semblance of a ‘participant’ political or social order, giving rise to ideologies of participation.

It was out of these orientations that some of the specific assumptions about patterns of participation and protest characteristics of the modern European societies and nation-states developed leading ultimately, but only ultimately, to the potentialities of *Entzauberung*.<sup>15</sup> The

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<sup>14</sup> B. Voegelin, *Order and History*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press; K. Mannheim, *Man and Society*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1935; J. Habermas, *Towards a Rational Society*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1960; C. Kerr, *Marshall, Marx and Modern Times. The Multi-Dimensional Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969; I.G. Mesthene, *Technological Change*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1970.

<sup>15</sup> These potentialities of *entzauberung* or disenchantment from worldly pursuits are analysed in S.N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change and Modernity*, New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1973.

most important of these assumptions were: first, that the major social and political forces (the political elites as well as the state) on the one hand, and 'society' on the other, continuously struggled about their relative importance in the formation and crystallisation of the cultural and political centres of the nation-state and the regulation of access to it, and about the access to the transcendental attributes which these centres represented; second was the assumption that the processes of structural change and dislocation, which developed as a result of the processes of modernisation, gave rise not only to various concrete problems and demands, but also the growing quest for participation in the broader social and political orders. This quest for participation of the periphery in such social, political and cultural orders was mostly manifest in the search for access to these centres.

These assumptions about the nature of participation in the centre were connected with specific types of orientations to protest that developed in European societies. These orientations to protest provided the concrete contents of the quest for such participation.

The first basic theme of protest focused on the search for principles of social order and justice, and for the legitimation of the centre in general and of the ruling groups in particular in terms of some non-traditional values, acceptable to broader strata, and to some extent, shared and even 'created' by them.

The second theme focused on the nature of the emerging overall civil, political and cultural community, especially on the finding of new common symbols in which various groups of society could find some sense of personal and collective identity.

The third major theme of protest focused around the possibility of attaining full expression of human and cultural creativity, of personal dignity, and of true or pure interpersonal relations with the specialised and differentiated frameworks attendant on modernisation and the complex division of labour involved. Basic to this theme was the problem of alienation, that is, of the assumed loss by individuals of the direct relation to and identification with their work, their social setting, and other people.

Around these focal themes of protest there developed different principled orientations which in reality often tended to overlap. One such orientation, usually called the 'rightist' one, was rooted in the continuous feeling by different groups of being ousted and deposed from existing positions and values, of losing their place in the soci-

ety, and the consequent development by them of demands for upholding and/or restoring traditional order and values. Another, what may be called the 'leftist' orientation, was aimed at effecting far-reaching changes in the social structure, in the basic principles of allocation which would favour those groups or classes which allegedly were formerly deprived of advantageous positions, or full participation. These groups could be social 'classes,' occupational categories, regional groups within any certain society, or special overall national or tribal subgroups within a broad (Imperial, colonial or international) social and political order.

Both these orientations became interrelated in different ways with the search for direct, 'pure', unalienated human relations and attachments to primordial symbols. Traditionalists would claim that such relations are possible only under relatively stable, ordered conditions, undiluted by the disrupting forces of growing differentiation, 'democratisation' and mass society. Political 'radicals,' on the other hand, would claim that such relations could be achieved only by overthrowing such order and establishing a new one whose institutional arrangements would entirely coalesce with 'nonalienated' relations. Other more 'non-political' radicals would claim that such relations could be attained only outside the political realm.

The history of modern European social and political movements can be, at least, on the ideological level, depicted in terms of these varied ideological orientations and their constellations, and it was in terms of such orientations that modern societies responded to the various crises which developed within them. Whatever the differences between the ideological constellations that developed in Europe, all these movements combined an emphasis on some orientation to the transcendental realm and of relating such orientations to socio-political realities, with the struggle to define the relative importance of social and political groups as carriers of such orientations.

In the earlier stages of European modernity it was assumed that through the reorganisation of the political-national centres, most social problems, especially the problems of meaningful participation in socio-cultural orders on the one hand, and the problems generated by industrialisation on the other, would be solved.

Social-political centres were viewed as the major foci and frameworks of charismatic orientations through which the modern social and cultural orders were defined, and also as the major reference points of individuals' cultural and collective identity. They were also

conceived as being able, through a series of appropriate social policies or through revolutionary changes, to restructure those aspects of modern economy which were felt to be most conducive to alienation and anomie. Thus, in the first stages of modernity, most movements of social protest revolved around the broadening of the scope of participation and channels of access to the centres, changing or reforming their cultural and social contents, solving the problems of unequal participation in them, and finding ways to attenuate or overcome, through the policies of the centre.

These movements of protest have crystallised around two foci—those of the nation-state and those of class society. The former epitomised the crystallisation of the new types of collectivities and centres that developed in modern Europe; the latter, concerns the mode of structuring class-consciousness and activities, and the relations between ‘State’ and ‘Society’. The second point, perhaps seen best in the socialist movements, has constituted a continuation, in conditions of modernity, of the patterns of class-formation that have developed in Europe.

The formation of these new centres and the movements of protest attendant to them was not, of course, a smooth process; it was a process of continuous struggle and was full of crises, the nature of which cannot be fully understood without recourse to basic premises of European civilisation.

#### DIFFERENCES WITHIN WESTERN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

Needless to say, there developed within Europe far-reaching differences in the concrete crystallisation of the above premises, as the essays collected in this book fully attest to. The major distinction within Europe was that between the concrete structuring of class consciousness and protest and the relative centrality of those protest movements in the construction of the centres. The degree to which a symbolism of protest was incorporated into them, and the degree to which viable nation-state centres were constructed early in the history of modern states, has also to be taken into account.

These variations were indeed connected with the structure of elites and especially the degree of their autonomy, the major cultural orientations articulated by such elites, and the major types of coalitions between different elites. Some of the major (often cross-cutting) dis-



inctions have been those between Northern and Southern Europe, between Protestant and Catholic countries, and between states with a long history of unity as against more recent ones. There is also a strong, although not universal, tendency to overlap between these two categories.

These differences in class formation, protest movements and crystallisation of elites, were also very closely related to the nature of the structure of patron-client relations in different European societies. Thus, it is well known that in the Mediterranean societies—Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece—patron-client relations, whether in the form of traditional patron-client relations or in the form of more modern parties, or bureaucratic and administrative networks, constituted not only, as in other European countries, important addenda to the central core of their institutional structure, but indeed made up the very core of this structure.<sup>16</sup> Whatever the differences between different European societies, they all shared a continuous tension between direct and indirect access to the centre, as well as between principles of hierarchy and equality, as basic symbolic components of their respective societies.

All these basic ideological premises—and their impact on the structure of centres, on the very conception of the political realm, and the composition of elites—were totally transformed in North America, first in the Puritan colonies, and after the American revolution, in the United States as a whole. This transformation was expressed in the strong emphasis developed in the United States on the metaphysical equality of all members of the community, so firmly stressed by Alexis de Tocqueville, on the unmediated access of all members of the community to the centre and on the almost total denial of the symbolic validity of hierarchy as a basic component of these premises.<sup>17</sup>

Of basic importance to these characteristics of the United States was the fact that access to the centre was given, in principle, to all citizens. In close relation to the conceptions of equality mentioned above, access to the centre did not constitute, as in Europe, a focus of principled struggle. Concomitantly, the confrontation between state

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<sup>16</sup> See in greater detail S.N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, *Patrons, Clients and Friends*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

<sup>17</sup> A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, New York, Vintage Press, 1966.

and society typically found in Europe was less prominent, with society in some way submerging the state within itself. As a result concepts and ideologies of the 'state' (as distinct from the 'republic' or the 'people') did not develop.

Another important factor in this development was the structure of elites and of the specific formation of strata that took place in the United States. Of special importance was the potentiality of all social actors to become elites and legitimately articulate orientations in all spheres of social life—political, cultural, economic and the like. The combination of these ideological premises and structure of elites, together with some crucial organisational aspects of American politics, such as its federalism and the structure of its parties, explain some of the general characteristics of American protest movements in general and of the failure of socialism in them in particular.<sup>18</sup>

The American case exemplifies the different innovative potentials inherent in Western civilisations as carried and articulated by different primary and secondary elite groups. These potentialities were always varied, heterogeneous and often moved in different directions, depending upon concrete historical situations that facilitated or favoured some lines of actualisation as against others. Analysis of these issues in Western societies forms the substance of the following chapters.

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<sup>18</sup> It might be worthwhile to have a brief comparative glance at Japan—another great capitalist industrial society—in which it is also impossible to talk about socialism in the European sense despite the existence of a socialist party. Nevertheless, the sources of this similarity are different. Japan presents an opposite situation to the American one. In the latter it was the absence of hierarchical civilisatory premises that explains at least partially the strong relative weakness of socialist movements. In Japan, the relative weakness of such movements is explained by the continuous relative predominance of the vertical hierarchical conceptions and the closely related predominance of strong vertical status orientations, and the concomitant weakness (even within the post World War II democratic state) of egalitarian conceptions within the political realm.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

# THE STRUCTURING OF SOCIAL PROTEST IN MODERN SOCIETIES: THE LIMITS AND DIRECTION OF CONVERGENCE

### PART I

This article examines the problem of the convergence of modern societies on the basis of a comparative analysis of protest movements—especially of “class” protest in several modern societies—particularly Europe, the United States and Japan.\* The history of modern politics can in many ways be seen as that of the incorporation of the symbols and demands of protest movements—rooted in the revolutionary origins of modernity—into the centers of their respective societies and of the concomitant transformation of these centers. In some cases such transformation was relatively peaceful; in others, it required violent confrontation.<sup>1</sup>

But while this tendency has been common to all modern societies—both within Europe and outside it—the nature of movements and the modes of their incorporation into the centers of their societies has varied greatly. Protest movements, especially in modern

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<sup>1</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies*, New York: The Free Press, 1978; E. Kamenka, (ed.), *A World in Revolution?* Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1970; idem, “The Concept of a Political Revolution”, in C.J. Friedrich, (ed.), *Revolution: Yearbook of the American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy*, Nomos 8. New York: Atherton, 1967, pp. 122–138; B. Mazlish, A.D. Kaledin and D.R. Balton, (eds.), *Revolution*. New York: MacMillan, 1971; D. Baechler, *Revolutions*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1976; C. Tilly, *The Rebellious Century, 1850–1910*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975; S.N. Eisenstadt, *Modernization: Protest and Change*, op. cit.; S.N. Eisenstadt, L. Roniger and A. Seligman, *Centre Formation, Protest Movements and Class Structure in Europe and the United States*, London: Frances Pinter, 1937.

societies, have always been generated by the interweaving of structural and “ideological” forces; the contours of any protest movement are shaped by the relative weights of these two conditions. The impetus towards crystallization of any protest movement is usually to be traced to structural and organizational changes of different social groups and their consequent dislocation. But how such dislocation and the problems it generated were defined—and particularly the modes of incorporating the basic theses of protest into the centers of these societies—differed greatly.

The theoretical focus of our analysis will be an examination of the extent to which the cultural premises and historical experience of different societies can, to an extent at least, explain these differences and accordingly such central aspects of their institutional structure and dynamics. Thus we shall analyze to what extent the structure of protest movements, their symbols, and the modes of their incorporation into the centers of their societies can be understood in terms of a combination of various structural and power variables with basic premises of different modern societies, their major institutional derivatives, and the structure of the major elites and counter-elites predominant within them.

Our starting point is Sombart’s famous question—recently taken up by Seymour Lipset:<sup>2</sup> “Why is there no socialism in America?” This question was asked against the background of the European experience, in which socialist movements, couched in terms of class struggle, were arguably the most important reactions to capitalism. The European intellectual tradition and public opinion viewed socialist movements in their reformatory or revolutionary variants as the “natural” response to the emergence of capitalism. This assumption was also one of the most pervasive in modern social science—first in the theories of Marx and the Marxists, and later, paradoxically enough, in the theories of convergence of industrial societies.

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<sup>2</sup> W. Sombart, *Why is There No Socialism in the U.S.A.?* London: MacMillan Press, 1975 (originally published in 1912 in Germany); S.M. Lipset, “American Exceptionalism in the North American Perspective: Why the United States has Withstood the World Socialist Movement”, in E.M. Adams, (ed.), *The Idea of America*, Cambridge; Harvard University Press, 1977; J.H.M. Laslett and S.M. Lipset, (eds.), *Failure of a Dream, Essays in the History of American Socialism*, Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1974; J. Heffer and J. Rovel (eds.), *Why is there no Socialism in the U.S.—Pourquoi n’y-a-t-il pas de socialisme aux Etats Unis?* Paris, Editions de l’Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1988.

Given that Europe, where the basic patterns first emerged in the form of capitalist-industrialism, developed very strong socialist movements, Sombart explained the absence of such a movement in the United States by structural-organizational features which distinguished the United States from Europe: it was a country of immigrants who received the vote almost immediately, or one of open frontiers, although he also stressed the importance of the myth of equality—but mostly from the point of view of the immigrants. Yet there is evidence that such structural-organizational explanations alone are rather inadequate. The experience of Australia, and to a lesser degree of Argentina, in the late 19th century—where similar structural conditions prevailed and in which strong labor or socialist movements nevertheless developed—indicates the inadequacy of Sombart's answer.<sup>3</sup>

At the other end of the spectrum—starting in the 1930s but with growing momentum after the Second World War—another major capitalist industrial complex has emerged in Japan. Although a socialist movement and party did develop there, they never attained as much predominance as in Europe, and their basic orientations, political behavior, and impact on the center were very different from those of their European counterparts.

## PART II

Let us first take a closer look at some of the specific characteristics of socialist movements as they developed in Europe. Most European socialist movements combined their concern with mundane problems of industrial struggle—wages, work conditions, and the like—with a strong component of protest couched in terms of a universal class struggle. The first component of socialist movements—industrial conflict—can be found in all industrialized countries. It is the combination of this element with the second—i.e. with a rather specific mode of political orientation and conception—that is characteristic

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<sup>3</sup> On Australia, see A.F. Davies and S. Encel, *Australian Society*, Melbourne: Cheshire, 1972; S. Encel, "Metropolitan Societies and Domination Societies", in S.N. Eisenstadt, (ed.), *Patterns of Modernity*, Vol. I: The West. London: Frances Pinter, 1987. On Argentina see C.H. Waisman, *From Military Rule to Liberal Democracy in Argentina*. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1987; idem, *Reversal of Development in Argentina*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987; idem, *Modernization and the Working Class*, Austin University of Texas Press, 1982.

of the socialist movement. Only in Europe, however, among the highly industrialized capitalist societies, did socialist (and communist) movements or parties attain political significance and were able, especially after the Second World War, to gain power, usually in a constitutional way.<sup>4</sup>

How can we then explain the fact that socialism, as a central political movement, based on a combination of strong class consciousness with a broad political movement aiming at the transformation of the center, arose in highly developed capitalist societies only, or mainly, in Europe and the former “White Dominions”—Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—to a smaller degree in Latin America—but neither in the U.S. nor in Japan?

Is this combination of industrial struggle with political class-consciousness then related in some way to dimensions of the European tradition, to the basic civilization premises institutionalized in most Western and Central European countries, and to the specific European historical experience? Socialism as a movement of protest, rebellion, and intellectual antinomianism does indeed evince characteristics closely related to central aspects of the European political tradition; to the basic premises of European civilizations and the traditions of protest that have developed with them, particularly their revolutionary dimension.

The themes of protest and rebellion have, of course, been central in the socialist repertoire. Indeed, they constituted one of the major foci and symbols of identity that developed within it. Not by chance were almost all the great socialist leaders—Engels, Kautsky, Bernstein, and others—ardent students of peasant and slave rebellions and of millenarian movements.<sup>5</sup> Certainly an analysis of the social determinants of such rebellions was important for the “scientific” understanding of social dynamics according to the tenets of Marxism. Yet

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<sup>4</sup> On the development of European socialism, see G.D.H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, London: MacMillan, 1953–60, 5 Vols.; E. Bolleans and M. Crozier, (eds.), 1950–1959, *Mouvements Ouvriers et Socialistes; Chronologie et bibliographie*, Paris: Ed. Ouvrieres, 1950, 5 Vols.; C. Landauer, *European Socialism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959; G. Lichtheim, *A Short History of Socialism*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1970; E. Kamenka, (ed.), *Feudalism, Capitalism and Beyond*, op. cit.; S.N. Eisenstadt and Y. Azmon, (eds.), *Socialism and Tradition*, Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1975.

<sup>5</sup> On peasant and slave rebellions and on millenarian movements, see K. Kautsky, *Foundations of Christianity*, New York: Russell, 1953 (1908); F. Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956 (1850).

fascination with these movements was at least partly due also to seeking the roots of socialist movements and especially to identify, in primitive communism or in communal and millenarian rebellions, the paradigm for the combination—to use van der Lieue's term—of *Urzeit* and *Endzeit*<sup>6</sup> within its vision of a new society.

However, socialism was not only a movement of rebellion, protest, and intellectual antinomianism. The various socialist and communist movements also developed strong orientations towards center-formation and concrete institution-building. This strong drive towards institution-building and the formation and institutionalization of centers constituted a crucial component of the class-consciousness promulgated by the socialist movement, distinguishing socialism from many other protest movements in the history of mankind, to give socialism its specific modern, revolutionary connotations. All these characteristics of socialist movements were closely related to certain basic premises of European civilization and modernity: initially, acceptance of its strong universalistic orientations, the combination of protest and institution-formation, the quest to broaden the scope of participation in the center; second, the combination of political struggle, political protest, and intellectual heterodoxy, which constituted central components of European political traditions.

This tradition also greatly influenced the development of some of the major themes that characterized the world view of socialism—especially its view of history as continuous progress into the future, its emphasis on the temporal dimensions of human existence, its activist orientations, as well as the specifically scientific and “rational” components of its world view.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, socialism (and communism) shared with the European tradition a strong “this-worldly” orientation, an emphasis on activity in the here and now—not by accepting the existing order, but rather by attempting to reconstruct it and its centers in terms of a transcendental vision beyond given reality, according to criteria of justice and equality, as well as with very strong universalistic orientations. Socialism also incorporated into its traditions and symbols some of the eschatological elements

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<sup>6</sup> See G. van der Lieuw, “Primordial Time and Final Time”, in J. Campbell, (ed.), *Man and Time, Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, New York: Bollinger Foundation, 1957, pp. 324–353.

<sup>7</sup> See C. Lichteim, *A Short History of Socialism*, op. cit.; E. Kamenka, (ed.), *Feudalism, Capitalism and Beyond*, op. cit.

of Christianity, its vision of the course of history and redemption, the division between the City of Man and the City of God, as well as a very strong missionary and chiliastic trend, which, together with its “this-worldly” orientations, provided an expansionary dynamic.<sup>8</sup>

### PART III

Socialism shared with or even inherited many of these orientations from the great revolutionary movements—the English, French, and American Revolutions—that ushered in the first stages of European modernity. But it is probably in their class symbolism that socialist movements and ideologies were most closely related to the basic premises of European civilization, which developed as early as the Middle Ages.<sup>9</sup>

Socialist class symbolism and ideology, and the organization of socialist movements, evinced some of the basic characteristics of strata-formation and class struggle of pre-modern Europe, namely an emphasis on the definition of status criteria in a broad and diversified way that combined the proximity of individuals to certain general cultural (religious) or social attributes, functional service to society, as well as relative standing with respect to wealth and power. In addition, the European class structure permitted relatively autonomous access, especially by the free classes, to the major attributes of the cosmic and social order from which the criteria of status were presumably derived. Most groups could participate in the center by virtue of their collective identities, as corporate or semi-corporate bodies. Different strata were always struggling to gain access to the social and cultural attributes on which the criteria of status were based, as well as to the centers of the society—the continuous

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<sup>8</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Socialism and Tradition”, in S.N. Eisenstadt and J. Azmon (eds.), *Socialism and Tradition*, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> On the relations between socialism and class structure in Europe, see S.N. Eisenstadt, *European Civilization in a Comparative Perspective*, Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1987, Chaps. 2–5. On European class formation see in greater detail B. Barber and E.B. Farber, *European Social Class*. New York: MacMillan, 1965; S.N. Eisenstadt, *Social Differentiation and Stratification*, Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1971; M.S. Archer and S. Ginner, *Social Stratification in Modern and Contemporary Europe*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971.



tension between hierarchy and equality. There was a high degree of status-association and perception of common class interests among occupational groups and widespread corporate activity and solidarity. There was also a relatively high degree of country-wide class consciousness that tended to minimize, from the point of view of strata-formation, the importance of ethnic, religious, or regional groups. Finally, there was a high degree of political articulation of class interests and conflicts, with a strong orientation towards the center and ambivalence concerning its hierarchical structure or the hierarchical components of the center.

In premodern Europe this tendency was especially evident among the higher strata, but even during the medieval and early modern period it was not unknown among the middle and even the lower (non-servile) free strata. The fullest expression of this tendency was found in the system of representation in the various parliaments and assemblies of Estates, and in the corporate arrangements in many cities. This enabled different political actors, by virtue of their collective identities as corporate or semi-corporate bodies, to engage in a constant struggle between hierarchy and equality, to aspire to political participation in the center and to reconstruct it and its policies.

These characteristics of class relations and symbolism were also related to the multiplicity and the characteristics of elites in Europe, many aspects of which were intensified with the development of modernity—especially their multiplicity, autonomy, and continuous competition. Thus socialist ideology and movements in the political life of modern Europe were characterized by the combination of concrete economic demands with class struggle or conflict, couched in universalistic terms and in terms of continuous, symbolic and institutional struggle regarding the reconstruction of political centers. It is in this way that they were closely related to the major institutional premises of European civilization and the structure of elites prevalent in them.

#### PART IV

But within Europe itself there were significant differences from country to country in how protest movements, and especially those based on class, were constructed and incorporated and it is worthwhile, from the point of view of our analysis, to look at some of them briefly.

Within the broad panorama of center construction and protest movements and their incorporation into the centers of European societies, the Scandinavian case is of great interest. The most distinctive aspects of patterns of center formation and class consciousness in the Scandinavian countries, as shown by Stein Rokkan, Matti Alestalo and Stein Kuhnle,<sup>10</sup> among others, are the unique combination of a strong political class consciousness with strong commitment to the center and to the democratic polity. This combination was evident in the development of both strong social-democratic and agrarian parties. Along with the more bourgeois ones these parties shared an acute political class consciousness, which, by its very nature, contained strong contestational elements. At the same time, this class consciousness, particular in its socialist version, was—in Marxist terminology—rather reformist. For most of their history these parties accepted the tenets of constitutional democracy and the legitimacy of the constitutional center.

Several aspects of the history of these parties were closely connected with the special pattern of economic development in Scandinavia, especially the importance of agriculture. While this was to no small degree connected with Scandinavia's place in the international economic system, yet, unlike Poland (which shared some of the characteristics of place in this system with Scandinavia) economic development there was not connected with the demise of a free peasantry. On the contrary, in many ways it strengthened the peasantry, bringing it into orbit of the modern state, minimizing the overlapping of feudal-urban with center-periphery cleavages and in many ways determining the patterns for further democratic mobilization.

Certain aspects of Scandinavian historical experience are of special importance for the understanding of these special characteristics of their socialist movements. First is the relatively early establishment (with the partial exception of Finland) of national unity without religious cleavages—even in Norway, which was long under Swedish or Danish domination. Second is the depoliticization of the clergy, which

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<sup>10</sup> On these dimensions, see S. Rokkan, "Dimensions of State Formation and Nation Building: A Possible Paradigm for Research on Variations within Europe", in C.H. Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of Nation States in Western Europe*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975, pp. 562–600; M. Alestalo and S. Kuhnle, "The Scandinavian Route", in R. Erikson et al., (eds.), *The Scandinavian Model—Welfare States and Welfare Research*, New York: M.E. Sharpe (forthcoming).

took place in the early Reformation, combined with a strong activist, this-worldly orientation. Third is the continuity of the political center in most of these countries. Fourth is the very strong tradition of participation by different strata, through Assemblies of Estates, in the center, combined with the acceptance of the predominance of the center. This predominance was strongly emphasized during periods of absolutism when the power of the Estates waned, but the autonomous place of the Estates was never obliterated. Fifth is the long tradition of tight family and kin cohesion, combined with the strong orientations of these groups towards the center.<sup>11</sup>

All of which was closely related to relatively tight family and regional cohesion, not segregated from the centers, but rather linked to them and to one another through a variety of cultural-religious, educational and political channels, and through the activities of distinct elites. These political, cultural and social elites were characterized by powerful tendencies to autonomy in their self-definition and criteria of recruitment. On the other hand, they were deeply rooted in their local and strata settings, and early on exhibited a strong orientation towards their respective centers—so much so that, at certain stages, they could be characterized as “over-bureaucratized”.

The Scandinavian socialist movements are best contrasted with those in Southern Europe—Spain, Italy, and Greece. Protest movements, socialist and communist parties with a strong revolutionary orientation to the center indeed developed in these countries.<sup>12</sup> They

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<sup>11</sup> See Lindstrom, *Fascism in Scandinavia, 1920–1940*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1985; M. Alestalo and S. Kuhnle, “The Scandinavian Route”, op. cit. On some aspects of Scandinavian historical and contemporary experience, see S.R. Graubard, (ed.), *Norden—The Passion for Equality*, Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1986; M. Roberts, *The Swedish Imperial Experience, 1560–1718*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979; idem, *Essays in Swedish History*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966; idem, (ed.), *Sweden’s Age of Greatness, 1632–1718*. London: MacMillan, 1973.

<sup>12</sup> See, for instance, M. Diamandouros, *Southern Europe. An Introductory Bibliographical Essay*, University of Strathelyde Studies in Public Policy, 1980; G. Fridham, “Comparative Perspectives on the New Mediterranean Democracies: A Model of Regime Transition?”, in *West European Politics*, Vol. 7, 1984, pp. 1–29; R. Carr, *Espana, 1808–1939*. Barcelona: Ariel, 1978; M. Clark, *Modern Italy, 1871–1982*. London and New York: Longman, 1984; H. Driessen and D. Meertens, *A Selected Bibliography on Spanish Society*, University of Amsterdam papers on European and Mediterranean Societies, 1976; K. Legg, *Politics in Modern Greece*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1969; idem, “Political Change in a Clientelistic Polity: The Failure of Democracy in Greece”, in *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1973, pp. 231–246.

were organized in clientelistic networks connected with extreme revolutionary symbolism, sectarian tendencies, mutual distrust, and low solidarity. They contained a preponderance of intellectuals, and had relatively weak links to the highly organized working class. In many ways these movements exhibited characteristics exactly opposite to those of Scandinavian countries, also with respect to their relationship with the centers of their societies.

To quote Luis Roniger, writing on center and periphery relations and political dynamics in these countries:

... First, the restrictive character of political participation granted to social forces by the central elites stood in contrast to the perception of such participation, ideally conceived as open to all members of the collectivity. Second, the central political forces were prone to be responsive to demands of the broader social strata only in particularistic clientelistic terms. Third, and connected to the foregoing, the policies of repression developed as part of central political forces against protest movements, usually denying these movements recognition. Accordingly, these movements have often exacerbated the totalistic character of their ideological tenets and tended to conceive themselves and were perceived to be a potential or actual alternative to the institutional arrangements found in society—without in fact being able to influence them or penetrate the center. Struggles, even if economic and stemming from specific demands, have tended to become rapidly oriented to the political realm and to be articulated as against the symbols of the center and its structures, but often without being able to reconstruct the centers.<sup>13</sup>

All these characteristics of the socialist movements in Southern Europe were related to crucial aspects of the structuring of social hierarchies of which the best index is the predominance of clientelistic relations. In Mediterranean societies—Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece—patron-client relations, whether in their “traditional” or in the form of more modern party or bureaucratic and administrative networks, did not constitute important addenda to the central core of their institutional structure (as in other European countries), but were the core itself.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See L. Roniger, “Social Stratification in Southern Europe”, in S.N. Eisenstadt, L. Roniger and A. Seligman, *Centre Formation, Protest Movements, and Class Structure in Europe and the United States*, op. cit., pp. 152 f.

<sup>14</sup> On Spanish patterns of clientelism, see J. Corbin, “Social Class and Patron-Clientage in Andalusia: Some Problems on Comparing Ethnographies”, in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 1979, pp. 79–114; M. Kenny, “Patterns of Patronage in

The predominance of such clientelistic relations in Southern European societies were closely related to the structure and coalitions of the predominant major elites as well as to the selection by these elites of specific cultural themes out of the repertory available in Europe. The most important characteristic of the major elites have been their internal weakness, as evident above all in a relatively low degree of internal solidarity, and lack of the symbolic and sometimes also organizational autonomy of the centers, the major elites and broader groups of the society. Few fully autonomous political, functional (professional) and cultural elites developed here. Most such elites tended to be strongly embedded, especially in mundane affairs, in broader ascriptive groups, with little autonomous self-definition and orientation—even when they were already very specialized (as in the case of professors or administrative echelons in the more modern societies). These social actors had little autonomous access to the major resources they needed to implement their goals and control their own resources.<sup>15</sup>

The low level of autonomy in the centers of societies in which the clientelistic model is predominant is seen in the fact that, even

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Spain”, in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 33, 1960, pp. 14–23; idem, “Parallel Power Structures in Castile: The Patron-Client Balance”, in J.B. Peristiany, (ed.), *Contributions in Mediterranean Sociology*, Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1968, pp. 155–62; idem, *A Spanish Tapestry: Town and Country in Castile*, New York: Harper and Row, 1975.

<sup>15</sup> On clientelism in Italy, see L. Graziano, “Patron-Client Relationships in Southern Italy”, in *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1973, pp. 3–34; M. Rossi-Doria, “The Land Tenure System and Class in Southern Italy”, in *American Historical Review*, Vol. 64, 1958, pp. 55–66; A.H. Balt, “Rethinking Patron-Client Relationships: The Real System and the Official System in Southern Italy”, in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 2, 1974, pp. 182–202; B. Caizi, (ed.), *Nuova antologia della questione meridionale*, Milan: Edizioni de Comunita, 1973; J. Davis, “Honour and Politics in Pisticci”, in *Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1969, pp. 68–81; idem, “Town and Country”, in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 43, 1969, pp. 171–185; idem, “Morals and Backwardness”, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 12, 1970, pp. 340–353; P.A. Allum, *Politics and Society in Postwar Naples*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973; M. Caciagli and F.P. Belloni, “The New Clientelism in Southern Italy: The Christian Democratic Party in Catania”, in S.N. Eisenstadt and R. Lemarchand, (eds.), *Political Clientelism, Patronage and Development*, London: Sage Publications, 1981, pp. 35–55; J. Chubb, “Naples under the Left: The Limits of Social Change,” in *ibidem*, pp. 91–124; S. Silverman, “Agricultural Organization, Social Structure and Values in Italy: Amoral Familism Reconsidered”, in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 70, 1968, pp. 1–20; idem, “Exploitation in Rural Central Italy: Structure and Ideology in Stratification Study”, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 12, 1970, pp. 327–339; R. Wade, “Political Behaviour and World View in a Central Italian Village”, in F.G. Bailey, (ed.), *Gift and Poison*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971, pp. 252–280.

when the centers were much more compact and able to establish relatively wide administrative frameworks, their structural weakness was manifest in their inability to act in an autonomous way, distinct from the mode of resource use found at the periphery, and to penetrate the periphery in an independent way through autonomous channels.

In parallel, in most of these societies the distinctiveness of the center did not involve strong attempts to effect a structural and ideological transformation of the periphery or far-reaching changes in its basic concept of social order. Accordingly, they possess rather weak autonomous linkages between the center and periphery, links that created few basic structural changes within sectors or strata of the periphery or within the center itself.

These societies were also characterized by the crystallization and relative predominance of certain symbolic or cultural themes taken from the basic repertory of European civilization. Three are particularly important: first, a relatively strong emphasis on other-worldly orientations; second, a deep emphasis on the givenness of the cultural and social order and a weak perception of active autonomous participation by any of the social groups in shaping the contours of these orders; and third, such a perception was closely related to a relatively low level of commitment to a broader social or cultural order, an awareness of this order as possibly open to exploitation or adaption.

The preceding analysis indicates that some of the variations in the development of socialism in different European countries were connected with the structure and autonomy of their major elites with the major cultural orientations selected by these elites from the repertory of European cultural traditions; and with the major coalitions among the different elites and structuring of the center as they developed in the historical experience of these countries within the broader parameters of the European framework.

Whatever the differences between different European societies, they all experienced tension between direct and indirect access to the center as between the closely related principles of hierarchy and equality, as basic symbolic components of their respective societies. The specific characteristics of the different socialist movements within them—and above all the combination of concrete problems of industrial relations with broad, politically oriented class-consciousness—were determined by the way in which the implication of these tensions were worked out.

## PART V

Such basic ideological premises, and their impact on the structure of centers, on the conception of the political realm, and on the composition of elites, were totally transformed in North America. It is this transformation that at least partially explains why—despite the development of structural-economic conditions seemingly conducive to the crystallization and political expression of acute class-consciousness—the development and structuring of class interests and protest movements differed greatly from those in Europe—a difference most evident in the weakness of socialist movements.

The most important premises are the “messianic” and millennial orientations of early American socio-political endeavors, and especially the particular combination of solidarity and individualism in collective identity and the anti-statist orientation of American society.<sup>16</sup> As a result, American nationalism or collective identity has been based neither on primordial elements nor rooted in an organic historical development, characterized as a strong future orientation of values and belief systems.

It was out of these orientations—rooted in Puritan and Lockean political orientations, the Enlightenment and non-conformist religion—that a peculiar “civil religion” developed as one of the most forceful components of the American collective identity. This ideological fusion of religious sentiment and political values—with its stress on achievement and equality, republican liberties, and the disestablishment of organized religion—gave both the social and political realms and the construction of the collectivity a unique and often salvationist meaning in the vision of 17th, 18th and 19th century American society.

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<sup>16</sup> See R. Bellah, “On Civil Religion in America”, in idem, *Beyond Belief*, New York: Harper and Row, 1970, pp. 168–193; J.H.M. Laslett and S.M. Lipset, “Social Scientists View the Problem”, in idem, (eds.), *Failure of a Dream, Essays in the History of American Socialism*, op. cit., pp. 25–85; S.M. Lipset, “American Exceptionalism in the North American Perspective: Why the United States has withstood the World Socialist Movement”, op. cit.; idem, “Revolution and Counter-revolution: The United States and Canada”, in idem, (ed.), *Revolution and Counterrevolution: Change and Persistence in Social Structures*, Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, pp. 37–75; idem, “Canada and the United States: The Cultural Dimension”, in C.F. Doran and J.M. Sigler, (eds.), *Canada and the United States: Enduring Friendship, Persistent Stress*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, pp. 109–160; S.P. Huntington, *American Politics, The Promise of Disharmony*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981.

The crucial difference between the basic civilizational premises of the United States and those of Europe or Canada has been the former's strong emphasis on the metaphysical equality of all members of the community (emphatically stressed by de Toqueville); on the unmediated access of all members of the community to the center, and on the almost total denial of the symbolic validity of hierarchy (as against, of course, actual social or economic hierarchy). Hence, in the United States, access to the center was in principle available to all citizens. It did not constitute, as in Europe, a focus of principled struggle. Concomitantly, the confrontation between State and society was weakened; society became predominant and in a way submerged the State. This predominance was evident in the absence of the concepts and ideologies of the state (as distinct from those of the people) or—to use R. Nettl's expression—the small degree of “stateness” in it, as against the great importance of such concepts in Continental Europe and the milder British concept of the “Crown” or “Crown in Parliament”.<sup>17</sup>

It is the combination of these basic premises and the structure of the center that explains certain characteristics of the protest movements in the United States, and the weakness of any socialist component in particular. In this perspective, the most important aspects of American civilization were the openness of the center to all members of the community, the premises of metaphysical equality mentioned above, and the lack of a symbolic (as distinct, of course, from a concrete) hierarchy. Consequently protest or class-consciousness oriented to the abolition or transformation of a hierarchy were very weak. Instead, the United States developed the unique combination of highly moralistic and pork-barrel politics, with constant oscillation between them, and in S.P. Huntington's words, the continuous “promise of disharmony”—but a disharmony based on full acceptance of the premises of the center.<sup>18</sup> The reconstruction of the center, as undertaken in the Jacksonian and New Deal periods, was effected through attempts to reestablish such harmony by reconstructing the policies of the center, not its basic premises.

To some extent the failure of socialism in the United States can be explained by certain basic characteristics which it shared with

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<sup>17</sup> See J.P. Nettl, “The State as a Conceptual Variable”, in *World Politics*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 1968, pp. 559–592.

<sup>18</sup> S.P. Huntington, *op. cit.*



other local movements. The same mechanisms (both symbolic and institutional) that played a role in absorbing other types of protest and demands by different groups into the center limited the development of full-fledged political class-consciousness and socialism in the United States. These characteristics of the protest movements in general, and the socialist one in particular, were very closely related to some of the basic premises of American civilization, as these crystallized through a process of transformation of many of those of European civilization, as well to the structure of the major local elites.

The weakness of socialism in the United States was the result not only of the basic premises of American civilization, but also of their combination with the characteristics of the major social elites and strata—just as the characteristics of socialist movements in Europe were shaped by such combination. Of special importance here was that in the United States all social actors have the potential to become elites, that different elites could become the carriers of the major cultural orientations and premises in all arenas of social life, and that there was a strong interweaving of orientations to all these arenas among different elites; that such elites were weakly organized and specialized, combined with strong autonomous tendencies; and that there was a hazy distinction between central and peripheral elites, characterized by continuous interpenetration.

This analysis does not obviate or minimize the importance of the development of labor movements in different societies, the structure of markets and the various attempts by the dominant elites to suppress or at least countermand the aspirations of organized labor. Such attempts were common to all societies, but the specific ways in which they were manifested differed greatly from one to another and were influenced by the factors analyzed above. Similarly, while the structure of markets was, of course, often shaped by the specific technical or economic characteristics of industries and movements, the overall pattern of the structuring of markets in the United States, as well as the very conception of what constitutes a “free market”, was often greatly influenced by the forces analyzed above.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> A very good illustration of the different modes of structure of markets in different societies can be found in F.R. Dobbin, *The Institutionalization of the State: Industrial Policy in Britain, France, and the United States*. (A dissertation submitted to the

## PART VI

An entirely different transposition of the basic characteristics of the modern state and of modes of protest, and of the relations between class consciousness, industrial conflict, and socialist movements in particular, developed in another of the most industrialized capitalist countries—Japan.

Socialist and communist groups did develop in Japan, beginning in the late nineteenth century and continuing to the present, culminating after the Second World War in relatively large socialist parties much more prominent than in the United States; but they certainly have not followed the European pattern.<sup>20</sup> The nature of their attitude towards industrial disputes, trade union organizations and the broader public differed markedly from European patterns. Consequently they were never able to attain the prominent role in politics—in terms of restructuring the premises of the center or of influencing its policies—that socialist movements attained in Europe.<sup>21</sup>

First of all, throughout most of their history they were not as closely related as their European counterparts with the organization of the working class, with waging the industrial struggle. Articulating the concrete demands of the workers was not—with the partial exception of the late 1940s and early 1950s—related to the socialist ideologies in general. The ideology of class consciousness expressed in

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Department of Sociology and the Committee on Graduate Studies of Stanford University), 1986. On the impact of State policies on structures of labor movements see: I. Katznelson and A.R. Zolberg, (eds.), *Working-Class Formation, Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. See also: C.L. Tomlins, *The State and the Unions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. On a different interpretation of the failure of socialism in the U.S. from the perspective of political economy see M. Shalev and W. Korpi, "Working Class Mobilization and American Exceptionalism", in *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, Vol. I, 1980, pp. 31–61.

<sup>20</sup> On the development of labor and socialist movements in Japan, see R. Scalapino, *The Early Japanese Labor Movements: Labor and Politics in a Developing Society*, Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies/Center for Japanese Studies, University of California, 1984; B.D. Totten, *The Social Democratic Movement in Postwar Japan*. New Haven: Yale University Press. On the economic structure of modern Japan see W.W. Lockwood, (ed.), *The Economic Development of Japan—Growth and Structural Change, 1868–1938*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (1954) 1968; H.T. Patrick, (ed.), *Japanese Industrialization and Its Social Consequences*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

<sup>21</sup> J.A.A. Stockwin, *Japan: Divided Politics in a Growth Economy*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1975.

political terms was politically not very effective. The Socialist and Communist parties, which were composed mostly of intellectuals, never became part of the ruling groups, while at the same time, in the central political arena, they behaved on the whole according to accepted rules without great impact on the center.

Even when, after the Second World War, the Socialist party gained prominence and became the major opposition party, it never attained the central political significance with respect to the possible reconstruction of the center that socialist groups did in Europe. Class-consciousness as a mode of reconstruction of, and access to, the center—even if rather strong in the rhetoric of some of these groups, and an important factor in their internal sectarian disputes—was not in fact very important in their activities and concrete demands. Moreover, the symbolism of class consciousness and struggle was never incorporated in the central mode of discourse of Japanese politics, or into the symbols of the center—nor did it have any far-reaching effect on the political system.<sup>22</sup> Immediately after the Second World War developments of a different kind occurred but, as indicated, they were rather short-lived.

The characteristics of the Japanese socialist movement are closely related to the mode of political protest characteristic of the country through most of its history. Despite some interesting parallels, this mode, and its relation to the center, were different from those in the United States, as well as in Europe. The two most important parallels with the mode of political protest in the United States were the strong emphasis on concrete demands—articulated by various groups, organizations, factions, or networks—and the very strong moralistic tone that could be found in their political discourse.

But in Japan, unlike the United States, this strong moralistic tone did not emphasize the principle of equality of access to the center; it did not deny the possibility that different groups may in fact have differential access to the center. Rather, it was focused on maintaining solidarity, harmony, and the moral cohesion of the community. Moralistic criticism of the materialism of capitalism, was often found among both right- and left-wing groups, but in Japan it facilitated the transition of many intellectuals from one camp to another

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 141–72.

to a much larger degree than in Europe.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the incorporation of demands by the center was usually effected by practical negotiation and rearrangement between different groups and their leaders. The leaders of the socialist and labor groups oscillated between radical slogans and playing according to accepted rules. Because of the strong tendency to factionalism that characterized Japanese socialist (and communist) movements, they were unable (except during relatively short periods of economic crisis after the Second World war), to appeal to the wider electorate and incorporate the demands of wider groups into their program.

Explanation of the basic characteristics of Japanese industrial relations and of its labour movements has constituted a major focus of controversy in the scholarly literature. The approach can be in terms of the specific cultural tradition or the unique characteristics of Japanese civilization, or in terms of structural constellations attributed to historical circumstances, for instance, Japan as a late-comer to industrialization.<sup>24</sup> Yet a closer look at the evidence indicates a more complicated picture. Of special importance here is that certain basic characteristics, both of the structuring of markets as of protest movements in modern Japan bear close resemblances to earlier historical periods. Such modes of articulation of demands and their incorporation into the center were closely related—as in Europe and the United States—to the structure of elites and their orientations to the center, as well as to the specific cultural orientations and civilizational premises and conceptions of center and authority predominant during most periods of Japanese history.

Among these basic orientations, the following were the most important: the relatively low level of tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders; a strong combination of this—and other-worldly orientations and an emphasis on ritual activities; a strong

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<sup>23</sup> On some of these intellectuals, see W.M. Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order: Intellectuals and Fascism in Prewar Japan*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982; I.I. Morris, (ed.), *Japan, 1931-1945 . . .* Lexington: Heath & Co., 1963.

<sup>24</sup> A good analysis of some of these discussions can be found in R.E. Cole, "The Theory of Institutionalization: Permanent Employment and Tradition in Japan", in *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Oct. 1971, pp. 47-70; idem, "The Late-Development Hypothesis: An Evaluation of its Relevance for Japanese Employment Patterns", in *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Summer 1978, pp. 247-265; R. Cole and B. Karsh, "Industrialization and the Convergence Hypothesis", in *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 24, 1968, pp. 45-64.

commitment to the social (and cosmic) orders, extending from the family, through various wider circles, in principle to the center of the collectivity as a whole; a strong emphasis on group identity in general and on special combinations of vertical and horizontal group loyalties in particular; and a concomitantly strong emphasis on certain social frameworks (or contexts) of the basic premises of activity and identity.<sup>25</sup>

In close relation to these orientations, there was almost no distinction between the societal and cultural orders represented by the center and those represented by the various collectivities at the periphery. A relatively close relationship evolved between the symbols of the center and those of peripheral groups, with the orientation of the center constituting a basic component of the identity of most such groups.

As the representative of the cosmic order, the Emperor occupied a strong mediatory position, with potentially wide access to the national symbolic center—but one that was on the whole mediated through vertical networks and the orientations of groups and sectors of the population.

These basic cultural orientations had a far-reaching impact on the bases of the political order. In structural-organizational terms, Japanese historical and pre-modern political systems can be regarded as similar to patrimonial systems, in which relatively little distinction existed between center and periphery, and where there was little permeation of the center into the periphery, or impingement by the periphery on the center.

Yet in Japan the centers continuously attempted to permeate the periphery. Such permeation was, however, less oriented to the ideological restructuring of the periphery than in certain other imperial systems; rather, it focused on mobilizing the economic, political and military resources, as well as on loyalty and strong commitments

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<sup>25</sup> See H. Befu, *Japan: An Anthropological Introduction*, San Francisco: Chandler, 1971; H. Passin, "Japanese Society", in D.L. Sills, (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, New York: MacMillan and Free Press, 1968; T.S. Lebra and W.P. Lebra, *Japanese Culture and Behavior*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, (1974) 1986, especially Part One, but also the introductions to the other parts; J.C. Pelzel, "Human Nature in the Japanese Myths", in *ibidem*, pp. 7–28. See also: M. Yamaguchi, "The Dual Structure of Japanese Emperorship", in *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 28, No. 4, Aug. 1987, pp. 5–11.

of peripheral groups to the center.<sup>26</sup> These characteristics of center-periphery relations were related to the structure of the major elites that arose and became predominant in Japanese history, and to the modes of control exercised by them. While the structure of these elites has, of course, changed over time, certain other characteristics have remained constant.

The most important among these were the multiplicity of “functional” elites—primordial, military, economic, and cultural-religious—as well as of representatives of the family, village, feudal, or regional sectors—all embedded in various broadly ascriptive contexts. Such elites emerged at different periods and attempted to mobilize the resources of the periphery, basing themselves on a combination of strong emphasis on group commitment and on the identity of the basic cultural premises and orientation of the center and periphery.

There was an almost total absence (except in limited spheres such as the artistic or intellectual ones) of autonomous criteria of recruitment and organization—beyond those of the primordial ascriptive groups—to most of the specialist, especially the cultural elites, even if these groups were themselves continuously reconstructed. The cultural elites’ lack of autonomy was closely related to the absence of universalistic criteria based on a vision stressing a chasm between the transcendental and mundane orders.

## PART VII

These elite orientations and structures had far-reaching repercussions on several crucial aspects of the structuring of social hierarchies and of control in Japanese society. Thus the structuring of social hierarchies and classes, and the criteria on which it was based, were organized less on horizontal and more on vertical lines, which could serve as the base for the organization of groups or strata with autonomous access to the attributes of status and to the center. Most tendencies to horizontal organization were expressed in millenarian and populist terms that never became important in the transformation of the center.

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<sup>26</sup> See J.W. Hall and M.B. Jansen, (eds.), *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968; J.W. Hall and P.J. Mass, (eds.), *Medieval Japan: Essays in Institutional History*, New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 1974; P. Duus, *Feudalism in Japan*. New York: Knopf, 1969.

These elites' orientations and structures have also been of great importance in the definition of conflicts and in the modes of their resolution which, contrary to some suppositions, have abounded in Japanese society.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, several bases of conflict were built into the institutional application of the basic premises of Japanese civilization. There was conflict between the hierarchical principles of any group represented by its designated (ascriptive or elected) leaders and the more egalitarian, horizontal tendencies within it. There was conflict between the concrete application of such principles and the interests of various subgroups within the family or village group. There was conflict between the internal solidarity and interests of the family group and their extension—mostly in terms of a hierarchical order—to broader settings that necessarily extracted resources from the family or the village. And there was conflict focused on specifying the exact locus of vertical networks and the mutual obligations of lower and higher echelons. The overt ideology of such obligations tended to stress mutual harmony and benevolence—themes that became predominant with the infusion of Neo-Confucian orientations into Japanese thought; yet many acute dissensions often arose.

It was only natural that in any period of great social change or upheaval there were attempts to change some of the basic premises of the Japanese system, and various other themes—usually some combination of the communal-egalitarian ones—together with potentially more universalistic orientations, challenged the bases of vertical hierarchy. Such developments could be seen in many of the peasant rebellions, both under the Tokugawa as well as in the early Meiji periods and in many popular uprisings during the early Meiji period. At the same time, numerous intellectuals attempted to undermine the “Emperor system” and establish some variety of liberal democracy.

The most important of such changes occurred immediately after the Second World War when, under the impact of defeat and the American occupation, the old premises lost some of their legitimacy and new directions of organizing social and political life opened up.

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<sup>27</sup> T. Najita and J.V. Koschmann, (eds.), *Conflict in Modern Japanese History*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982; E.S. Krauss, T.P. Rohlen and P.G. Steinhoff, (eds.), *Conflict in Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984; F.K. Upham, *Law and Social Change in Postwar Japan*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957.

A major upsurge of new forms of political and industrial organization took place, and the socialist party emerged as a strong and potentially innovative force.<sup>28</sup> It was also in this period that, in the public sector, a relatively strong connection between socialist politicians and intellectuals and working class organizations led to fairly pronounced class consciousness and the connection of class symbolism with industrial and political activities. But, as indicated, these attempts rarely had any lasting effect in restructuring the basic status arrangements. In almost all situations the ruling elites were ultimately able to restructure social networks according to the predominant mode and premises, even if the actual contours of such restructuring changed greatly.

The resolution of such conflicts tended to re-establish some of the vertical hierarchical principles, even if in different organizational or institutional configurations, and sometimes even with different ideological underpinnings. Horizontal or egalitarian, solidary-communitarian orientations—often imbued with millenarian but not utopian themes—were more evident in peasant rebellions.<sup>29</sup> They constituted part of the reservoirs of cultural themes in Japanese society and served as important components of collective action; but they were not effective in changing the basic premises of the center.<sup>30</sup>

Though many such conflicts and movements were organized by apparently independent individuals, they could rarely establish their positions effectively without acting in accordance with principles.

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<sup>28</sup> See G.O. Totten, *The Social Democratic Movement in Prewar Japan*, op. cit.; J.A.A. Stockwin, op. cit., pp. 148–9; R.J. Hrebenar, *The Japanese Party System—From One Party Rule to Coalition Government*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1986.

<sup>29</sup> I. Scheiner, “Benevolent Lords and Honorable Peasants . . .,” in T. Najita and I. Scheiner (eds.), *Japanese Thought in the Tokugawa Period*, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978; A. Walthall, *Social Protest and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Japan*, Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1986; W.M. Kelly, *Deference and Defiance in 19th Century Japan*, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985.

<sup>30</sup> T. Najita, *Japan: The Intellectual Foundation of Modern Japanese Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974; M.B. Jansen, “The Presidential Address: Monarchy and Modernization in Japan”, in *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 6, pp. 11–22; C. Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths—Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985; H. Atsuto, “The State and Ideology to Meiji Japan—A Review Article”, in *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1, Feb. 1987, pp. 89–104; N. Michin and M. Urruita, (eds.), *Meiji Ishin: Restoration and Revolution*, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1986; R.E. Ward, (ed.), *Political Development in Modern Japan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, esp. Chaps. i–iv. See also S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies*, New York: The Free Press, 1978.



Even the more horizontal communal orientations tended towards a certain populist, communitarian, ideological participation, and less towards a horizontal class or sector identity based on autonomous access to the major attributes of status and to the center.

Such orientations, premises and processes of control, modes of definition and resolution of conflicts also shaped the political premises of modern Japan after the Meiji restoration. The structure and ideology of the Meiji restoration—especially those characteristics that distinguished it from the other great revolutions, such as the lack of universalistic and missionary orientations, of utopian vision and weakness of autonomous cultural elites in the revolutionary process—highlights the nature of some of these differences.<sup>31</sup>

One of the most interesting aspects of the modern political regime was the transposition into its new institutional framework of the “older” conceptions of vertical hierarchy with their institutional repercussions. Obviously both the actual structure of many of the strata, occupational groups, or social organizations, as well as their composition, changed greatly. Later, after the Second World War, full-fledged democratic principles were incorporated into the new constitution. Yet all these have so far not obliterated the continued predominance of vertical hierarchy and group loyalty. Rather, they have transposed their premises into new institutional loci—industrial companies, military or party cliques, and the like.

One central aspect of this transposition was the mode of incorporation of the demands of various groups and networks—new and old—into the center, entirely different from that in Europe and the United States. Of special interest, from our point of view, of course, are those connected with industrial problems and conflicts.

Incorporation was characterized by the selective cooptation by the center of such groups and their demands, and their articulation

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<sup>31</sup> On the outcome of the Meiji Restoration see P. Akamatsu, *Meiji 1868*, New York: Harper & Row, 1972; H. Norman, *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State*. New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940; R.A. Scalapino, “Japan between Traditionalism and Democracy”, in S. Neumann, (ed.), *Modern Political Parties*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965, pp. 305–353; R. Ward (ed.), *Political Development in Modern Japan*, op. cit.; and W.W. Lockwood, (ed.), *The State and Economic Entrepreneurs in Japan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965. See also: M. Maruyama, *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1964; D.M. Earl, *Emperor and Nation in Japan: Political Thinkers of the Tokugawa Period*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964.

mostly through channels controlled by the center, effected by activating various vertical-hierarchical ties and appropriate “contextual” orientations. Even if such ties became more and more dispersed and diversified, the basic vertical-hierarchical orientations to the center and within the society continued to predominate.

More principled or ideological demands were rarely politically effective. They often remained at the purely “symbolic” level, and even then rarely led to the restructuring of the premises of the center—the sort of challenge that characterized European politically class-conscious movements in general and socialist ones in particular. Moreover, demands were often couched in highly moralistic terms based, not on universalistic premises of autonomous individual access to the center, but on the ideology of communal solidarity and harmony.

The ability of the elites in the past to perform such restructuring is of special interest because, contrary to earlier periods in Japanese history, they had fewer coercive means at their disposal—though even in the earlier periods such means did not constitute the major element in restructuring. The crucial elements of these processes were the restructuring of markets and status hierarchy (evident, for instance, in the clear line of promotion within departments of industries or firms); the cooptation of different echelons onto higher ranks of the vertical hierarchies; the relative dissociation between status and wealth; and the strong mobilization of motivation, commitment and group loyalties—effected through education, socialization, and communication. The same elements were also of crucial importance earlier, such as during the Tokugawa period or the 1930s, when coercion played an important part in reconstruction. But even then coercive measures were in most cases connected with these other elements, and therefore on the whole milder than in many other locations.

Thus, although ruling elements attempted to suppress all opposition movements, socialist ones in particular, in all modern societies, the nature and effects of suppression differed greatly from one society to another. In Japan, suppression was always accompanied, even if to a differing extent, in different periods by the tendency to leave some living space to the loser, expressing group commitments and the moralistic themes of overall group harmony.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> B. Shiloni, “Victory Without Vanquished—The Historical Record of Conflict

The same patterns, with fewer coercive elements, were evident in the restructuring of Japanese society from the mid-1950s and had a significant impact on the development of the Socialist party in Japan. The ideological and organizational factors that characterized socialist movements—above all the continuous factionalism and the vertical hierarchical relation to predominant factions, yet without the flexibility of such relations typical of other parts of Japanese society—were closely connected with the modes of control of the central elites. They also explain the weakness and idiosyncrasies of the socialist movement and its impact on the center and the political process by comparison with its European counterparts. They explain why this party, which has become the major parliamentary opposition, was never able to attain power, or even—with the exception of a very short period in the late 1940s—join the ruling coalition.<sup>33</sup>

Thus the situation in Japan is the opposite of that in the United States. In the latter, the absence of the hierarchical dimension in the basic premises of the civilization and in access to the center at least partially explains the weakness of socialist movements. In Japan, their weakness is to be explained in opposite terms: the relative predominance of hierarchy, vertical-hierarchical conceptions, the concomitant weakness of egalitarianism in the political realm—even in the democratic state—and the fact that even such conceptions were couched in terms of vertical relations and group solidarities, group harmony and the concomitant predominance of strong vertical status orientations.

## PART VIII

Let us now draw some conclusions from our analysis of convergence in modern industrial societies. Our starting point is the obvious fact that in many central aspects of their institutional structure—be it in occupational and industrial structure, in that of education or of cities—very strong convergences have developed in modern societies

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Resolution in Japan”, to be published in S.N. Eisenstadt and E. Ben-Ari (eds.), *Modes of Conflict Resolution in Japanese Society*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul (forthcoming); E.K. Tystron, *The Civil Police in the Suppression of the Prewar Japanese Left*, dissertation at the Department of History, Indiana University, 1972 (University Microfilms).

<sup>33</sup> J.A.A. Stockwin, op. cit.

which have indeed generated common problems such as those of urban, industrial and educational development, or of political organization. But at the same time modes of coping with these problems differed greatly, to no small degree attributable to traditions—especially basic premises—crystallized and continuously reconstructed in these civilizations and to their distinct historical experiences. Thus the symbolic and institutional modes of coping with the common problems of modern societies, their symbolic and institutional formations, were shaped first by the basic premises and the perception of the relation between the cosmic and social orders; by the conception of social and political order, of hierarchy and equality and further by the structure of their predominant elites, as the carriers and articulators of these perceptions and visions; third by the modes of control exercised by these elites, and of protests as articulated by counter-elites.

The structure of elites is closely related to the basic cultural orientations and premises prevalent in a society; in other words, different elites are carriers of different orientations. Especially important are those relating to (1) the structure of authority and its accountability; (2) the conceptions of justice; (3) the structure of power and political struggles; (4) the principles of social hierarchization; (5) the definition of the scope-of-membership of different communities.

Cultural orientations, moreover tend to exercise different modes of control over the production and allocation of basic resources. This control is effected by a combination of organizational and coercive measures, together with structuring the cognitive maps of the social order and the major reference orientations of social groups. It is the coalitions of elites and their modes of control that shape the major characteristics and boundaries of social systems in which they construct the political, economic, social stratification, class formation, and overall macro-societal systems. Modes shape the control aspects of institutional structure in societies and give rise to processes of change and protest and patterns of institutional dynamics specific to each.

These considerations bring us back to the reappraisal of the vision of modern society and of modernization. Such a reappraisal is based first of all on the recognition that the spread of modernity has to be viewed as the crystallization of a new type of civilization—not unlike the spread of Great Religions, or great imperial expansions in past times. But because the expansion of this civilization com-

bined economic, political and ideological aspects and forces, its impact was much more intense than in most historical cases.

Further the expansion of all historical civilizations, in particular the civilization of modernity, undermined the symbolic and institutional premises of the societies incorporated into it, calling for them to respond and open up new options and possibilities. But while modernity has spread to most of the world, it did not give rise to a single civilization and one pattern of ideological and institutional response, but to several, or at least to many basic variants, which are constantly generating their own closely related but not identical dynamics.

A great variety of modern or modernizing societies, sharing many common characteristics but also evincing great differences, grew out of these responses. Each modern or modernizing and developing society, crystallized out of a selective incorporation (and hence also recrystallization and transformation) of the major symbolic premises and institutional formations of the original "Western" civilization, opened up new options before various groups within it. This generated far-reaching processes of change of which a crucial point was the selection of various symbolic and institutional aspects of the original civilization of modernity and the concomitant restructuring of its own symbolic and institutional formations.

This approach entails a far-reaching reformulation of the vision of modernization, of modern civilization. Instead of looking at modernization or modernity as the ultimate culmination in the evolution of all known societies, which brings out their common evolutionary potential and of which the European experience was the most important and succinct manifestation and paradigm, modernity has rather to be viewed as one specific type of civilization, which originated in Europe and has spread all its economic, political and ideological aspects throughout the world, encompassing almost all of it after the Second World War.

The expansion of this civilization and of the emergence of the manifold economic, political, ideological, international systems has given rise to the convergence of the central aspects of their institutional structures—to the emergence of common institutional problems—but also to different institutional modes of coping with these problems.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

# CONSTRUCTION OF TRUST, COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND THE FRAGILITY AND CONTINUITY OF DEMOCRATIC REGIMES

### I. TRUST AND INSTITUTION BUILDING: THE PROBLEM OF GENERALIZABILITY OF TRUST

The purpose of this paper is to explore some of the relations between the construction of trust, collective identity and the development and continuity of modern democratic-constitutional regimes.

The place of trust in the processes of institution building and institutional dynamics has, of course, been the basic thrust of Durkheim's emphasis on the importance of precontractual elements for the fulfillment of contracts seemingly dealing with purely "utilitarian" considerations.<sup>1</sup> But this crucial insight—and problematic—has not been systematically followed up in the social science literature. Only lately it has been again taken up—initially, perhaps paradoxically—from within various rational choice approaches which have come to recognize that continuity of patterns of social interaction and of institutional frameworks cannot be explained by purely rational-utilitarian considerations.<sup>2</sup> At the same time the more recent analyses have also pointed to some of the complexities, paradoxes and problems of the construction of trust in social interaction and institution building.

## II

The most basic of these paradoxes is that while trust does indeed constitute a precondition for the continuity of any long-range social

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<sup>1</sup> T. Fukuda review of E. Durkheim, "Die gesellschaftliche und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in Japan", *L'annee sociologique*, 5 (1900–1901): 342–47.

<sup>2</sup> V. Braithwaite and M. Levi, eds., *Trust and Governance*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1998; R. Kramer and T. Tyler, *Trust in Organizations. Frontiers of Theory and Research*, London, Sage Publications, 1993.

interactions, at the same time it is not naturally given but continually constructed and reconstructed—and hence also potentially fragile.

By trust I mean, following Claus Offe:

... Trust is the *belief* that others will do certain things or refrain from doing certain things. The truster knows that the action of the trusted others will have consequences for his own welfare, and that for this reason there is a *risk* involved in trusting. Trust is a reflectively fallible *ex ante* guess. It follows the logic: 'I know it *can* happen, yet I believe it *won't happen*,' with 'it' being some undesired event caused by the trusted.

The dynamics of trust-building can be represented on the time axis. Trust, once its necessary and sufficient conditions are met, is a steady state capable of reproducing itself. What is associated with this steady state is a perception of predictability, consistency, robustness concerning the behavior of relevant others. . . . He should always remain faithful to shared beliefs and values and performed competently will continue to do so in the future—at least in the absence of irritating events and perceptions that lead the actor to reconsider whom to trust, to what extent to trust, and in what respects. In the absence of such irritating events, a trust relation is self-enforcing. . . .<sup>3</sup>

But trust is inherently fragile. It is fragile first of all because it entails a strong element of uncertainty, of risk. This risk results, to follow Margaret Levi,

from the fact that the truster is *unable to make sure* or *know for certain* that the other person(s) will actually act in the way preferred by the truster. The means by which he might be able to make this sure—coercive *power*, economic resources to be employed as *incentives*, and certain *knowledge* derived from direct observation or tested causal theories—are not at the disposal of the truster.<sup>4</sup>

### III

The fragility of trust is exacerbated in any broader institutional setting by the fact that the conditions that make for maintenance of trust are seemingly best met in relatively limited ranges of social

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<sup>3</sup> Claus Offe, "Trust and Knowledge, Rules and Decisions: Exploring a Difficult Conceptual Terrain", Draft Paper prepared for the Conference "Democracy and Trust", Georgetown University, Washington DC. November 7–9, 1996, pp. 3–4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.



activities or interaction, such as in family, kinship, or small territorial groups in which social interaction is regulated according to primordial and/or particularistic criteria. Such limited ranges of interaction seem to constitute the necessary minimal conditions for the initial development of trust, even if they may not be enough to guarantee its continuity even in such settings. At the same time, however, these very conditions may be inimical to the development of resources and activities needed for the development and institutionalization of broader institutional complexes. The very processes that generate resources necessary for the construction of such broader, institutional settings also tend to undermine the potential trust as it tends to develop within the family, kinship groups or in small communities—but at the same time such construction cannot be effective without strong components of trust being built into it.

The institutionalization of such broader institutional complexes is on the one hand dependent on the availability of “free” resources<sup>5</sup> which are not embedded in relatively closed and limited ascriptive settings. But unless the use of such resources is regulated in some way, their very development may create a situation of anarchy or of irregulated conflict—almost the original Hobbesian state of nature. Such regulation may of course be in principle effected by purely coercive means. But even if coercive elements constitute a crucial component in all such regulation—the effectiveness of purely coercive regulation for broader creative institution building is rather limited. Continual institution building, the crystallization and continuity and transformability of broader institutional complexes is to no small extent dependent on the interweaving of purely utilitarian considerations and coercive components with the establishment of broader frameworks of trust—i.e., on the effective extension of the range of trust, its symbols and the normative obligations they imply beyond the narrow minimal scope of primordial units. Such extension is found, for example, in the depiction of rulers as “fathers” of their countries. . . .<sup>6</sup>

Such extension entails the *generalizability* of trust beyond different “narrow,” particularistic settings. But such generalizability, connected

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<sup>5</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Political Systems of Empires*, New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1993.

<sup>6</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Power, Trust and Meaning*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1995.

as it is with the interweaving of trust in broader institutional settings with utilitarian considerations and with coercive components of regulation, necessarily generates contradictions and tensions with regard to the criteria of social interaction and of allocation of resources. Such contradictions and tensions arise first between criteria rooted in relatively small and particularistic settings and those derived from broader ones, and second between the criteria derived from such different—for instance religious or political collectivities—broader settings, each of which is borne by different social actors, especially by different elites and influentials and coalitions thereof.

#### IV

Such problems of extension of trust and its generalizability exist in all societies. They become especially visible in more complex or differentiated societies—in all of which there develop special social mechanisms which attempt to cope—albeit with different degrees of success—with these problems. But the nature of these problems and mechanisms differs greatly between different societies or types thereof. Thus for instance in the Axial civilizations ( ) in which there emerged autonomous elites which were crucial in the crystallization of distinct types of institutional formations which were not embedded in various ascriptive—family, kinship, and narrow territorial—settings, such as distinct civilizational or religious collectivities, as well as different types of autonomous centers distinct from their peripheries which were constructed according to some broad universalistic principles and the permeation by the center of the family units (and of the periphery in general) was to some extent at least legitimized in terms of universalistic principles. There developed a break in the transition from the various particularistic—family, local and the like—settings towards the broader ones, and potential confrontation between trust defined in various particularistic terms and the claims of various universalistic principles. The problem of how to interweave the primordial-particularistic orientations with universalistic ones constituted in all these civilizations a potential point of contention. The Confucian controversy over the relative priority of filial piety as against loyalty to one's lord is but one illustration of such potential confrontations which developed in all Axial civilizations. ( ) At the same time in all these societies there could also develop strong con-

testations between the bearers of different broader, especially universalistic principles—political, religious, and broader cultural ones. Such tensions involved in the extension of trust from the various relatively narrow to broader settings has been exacerbated in modern societies characterized by their great structural differentiation, of autonomous differentiated institutional systems and the core characteristics of the political process in modern societies—above all their openness. In all these societies and indeed above all in the modern ones there developed different regulative frameworks—such as legal and bureaucratic ones, as well as voluntary associations and public spheres not embedded in closed particularistic settings, structured according to some formal and rational universalistic principles, which attempted, with different degrees of success, to regulate or mediate between such contesting claims and which could uphold the continual construction of generalization of trust and of its flow.

The efficacy of such regulation is to no small extent dependent on these frameworks being legitimized not only in terms of their own internal formal rational criteria but also in the broader symbols of collective identity and solidarity, and the core symbols of the respective societies. It is only insofar as such legitimation is effected that trust rooted in various narrow, usual particularistic settings is successfully generalized and extended beyond them; and the rupture of the transition to broader settings, and to the institutional frameworks organized according to universalistic principles, is mitigated, and the flow of such generalized trust between different sectors of society and between them and the broader frameworks and central institutions of their respective societies is effected.

#### V. GENERALIZABILITY OF TRUST IN MODERN SOCIETIES AND THE OPENNESS OF THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL PROGRAM OF MODERNITY

Such legitimation is not however naturally given or assured in any society. In modern societies it is not assured, above all because the openness of the political process, of political game in modern societies—an openness which is (as we shall see later on) of special importance from the point of view of the viability and the potential fragility of modern democracies. Such openness is rooted in the ideological and institutional history of modern political formations, as well as in the cultural and political program of modernity.

This program entailed a very distinct shift in the conception of human agency, of its autonomy, and of its place in the flow of time as they crystallized in the cultural project of modernity. The modern project, the cultural program of modernity as it developed first in the West, in Western and Central Europe, entailing a very distinct shift in the conception of human agency, of its autonomy, and of its place in the flow of time, exacerbated the tensions between the constructive and destructive potentialities of the construction of social orders, highlighting the challenge of human autonomy and self-regulation and of consciousness thereof.<sup>7</sup> The program entailed a conception of future in which various possibilities which can be realized by autonomous human agency, or by the march of history are opened.

The central core of this cultural program has been most successfully formulated by Max Weber. To follow James D. Faubian'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 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. . . .<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The analyses of the cultural program of modernity and of the different historical experience of modernity, especially European societies, are based on S.N. Eisenstadt, *Paradoxes of Democracy: Fragility, Continuity and Change*, Baltimore, Maryland, The Woodrow Wilson Center Press and the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999; and idem, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, where full bibliographical references are given.

<sup>8</sup> James D. Faubian, *Modern Greek Lessons. A Primer in Historical Constructivism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 113–115.

It is because of the fact that all such responses leave the problematic intact, that the reflexivity which developed in the program of modernity went beyond that which crystallized in the Axial Civilizations.<sup>9</sup> This reflexivity focused not only on the possibility of different interpretations of the transcendental visions and basic ontological conceptions prevalent in a society or civilization, 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 multiplicity of such visions and patterns and of the possibility that such visions and conceptions can indeed be contested.

Concomitantly, closely related to such awareness and central to this cultural program were the emphasis on the autonomy of man; his or her—but in this, in its initial formulation, program certainly “his”—emancipation from the fetters of traditional political and cultural authority and the continuous expansion of the realm of personal and institutional freedom, of human activity, creativity and autonomy. Parallely, this program entailed a very strong emphasis on autonomous participation of members of society—in the construction of social and political order and its constitution; on autonomous access, indeed of all members of the society to these orders and their centers.

Out of the conjunctions of these different 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 program. The first such tendency was that the program as it crystallized above all in the Great Revolutions and later in a sort of mirror way in the romantic movements, 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 legitimacy of multiple individual and group goals and interests and of multiple interpretations of the common good.

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<sup>9</sup> On the Axial Age Civilizations, see S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics,” *European Journal of Sociology*, 23/2, 1982, pp. 294–314; idem, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial-Age Civilizations*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986.

## VI

The basic characteristics of the modern cultural program, the combination of open future with autonomy and of the belief in the possibility of active formation of society by conscious human activity, shaped also the premises of modern political order and of collective identities and boundaries—above all their openness. The core of the political program of modernity was the breakdown of traditional legitimation of the political order; the concomitant opening up of different possibilities of construction of such order and of contestation about the ways in which political order was to be constructed. It combined orientations of rebellion, protest, and intellectual antinomianism, together with strong orientations to center-formation and institution-building, giving rise to social movements, movements of protest as a continual component of the political process.<sup>10</sup>

It entailed the combination of the charismatization of the center or centers with the incorporation into them of themes and symbols of protest which became constituted in components of the modern transcendental visions as basic and legitimate components of the premises of these centers. Themes and symbols of protest—equality and freedom, justice and autonomy, solidarity and identity—became central components of the modern project of emancipation of man. It was indeed the incorporation of such themes of protest into the center which heralded the radical transformation of various sectarian utopian visions into central components of the political and cultural program.<sup>11</sup>

Parallely the construction of the boundaries of modern collectivities and collective identities was continually problematized in reflexive ways.<sup>12</sup> Collective identities and boundaries were not taken as given or as preordained by some transcendental vision and authority, or by perennial customs. They constituted foci not only of reflexivity

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<sup>10</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, *Paradoxes of Democracy*, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Eric Voegelin, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, edited by John H. Hallowell, Durham N.C., Duke University Press, 1975; A Seligman (ed.), *Order and Transcendence*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1989; and S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolution*, op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> See E. Shils, "Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties," in idem, ed., *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1975, pp. 111–126; see also S.N. Eisenstadt and B. Giesen, "The Construction of Collective Identity," *European Journal of Sociology*, Volume 36, No. 1, 1995, pp. 72–102.

but also of contestations and struggles, often couched in highly ideological terms, promulgated above all by different—above all national or nationalist—movements. Such contestations focused first on the relative importance of the basic components of collective identities—the civil, primordial and universalistic and transcendental “sacred” ones; and around the modes of their institutionalization. Second, such contestation focused on the extent of the connection between the construction of political boundaries defined more and more in territorial terms and those of the cultural collectivities; and third, on the relations between the territorial and/or particularistic components of these collectivities and broader, potential universalistic ones.

Out of the combination of the transformation of the conceptions and practice of accountability of rulers, of the incorporation of symbols and demands of protest into the central symbolic repertoire of society, and of the reconfirmation of the legitimacy of multiple interests, the continuous restructuring of center-periphery relations has become a central focus of political process and dynamics in modern societies. The various processes of structural change and dislocation which continually took place in modern societies as a result of economic changes, urbanization, changes in the process of communication, of the development of capitalism and of the new political formations have led in modern societies not only to the promulgation by different groups of various concrete grievances and demands, but also to a growing quest for participation in the broader social and political order and in the central arenas thereof, and for the incorporation of the peripheries in the centers of their respective societies.

One of the most important aspects of the development of these new center-periphery relations was the crystallization of relative widespread autonomous public sphere or spheres in which different sectors of the peripheries organized themselves in order to explore the possibilities to exert their influence on these matters and to gain a relatively autonomous ways of access to the center or centers.

It was this tendency to such continuous reconstruction of center—periphery relations that epitomized the fact that the program of political modernity combined orientations of rebellion, protest, and intellectual antinomianism, together with strong orientations to center-formation and institution-building, which came together in various social movements and in the public areas.

## VII. THE POLITICAL PROGRAM OF MODERNITY—PLURALISTIC VS. TOTALISTIC TENDENCIES

The programme and civilization of modernity as it developed first in the West was from its very beginning—as was the case with any great civilizational visions, as for instance those of the Axial civilizations—beset by internal antinomies and contradictions, giving rise to continual critical discourse 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 the most critical from the point of view of the development of different ideological and institutional patterns has been that between on the one hand absolutizing totalizing and on the other more pluralistic multifaceted visions and practices—between the view which accepts the existence of different values, commitments and rationalities as against the view which conflates such different values and rationalities in a totalistic way, with strong tendencies to their absolutization. This tension became manifest in the political arena with that 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 orientations which denied the legitimacy of such plurality of interests and of the conceptions of the common good and commitment to it.

One such totalistic form of ideology emphasized the primacy of a collectivity perceived as a distinct ontological entity based on common primordial and/or spiritual attributes—i.e., above all a national collectivity. The bearers of this totalistic views tended usually to emphasize strongly the human-individual and/or collective will as against that on reason and on the legitimacy of utilitarian goals; and the primacy of the aesthetic emotional dimension of human existence, very often promulgated in primordial terms.

The other such totalistic ideology has been the Jacobin one the historical roots of which go back to medieval eschatological and gnostic sources, the essence of which was the belief in the possibility of transforming society through mobilized participatory political action. The Jacobin orientations and ideologies promulgate the belief in the primacy of politics and in the ability of politics to reconstitute society. They have been manifest in a very strong emphasis on social and cultural activism, on the ability of man to reconstruct society



by political action according to some transcendental visions, with the very strong closely connected tendency to the absolutization of the major dimensions of human experience, as well as of the major components of collective identity. The pristine Jacobin orientations and movements have been characterized by a strong predisposition to develop not only a totalistic world view, but also to overarching all-encompassing totalitarian ideologies, which promulgate a total reconstitution of the social and political order, and which espouse a strong—even if not always often universalistic, missionary zeal. These orientations have become visible above all in the attempts to reconstruct the centers of their respective societies; in the almost total conflation of center and periphery, negating the existence of intermediary institutions and association of what has been often called civil society, conflating civil society with the overall community.

Parallel, and closely related, contradictions and tensions developed with respect to the construction of collective identities. These contradictions and tensions developed around the relative importance of the basic components thereof—the primordial, civil and universalistic ones; between the tendencies to absolutization of such dimensions and as against a more open or multifaceted approach to such construction; between the closely related tendencies to homogenization of social and cultural spaces and construction of more multiple spaces allowing for heterogeneous identities. These tensions were manifest above all in the contradictions between, on the one hand, tendencies to the absolutization of primordial and/or Jacobin universalistic components of collective identities as against a more open or multifaceted approach to such construction; between the closely related tendencies to homogenization of social and cultural spaces as against construction of more multiple spaces allowing for heterogeneous identities.

Whatever the differences between these collectivistic and absolutizing ideologies they all shared first deep suspicion of the open political process and institutions, especially of the representative institutions and of open public discussion, and second strong autocratic tendencies and tendencies to exclusion of others and to the demonization of those excluded.

The ubiquity of the contradiction between an encompassing, totalistic, potentially totalitarian vision, and/or a commitment to the pluralistic premises constituted an inherent element of all modern, including constitutional regimes and a basic component of the political dynamics of these regimes.

VIII. THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN MODERN SOCIETIES:  
PROTEST MOVEMENTS AND THE REDEFINITION OF THE  
SCOPE OF THE POLITICAL

The full significance of these tensions for the dynamics of modern regimes, above all as they bear on the fragility or continuity of constitutional-democratic regimes, can only be understood in terms of their conjunction with two characteristics of the openness of the political process that developed within these regimes—in particular, the continual interactions between centers and peripheries and the incorporation of protest symbols into the major symbols of modern regimes. These are (1) the generally high potential for the politicization of demands by various sectors of the society and of the conflicts between them (to a degree unparalleled in other regimes, with the possible but very partial exception of some of the city-states of antiquity); and (2) the continual struggle over the redefinition of the realm of the political. The tendency toward the former is manifest in the continual interweaving of struggles over the discrete interests of individuals and groups with those over the promulgation of different conceptions of the common will and collective identity or identities (Pizzorno 1994).

In close relation to such interweaving there developed in all modern regimes the strong tendency toward continually redefining the boundaries of the open political arena. The transition from the “laissez-faire” conception of the state—never, of course, fully implemented in reality—the post-Second World War Keynesian regulatory policies and the institutionalization of the welfare state is perhaps the best illustration of such redefinition, but it is only the tip of the iceberg (see Maier 1987; Przeworski 1985). In fact such changes have occurred in these societies throughout their histories. Drawing the boundaries of the political has in itself constituted—unlike in most other political regimes in the history of mankind—one of the major foci of open political contestation and struggle.

Such redefinitions of the political usually entailed attempts to reconstruct the conception of the common good, as the illustration of the welfare state attests. In turn, the revised notion of the common good usually necessitated a redefinition of the rights and entitlements of the members of the community to public distribution of private goods (especially entitlement to the access to public goods) and of the criteria for the construction of public space.

Demands for the reconstruction of the realm of the political could and often did bring out a wide range of tensions and conflicts. These included tensions between the different conceptions of democracy (particularly between the Jacobin and pluralistic components in the political program of modernity), confrontations between the autonomy of civil society and the power of the state, legitimation tensions between defenders of the rules of the constitutional game and proponents of some other, often “ultimate,” visions (couched in primordial and/or sacred terms), and differences between the “routine” and the “revolutionary” aspects of politics (Ackerman 1991; Eisenstadt 1996; Lasky 1970, 1976).

Of special importance in this context is the central place in the political process of social movements, in those which have often articulated the dichotomies, tensions, and themes of protest inherent in the program of modernity. Many of these movements constituted the transformation, in the modern setting, of the various heterodoxies of the Axial civilizations—especially those that sought to bring about by political action the realization and reconstruction of the Kingdom of God on Earth. Many of these movements epitomized the search for ways in which the concrete social and political order could become the embodiment of an ideal order, and that search constituted a central component, if certainly not the only one, of modern political discourse and process. These movements in modern societies were one of the main bearers, and perhaps *the* main bearer, of utopian visions. It is above all in such movements that the utopian dimension of modern political life has played out its relation to both modern political frameworks and political pluralism. This tendency was closely connected to the charismatization of the center as the major arena in which such visions could and should be implemented.

These continually changing movements developed side by side, constituting a central component of modern political and social dynamics and the discourse of modernity as it developed from the late eighteenth century on. However, because they promoted different visions of modern social and political order, they could also under some conditions come into intensive ideological and political conflict with one another, as was the case in the fierce ideological and political struggle between communist and fascist movements in the 1930s, or between communist and democratic ideologies during the Cold War.

These movements and their impact on the political dynamics of their respective societies developed against the institutional back-

ground of modern regimes in Europe and later beyond it. They arose above all in relation to the processes of industrialization, the development and expansion of capitalism, the construction of new modern political regimes, formations, and international systems, and the concomitant new types of collectivities—nations and nation states. Beyond Western Europe these movements arose in relation to the expansion of modernity throughout the world in its imperialist, economic, military, and ideological dimensions, and in the confrontation between Western hegemony and the Central and Eastern European, Asian, and African traditions and civilizations. All these institutional developments constituted not only the historical background of the crystallization of the cultural and political program of modernity, but also the arenas in which this program—with the antinomies, tensions, and contradictions inherent in it—was played out, institutionalized, and confronted with continually changing social developments. It was the tensions and contradictions between the basic premises of the cultural and political program of modernity, and between these premises and developments within the various national and international institutional arenas, that gave rise to the major social movements.

The major aim of one type of these movements was to reconstruct the centers of their respective societies.<sup>13</sup> Among such center-oriented movements were those that aimed to change the distribution of power and its bases within a given society. The most important of them in modern times were, first, those that aimed at the inclusion of wider strata into the central political framework (through the extension of suffrage); and, second, the socialist and communist movements that added the demand for the reconstruction of the patterns of the political economy. This latter goal was to be effected by reconstructing economic relations and abolishing the more hierarchical premises of their respective centers. A second type of movement

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<sup>13</sup> For general analysis of social movements, see Tarrow (1994), Pizzorno (1994), Bash (1995), Morris and Mueller (1992), Snowden (1953), Sorel (1961, 1975), Elliot (1968), Joll (1964). For the history of different movements in selected societies, see: Asian countries—Mathew (1986), Kesavanarayana (1976), Apter (1994), Bennett (1976), Koury (1970), Uyehara (1959); Latin America—LaGotz (1995), Assies (1992), Schneider (1995), Stokes (1995); Western Europe—Della Porta (1995), Sarkar (1993), Boggs (1986); Eastern Europe—Joppke (1995), Opp (1995), Brovkin (1994), Kostunica (1985); North America—Steigerwald (1995), Jackson (1992), Berry (1992), Reed (1992), Morgan (1991), Goldberg (1991).

aimed at reconstructing the boundaries of political collectivities—above all nationalistic or ethnic ones.

Lately, new types of social movements have become prominent and increasingly oriented toward the center.<sup>14</sup> These include women's movements and various minority movements, all demanding changes in the principles of access to and allocation of resources. Similarly, many fundamentalist and religious communal movements in the last decades of the twentieth century have become center-oriented and sometimes dominant. Such movements usually promulgate not only specific demands but combine them with broader, overarching visions, which often entailed strong Jacobin components.

Alongside such center-oriented movements there also developed religious reform movements, cooperative or syndicalist movements aimed at reorganizing aspects of life in different sectors of society, anarchist movements which opposed the state in principle, and popular movements which emphasized autonomous participation in the political process against bureaucratic or center domination. Many of these cultivated a total denial of the basic premise of modernity and its major institutional implications. Some of these movements superficially rejected orientation toward the center, including earlier religious-reformist movements, "syndicalist" movements and many postmodern movements (to which we shall refer in greater detail later). These tended to emphasize the construction of new spaces independent of the center, though in many cases impinging on it. In practice, most always involved some overlap between orientation toward the center and the construction of new spaces. The concrete themes promulgated by them would in later periods become transposed into center-oriented ones.

The ubiquity of these movements and demands for the reconstruction of the realm of the political and the concomitant challenge of the contradiction between an encompassing, totalistic, potentially totalitarian vision and a commitment to pluralistic premises was inherent in all modern regimes and a basic component of the political dynamics of the modern era. None of the modern constitutional and/or liberal democracies has entirely done away with—or can do away with—the Jacobin component, especially its utopian dimension.

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<sup>14</sup> On the "new social movements," see Aronowitz (1992), Karst (1993), Banks (1981), West and Blumberg (1990), Jelin (1990), Pizzorno (1994).

They cannot fully eliminate orientations toward some primordial or "sacred" religious components in collective identity, or the legitimization that such visions lend the political order.

## IX

The multiplicity and changeability of the issues of political struggle, the range of goals and the continuously changing boundaries of the political and the tendencies to politicization of social conflict experience—which constitute the clearest manifestation of the openness of political process and game in modern constitutional regimes—indicate that these regimes face a double ideological and institutional challenge.

The first challenge is not just to assure the adherence of the major political actors to the existing rules of the game, but also to preserve the capacity to incorporate protest into the center, to redefine the boundaries of the political, and, as a consequence, to transform the bases of legitimation of these regimes. Such reconstruction is manifest above all in the redefinition of the realm of the political, of the rights and entitlements of the members of the community, and of the scope of the distribution of private goods and access to them. This can develop in several often overlapping directions: first, through reconstructing or redefining the symbols of collective identity and centers; second, through redefining at least some of the premises and patterns of the legitimation of regimes; third, through promulgating and executing policies aimed at the redistribution of resources; and, fourth, through constructing social spaces in which different groups can develop distinct collective identities and patterns of social, cultural, or economic activity.

Thus the second challenge that modern constitutional-democratic regimes face is to create and maintain some common framework for themselves in which different views of the common good can compete without undermining the very working of the system. It poses the question of the nature of the common basis or bases for the acceptance of constitutional-democratic regimes—beyond adherence to the rules of the game—and the possibility that such a common element may perhaps exist in the very prevalence of multiple bases of legitimation, so long as none of them predominate.

It is the extent to which such differences can be resolved mainly

within the major institutional arenas of constitutional-democratic regimes and through changes within them that forms the major challenge to the continuity of these regimes. Indeed, it is the existence of this possibility that epitomizes the paradox of the transformability of these modern regimes. The crux of the matter lies in the fact that any such transformation entails some "meta-legitimation" beyond the (existing) rules of the game at the same time as it is effected within the framework of democratic-constitutional regimes.

#### X. THE CHALLENGE OF INCORPORATING PROTEST: THE NON-ZERO-SUM GAME CONCEPTION OF POLITICS AND THE STRUCTURING OF TRUST IN MODERN SOCIETIES

Thus, at least one of the crucial tests of modern regimes, especially constitutional-democratic ones, is their capacity to incorporate the themes and symbols of protest of different sectors of the population into their central frameworks—including attempts to reconstruct the *volonté générale*, or conception of the common will. It is through such incorporation that regimes may be transformed and their continuity maintained without giving up their constitutional frameworks and the basic premises of democracy.

But not all constitutional-democratic regimes have lived up to such challenges. Many, such as the United States during the Civil War and those of Central Europe in the 1930s, have floundered exactly because they were unable to cope with this process of incorporation. The key openness of the political process in these societies exacerbate the fact, pointed out some time ago by Przeworski (1986, 1989; see also O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986), that there exists in the very nature of political struggle in these regimes uncertainty about the outcome of any single political contest, any single election or dispute about the implementation of different policies. In other words, no contestants in the political game, no group of rulers or would-be rulers, can be sure of the outcome of a political contest. At best, they can only be sure of being given a second chance at the next stage of the political process. Such uncertainty is naturally reinforced by the challenge of incorporating themes and symbols of protest and demands for the redefinition of the realm of the political, which necessarily entails the redistribution of the resources and relative strengths of the different groups or sectors of the society and sharpens the

problem of why political actors should be willing to give up positions of power. Paradoxically, however, the very openness of the modern political game may give rise to such willingness.

In most regimes in the history of mankind, political struggle has usually been perceived as a more or less constant zero-sum game. Gains by any contender or groups of contenders at any given moment are balanced by the losses of others. The range of potential political goals in modern constitutional-democratic regimes, however, has expanded to a point where the very nature of the game may have changed. Of course, at any given period of time in any concrete democratic regime this range is not limitless; one can identify the major issues in the forefront of a political struggle and others that are suppressed or excluded. The most general limitation on the range of goals is the relation between capitalism and constitutional democracy. It has been one of the criticisms of constitutional-democratic regimes, voiced especially from the left, that these regimes have never been able to transcend the capitalist order. Others, mostly on the right (at least until lately), claimed that a market economy constitutes a condition *sine qua non* of constitutional democracies. Without entering here into this principled and complex debate, suffice it to point out that capitalist regimes of the late twentieth century obviously are far removed from those of the nineteenth or the early twentieth century. At the very least they were "tamed" or transformed in far-reaching ways under the impact of social movements (and particularly socialist movements) that have changed the range of political goals and the realm of the political in the society. Such changes epitomize the possibility of the continuous expansion of the range of this game and point out to the paradox of the relations between the openness of the political process in modern societies and the fragility and continuity of modern democratic regimes.

The crux of the paradox is that although the expansion of the range of the political game has introduced an entirely new dimension of uncertainty into the political game which may indeed exacerbate the fragility of these regimes, that expansion may also change the nature of the game by creating a *non-zero-sum* political game that may be perceived as such and that may thus decrease the possibility of total loss by any contender. The development of such a conception, which necessarily entails a strong orientation toward an open future, may encourage political actors to give up power according to the constitutional rules of the game. Although they may lose posi-



tions of power as new demands are incorporated and as the realm of the political is redefined, this flexibility may later permit them to regain those positions, implement their own visions and attain new goals.

Thus, where the conception of politics as a non-zero-sum game develops and takes root in a society, there tends to develop the capacity to incorporate symbols of protest and various demands—especially when they concern the reconstruction of the realm of the political. This increases the potential transformability of constitutional-democratic regimes and thus better equips them to overcome major challenges to their continuity.

## XI

The development and continuity of the conception of politics as a non-zero-sum game and the concomitant possibilities of incorporating protest are not automatically assured by the establishment of constitutional-democratic regimes and the promulgation of constitutions. It is dependent on the development of specific conditions, some of which were indeed abundantly analyzed in the rich research literature, devoted to the analysis of the conditions or preconditions of democracy. Special emphasis has been placed in this literature on (1) the distribution of resources and power in society, especially the continual possibility of different actors having enough resources with which to enter the political game and continue in it; (2) the relation between the major centers of social and economic power and the central political institutions and arenas; and (3) the closely related construction and “reproduction” of autonomous public spheres.

The most important variable within the first such set of conditions is the non-monopolization by any group or sector of the major resources and sources of power in the society—that is, the continued existence of a multiplicity of different centers of power potentially beyond the reach of political powers (whether absolutist, republican, or revolutionary communitarian) with potential access to the centers of their respective societies. The second, crucially important set of conditions for the continuity of constitutional-democratic regimes is the ongoing development of autonomous access for social groups to the central political arena or arenas—not only in the purely formal sense of suffrage but also in terms of the possibility of actual

participation and/or influence in them. This access requires the development and continual functioning of institutional arenas and organizations that serve as links between those sectors and the political arena. Of special importance in this context are autonomous public arenas that are embedded neither within the State nor in "fixed" ascriptive or corporate frameworks of any sectors of society. In order to assure their ongoing development, moreover, they cannot be controlled by the State, although those who act in them may have access to the State. The most important of these arenas have been the major frameworks of political representation and organization such as political parties and other types of political association, as well as the channels of communication and discourse in which politically relevant information continually flows.

The importance of these conditions of institutional arrangements for the continuity of constitutional-democratic regimes has indeed been analyzed in great detail, but their relation to the development and continuity of non-zero-sum conceptions of politics and hence also the conditions under which these arrangements develop and do not break down has not been systematically investigated. The missing link here is indeed that of the continual reconstruction of the networks of solidarity and trust between various sectors of the society and between them and the broader institutional arenas, as symbolized in its centers and institutions that is of crucial importance in this context. It is such reconstruction of networks that can assure the continual generalizability of trust in societies and the legitimation of the frameworks which regulate such generalizability.

Such reconstruction of networks of trust is however, in democratic regimes, very problematic. As Mark Warren has put it:

The paradox here is that the relationship between democracy and trust is complex: conflicts indicate that trust is absent and probably inappropriate, and yet any non-zero-sum way of addressing the conflict requires that (a) the conflict be contained by other relationships (and institutions) that include trust; and (b) the process of conflict resolution itself generates trust. In the absence of these possibilities, democracy is at best fragile. (Private correspondence)

Such possibilities are in turn dependent on several conditions among which of special importance are the mutual openness of elites, their relations to broader social strata, and the modes of construction of collective identities in modern societies.

We shall focus our analysis here on the last dimension, one which has not been however systematically explored in the literature, namely the construction of collective identities in modern societies—first of all in Europe—especially in its relation to the continuity of democratic regimes.

Of special importance in this connection has been in Europe the extent to which the primordial, the civil, and the sacred—where religious or secular—universalistic dimensions or components of collective identity became interwoven in different societies, and especially the extent to which none of these dimensions has been totally absolutized and set up by their respective carriers against the other dimensions. The most important aspect of the construction of collective boundaries and identities from the point of view of the continuity or breakdown of constitutional regimes in modern European societies has been the mode in which the modern universalistic or civic components of collective identity were combined not only with the older religious ones, but also with primordial ones as they became redefined and reconstituted in conjunction with processes of modernization in terms of nationality and/or ethnicity.

The various modes of constructing the boundaries of collectivities and the interrelation between different components of collective identity were in Europe closely related, as Lipset and Rokkan (1967; Rokkan 1975) have shown, to the way in which the great religious cleavages and battles of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and the relations among the national, civilizational, and religious collectivities were resolved.

One such mode of “resolution,” which crystallized in Germany,<sup>15</sup> the religious question (the divide between Catholics and Protestants, or between usually traditional religious groups and “secularists”) constituted a continuous focus of division and political struggle in relatively rigid and contested centers and among confrontational elites over the construction of the symbols of collective identity and the

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<sup>15</sup> References in the text below are only minimal. More can be found in the following sources: on France—Bien and Grew (1978), Thomson (1943), Lorwin (1954), Weber (1976), Hoffman (1962), Wohl (1966), Pitts (1963), Wright (1960), Luethy (1957); on Germany—Gillis (1971, 1978), Neumann (1956, 1962), Hamerow (1958, 1969), Craig (1955).

scope of autonomous spaces of religious groups in arenas such as education and marriage. The other mode of resolving the religious issue, which developed mostly in Counter-Reformation Catholic countries—especially Spain, Portugal, and the Italian states, and in a partial and convoluted way in Absolutist France—was characterized by the promulgation of the Catholic symbols and institutional frameworks as the exclusive ones of the national collectivity, and by a corresponding repression of religious minorities (see Grew 1963, 1978; Magnone 1961; Delzell 1965; Salvatorelli 1970; Beales 1971; Payne 1978; Linz; Derrick 1959).

Both these resolutions were in marked contrast to those which developed in the Protestant countries of Western Europe in which constitutional regimes were successfully institutionalized. Common to these was the *relative* or partial depoliticization of the religious cleavage, which entailed both the failure to implement the totalistic vision inherent in some of the extreme Protestant sects and the concomitant weakening of these totalistic orientations, and the strengthening of the more egalitarian and individualistic components that were strong in other Protestant groups.

The different resolutions to the religious conflict influenced the extent to which traditional religious and/or totalistic revolutionary orientations became sorts of monopolies—as preconditions for the construction of symbols of collective identity. The institutions that promoted them, such as the Church or particular political parties, were denied veto power over the construction of such collective boundaries. In the Protestant countries, neither the religious nor the revolutionary symbols or orientations became the foci of continuous contention with respect to the construction of the symbols of the collectivity, although, needless to say, tensions between them developed continuously. In such regimes these tensions were usually resolved within the framework of the newly crystallized states and modern constitutional institutions. In other words, the religious and revolutionary orientations or symbols tended to become interwoven with one another and with both the primordial and civil components of legitimation. As a consequence, the more totalistic and absolutist dimensions of these orientations weakened.

These modes of “resolution” of the religious conflict were indeed closely related to the patterns of collective identity that developed in the respective European countries. Thus the patterns that developed in England, Holland, Switzerland, and the Scandinavian countries

were characterized by the close interweaving of the primordial and religious components with the civil and universalistic ones, without the former being denied. This allowed a relatively wide scope for pluralistic arrangements (see Graubard 1986; Kuhnle 1975; Rothstein 1996; Rustow 1956; Thomas 1978; Thompson 1968, Thomson 1943, 1960; Geyl 1958; Beloff 1954; Daalder 1971; Bergier 1974; Lehmbruch 1972; Lorwin 1971; Steiner 1974). In these countries there developed a relatively successful, if never bereft of tension, interweaving of primordial and territorial statist conceptions and symbols of collective identity, together with the development of strong centers within which representative institutions played an important part. The various elites and carriers of these conceptions were incorporated into the basic constitutional structure and played by its rules.

As against situations in these societies, in those societies (as was the case in Central Europe, above all in Germany and in most countries of Southern and Central Europe) in which the construction of the collective identities of the modern nation-state was connected with continual confrontations between the primordial and the civil and universalistic, and as well as between "traditional" religious and modern universalistic components, there developed a stronger tendency to crises and breakdowns of different types of constitutional arrangements. The tension between the bearers of primordial and universalistic components of collective identities gave rise to movements that emphasized the centrality and absolutization of one or the other orientation. The primordial components took hold in the more "traditional" authoritarian regimes and in the totalitarian fascist or national-socialist movements in strong racist terms, whereas absolutized universalistic orientations were spread by various "leftist" Jacobin movements.

France constitutes a very important—probably the most important—illustration of the problems arising out of continual confrontations between Jacobin and traditional components in the legitimation of modern regimes—even within the framework of relatively continuous polity and collective identity and boundaries. The case of France illustrates that under such conditions, pluralistic tendencies and arrangements do not develop easily, giving rise to the consequent turbulence of the institutionalization of a continual constitutional democratic regime.

## XIII

The construction of different modes of collective identity has indeed been connected in Europe—and beyond Europe—with specific institutional conditions mentioned above, mainly with the flexibility of the centers, the mutual openness of elites, and their relations to broader social strata. There developed in Europe, and later in other societies, a close elective affinity between the absolutizing types of collective identity and various types of absolutist regimes and rigid centers, and between the multifaceted pattern of collective identity in which the primordial, civil, and sacred components were continually interwoven with the development of relatively open and flexible centers and of mutual openings between various strata. It was the concomitant development of relatively strong but flexible and open centers, multifaceted modes of collective identity, and autonomous access of major strata to the center that provided the framework for the development and continuity of a distinct type of civil society, mainly a society that was to a large extent autonomous *from* the state but at the same time autonomous *in* the state and had an autonomous access to the state and participated in formulating the rules of the political game; and in the political arena. It was within this type that there could take place a continual reconstruction of networks of trust which facilitated the transformability or breakdown of modern, especially constitutional, later constitutional-democratic regimes.

Such civil society facilitated the continual reconstruction of the network of solidarity and trust generated between various sectors of the society and between them and the broader institutional arenas, as symbolized in its centers and institutions, and in turn was reinforced by such continual reconstruction. It is such continual reconstruction of such networks that can assure the continual extension and generalizability of trust in societies and the legitimation of the frameworks which regulate such extension.

Some recent analyses of the breakdown of the Weimar republic are of great importance from the point of view of the difference in the mode of extension of trust and construction of civil society between those societies in which constitutional-democratic regimes broke down and those in which they did not. The major upshot of these new analyses of the breakdown of the Weimar republic as against the older theories which stressed the depolitization and pauperization of the middle classes and consequent development of a shapeless mass-

society, has been that it was not necessarily the absence of civil society or just a weak development thereof, (Ertman) but rather the dissociation between different organized sectors and between them and the center; their basic attitudes to the center and the lack of mutual trust between them, the weakness of the interlinking arenas, and between them and the center, that have been of crucial importance.

In the European experience a central aspect of the development of such linkages among different sectors of society and between them and the center has been, as Thomas Ertman has shown, the relation between political parties and associational life. To quote him:

What this literature, both old and new, seems to imply is that political change and the character of civil society in late-nineteenth-century Europe interacted with one another to produce the distinctive patterns in the relationship between political parties and associational life that underlay divergent interwar outcomes. More concretely, where parties and party competition stood at the center of political life before 1914 and the associational landscape was well developed (Britain, France, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands), the two came to reinforce each other in such a way as to further democratization and increase the durability of the resulting democratic regimes after 1918. Conversely, where the associational landscape was well developed but parties and party competition were not central to political life (Germany and Italy), conservative political forces were fragmented and only weakly tied to bourgeois and agrarian associational networks. This situation created conditions favorable to the sudden success of far-right movements of agrarian and bourgeois defense under the crisis conditions of the interwar period.

The opposite situation, where associational life before 1914 was weak but party government strong (Spain and Portugal), tended to reinforce patron-client networks and the cacique politics associated with them. When more modern right-wing parties emerged after 1918 in response to left-wing parties firmly rooted in associational subcultures, they remained weak and divided among themselves, leading their supporters to seek military assistance to counter the threat from the left. Finally, moving beyond the borders of Western Europe, Russia possessed neither party-centered politics nor an extensively developed associational landscape before 1914. The result there was a pattern of very weak parties and conspiratorial organizing that helped make possible the Bolshevik overthrow of the Kerensky government. Perhaps some additional historical detail will render the logic of this argument clearer. The second half of the nineteenth century saw a tremendous upsurge in Britain, France, Norway, Denmark and Sweden in the creation of and membership in voluntary organizations: trade unions, cooperatives, agricultural pressure groups, educational associations, temperance groups,

and dissenting sects in Britain and Scandinavia; trade unions, agriculture pressure groups, educational associations, reading circles, and Masonic lodges in France. Such organizations helped mobilize citizens, bind them to one another, and involve them in public affairs during a period of massive and disorienting social dislocation. At the same time, parties and party competition in all of these states came to assume central importance in political life. In Britain, France, and Norway this was a direct result of both full parliamentarization (executives responsible solely to a parliamentary majority) and expansion of suffrage; in Denmark and Sweden it was the result of suffrage expansion and an ongoing struggle over parliamentarization that pitted liberal and conservative forces within the national legislatures against one another.

In finding themselves confronted with diverse and well-organized civil societies, emergent parties in these countries sought to forge ties with associations and win over their members, but the resulting overlap between the associational and party landscapes was far from perfect. Thus, trade unionists in Britain were known to support, albeit in lesser numbers, the Conservatives as well as the Liberals and, later, Labour, and dissenters were known to support both the Liberals and Labour. In Scandinavia farmers split their votes among the Conservatives, the Liberals and, later the Agrarians; dissenters voted for the Liberals, Social Democrats, and Agrarians; and trade unionists voted for the Liberals and Social Democrats. Finally, in France members of associational groups could choose from at least two political groupings at every point across the political spectrum.

This lack of a one-to-one correspondence between associational groupings and political parties had a beneficial effect on the long-term political trajectory of these nations. On the one hand, it allowed individuals whose views may have differed on many other issues to organize reform campaigns that cut across party and class lines, as happened with the free trade, temperance, and suffrage issues in both Britain and Scandinavia. On the other hand, it forced the parties to remain pragmatic and flexible in their positions in order to win the support of a range of interest groups and react to new currents within civil society. . . .

#### XIV

It is thus the concomitant development of and continual feedback between “open” or multifaceted modes of collective identity, relatively strong but flexible centers, and of autonomous access of major strata to the center that has been crucial in the successful extension and generalizability of trust in modern societies and of its continual flow between sectors of society and between the centers thereof.



It is the assurance of such flow that is important for the development and continuity of the distribution of resources and power in society, especially the continual possibility of different actors having enough resources with which to enter the political game and continue in it; the autonomous relation between the major centers of social and economic power and the central political institutions and arenas; and the concomitant construction and "reproduction" of autonomous public spheres. It is also such continual feedback between these conditions that assures the continual development and continuity of specific types of relations between "state" and society, of some distinct components of civil society, especially of the development of relatively independent centers of power and sectors of social life—potentially beyond the reach of the political (whether absolutist, republican or revolutionary communitarian) powers, but at the same time with potential access to these centers—even if the structure of such sphere or spheres differs in different societies, and is also continually changing in any single society.

Concomitantly it is the prevalence of such public arenas and of a continual process of open flow of communication and information within and between them, and between them and the centers, above all through the combination of associational and political activities, which are crucially important in facilitating the autonomous access of major social sectors to the political arena and engage in a continual participation and their ability to call for some accountability of the rulers. It is also these conditions reinforced the internal solidarity of the major elites and their commitment to the political institutions—thus assuring some at least degree of their efficiency in this way there tended to develop in the political arena, so the combination of efficiency and legitimacy—a combination which has been so often stressed in the literature as important for the continuity of constitutional-democratic regimes.

Second, it is the continual interweaving of these conditions that influence the extent to which there develop in such regimes chances that at any junction of intensive social change, there will emerge a possibility of some recombination of the components of collective identity and of different bases of legitimation of the political regime without total confrontation between different sectors, and that some basic orientations to common collective identity or consciousness to a common "text" referred to by different sectors of the population, will continually develop.

It is such combination of these broad sets of conditions and feedback between them—especially the crystallization of a common “text” and the continual crystallization and continual reconstruction of public spheres and political organizations, together with the continual dispersion of centers of power and decoupling between power, wealth and prestige—that enhance the possibility of continual reinterpretation and reinforcement of the legitimation of the rules of the game in terms of some combination or interweaving of primordial and cultural or civil orientation without attempts to impose ideological homogeneity on all sectors of the society; and hence also of the continual reproduction of the meta-legitimation of the rules of the game of the constitutional democratic regimes.

## XV

The continual reconstruction of trust, the concomitant development of non-zero-sum conceptions of the political game, and the consequent transformability of the constitution-democratic regimes has been influenced in all societies by the combination of the various conditions referred to above. But the concrete modes of such interweaving and the concomitant pattern of development of generalized trust differ greatly in different societies.

The relative importance of these different conditions or conceptions of authority—for instance, the timing of the construction of political centers and different collectivities—may vary greatly in different societies and historical settings. Above all there may develop differences with respect to the relative importance of internal and external conditions in creating frameworks for these learning processes. Indeed, one of the most interesting experiences of the contemporary era, which in many ways repeats earlier historical experiences, is the strong impact of international settings (such as the pressure toward democratization) in creating the framework for these processes even in situations in which some of the internal conditions are relatively weak.

But the existence of such conditions does not in itself assure that there will develop among the respective actors such trust as is necessary for the continuity of their regimes. The constitution of this trust and its relation to the distribution of resources often emerges under the impact of different historical contingencies, especially in

the aftermath of relatively intense internal conflict and under the pressure of international events. The learning process during the development of the constitutional regimes in Europe, shown long ago in Rustow's (1970) analysis and lately in that by Burton, Gunther, and Highley (1992), was crucially important to the development of such trust.

The experience of European societies does also indicate that it is in the nature of the development and continuity of constitutional democratic regimes that the existence of favorable conditions to the functioning of these regimes at a certain period of time does not assure their continuity or reproduction.

True enough the successful institutionalization of a constitutional-democratic regime generates at least some continual reinforcement of such conditions, especially of the acceptance of the rules of the political game—yet in situations of change there may take place process which undermine such conditions. Indeed, the very nature of the continually changing conditions of the modern societies as well as the democratic-political process is that they such favorable initial conditions may indeed change. The erosion or breakdown of trust may take place, as we shall yet see in greater detail later on, not only through the impact of “broad” social or economic processes, but also from within the very political process itself which takes place in all modern regimes, which undermines the combination of efficiency and legitimacy which is at the core of these regimes and which is probably most viable in the democratic-constitutional regimes. Such possibility is inherent in the processes of selection of leadership, in the selection of those who are willing to enter the contest for political positions which are inherent in the constitutional-democratic regimes and states. Such selection may weave the combination of efficiency and legitimacy of the regime.

#### XVI. SOCIAL CHANGE, THE POLITICAL PROCESS, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF THE EROSION OF BOTH TRUST AND PUBLIC SPHERES IN CONSTITUTIONAL-DEMOCRATIC REGIMES; TENDENCIES TOWARD THE DECONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES

It is indeed in the nature of the continual development of constitutional-democratic regimes that the existence of favorable conditions for the functioning of these regimes, at given periods of time, does

not automatically assure their continuity or reproduction. True enough, the successful institutionalization of a constitutional-democratic regime generates at least some critical reinforcement of such conditions, especially as regards acceptance of the legitimation of the regime, trust in the rules of the political game, and a non-zero-sum conception of politics. Yet in any modern constitutional-democratic regime processes may take place that undermine such conditions. Indeed, the very fact that modern societies (and more particularly, the basic characteristics of the political process in constitutional-democratic regimes) are continually changing may undermine favorable initial conditions for the continual reconstruction of trust.

First, as modern regimes develop in continuously changing situations and as social, political and economic changes take place within them, the distribution of power within them may change, leading to the erosion of many existing centers of power. Moreover, it is often the case that the very policies initially intended to weaken existing semi-monopolistic centers of power—for instance, those connected with the welfare-state—could increase the power of the State in its various political and administrative organs to such an extent that they might obliterate many independent bases of power. The bureaucratization of the major arenas of social life, including the political, has created one such possibility, and the specter of such bureaucratization has haunted modern social discourse—as Tocqueville, Marx, and Weber attest. The force of this specter, of course, has been reinforced by the development of totalitarian regimes.

Yet another opportunity for such overconcentration of power relates to one of the central nerves of the democratic process: the production and distribution of information, access to information, and the growing professionalism and “technocratization” of knowledge and information relevant to the political process. The possibility that such knowledge will be presented by many experts and political leaders as beyond the ability of broader sectors of society to comprehend may, if accepted, lead to political apathy and withdrawal from political participation. Such developments may also undermine the balance within the political arena itself—especially between different branches of the government—and increase the power of the executive branch.

Second, the autonomy and distinctiveness of different elites, the center, and various public arenas may be undermined in situations of intense change. Autonomous sectors of civil society and public

arenas may erode and impediments to restructuring the relations between civil society and the State may develop out of attempts to redefine the boundaries of the political—as, for instance, in demands for the extension of suffrage. In such cases, tensions can arise between, on the one hand, adherence to the existing rules of the game and the balance between the State and civil society, and, on the other, the new demands of emerging social forces. Within all these sectors, old and new alike, there may develop tendencies to represent narrow corporate or ascriptive settings, weakening whatever initial acceptance of the existence of such sectors was present in the newly emerging common frameworks and centers.

In all such situations, those demanding such redefinition grow suspicious that the existing representative institutions do not serve the common good. Quite often the existing power-holders—often strong, semi-monopolistic, oligarchic groups—uphold a set of rights, especially those of property, which assures their standing against the emerging groups. The new contending groups tend to advocate the importance of different sets of rights against what seem to them to be the narrow interests of a small club, to which only members of the upper classes can *de jure* or *de facto* be admitted. Such accusations are, of course, leveled especially by leftist critics against liberal democratic regimes, and are epitomized by Anatole France's famous dictum that the beggar sleeping under the bridge has the same "equal" rights as the wealthy bourgeois. But at the same time the "older" groups tend to claim that they are the representatives of the common good against the "newcomers," who are accused of favoring only their narrow and egotistical—even if relatively widespread—interests and of seeking to use the representative institutions for their promotion.

The reconstruction of civil society, which takes place in such situations, entails almost by definition a confrontation between the basic conceptions of democracy—especially the constitutional and participatory ones—and, in a more general way, between the pluralistic and Jacobin orientations inherent in the modern program. All these possibilities epitomize the paradox of the transformability of modern constitutional regimes—the crux of which lies, as we have seen, in the fact that any such transformation entails some meta-legitimations beyond the (existing) rules of the game. At the same time, such transformation is effected within the framework of democratic-constitutional regimes through these very institutions.

These processes may give rise to partial regime changes in democratic regimes, as, for instance, the transition from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic in France. Such regime changes have taken place in many contemporary societies—in the United States, Israel, and India—and, in a less dramatic way, in Europe. The central aspects of this change are (1) the weakening of parties and representative institutions as against direct unmediated relations between political actions and different political actors; (2) the growth and importance of the media in the political process; and (3) the growing importance of the executive, with a possible increase in the power of the judicial system.

These changes are closely connected to the possibilities of partial regime change which I discussed above. The combination of these developments may also give rise, in more extreme cases, to the deconsolidation of many institutional and associational bases of constitutional-democratic regimes, to borrow Diamond's (1993a; Linz and Stepan 1996) felicitous expression. They can result in the weakening or erosion of the constitutional components that were central to the rule of law, such as freedom from interference by political authorities in the public and private system, and the like.

In many contemporary constitutional-democratic societies today, as Dahrendorf (1990) has pointed out, we witness such weakening or erosion of many of the frameworks and bases of civil society. This can be seen, perhaps, in the Latin American countries (Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens 1998) as a growth in the formal aspects and a weakening of the participatory aspects of democracy. Paradoxically this development takes place in historical situations in which the ideological—especially totalitarian fascist or communist—opponents of constitutional democracy have disappeared from the scene. The accumulation of such processes may give rise to distrust and apathy, all of which can produce an erosion of trust in central institutions or, at the other extreme, a turn to different extremist movements and the development of new directions of political activity.

It may well be that we are witnessing the emergence, in both constitutional-democratic regimes and in a great variety of semi-democratic authoritarian regimes throughout the world, of new patterns of political activity, closely related to far-reaching "cultural" changes and to shifts in the bases of legitimation of such regimes. But these developments, though they bear closely on the problems analyzed here, are beyond the scope of this essay.

## INTRODUCTION TO SECTION V-B: THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

The chapters in this section address some of the most important transformations in the institutional and cultural dimension of modernity on the contemporary scene—the common denominator of which is a far-reaching transformation of the “classical” model of the nation state and of the revolutionary state which were predominant in the earlier period. These transformations were attendant on several processes, namely—first, changes in the international systems and shifts of hegemonies within them—shifts in which the demise of the Soviet Union has played a crucial role; second, processes of internal ideological change in Western societies; third, the development of new processes of globalization; and fourth, of far-reaching processes of democratization, of the growing demands of new social sectors into the centers of their respective societies, as well as into international arenas—all of which have reduced the control of the nation state over its own economic and political affairs.

In the first chapter some of the general characteristics of these trends on the contemporary scene are presented. The second chapter addresses the problem of the extent to which the processes of contemporary intensive globalization have indeed created a homogeneous world—or have generated, contrary to the assumptions or predictions of the theories of convergence of industrial societies, as was also the case in the earlier periods of modernity, new patterns of multiple modernities.

The third chapter deals with a central aspect of the contemporary scene—namely, with the place of the religious dimensions in it, of its “move” as it were from the private sphere as was the case in the classical nation state, to the central political arenas; and the fourth chapter analyzes the basic characteristics of the new movements which promulgate this move—the fundamentalist and the religious communal ones. This analysis shows that contrary to many accepted views, these movements are not “traditional” ones, but very modern ones, albeit often promulgating strong anti-Enlightenment and anti-Western themes.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

# THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE—BEYOND THE HEGEMONY OF THE NATION AND REVOLUTIONARY STATE MODEL

### I

The multiple and divergent modernities of the “classical” age of modernity have crystallized during the nineteenth century and above all in the first six or seven decades of the twentieth century in the different territorial nation—and revolutionary states and social movements that have 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 under the impact of processes of structural and ideological changes first of all in Western societies, of far-reaching processes of democratization manifest in the growing demands of new social sectors into the central frameworks of their respective societies, as well as into international arenas; and of broader international forces often referred to as processes of globalization, giving rise to new visions of modernity and new modes of contestations around such visions.

### II

These developments have been closely connected first of all with far-reaching changes in many aspects of social structure that have been taking place in contemporary societies which have been sometimes designated as “post-modern.” Among the most important aspects of these developments have been first a weakening of the former relatively fixed, quite rigid, homogeneous definition of life patterns, and hence also of the boundaries of family, community, or of spatial and social organization. Second, there took place the development of a

strong tendency to the dissolution of most of the major roles from encompassing, society-wide, symbolic and institutional frameworks. Occupational, family, gender and residential roles have become more and more dissociated from “St@nde, class and party-political regional frameworks. Such various roles tend more and more to crystallize into continuously changing clusters, with relatively weak orientations to such broad frameworks in general, to the societal centers in particular.

Third, there has taken place a redefinition of many roles and role clusters, especially the occupational and citizenship roles. Thus, for instance, in the occupational sphere, there has developed, the growing inclusion of community or “service” components into purely professional and occupational activities. There tends also to develop a growing dissociation between high occupational strata and “conservative” political and social attitudes, creating generations of high executives with political and cultural “leftist views” and with orientation to participation in new “permissive enclaves” or subcultures. In the political sphere and in the definition of the citizenship role there have developed tendencies to the redefinition of boundaries of collectivities: to growing dissociation between political centers and the social and cultural collectivities, and to the development of new nuclei of cultural and social identity which transcend the existing political and cultural boundaries.

Fourth, one of the most important institutional changes connected with these tendencies has been the development of various semi-liminal structural enclaves within which new cultural orientations, new modes of search for meaning—often couched in transcendental terms—tend to be developed and upheld, partially as counter-cultures, partially as components of new cultural repertoires. These enclaves, in which some people may participate fully, others in a more transitory fashion, may serve in some situations as reservoirs of revolutionary activities and groups, but on the whole they tend to serve as loci or starting points of far-reaching changes in roles and cultural orientations and in the constitution of new social and cultural spaces.

The combinations of these structural changes with changes in the symbolic definition of different arenas of social life gave rise to a growing diversification of the process of strata formation, to the development of a very diversified criss-cross of political, sectorial and occupational formations and public values. Thus, instead of the situation characteristic of the “modern” and “industrial” society, in which

different strata had relatively separate cultural traditions and focused around some broad common political symbols, there has continuously developed greater dissociation among the occupational, cultural and political spheres of life. Different strata have no longer separate totally different "cultures" as before; they tend more and more to participate in common aspects, foci and arenas of culture in general, and mass culture in particular.

These developments have given rise to rather subtle and complex new patterns of status or class conflict and struggles; new types of status or "class" consciousness; and the weakening of any overall, especially "class" or "social" ideological orientations, in the crystallization of such consciousness. Concomitantly, a new and distinct type of status struggle has developed around the type of various welfare benefits distributed by the state. The major themes of "class" conflicts and struggles became focused around the state as a distributive, and to a smaller degree regulative agency. By its very nature, this struggle is occupationally dispersed with but little overall ideological political orientations.

While the concrete "economic" foci of such status or "class" struggles have become dispersed between the different types of demands of various occupational groups, the political and ideological expressions of status consciousness became less and less focused around such economic problems. They became more oriented around the center/periphery axis, and/or around the development of distinct styles and patterns of life. The distinction between "left" and "right" in general and the close relation between such distinction and the reconstruction of the center that was strong at least in Europe and Japan became weakened—and the political discourse became more and more set within a narrow range of issues, combined with a strong tendency to their de-ideologization, above all in their relation to the center. At the same time new types of social and economic cleavages developed as well; and from about the seventies there developed a new underclass composed of persons continually unemployed in the new age of technological globalization.

### III

These changes were intensified by the development, on the contemporary scene, of new forms of globalization manifest especially 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 nation states 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 Western, above all American, cultural programs or visions.<sup>1</sup>

Parallely there took place continuous shifts in the relative hegemony of different centers of modernity—first European and U.S. ones, moving to East Asian—shifts which became continually connected with concomitant growing contestations between such centers around their presumed hegemonic standing.<sup>2</sup>

All these developments gave rise to the promulgation of new visions of modernity. These new visions were promulgated above all by several types of new social movements and intellectuals which often developed from within the new enclaves analyzed above. Such “new” social movements, such as women’s and the ecological movements all closely related to or rooted in the student and anti-Vietnam war movements of the late sixties and seventies, developed first in most Western countries. They were indicative of a more general shift in many countries in the world, “capitalist” and communist (such as

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<sup>1</sup> On the “New Social Movements” see: S. Aronowitz, *The Politics of Identity: Class, Culture, Social Movements*, New York, Routledge, 1992; K. Karst, *Law’s Promise, Law’s Expression: Visions of Power in the Politics of Race, Gender and Religion*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993; O. Banks, *Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement*, Oxford, Martin Robertson and Company, 1981; G. West and R. Blumberg, eds., *Women and Social Protest*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1990; E. Jelin, ed., *Women and Social Change in Latin America*, Geneva, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1990; A. Pizzorno, *Le radici della politica assoluta*, Milano, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Editore, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.

China) alike from movements oriented to the state to more local ones. Second there developed, somewhat later, the fundamentalist movements which developed in Muslim, Protestant and Jewish communities, and the communal religious movements as those for instance in the Indian and Buddhist countries; and third, the various particularistic "ethnic" movements and identities. All these developments gathered momentum especially in the last two decades of the twentieth 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, the most important of such settings being new—especially the Muslim, Chinese and Indian diasporas, new types of ethnic minorities like for instance the Russian ones which emerged in many of the successor states of the Soviet Union.

All these developments were connected with growing processes of democratization throughout the world—in pluralistic and authoritarian regimes alike. They were all connected with the growing demands of broader sectors—for hitherto relatively greater participation or influence in the political frameworks of their respective centers or for the constitution of more autonomous social spaces.

The common denominator of many of these new movements and settings is that they do not see themselves as bound by the strong homogenizing cultural premises of the classical model of nation state—especially by the places allotted to them in the public spheres of such states. All these developments entailed the resurrection, or rather reconstitution, as it were, though in a highly reconstructed way, of hitherto "subdued" identities—ethnic, local, regional, and transnational—and their movement into the centers of their respective societies, as well as often also in the international arena or arenas.

They contested the hegemony of the older homogenizing programs, claiming their own autonomous places in central institutional arenas—be it in educational programs, in public communications and media and very often are making also far-reaching claims with respect to the redefinition of citizenship and of rights and entitlements connected with it.

It is not that they—the leaders and members of these movements and sectors—do not want to be "domiciled" in their respective countries. Indeed part of their struggle is to become so domiciled, but

on rather new—as compared to classical models of assimilation in the nation-state—terms. They aim to be recognized in the public spheres, in the constitution of civil society in relation to the state as culturally distinct groups promulgating their collective identities and not to be confined only to the private sphere.

In the spaces constructed by these movements the older homogenizing forces promulgated by the different nation or revolutionary states were contested—especially by the various new movements and minorities which claimed their own autonomous place in central institutional arenas—in educational programs, public communications and media outlets. They do indeed make claims—as can be seen among others in the recent debate about *laïcité* in France, for the re-construction both of new public spaces as well as the reconstruction of the symbols of collective identity promulgated in respective states.

But at the same time, while the identities which are promulgated in these movements and settings are often very local and particularistic, they tend also to be strongly transnational or transstate ones—often connected with broader civilizational or religious frameworks, often rooted in the great religions—Islam, Buddhism, and different branches of Christianity, but reconstructed in modern ways. In these settings and movements local dimensions were often brought together in new ways beyond the model of the classical nation state, with transnational ones such as for instance European Union; or with broad religious identities—many of them rooted in the great religions in Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism, or different branches of Christianity, but reformulated in new modern ways. Concomitantly there developed a continual process of decomposition of the relatively compact image of the styles of life, of construction of life worlds, of the image of “civilized man” which were connected with the promulgation of the original nation- and revolutionary state and program of modernity, as well as of different combinations, in different continually changing patterns, of many cultural themes and tropes brought together from different cultures around the world.<sup>3</sup>

These movements and sectors have also become active on the international scene. Many of the separatist, local or regional settings,

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<sup>3</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions. The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, op. cit.

as well as for instance the ecological movements, develop direct connections with transnational frameworks and organizations such as for instance the European Union. But it is above all the various religious, especially fundamentalist movements—Muslim, Protestant, Jewish—that have become very active on the international scene through very intensive networks which developed among them.

Indeed, one of the most visible developments from the point of view of the contemporary scene is, of course, what has been often called politicization of religion, most fully manifest in the various fundamentalist and religious communal movements. The central new development from the point of view of the place of the religious component or dimension was in the constitution of public spaces that this component which was in the classical model of the nation state delegated or confined to private or secondary spheres, has become transposed into the central political and cultural arenas and become an autonomous component in the constitution of these collective identities, while paradoxically enough at the same time there developed also on the contemporary scene, especially in Western and Central Europe—namely the seeming decline of religious institutions and adherence and a growing multiplicity of new “informal” types of religion. But such transposition and developments of various often intense types did not entail a simple return of some traditional forms of religion but rather a far-reaching reconstitution of the religious component.

All these developments attest to the weakening of “traditional” models of nation-states, above all to the decoupling of its basic components—citizenship, collective identities, and the construction of public spaces and modes of political participation.<sup>4</sup>

The contours and impact of these changes differ between different societies—even between European ones. These differences are influenced, inter alia, by the extent of the homogeneity in particular European countries, from highly homogenous as in France, to more multifaceted as in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands; by the place of religious symbols and traditions in the construction of nations’ identities; by different ways in which State-Church-religion relations have been worked out in these societies. These

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<sup>4</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, 1999, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolution: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*.

differences can be seen also in the ways in which such different minority groups are designated in different European societies, “strangers” in Germany, “racial minorities” in England, “immigrants” in France, “ethnic and cultural minorities” in the Netherlands, etc.

#### IV

All these processes reduced 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 nation states being able to control the continually recurring occurrences of such violence.<sup>5</sup>

All these developments do indeed indicate far-reaching changes or shifts from the model or models of modern nation- and revolutionary state. They attest to the decomposition of its major structural characteristics and the weakening of its ideological hegemony, and 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 program of modernity and collective identity, as the major regulator of the various secondary identities, became weakened, and new political and social and civilizational visions and visions of collective identity developed. Yet at the same time in these movements some of the most important tensions of modernity, especially those between pluralistic and totalistic tendencies, are articulated albeit in new transformed ways.

The movements bearing the new visions of modernity 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 these movements

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<sup>5</sup> This analysis is based on S.N. Eisenstadt, 2000, “The Reconstruction of Religious Arenas in the Framework of ‘Multiple Modernities,’” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29, pp. 591–611.



and sectors the basic tensions inherent in the modern program, especially those between the pluralistic and totalistic one, between utopian or more open and pragmatic attitudes, between multifaceted as against closed identities, as well as the relations to the West, and the perception of the relations between the West and modernity, are continually played out—but in new ways, in new terms the core of which are attempts of those movements and sectors. Within all of them the continuous tension between pluralistic and totalistic tendencies are continually played out.<sup>6</sup>

## V

All these changes constituted important transformations of the discourse of modernity with the different movements and sectors, attempting to appropriate and interpret modernity in their own terms 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. These movements have reconstituted in new ways the problematic of modernity in new historical contexts, in new arenas. First among these new ways is the worldwide reach and diffusion (especially through the various media) of such movements and of the confrontations they entail; second their politicization, their continual interweaving with fierce contestations formulated in highly political ideologies and terms; and third, a crucial component of these reinterpretations and appropriations of modernity is the continual reconstruction of collective identities in reference to the new global context and contestations between them. Such contestations may indeed be couched in “civilizational” terms—but these very terms are already couched in terms of the discourse of modernity, defined in totalistic and absolutizing terms derived from the basic premises of the discourse of modernity, even if it can often draw on older religious animosities. When such clashes or contestations are combined with political, military or economic struggles and conflicts they can indeed become very violent.

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<sup>6</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions. The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 1998; idem, *Post-Traditional Societies*, New York, 1974.

Fourth, the reconstructions of the various political and cultural visions and such collective identities on the contemporary scene entail a very important shift in this discourse with respect to the confrontation between the Western and non-Western civilization or religions or societies and the relations of these confrontations to the Western cultural program of modernity. As against the seeming, even if highly ambivalent, acceptance of these premises combined with their continual reinterpretation that was characteristic of the earlier reformist religious and national movements, most of the contemporary religious movements—including the fundamentalist and most communal religious movements—as well as the more general discourse of modernity which developed within these societies, promulgate a seeming negation of at least some of these premises. They promulgate a markedly confrontational attitude to the West, to what is conceived as Western, and attempts to appropriate modernity and the global system on their own non-Western, often anti-Western, terms—but formulated in the terms of the discourse of modernity. The confrontation with the West does not take with them the form of searching to become incorporated into the new hegemonic civilization on its own terms, but rather to appropriate the new international global scene and the modernity for themselves, for their traditions or “civilizations”—as they were continually promulgated and reconstructed under the impact of their continual encounter with the West. These movements attempted to completely dissociate Westernization from modernity and they denied the monopoly or hegemony of Western modernity, and the acceptance of the Western cultural program as the epitome of modernity. Significantly enough many of these themes are espoused also, even if naturally in different idioms, by many of the “post-modern” movements.

All these developments and trends constitute aspects of the continual reinterpretation, reconstruction of the cultural program 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, and of continual changes in the definitions of the realm of the political in the modern scene. At the same time they entail a shift of the major arenas of contestations and of crystallization of multiple modernities and modern political programs and of the construction of modern collective identities, from the arenas of the nation state to new arenas in which different movements and societies continually interact and cross each other.

## VI

The preceding discussion bears also on some central problems in the analysis of the contemporary scene from the point of view of interpretation of modernity, especially from the point of view of multiple modernities. As we have seen, this concept presumes that the best way to understand the contemporary world—indeed to explain the history of modernity is to see it as a story or continual construction and reconstruction of multiple cultural programs.

The preceding analysis points out to some possibilities of specification of the ideological and institutional implication of such multiple modernities—as against the assumption of total convergence between all modern societies. Modernization of different societies does indeed entail the development of many convergences between their patterns of industrialization, development of different economic interests, numerous encounters and the like. It is these convergences that generate the different types of “interests” of the components of *volonté des tous*.

But they do not necessarily converge with respect to the conception of *volonté générale*, and with respect to the changing conceptions of the common good. Here many differences between different societies or civilization may and indeed do develop. The differences in such conceptions are greatly influenced by combination of the cultural traditions and the changing basic premises and historical experience of these societies.

The historical and cultural traditions of these societies are indeed of great 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—civilizations in which even in their modern post-revolutionary permutations, the political arena has been perceived as the major arena of the implementation of the transcendental utopian visions—even in the modern era if such vision was couched in modern secular terms. As against this, the ideological reconstruction of the political center in a Jacobin mode, has been much weaker in 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 tend to develop also with them.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> But, as was indeed the case in Europe, all these “historical” or “civilizational” influences did not simply perpetuate the old “traditional” pattern of political institution or dynamics. In all of them both the broad, “inclusivist” universalisms of seemingly traditional and primordial “exclusivist” tendencies are constructed in typically modern ways, and continually articulate, in different concrete ways in different historical settings, the antinomies and contradictions of modernity, as do also the developments on the contemporary scene analyzed above which go, as we have seen, beyond the model of the nation or revolutionary state, already in a different vein.

Thus the processes of globalization that have been taking place in the contemporary scene do not entail either the “end of history”

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<sup>7</sup> Eisenstadt, S.N., 1999. *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>8</sup> Hansen, Thomas Blom. 1999. *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Kohli, Atul (ed.). 2001. *The Success of Indian Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Eisenstadt, S.N. 1996. *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative View*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

<sup>9</sup> Malia, Martin E. 1994. *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991*. New York: Free Press; Idem. 1999. *Russia Under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum*. Cambridge, MA: The Belnap Press of Harvard University; Schram, Stuart R. (ed.). 1987. *Foundations and Limits of State Power in China*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies; Woodside, Alexander. 1989. “History, Structure and Revolution in Vietnam”, *International Political Science Review*, 10, 2, April, pp. 143–158.

<sup>10</sup> Eisenstadt, S.N. 1987. *European Civilization in a Comparative Perspective*. Oslo: Norwegian University Press.

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 problematique of premodern Axial civilizations. Rather, all these developments and trends constitute aspects of the continual reinterpretation, reconstruction of the cultural program 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.

While the common starting point of many of these developments was indeed the cultural programme of modernity as it developed in the West, more recent developments gave rise to a multiplicity of cultural and social formations which go far beyond the very homogenizing and hegemonizing aspects of this original version. All these developments do indeed attest to continual development of multiple modernities, or of multiple interpretations of modernity—and above all to the de-Westernization of the decoupling of modernity from its “Western” pattern, of depriving, as it were, the West from monopoly of modernity. It is in this broad context that European or Western modernity or modernities have to be seen not as *the* only real modernity but as one of multiple modernities—even if of course it has played a special role not only in the origins of modernity but also in the continual expansion and reinterpretation of modernities—becomes fully highlighted. But at the same time these developments constitute illustrations of the different—constructive and destructive—potentialities inherent in the Axial, especially global Axialities as they unfold on the eve of the twenty-first century.

## VII

This emphasis on the essentially modern characteristics of all these movements and collective identities which go beyond the classical model of the territorial, national and/or revolutionary state does not necessarily entail an optimistic view. On the contrary—they emphasise

not only the fragility and changeability of different modernities but also the destructive forces which are inherent potentialities in the modern program, most fully manifest in the ideologization of violence, terror and wars. These destructive forces, the “traumas” of modernity which brought into question the great promises of modernity, emerged clearly after the First World War, became even more visible in the Second World War, in the Holocaust, even if they were paradoxically ignored or branched out from the discourse of modernity in the first two or three decades after the Second World War. Lately they have re-emerged again in a most frightening way on the contemporary scene, in the new “ethnic” conflict—in parts of the Balkans, especially in the former Yugoslavia, in many of the former republics of Soviet Russia, in Sri Lanka and in a most terrible way in African countries, such as Rwanda.<sup>11</sup> These are not outbursts of old “traditional” force—but outcomes of modern reconstruction and seemingly “traditional” forces in a modern way—just as the fundamentalist and religious communal movements developed within the framework of the processes of modernity and they cannot be fully understood except within this framework. Thus indeed modernity is, to paraphrase Leszek Kolakowski’s felicitous and sanguine expression—“on endless trial.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Tiryakian, E. 1997. “The Wild Cards of Modernity”, *Daedalus*, 126, 2, September, pp. 147–181.

<sup>12</sup> Kolakowski, L. 1990. *Modernity on Endless Trial*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

# GLOBALIZATION, CIVILIZATIONAL TRADITIONS AND MULTIPLE MODERNITIES

### THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE AND GLOBALIZATION

Most social scientists were not fully prepared for the current transitions and transformations, neither the more dramatic ones, such as the demise of the communist system, nor the more pedestrian ones in Western Europe. What do these transitions and transformations tell us about the nature of the contemporary world and contemporary societies? In particular, do they give any indication of the extent to which industrialized societies are likely to converge and a single modern civilization (with local variants) to develop?

This question has loomed very large over Development Studies ever since its beginnings in the late 1940s and 1950s. We all remember the famous theory of the convergence of industrial societies propounded in the early 1960s by Tinbergen and others. This is a propitious moment to look at these theories again. What do recent experiences and problems tell us about them and the nature of the contemporary international—or rather global—scene? I use the term “global” advisedly, because we now have a growing globalization of interrelations and influences that cannot be understood simply in terms of interactions between national societies and state apparatuses. At the same time, the growing diversity at local and regional levels and the emergence of many new problems, seemingly in contradiction to this impression, cannot be understood except in the context of this globalization.

### TRANSFORMATIONS IN EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPE

To elucidate these questions let us consider the transformations now taking place simultaneously in Western and Eastern Europe. The two processes seem to be going in almost opposite directions. On the one hand we see in Western Europe a slight movement in the direction of unification. This a peaceful movement, with relatively

little violence, although there is quite a lot of political struggle associated with the various steps towards unification. In Eastern Europe the trend seems to be the opposite, sometimes with very unpleasant and bloody manifestations of disintegration.

At the same time there are some similarities between the processes in Eastern and Western Europe. One of the similarities, of course, is that the economies of Eastern Europe are—seemingly—moving in the direction of so-called market economies, i.e. in the same direction as Western Europe (I shall return to the apparent nature of this trend later). This is only part of the truth, however: the full picture is much more complicated. Despite the movement of East and West in different directions (greater federalization in Western Europe, the breakdown of federalization in Eastern Europe), I believe they share some common roots, which are basically the roots of European Western modernity in its various guises.

In my opinion the communist regimes should not be considered as a sort of autocratic *ancien régime*. They were modern regimes, but of a special type. This has been my firm belief since long before the breakdown. I used to shock colleagues by telling them that the old Soviet Union was basically almost a democratic state. Did it not have a constitution and elections? When people started to laugh, I asked them the following question: Why were the czars not in favour of having a constitution or elections, and why did the Soviets institute both and then regulate and control them in a very brutal way? The answer, of course, is that the whole mode of legitimation was different. The legitimation of the Soviet regime was modern, the Jacobin mirror image, in a sense, of the legitimating arrangements in Western Europe. Jacobin elements existed in the West, of course, in different guises.

Another common factor in these regimes in both East and West was that they established, in different but not entirely contradictory ways, fairly clear boundaries for society and the state. These boundaries were opposite in many ways, but they were composed of similar components, albeit organized differently. What we see today, and this is a very important common element in the processes in both East and West, is that these boundaries, constructed in the nineteenth and especially the twentieth century, are now being radically transformed—seemingly, again, entirely differently in the West and the East.

The nation state, which was the epitome of these boundaries in



Western and Central Europe, is weakening; it is not disappearing. To talk of the disappearance of the nation state is an exaggeration. At the same time there is no doubt that the boundaries are changing quite radically. The same is true of the boundaries of the former communist regimes. First of all, the "communist empire", whatever we may call it, has changed. The internal boundaries, not only geographic but also political and social, are changing greatly.

The transformations in Eastern and Western Europe also share some interesting political, social and cultural characteristics. The first is the great change in the nature of the relations between state and society, particularly the disenchantment—I would almost say *Entzauberung* (i.e. the loss of its "magic" power)—with the political arena as the lever for the reconstruction of society. Common to the original projects of modernity, especially after the French Revolution, throughout Europe and then in the East, was the belief that society can be reconstructed by political belief, by political action, even by political utopias: different types of utopia, open and more closed, totalitarian or perhaps less totalitarian. This strong belief in the primacy of the political arena has now been weakened and retransformed in both the West and the East.

This does not mean that the political arena itself has become weaker. In terms of the resources available to it, it has strengthened significantly. With much greater leverage available to states it is almost impossible to do anything in the so-called market economies, even in Western Europe, without state intervention. On the other hand, the state, the political arena, the centre, has lost some of the charismatic qualities which were very strong in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. One very interesting indicator is attachment to the army. The most dramatic illustration I have seen in recent years is Switzerland. Apart from the post office and the railways, the army is the only all-Swiss institution, and the first two are obviously less important in forging Swiss society. A few years ago there was a referendum in Switzerland on the abolition of the army: thirty per cent of the population were in favour. In the same vein, soldiers are organizing themselves into trade unions in the Netherlands and elsewhere. Could we ever imagine the army of a proper nineteenth-century nation state permitting its soldiers to form trade unions, let alone an electorate voting it out of existence? The point is that the political centre has lost quite a lot of its charismatic power, not its administrative or financial power.

This can also be seen very clearly in the so-called new social movements (the ecological movement, the women's movement, regional movements), which are demanding resources from the centre. They no longer want to reconstruct the centre in a highly ideological way, rather, they want to move out of the centre to create new autonomous areas for society, with less central control. This weakening of the symbolic significance of the political arena, of the belief that politics can transform society by itself, is also very strong in the East, of course. Take, for example, the eminent Hungarian writer György Konrad, who was talking about leaving politics. Leaving politics is also politics, but a different kind. This, in my opinion, is something common to the developments in both Western and Eastern Europe.

Closely related to this is the growing emphasis on civil society. Civil society has even become something of a slogan which is not always easy to define. The emphasis itself, however, is important and indicative. It is again a symbolic flight from the primacy of the political arena. In Western and Eastern Europe we have had this very strong emphasis on civil society for perhaps no more than ten years. Civil society was scarcely mentioned as an analytical concept in social science discussions in the 1950s, 1960s or 1970s. Suddenly it has reappeared. This is, in my view, a very interesting indication of the diminishing position of the political arena, and it will also be seen to be very interesting when we come to compare Europe and India shortly.

Thus there are common elements in Eastern and Western Europe, common roots, and currently a common emphasis on civil society. There are more and more common contacts, increasing "Euro-globalization", to coin a phrase. The interchanges between different European countries, in both Western and Eastern Europe, are becoming ever closer at every level, economic, administrative, political and ideological. At the same time we see different paths of development in each. Both these observations refer to something much wider, to a worldwide convergence of industrial societies.

#### MULTIPLE PROGRAMMES OF MODERNITY

The current scene is one of growing globalization, and thus in many ways growing modernization, economically, politically and ideologically. It could be claimed that, with the exception of some areas

such as the Gulf states (certainly until a few years ago), all societies in the world are now, or will soon become, modern societies. It would be wrong to talk about India, say, as a sort of traditional society, even though it has many traditional pockets. Indeed, it would be wrong to talk about any contemporary society as a traditional one, even African societies with all their disintegration: in many cases they are disintegrating as modern societies.

What do we mean by “modern”? This question is now much less difficult to answer than forty years ago. I shall pass over the current—sometimes rather curious—debate about “modern” and “post-modern”, which seems to be a much more pressing concern than the modern/traditional polarity. The following criteria are crucial, in my view, in distinguishing between traditional and modern. To be modern a society must have a certain level of technology. Very important is the opening-up of a market economy as against a feudal or patrimonial type of economy. Politically or ideologically there has to be a very strong emphasis on some combination of equality and participation. I am certainly not talking about individualism: if we look at Japan or India, for instance, we find lots of participation of different kinds, lots of equality in some ways, but equality of different types from those grounded in the conception of the autonomous individual that dominates in the West. Finally, the legitimation of the regime lies in some sort of accountability to the population. These, in my view, are the minimum criteria for modernity.

At the same time all these modern societies differ greatly from one another. They are certainly not becoming all of a kind with minor local variations. What we are witnessing today, on a regional scale in Europe and also on a world scale, is the development of multiple modern societies or civilizations: or multiple cultural programmes of modernity, as I would prefer to call them. The term “cultural” is used not in a narrow sense, but with very far-reaching institutional implications: different conceptions of authority, institution-building and political economy. All these conceptions are basically modern, despite the differences between them.

This does not mean that their mutual relations are becoming more harmonious. The older literature on development and modernization very often implied that the more modern societies become, the more harmonious and cooperative their mutual relations will be. The real tension in that perspective was between traditional and modern, and the real struggle would thus be between these two. This is no

longer a generally shared view. There are now many different modern societies and growing tensions between them, some of them due to conflicts of interest, but many also due to different cultural conceptions.

These conceptions differ as to the kind of modernity they want and how they see each other. To give one illustration, the international trade conflicts between the United States and Japan are not only trade conflicts, they are also sharp cultural conflicts about different conceptions of nationhood, international relations, ideology and so on. Trade conflicts cannot be understood in purely economic terms: the economic aspect is important, but it is insufficient to account for the actual conflicts.

In Europe and throughout the world we have growing globalization, growing contacts and the development of modern life, but different modes of modernity. It is not merely a question of different degrees of development, which exist whatever economic indices we measure them by. Cutting across these different degrees of development, however, are different cultural conceptions within modernity.

Take, for example, the nature of democracy in India, one of the most fascinating problems in the study of contemporary societies. In terms of population India is the greatest constitutional democracy in the world today. Most theories of democracy somehow fail to fit the Indian case. Apparently there is something wrong with the theories. This is a different type of democracy, very strong, but different from the European and American type. We often forget that the European and American democracies are also different; Japan has yet another type of constitutional democracy. All these types are democratic, all are constitutional, but the political culture, the rules of the game (not so much the formal rules as the basic conceptions of authority, accountability and the like) are very different.

They are all modern, certainly not traditional, but they are influenced in many ways by the respective historical experiences of these different societies. We have to look very closely at these historical experiences in order to understand the differences. Two illustrations, one concerning Western Europe, the US and Japan, and one relating to India and Europe, will indicate some of the problems.

## THE SPECIFICITY OF EUROPEAN, AMERICAN AND JAPANESE MODERNITY

The illustration touching on Europe, the United States and Japan goes back to a small book published eighty years ago by an eminent German economic historian, economist and sociologist, Werner Sombart, called *Why is there no socialism in the United States?* Why did Sombart ask this question? Having a European background and coming from a highly industrialized capitalist country he assumed that a natural reaction to—or development of—capitalism is some type of socialism. It may be reformist, or perhaps revolutionary, but it will become a major political force, not just a debating club for a handful of intellectuals, small groups of anarchists and so on. Then he looked at the United States, which was just becoming a major industrial power. He saw no traces of socialism in the European sense although there were plenty of labour conflicts. These occur in any civilization, but the modes of the disputes were apparently very different. If Sombart had lived today, he could easily still have asked the same question.

Now he could also ask more or less the same question about Japan. While Japan does have a socialist party, the similarity between it and any branch of European socialism (revolutionary, social democratic, etc.) is very sketchy. The question, then, should perhaps be changed: instead of asking why there is no socialism in the United States and scarcely any in Japan, we should ask why there *is* socialism in Europe. The answer to this question may be that socialism neither was nor is, as Sombart assumed, the natural response to capitalism; it is the specific European response to capitalism, rooted in European political traditions and experience. If this is so, we have to look for different modes of expression of labour disputes in different places in order to understand the variety of modern civilizations.

### INDIA AND EUROPE—SOME COMPARATIVE INDICATIONS

We also have to take into account—this is certainly not the only key—historical experience and cultural traditions, and this brings us to the comparison between Europe and India. Comparisons have often been made between Europe and other countries, including Asian countries, usually China or Japan. There is a much closer

similarity between Europe and India in the medieval as well as the modern period, but there are also crucial differences.

The similarity between India and Europe is very simple: both were subcontinents, with a strong civilization or cultural identity, and at the same time they were diversified both politically and economically. They were never unified, and there was always a multiplicity of political regimes and political economies, unlike in China and Japan, where, in spite of periods of disintegration, closed, unified empires flourished over long periods.

In the Indian and European civilizations there were different levels of integration. It was not merely an imperial type of integration with a series of local peripheries left more or less to their own devices; every household and local community was linked simultaneously to various, more encompassing, units of differing scope. This is basically different from the nation-state type of integration mentioned earlier. The nation state in Europe is, of course, a very recent development, no more than two hundred years old. There were other modes of integration in medieval and early modern Europe. States existed, but no nation states as yet. The situation was similar in India: there was no unified political system but a multiplicity of levels of integration which were continually shifting.

This is a fascinating similarity, but there was also a crucial difference. In Europe the ideal of political unification was manifest from early on in the Holy Roman Empire. However fragile its institutional bases, it constituted a basically continuous ideal model which was later transformed at various stages into that of the modern nation state. In India such ideals have been very weak if they existed at all, even in modern times. Consequently India never knew the state-formation phase of absolutism, and until modern times there have also been no wars of religion.

The political arena is one arena, sometimes *the* arena, through which the great transcendental vision is expressed. Using a Weberian, purely Christian, term, it serves as the arena of salvation. This notion should not be applied lightly, but it is appropriate. In India the political arena had many sacral attributes: kings played a very important sacral, by definition transcendental, role. At the same time it is rather doubtful whether one can talk of the political arena as an independent symbolic arena in traditional India. It certainly was not the major arena where this transcendental vision was implemented. This had very important repercussions for the whole political game.

Another closely connected element is the problem of civil society. Here it is very interesting to note that the caste system in India, a notion introduced by Westerners, starting with the English census of India, has performed many of the equivalent functions of civil society in Europe—not in the sense that it was based on conceptions of individual liberty, far from it, but in the sense that it was a highly autonomous force vis-à-vis the political rulers, and that it regulated social relations with the rulers, but not necessarily favouring them. From a comparative point of view it is fascinating to consider the Indian caste system, that whole set of rituals with respect to family, kinship and regional relations, as a distinct type of civil society.

I call it a distinct type advisedly, because this brings me to a more general point on which I touched briefly when I discussed Europe. Civil society has become a slogan. The realities of civil society are very different in different European countries, and different yet again in other Western countries. Civil society in the United States, for instance, is an entirely different game from the one we play in Europe, and civil society in Sweden is very different from that in the Netherlands.

One of the characteristics of civil society in India concerns the relative weakness of the political arena, symbolically and organizationally. What we are witnessing today in India is that, while democracy in the sense of participation has become strongly rooted, there is a very great problem of governability. There were roots on which to graft participation, but the basis for building institutions to ensure governability was much shakier. This, in my opinion, is an important part of the Indian *problématique*. In Europe it may be the other way round: the conditions for governability are better rooted in history than those for participation. Thus, although there are many common elements in these modern societies, the ways in which they are being crystallized and coped with differ greatly. This can be related partly, but only partly, to the historical experience.

#### DIFFERENT CONSTELLATIONS OF MARKET, REGULATION, INTERVENTION AND WELFARE

What we are seeing in the contemporary scene is the development not of one type of modern society with variations but of very many different types. Here again I believe that India and Europe may

develop in certain parallel ways, in the sense that there will be much greater flexibility in the different levels of integration as compared, say, with China or even Japan. Different modes will develop different levels of integration and a multiplicity of types of political economy.

This runs counter to the often expressed idea that all countries now look basically alike: the end of history. According to this idea we have one type of political economy, the market, that is winning over all the others. This is true if the market is compared only to the old type of planned society or planned economy. It does not mean, however, that we shall be left with only one type of political economy. There is no such thing as a "pure" market except in the thinking of some market fundamentalists. The United States, the closest approximation to the pure market that we know, has its Federal Reserve System, which regulates in some very interesting ways: some years ago, when the notorious crash of the savings and loans associations occurred, it was the state that had to step in and bail them out, at a price estimated by some as exceeding the United States' entire welfare budget.

The market *is* winning over centralized planning, but different types of political economy will develop based on different combinations of four basic elements: the market, regulation, intervention and welfare. What we see today throughout the world, I believe, is not just the spread of the market against all opposition, although it is sometimes described as such. In Europe, at least, the problem is really how to combine these four elements in continually changing ways, because they cannot be the same in different historical circumstances in the same society.

#### DEGREES AND TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT

We see the development not only of multiple cultural programmes of modernity but also of multiple types of political economy. The components are similar in some ways; the way in which they come together, however, will be influenced not only by international relations, by globalization, but also by the internal political cultures of different societies. This leads to some very interesting applications in the field of so-called Development Studies. Development Studies as it began in the 1940s and 1950s is not only *passé*, it is history, but still its spirit lingers on. It was based on the assumption that devel-



opment is tied up in a sort of package deal with the same type of social and political institutions. We now know that this is not true: not only are there different degrees of development, especially economic development, but also different types.

This should be made absolutely explicit and should serve as the starting point for a sort of research programme. What are the different packages of development and social institutions which can develop in different places? What are the types of development, of political economy and of political regime, and how do they relate to social traditions? Development in the sense of an increase in productivity is a universal element; but there is no simple recipe for promoting it, combining it with other elements of modernity—neither for all societies nor for the same society in different periods. Historical periods are now changing very rapidly.

It is not the end of history, it is the intensification of history that is taking place. It is very important for Development Studies to take into account the process of globalization, the fact that all societies are becoming modern and in this sense subscribe to the notion of development. At the same time the mode of development cannot be the same; it must be continually interwoven into the specific social and political fabric of a particular country as it changes.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

# THE JACOBIN COMPONENT OF FUNDAMENTALIST MOVEMENTS

### I

The major thesis of this paper is that modern fundamentalist movements constitute a distinct type of modern political movement, the most important characteristic of which is a very strong Jacobin component.

By modern fundamentalist movements I mean those movements which have emerged only since the nineteenth century originally among Protestants groups in the United States, and above all their contemporary “descendants” and those which emerged later—first of all in Islamic societies, later in sectors of Jewish societies. These latter movements—beyond the original Protestants ones—did not call themselves fundamentalists; they were rather so dubbed by Western scholarly and more general discourse.<sup>1</sup> We include all these movements under this term despite the great differences between them, because they share some characteristics—especially strong Jacobin tendencies—which are indeed crucial for the understanding of their dynamics.

In this essay I shall first analyze the characteristics of the modern fundamentalist movements as sectarian, utopian, past-oriented ones, characteristics which they share with “traditional” proto-fundamentalist ones. Second, I shall analyze the distinctively modern, Jacobin characteristics of these movements. Third, I shall compare these movements with the most “secular” modern Jacobin movements or regimes—the Communist ones; fourth, I shall analyze the paradoxical attitude of these movements to tradition—namely their

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<sup>1</sup> On these various movements, see the respective chapters in the five volumes of the Fundamentalism project of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the articles in *Contention*, nos. 11 & 12. See also Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

promulgation of tradition and traditions as an ideology couched in highly modern terms.

Last, I shall briefly point out some of the differences between them and above all between them and seemingly similar movements found, especially in some South and South East Asian Hindu or Buddhist civilizations or societies.

## II

Modern fundamentalist movements are to be seen as the transformation in a modern mode of certain types of utopian heterodoxies that developed in some Axial Civilizations or the Great Religious<sup>2</sup>—i.e. those civilizations that crystallized during the five hundred years from 500 B.C.E. to the first century of the Christian era, within which new types of ontological visions, of conceptions of a basic tension between the transcendental and mundane orders emerged and were institutionalized in many parts of the world. These conceptions developed in ancient Israel, later in Second-Commonwealth Judaism and Christianity; Ancient Greece; Zoroastrian Iran; early Imperial China; Hinduism and Buddhism; and, beyond the Axial Age proper, Islam. In all these civilizations there developed forceful utopian heterodoxies, such as the premodern gnostic and chiliastic movements in the Middle Ages, the Karaites, and the numerous movements of renovation, of *Tajdid* in Islamic societies, and many of the early radical Protestant movements such as the Anabaptists. Fundamentalist movements are also rooted in religious traditions of their respective civilizations, not in the accepted orthodoxies of their respective traditions but rather in that of their heterodoxies—especially in utopian heterodox tendencies and movements.

The common core of the proto-fundamentalist and modern fundamentalist movements is that of a special mode of renovative utopian sectarianism, oriented to the renewal of their religion according to a pristine vision rooted in the past. Such sectarianist ideologies and organization developed in all so-called Axial civilizations, above all

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<sup>2</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and Rise of Clerics," *European Journal of Sociology* 23, no. 2 (1982): 294–314; idem, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986).

but only in the monotheistic ones; their influence became central in the crystallization of modernity—and they have then become, in a highly transformed way, a central component in modernity, of the cultural and political program of modernity, in different modern, political movements—among which are the fundamentalist movements.

Proto-fundamentalist (and fundamentalist) movements promulgated—as did many other sectarian utopian movements—visions of an alternative cultural and social order, an eschatological vision which emphasized the search for an alternative “better” order beyond the existing one, the reconstruction of the mundane world according to a sharply articulated transcendental vision. The proto-fundamentalist movements aimed at the reconstruction of the existing order, according to what has been promulgated by them as the pristine “original” version of their religion—a version most fully realized in the past and embodied in a text or exemplary activity or movement—and they are oriented against the existing situation into which religion has degenerated, and which accordingly calls for a fundamental renewal.

As do other utopian sectarian groups and fundamentalist movements, proto-fundamentalist movements emphasize very strongly the construction of very sharp symbolic and institutional boundaries; they stress the distinction between purity and pollution—the purity of the internal fundamentalist community as against the pollution of the outside world.<sup>3</sup> These groups are highly totalistic-ideological, attempting to construct a self-enclosed universe which demarcates and organizes clearly all arenas of life. The strong tendency to rituals and ritualization that has developed in these groups is closely related to such attempts.

All these “sectarian” components or characteristics are common to both proto-fundamentalist and fundamentalist movements—but they have been radically transformed in the modern fundamentalist movements, attesting to the close relation of fundamentalist movements to modernity. This close relation is manifest, first of all, in many of their organizational characteristics, such as very tight party-like discipline, and in the use of modern communication technologies and of modern propaganda techniques. The composition of these

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<sup>3</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966).

movements has also differed greatly from that of earlier periods, very much in line with the composition of some of the more militant modern, especially Jacobin, movements.

It is, however, above all with respect to the mode of construction of their ideologies and the mode of mobilization of different sectors of society, that the relations between the fundamentalist movements and the modern world are most conspicuous. The most important aspect of their ideologies is the appropriation by these fundamentalist movements, side by side with their anti-modern ideology, of Jacobin, totalistic components of the political program of modernity, above all of the belief in the possibility of transformation of society through totalistic political action. Jacobin orientations emphasize the belief in the primacy of politics and of the ability of politics to reconstitute society according to a totalistic vision and through highly mobilized political action. It is with respect to all these characteristics that the distinctions of the modern fundamentalist movements from the premodern proto-fundamentalist stand out.

Many of the fundamentalist movements share the Jacobin belief in the primacy of politics with the great modern revolutions—albeit in their case, religious politics or politics guided by a totalistic religious vision to reconstruct society, or sectors thereof.<sup>4</sup> The fundamentalist movements attempt to impose such Jacobin orientations on the more traditional ways of life—making the ideological formulation of a pristine tradition into their overarching basic organizing principle.

The modern and contemporary fundamentalist movements have been characterized, in principle at least, by a strong predisposition to develop not only a totalistic world view and organization which is characteristic of many “traditional” sectarian movements, including the proto-fundamentalist one, but also overarching totalitarian all-encompassing ideologies, which emphasize a total reconstitution of the social and political order, and which espouse a strong uni-

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<sup>4</sup> On the Jacobin elements in modern politics see: Augustin Cochin, *La Révolution et la Libre Pensée* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1924); idem, *L'esprit du Jacobinisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979) and Jean Baechler, preface in idem, 7–33; Francois Furet, *Rethinking the French Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). Jacob L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarianism Democracy* (New York: Praeger, 1960): See also J.L. Salvadori and Nicola Tranfaglia, eds., “Il Modello politico giacobino,” Firenze, *La Nova Italia*, 1984; Massimo Salvador, “Europe, America, Marxismo,” (Turin: Einaudi, 1990).

versalistic, missionary zeal. These characteristics of the modern fundamentalist movements are reminiscent of some of the components of the Great Revolutions; in the English Civil War, in the American, French, and later the Russian revolutions. They are in many ways rooted in the components of the political program of modernity which crystallized in these revolutions—just as the Great Revolutions had their roots in the heterodoxies of the Axial civilizations within which they developed, so did the fundamentalist movements, especially those which developed within monotheistic civilization; and just as the Great Revolutions, they have transformed these heterodox tendencies into potentially full-fledged political programs and missionary visions.

Indeed the Great Revolutions can be seen, paradoxically, as the first or at least the most dramatic, successful attempt at implementation of the utopian gnostic vision which shared many characteristics with the proto-fundamentalist movements—except that in these revolutions—future-oriented visions—which became a central component of the cultural program of modernity—became predominant.<sup>5</sup> Such revolutions tend to spawn, with the unfolding of the revolutionary process, to use Said Arjomand's term, some distinct cosmologies, some very distinct cultural and political programs.<sup>6</sup>

The distinctiveness of the utopian visions which constituted the central core of the cosmologies or ontologies of these revolutions lay not only in the transposition of the perennial themes of protest, of justice, liberty and the like into the central political arena, and in their combination with the reconstruction of central political institutions, but also in the conception of society as an object which can be remolded according to such visions. It is this new view of society, i.e., the view of society as an object of active construction by human beings—above all by political action—that constitutes one of

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<sup>5</sup> On the dynamics of the Great Revolutions and their roots in the Axial civilizations, see S.N. Eisenstadt, "Frameworks of the Great Revolutions—Culture, Social Structure, History and Human Agency," *International Social Science Journal* 133 (August 1992): 385–401. In greater detail, see S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolutions and the Transformation of Societies* (New York: Free Press, 1978). On the image of revolution in modern social thought, see Melvin J. Lasky, "The Birth of a Metaphor: On the Origins of Utopia and Revolution," *Encounter* 34, no. 2 (1970): 35–45, and no. 3 (1970): 30–42; idem, *Utopia and Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

<sup>6</sup> S.A. Arjomand, "Iran's Islamic Revolution in Comparative Perspective," *World Politics* 38, no. 3 (1976).

the distinct characteristics of the cosmologies of these revolutions. They proclaimed the primacy of the political as being closely related to such visions in the process of reconstruction of society.<sup>7</sup> These dimensions of the Great Revolutions have become most fully manifest in Jacobin ideologies and movements—and they are shared, at least potentially, by many of the modern fundamentalist movements.

The strong totalitarian, Jacobin-like component or orientation of these movements is visible first in the attempts to effect the reconstruction of the centers of their respective societies: in the almost total conflation of center and periphery, negating the existence of intermediary institutions and association—of what can sometimes be called civil society, conflating civil society with the overall community.

Secondly, this Jacobin component of the fundamentalist movement can be found in the strong tendency to the sanctification of the reconstruction of the center as a continuous liminal arena, and thirdly, in the closely related tendency to missionary expansionism, manifest in their strong universalistic (Christian, Protestant, or Islamic) orientations as against primordial components of collective identity.

As with many of the Great Revolutions, the fundamentalist movements tended also to minimize the importance of those components of collective identity which have been often terms promulgated as primordial—such as kinship, territory or language and the like:<sup>8</sup> of what has been often called in overly general terms “ethnic” or national—as opposed to the universalistic religious ones—for instance the Islamic against the Iranian ones. It is only in such cases, as in Judaism, in which the primordial orientations constitute a basic component of the universal religion, that the emphasis on primordial and nationalist fundamentalist orientations become predominant in some of the fundamentalist movements that develop within them. Such emphasis on primordial elements may become strong in some

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<sup>7</sup> On the primacy of politics in the Great Revolutions see Claude Leforte, *Democracy and Political Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 57–163; *Totalitarian Democracy and After—International Colloquium in Memory of Jacob L. Talmon* (Jerusalem, 21–24 June 1982: The Hebrew University, 1984), pp. 37–56. Francois Furet, *The French Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1970); *Interpreting the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981). In the primacy of politics in many contemporary Islamic fundamentalist movements see: Bassam Tibi, *The Crisis of Modern Islam* (Utah: University of Utah Press, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> See on the meaning of this term: S.N. Eisenstadt and Bernhard Giessen, “Construction of Collective Identities.” *European Journal of Sociology* 36 (1995): 73–102.



contemporary movements which are sometimes compared with the fundamentalist ones—other-worldly civilizations, like Hinduism or Buddhism, the religious premises of which are not—as we shall see in greater detail later on—very conducive to the development of pure pristine fundamentalist orientations.

One of the most interesting and paradoxical manifestations of this combination of modern Jacobin mobilizatory dimension of modern fundamentalist movements and regimes with their “anti-modern,” or at least anti-liberal ideology, can be found in their attitude to women. On the one hand most of these movements promulgate a strong patriarchal, antifeminist attitude which tends to segregate women and to impose far-reaching restrictions on them—of a type which can seemingly be found in many of the Arab regimes like Saudi Arabia, the roots of which was the traditional proto-fundamentalist movement. On the other hand, in stark contrast to such traditionalistic regimes, the modern fundamentalist ones mobilize women into the public space—be it in demonstrations, paramilitary organizations or the like.<sup>9</sup>

Because of this Jacobin tendency or predisposition, these movements face a continuous tension—a tension which is inherent in most sectarian movements, but which is exacerbated in the modern fundamentalist ones, between the strong participatory orientations—rooted very much in the modern conceptions of center-periphery relations—which develop within them, and the authoritarian ones inherent in their basic ideologies.

The strong modern components of many of the fundamentalist movements—even of the most extreme ones—can also be seen in some aspects of their institutionalization. When the Islamic revolution triumphed in Iran, it did not abolish the most modern of institutions—basically without any roots in Islam—such as the parliament and election to it. Both the majlis and the mode of election were reconstructed—with some very strong Jacobin elements, clothed in an Islamic garb. Interestingly enough, one of these garbs—the institutionalization of a special Islamic court to supervise “secular”

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<sup>9</sup> Martin Riesebrodt, *Fundamentalismus als patriarchalische Protestbewegung: Amerikanische Protestanten (1910–28) und iranische Schiiten (1961–79) im Vergleich* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1990); and idem, “Fundamentalism and the Political Mobilization of Women,” in Said Amir Arjomand, ed., *The Political Dimensions of Religion* (New York: State University of New York Press), 243–272.

legislation—was not so far removed from the special place of judicial institutions characteristic of modern constitutional regimes, even from the principle of judicial revision.

#### IV

With respect to all these features, some very interesting parallels emerge between fundamentalists and the secular Jacobin totalitarian regimes of the left. In this context it might be worthwhile to compare the communist totalitarian regimes with the fully institutionalized fundamentalist regimes—above all with that of the Iranian one, and possibly also with the Islamic fundamentalist movement in Algeria.

The Communist and the fundamentalist regimes share, paradoxically, sometimes in a sort of mirror image, emphasis on the active participation of society in the formation of a new social and cultural order, as well as a high level of commitment to such orders.<sup>10</sup>

Both types of regimes aimed at the total transformation of the symbols of collective identity and of the institutional structure of the society and at the establishment of a new social order, based on revolutionary universalistic ideological tenets, in principle transcending any units, such as national or ethnic units constructed in primordial terms—even if not denying their partial legitimacy.

These two types of regimes shared also a very strong salvationist vision or gospel. Both types of regimes developed a strong tendency to combine themes of protest with the construction of a new ontological definition of reality with a total world view. Although the content of this vision differed radically between them, they shared the view that the implementation of this vision was to take place in this world, in the present. Instead of the—basically unfathomable—future, the implementation of this vision—as that of all the great rev-

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<sup>10</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, "Center-Periphery in Soviet Russia," in Alexander Motyl, ed., *Rethinking Theoretically about Soviet Nationalities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 205–225; and idem, "The Breakdown of Communist Regimes," *Daedalus* (Spring 1992): 21–43. Ernest Gellner recently presented from a complementary but different point of view, an interesting comparison between Communist and Muslim Fundamentalism, in which he stressed the differences between them. See Ernest Gellner, "Fundamentalism as a Comprehensive System: Soviet Marxism and Islamic Fundamentalism Compared," in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Comprehended* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 277–288.

olutions—was to be achieved in the present. Present and future became in many ways conflated. This vision entailed the transformation both of man and of society. It was in the name of salvation that it demanded total submergence of the individual in the general totalistic vision and community.

Even if they differed radically with respect to the nature of the vision which guides such action, the institutionalization of such a vision was based in both regimes on the belief that many aspects of the social and political orders can be continuously reconstructed by conscious human action. In both cases it gave rise to regimes characterized by strong mobilizing orientations and policies aiming at change, at transforming the structure of society in general, and center-periphery relations in particular.

These salvationist orientations constituted the ultimate legitimation of the regimes, and the elites were the bearers of the salvationist mission. In this sense both regimes were based on, as Maria Marcus has put it with respect to the Communist regimes, legitimation from the top—i.e., on a legitimation which seemingly was in no need of popular approbation, not unlike that of the bearers of many transcendental religions. And yet the legitimation of both the Soviet regime and the fundamentalist movement differed in several crucial respects from that of either traditional religious salvationist, or from that of historical absolutist regimes—the pre-revolutionary ancient regimes.

The mode of legitimation of these regimes was couched in very strong, far-reaching revolutionary terms, combined with very strong mobilizational policies, and hence implied a new type of accountability of rulers. In principle it was the entire community that was not only the object but also the bearer of the salvationist vision or mission. True enough, Islamist fundamentalist movements denied the legitimacy of popular sovereignty—emphasizing the sovereignty of Islam—but the elite “only” represented it—possibly instituting it—promulgating the “real” will of the society, or of the holy vision of the community even if the proper interpretation of the vision could be vested in one person or group.

These movements face the usual problems attendant on the institutionalization of a charismatic vision: the growing contradiction between the salvational vision and the exigencies of raising some type of orderly political and modern economic regime; the potential corruption of their elites and the general, even if partial, “regression”

from the universalistic-missionary vision to the primacy of concrete statehood.

## V

But needless to say, there developed also great differences in the processes of institutionalization of these different Jacobin regimes—some of which were rooted in their different ideologies and in their “reaction” to modernity. Here we encounter one of the paradoxes of these movements. Ideologically, they are among the most extreme of anti-modernists, but at the same time they have fully appropriated some of the most crucial dimensions of modernity.

The basic ideology of fundamentalism is anti-modern—the negation of some of the basic tenets of modernity as a civilization—although not necessarily of its technological or organizational aspects. These movements are radically oriented against some of the basic premises of the Enlightenment, especially against the change of the place of God in the construction of the cosmos and of man, and of belief in God (or in some metaphysical principles) as constituting the starting point for the understanding of both man and cosmos, the sovereignty of reason, the exploration by reason of all the aspects of nature and society, and individual autonomy and freedom. They are also strongly oriented against the pluralistic aspects of the political program of modernity.

Yet, at the same time most fundamentalist ideologies exhibit some very distinct modern Jacobean characteristics. Accordingly, the anti-modern attitude that develops within the fundamentalist visio is not just a reaction of traditional groups to the encroachment of new ways of life, but a militant ideology which is basically couched in highly modern idiom.

The central characteristic of their “reaction” to modernity, is indeed the attempt at totalistic construction of a closed utopian-sectarian vision and its legitimation in terms of ideologized tradition; and it is such construction that guides the reconstruction of tradition and selection of traditional themes that take place in fundamentalist movements.

The most important such selection is the very emphasis on some original pristine vision or symbol of a tradition—especially on a book or a pristine cannon, or for instance on the sanctity of the Land of Israel in the ideology of Gush Emunim—as the main, even the sin-

gle focus of the tradition. It is not, however, just the selection of a certain theme or symbol of tradition as against others that is characteristic of the various fundamentalist movements. It is rather the attempt at the totalization of this vision that is crucial here—the subordination of different aspects and layers of tradition under the presumed implications of this single principle and their concomitant hierarchization. The same is, of course, true of the emphasis on a basic pristine premise embodied in some text—whether in the form of a book, or of a message, or even a set of symbols.

Thus, fundamentalist traditionalism is not to be confused with a “simple” or “natural” upkeep of a given tradition. Rather, it denotes an ideological mode and stance oriented against new developments; it selects and promulgates certain themes of the tradition as the only legitimate symbols of the traditional order and upholds them against the existing situation.

Such constructions of the fundamentalist utopian universe are accordingly characterized by several paradoxes. Although seemingly traditional, in fact these movements are in some paradoxical way anti-traditional. They are anti-traditional in the sense that they negate the living tradition, with its complexity and heterogeneity, and instead they uphold a highly ideological conception of tradition as an overarching principle of cognitive and social organization.

The fundamentalist groups espouse a principled denial of interpretation and unfolding of tradition which does, of course, in itself constitute a very distinct new and innovative mode of interpretation. The fundamentalists are oriented in principle against any innovation or lenience within the existing traditions—even if such innovation has been a continuous component in such tradition. The famous injunction of Hatam Sofer—a major figure in early modern Eastern European fundamentalist Jewish orthodoxy in the first half of the nineteenth century—that “anything new is forbidden from Torah” went against the great and continuous tradition of interpretation and innovation which characterized the classical (medieval and early modern) Jewish tradition. Such injunctions and attitudes were in fact themselves innovations—but innovations presented as representations of simple, pristine “old” tradition.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Michael K. Silber “The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Invention of a Tradition,” in Jack Wertheimer, ed., *The Uses of Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). For an interesting comparative case in what may be the

Fundamentalist movements are accordingly characterized by a strong *principled*—though not easily observed in practice—differentiation between different layers of “tradition” in terms of their relation to the pristine vision, and by the ideological symbolization of many customs, such as pattern of dress and of calenderic observance, which can be used, as markers of collective identity, to demarcate the boundaries between the internally pure space and the externally polluted one.<sup>12</sup>

As many other such sectarian-ideological and authoritarian movements of the left and of the right, the fundamentalist ones also exhibit a very low threshold of tolerance of ambiguity on both personal and collective levels. In practice they may often waver between, on the one hand, sharp segregation between “traditional” (ritual, religious) and non-traditional spheres of life, without developing any strong connective symbolic and organizational bonds between the two; and, on the other hand, a strong predisposition or demand for some clear unifying principles which would connect and unify both arenas.

As a result, there develops within these movements a strong tendency toward “ritualization” of the symbols of traditional life, on both the personal and the collective levels. Increasing attempts to impose traditional symbols on the new secular world in relatively rigid, militant ways may then alternate with the total isolation of these traditional symbols from the impurities of that world.

## VI

In close relation to this attitude to tradition, fundamentalist movements are characterized by yet another paradox. Although these movements present themselves as the pure orthodoxy of their respective religion, in fact, in any given situation they are heterodoxies, in sharp conflict with the existing religious establishment and ways of life. Indeed, in many cases the leaders of the fundamentalist movements were intellectuals with strongly antinomian tendencies, their

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first case of *tajdid* in medieval Islam, see Ella Landau-Tasseron, “‘The Cyclical Reform’: A Study of the Mujeddid Tradition,” *Studia Islamica* 70 (1989): esp. 105–119.

<sup>12</sup> Haym Soloveitchik, “Migration, Acculturation, and the New Role of Texts in the Haredi World,” in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Accounting for Fundamentalisms* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 197–236.

antinomianism being above all oriented against the prevalent modes of interpretation of tradition.

The basically heterodox nature of the fundamentalist movements is evident also in the fact that within any single religion there may develop, at any single point, not one but several fundamentalist movements. Such variety may be due to different socio-political circumstances or to changing constellations of the relation between the various fundamentalist groups with the political rulers and of the possible incorporation of some of the fundamentalist themes or symbols by the rulers. But basically such variety is also inherent in the very nature of the religious sectarian dynamics of these religions—and of the fundamentalist movements themselves. Despite the fact that each such movement claims to be the only representative of the original pristine vision of its religion, in fact they all are new constructions, and they may differ with respect to which aspect or symbol of their religion they portray as the essence of the original pristine vision.

One of the clearest illustrations of the almost coterminous development of different fundamentalist movements in the fold of the same religion can be found in contemporary Israel, where both the anti-Zionist “Haredim” and the ultra-national Gush Emunim claim to present the pristine vision of Judaism.<sup>13</sup> Yet another illustration of such variety of fundamentalist or proto-fundamentalist movements can be found in the numerous revivalist Islamic movements in the eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Samuel Heilman and Menachem Friedman “Religious Fundamentalism and Religious Jews: The Case of the Haredim,” and G. Aran “Jewish Zionist Fundamentalism: The Blood of the Faithful in Israel (Gush Emunim),” in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalism Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 197–264 and 265–344. See also Lawrence Jay Silberstein, ed., *Jewish Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective: Religion, Ideology, and the Crisis of Modernity* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1993).

<sup>14</sup> John Obert Voll, “Fundamentalism in Sunni Arab World: Egypt and the Sudan” and Abdulaziz Abdulhusein Sachedina, “Activist Shi’ism in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon,” in Marty and Appleby, *Fundamentalism Observed*, 345–403 and 403–456; also Tibi, *The Crisis of Modern Islam*. See also Said Amir Arjomand, “University and Diversity in Islamic Fundamentalism,” in Marty and Appleby, *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, 179–198.

## VII

Far-reaching differences developed—as they did also in the case of the proto-fundamentalist movements—in the strengthening of different fundamentalist movements or the extent of their appeal in their respective societies; in, among others, the extent to which they are able to develop fully their totalistic tendency, the extent to which they attempt to shape all arenas of life; as well as in their rigidity, especially with respect to the differentiation between internal and external, pure and polluted sectors and societies, and in their impact on the societies within which they develop.

The differences between the various modern fundamentalist movements were greatly influenced, first, by the basic ontological conceptions and political traditions of the respective civilization in which they developed, and, second, by their historical experiences and by the modes of their encounter with Western civilization. We shall briefly address ourselves to the first set of factors. These differences are related first—as they are with respect to proto-fundamentalist movements—to the basic conception in the political arena, as an area of implementation of the transcendental visions prevalent in these societies and in the closely related importance of political utopias in the political tradition and the experiences of these societies. In those civilizations in which a strong semi-Messianic utopian stance was oriented to the political arena, there developed the strongest tendencies to the development of totalistic-Jacobin tendencies—while the opposite was true of those civilizations in which this stance was weakest. Such tendencies became stronger in those civilizations in which there is relatively heavy emphasis on doctrine and on logocentric exposition thereof, and in which it is relatively easy to identify a clear version. Third, the tendency to the development of fundamentalist ideologies and movements is stronger in those Axial civilizations in which no institution or group monopolizes the access to the sacred and to the proper interpretation thereof, thus increasing the range of possible interpretation, and above all facilitating the possibility of any group to present itself not just as opposing the existing religious authorities and their interpretation of religion—but as embodying the true vision of their religion. Here the comparison between Protestantism and Catholicism is of great interest. It is not accidental that it was within Protestantism, especially sectarian Protestantism, that fundamentalism developed in some of its most crystallized ways—while such developments were always much weaker



in Catholic Christianity—their fullest crystallization being always confronted by the mediating functions of the Pope and the Church, and by Catholicism's ability to block them in, as it were, the fundamentalist tendencies by the establishment of different orders.<sup>15</sup>

But the seed of fundamentalism is to be found in all Axial civilizations. Given the centrality of politics in the expansion of modernity, there may develop fundamentalist-like religious or religious movements with strong political orientations—even in “other-worldly” civilizations, such as Buddhism and Hinduism. Many political movements that developed in these societies tended to clothe themselves in religious, often fundamentalist garb—as several trends of so-called Hindu-fundamentalism attest to.<sup>16</sup> The development by these movements of seemingly fundamentalist ideologies entailed attempts at a soteriological revaluation of the political arena, far beyond what existed in the historical tradition of these civilizations—in ways contrary to whatever was seen as the center of “classical” Hinduism, and prompted them to endow some basically mythical events and texts with a canonic standing or as founding moments of their religions.

But most of these movements differ in very crucial ways from the “pristine” modern fundamentalist movements analyzed above. First their major orientations are particularistic, primordial, and not universalistic—and most of them harbor some particularistic vision of exclusion based on particularistic criteria. Second, only very few develop into fully totalistic-Jacobin direction. They have no, or only a very weak, conception of a reconstruction of the social order according to any social vision rooted in ontological conception. The same is true—even if given the stronger political orientations of Theravada Buddhism—to a smaller extent of Buddhist countries, especially of Sri-Lanka, even if (as Obeyesekere has shown) there may in these circumstances develop other apolitical fundamentalist orientations, groups, or movements.<sup>17</sup> But a full-fledged analysis of these movements is already beyond the scope of this paper.

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<sup>15</sup> See James Coleman, “Catholic Integralism in Fundamentalism,” in Lawrence Kaplan, ed., *Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 74–95.

<sup>16</sup> Donald K. Swearer, “Fundamentalistic Movements in Theravada Buddhism,” in Marty and Appleby, *Fundamentalism Observed*, 628–691.

<sup>17</sup> Gananath Obeyesekere, “Buddhism, Nationhood, and Cultural Identity: A Question of Fundamentals,” in Marty and Appleby, *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, 231–258.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

### THE RECONSTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS ARENAS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF 'MULTIPLE MODERNITIES'

#### I

There has lately taken place a far-reaching resurgence or reconstruction of the religious dimension in the contemporary world. It is manifested among others in the rise of new religious, especially fundamentalist and communal-national movements, and in the crystallisation of new diasporas with a prominent religious identity. This reconstruction transcends the vision of the classical cultural and political program of modernity and of the 'classical' model of the modern nation-state.

This resurgence of the religious dimension is very important for the evaluation of the many interpretations of the contemporary world, especially those that proclaim, from often opposing vantage points, the possibility that the classical modern project, as it has developed for the last two centuries, is exhausted. In one version the possibility of such exhaustion takes the form of the 'end of history' as proclaimed by Francis Fukuyama; the ideological premises of modernity with all the tensions and contradictions inherent in them are understood as almost irrelevant, enabling paradoxically the rise of multiple postmodern visions, and the new religious movements are on the whole seen as temporary 'aberrations'.<sup>1</sup> In another view of the exhaustion of the modern program or withdrawal from it, that of, to use Samuel Huntington's terminology, the 'clash of civilisations', these new religious movements play indeed a very central role. Huntington understands the Western civilisational vision—the seeming epitome

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<sup>1</sup> See Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992). There is a certain irony in the fact that the view which promulgated the overall homogenising of the contemporary world—seemingly very close to the earlier theories of modernisation and of convergence of industrial societies—does also proclaim the end of modernity, of the classical programme thereof.

of modernity—as often confronted in hostile terms with other, especially the Muslim and to some extent the so-called Confucian. Within this civilisational conflict, traditional, fundamentalist, anti-modern, and anti-Western movements are predominant and religious components and identities become central, evidently relegating the classical model of the modern nation-state to a secondary position.<sup>2</sup>

As contrary to both these visions, this essay argues that the best way to understand the contemporary world, including the upsurge and reconstruction of the religious dimension on the contemporary scene—indeed the history of modernity—is to see it as a story of continual development and formation, constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs of modernity and of distinctively modern institutional patterns, of multiple modernities.<sup>3</sup>

## II

The term ‘multiple modernities’ denotes a certain view of the contemporary world—indeed of the history and characteristics of the modern era—which goes first against the account of the ‘classical’ theories of modernisation of the 1950s. It runs against the classical sociological analyses of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and to a large extent even of Max Weber—or at least of one reading of him—which have assumed, even if only implicitly, that the cultural program of modernity and the basic institutional constellations which came together in modern Europe will be ultimately taken over in all modernising and modern societies; that they will, with the expansion of modernity, prevail throughout the world.<sup>4</sup>

The reality that emerged, already from the beginning of modernity, but especially after World War II, has not borne out the assumptions of any of these approaches. Actual developments in modern, or as they were then designated, modernising societies have gone far beyond the homogenising and hegemonic assumptions of the original European or Western program of modernity. General trends to

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> See in greater detail S.N. Eisenstadt, ‘Multiple Modernities’, *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 1–29. The entire issue of *Daedalus* is devoted to this topic.

<sup>4</sup> On the developments of these themes, see S.N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change, and Modernity* (New York: Wiley, 1973).

structural differentiation of various institutional, political, economic, family, and the 'cultural' arenas; to urbanisation, extension of modern education, and means of communication; and tendencies to individualistic orientations developed in most of these societies. Yet the ways in which these arenas were defined and organised varied, in different modern societies and periods of their development, giving rise to multiple institutional and ideological patterns. But these patterns did not constitute simple continuations of the respective traditions of these societies. They were distinctively modern even if their dynamics were greatly influenced by the cultural premises, traditions, and historical experiences of these societies.

All 'modernising' societies developed distinct modern dynamics, distinctive ways of interpreting modernity, for which the original Western project constituted the crucial starting and continual—usually ambivalent—reference point but which often went beyond it. Of special importance, in this context, was the fact that the social movements that developed in these non-Western societies, even while they often promulgated strong anti-Western or even anti-modern themes, were distinctively modern. This was the case not only of the various nationalist and traditionalistic movements originating from about the middle of the nineteenth century up to the aftermath of World War II, but also of the contemporary fundamentalist ones.

The continuous reconstructions of multiple modernities have been incessantly promulgated by social, political, and intellectual activists and by social movements that envisaged alternative programs of modernity and different self-conceptions of their societies as modern. These activities have not been confined to any 'single' society or state, even if it was such societies or states that constituted the major arenas of the implementation of the programs and goals of such activists. It has been in the very nature of the visions of modernity and of its institutional dynamics that from the very beginning of the modern era they have been international in their scope and orientation. Thus multiple modernities were propounded not only in different nation-states, communist and fascist movements, and later on fundamentalist and communal-religious ones, but each of these projects also had an international dimension.

The term 'multiple modernities' suggests several implications. The first one is that modernity and Westernisation are not identical; the Western pattern or patterns of modernity are not the only 'authentic' modernities, even if they were historically prior and continued

to be a central reference point for other modern visions. The second implication is that the crystallisation of such multiple modernities has been imprinted not only in the conflicts between different states, and thus requires taking the nation-state, the 'society' as the natural unit of sociological analysis, but also in different cross-state, trans-state arenas. Finally, the concept of multiple modernities entails the recognition that such modernities are not 'static', but continually changing, and it is within the framework of such transformations that the upsurge and reconstruction of the religious dimension in the contemporary era is best understood.

### III

The roots of these changes, and their distinct modes and characteristics, are inherent in some of the basic features of modern societies. They are of course intrinsic in some of the basic structural characteristics of modern societies such as urbanisation, industrialisation, or communications, in the development of modern political regimes, and of the capitalist and later communist economic systems. But the full impact of these processes and their specific characteristics can be fully understood only in relation to the basic cultural and political programs of modernity.

The central core of modern cultural program as it developed first in Western and Central Europe involved a very distinct shift in the conception of human agency, of its autonomy, and of its place in the flow of time.<sup>5</sup> This central core has been probably most successfully formulated by Weber. To follow James D. Faubian's exposition of Weber's conception of modernity:

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

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<sup>5</sup> The analyses of the cultural program of modernity and of the different historical experience of modernity, especially European societies, are based on S.N. Eisenstadt, *Paradoxes of Democracy: Fragility, Continuity, and Change* (Baltimore, MD: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999) and *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolutions: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), where full bibliographical references are given.

another modernity can 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.<sup>6</sup>

It is because all responses to the program of modernity leave its problematic intact that the reflexivity which developed within modernity transcends that which crystallised in the era of the Axial Civilisations. The reflexivity that underlies the modern cultural program focused not only on the possibility of different interpretations of the transcendental visions and basic ontological conceptions prevalent in a society or civilisation, but also 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 multiplicity of such visions and patterns, and of the possibility that such visions and conceptions can indeed be contested.

Concomitantly, closely related to such awareness and central to this cultural program were the emphasis on the autonomy of man, his or her—but in its initial formulation, program certainly ‘his’—emancipation from the fetters of traditional political and cultural authority, and the continuous expansion of the realm of personal and institutional freedom, of human activity, creativity, and autonomy. This program placed a very strong emphasis on autonomous participation of members of society in the construction of social and political order and its constitution, and on autonomous access of all members of society to these orders and their centres. It envisaged a conception of the future in which various possibilities that can be realised by autonomous human agency, or by the march of history, are opened.

Within this framework, a distinct modern political program developed. Its central core was the battle against the traditional legitimation of the social and political order, the opening up of different

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<sup>6</sup> James D. Faubion, *Modern Greek Lessons: A Primer in Historical Constructivism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1993), 113–15.

possibilities of legitimation, and the contestation over the different ways in which political order was to be constructed by human actors.<sup>7</sup> The modern program entailed the combination of the charismatisation of the centre or centres with the incorporation into the centres of themes and symbols of protest. Themes and symbols of protest—equality and freedom, justice and autonomy, solidarity and identity—became central components of the modern project for the emancipation of man. It was the incorporation of these themes of protest into the centre which heralded the radical transformation of various sectarian utopian visions into central components of the political and cultural program.<sup>8</sup>

In a parallel fashion, the construction of the boundaries of modern collectivities and collective identities was continually problematised in reflexive ways.<sup>9</sup> Collective identities and boundaries were not anymore taken as given or as preordained by some transcendental vision and authority, or by perennial customs. The construction of collectivities and identities, like different political programs, constituted foci not only of reflexivity but also of contestations and struggles, often couched in highly ideological terms, promulgated by different national or nationalist movements.

These struggles focused among others on the extent of the connection between the construction of political boundaries defined more and more in territorial terms and those of the cultural collectivities, and as well on the relations between the territorial and/or particularistic components of these collectivities and broader, potentially universalistic communities. A very central component in the construction of collective identities was the self-perception of the society as 'modern', as bearer of a distinct cultural and political program, shared by like-minded societies and rejected by various 'others'.

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<sup>7</sup> See Eisenstadt, *Paradoxes of Democracy*.

<sup>8</sup> Eric Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, ed. John H. Hallowell (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1974); Adam Seligman, ed., *Order and Transcendence* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989); and Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolution*.

<sup>9</sup> See Edward Albert Shils, 'Primordial, Personal, Sacred, and Civil Ties', in *Centre and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*, ed. Edward Shils (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1975); S.N. Eisenstadt and Bernhard Giesen, 'The Construction of Collective Identity', *European Journal of Sociology* 36, no. 1 (1995): 72–102; and S.N. Eisenstadt, 'The Construction of Collective Identities. Some Analytical and Comparative Indications', *European Journal of Social Theory* 1, no. 2 (1998): 229–54.



## IV

The program and civilisation of modernity as it first developed in the West entailed from its very beginning internal antinomies and tensions. The most critical tension from the point of view of the development of the different cultural and institutional patterns of modernity has been between absolutising, totalising tendencies and more pluralistic, multifaceted visions and practices; between the view which accepts the existence of different values, commitments, and rationalities as against the conflation of such different values and rationalities in a totalistic way, with a strong disposition to their absolutisation.

In modern political discourse and practice these tensions crystallised around the problem of relations between, on the one hand, the legitimacy of the plurality of discrete individual and group interests and of different conceptions of the common good and of the social order, and on the other hand, of totalising ideologies which denied the legitimacy of such pluralities. One major form of totalistic ideology emphasised the primacy of the collectivity perceived as a distinct ontological entity based on common primordial and/or spiritual attributes, i.e. above all national collectivities. The other major totalistic ideology has been Jacobinism, whose historical roots originate in medieval eschatological sources.

The core of Jacobinism was the belief in the primacy of politics; in the ability of politics to reconstitute society, and in the possibility of transforming society through totalistic mobilised participatory political action.<sup>10</sup> The tensions between absolutist and pluralistic conceptions were particularly manifest in the construction of collective identities and collectivities. This struggle unleashed closely related forces pressing for the homogenisation of social and cultural spaces as against the construction of more multiple spaces allowing for heterogeneous identities. Given the strong territorial orientations of modern collectivities and collective identities, the struggles about their construction usually took the form of inter-state conflict, unprecedented, to an extent, in comparison to 'premodern' civilisations.

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<sup>10</sup> Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolution*.

## V

It was the conjunction of the continual structural changes inherent in the development and expansion of modernity with the dynamic interplay between the antinomies inherent in this program that gave rise to one of the most important specifically modern elements in the political process, namely social movements, movements of protest. Modern social movements constitute the transformation, in the modern setting, on the one hand of the various heterodoxies of the Axial civilisations, mainly the project of the realisation through political action of the Kingdom of God on earth, and on the other hand, of movements of protest, of subaltern rebellions, and the like. Many of these movements epitomised the search for the ways in which the concrete social and political arena could become the embodiment of an ideal order, and thus constituted a central component of the modern political discourse.

The numerous, continually changing movements developed first of all in Europe, then in the Americas, and later throughout the world in close relation to the problems arising out of the contradictions between the basic premises of the cultural and political program of modernity and the actual processes of its institutionalisation. These movements crystallised around the processes and problems of industrialisation and the expansion of capitalism; of the construction of new modern political regimes and formations, and international systems; and of the concurrent new types of collectivities, nations, and nation-states.

Beyond Western Europe indigenous social movements arose in relation to the universal expansion of modernity in its imperialist—economic, military and ideological—dimensions, and to the confrontation between Western hegemony and the Central and Eastern European, and Asian and African traditions, civilisations and societies. They reflected the search by these societies for an autonomous standing in the new international system.

The most important movements that crystallised in the classic period of modernity, i.e. in the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth century, were those focused on the construction of the different aspects of the modern nations and revolutionary states which were conceived as the epitome of modernity. Amongst them were, first, those that aimed at the inclusion of wider strata into the central political framework (through the extension of suffrage); second,

socialist and communist groups supporting the transformation of the social and economic premises and bases of power in society; and third, movements—primarily nationalistic—which aimed at reconstructing the boundaries of political collectivities.

## VI

These modern social movements developed first in Europe and then spread with the expansion of modern civilisations beyond the West, and above all in Asian and African societies. Several groups in non-European nations—especially elites and intellectuals—were attracted to modern themes promulgated by Western movements and to many of the basic political institutions which originated in Europe, because it allowed them 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. One of the most important aspects of the expansion of these themes beyond Western Europe and of their appropriation by different groups in the non-Western world lay in the fact that it made it possible to rebel against the institutional realities of the new modern civilisation in terms of its own symbols and premises.<sup>11</sup>

The attraction of these themes was also intensified by the fact that their appropriation by non-Western movements involved the transposition to the international scene of the struggle between hierarchy and equality. Although initially couched in European terms, the political discourse of modernity could find resonances in the political traditions of many of these societies. The transposition of these themes from the Western European to Central and Eastern Europe and to non-European settings was reinforced by the combination of orientations of protest with institution-building and centre-formation.

Finally, the appropriation of modern themes allowed non-Western 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. This did not necessarily imply the rejection of either specific components of their traditional

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<sup>11</sup> See Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Revolutions, and Modernity* and the essays in S.N. Eisenstadt and Yael Azmon, eds., *Socialism and Tradition* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1975).

identities, often also couched in universalistic—especially religious—terms which differed from those that were predominant in the West, or of their negative attitude towards the West.

## VII

The major social movements were of crucial importance in the crystallisation of the multiple and divergent instantiations of the ‘classical’ age of modernity into different territorial nation and revolutionary states in Europe, Asia, and Africa. And it was indeed with respect to the salience of the institutional, symbolic, and ideological contours of modern national and revolutionary states that the contemporary international scene experienced changes or shifts from the hitherto predominant models of the classical nation and revolutionary states.

These changes were primarily reflected in the development of new types of social movements. The so-called ‘new’ social movements, beginning with the student movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, such as women’s and ecological movements, numerous ethnic and separatist movements, and somewhat later fundamentalist and communal religious movements that emerged within Muslim, Jewish, and Protestant communities, and have managed to occupy centre stage in many national societies and, from time to time, on the international scene.<sup>12</sup>

Concomitantly, in the contemporary era new types of social settings or sectors developed that further challenged the classical model of the modern nation-state, important illustrations thereof being the emergence of new diasporas and minorities. The most visible among the new diasporas are the Muslim ones, especially in Europe and to some extent in the US. Parallel migrations strengthened the Chinese and possibly Korean diasporas in East Asia, in the US, and also in

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<sup>12</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolutions*; Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Comprehended* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); and Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

Europe, as well as Jewish communities, especially in Europe. The new types of minorities are best illustrated by the Russian ones in some of the former Soviet Republics, especially in the Baltics and in some Asian states, and for instance, the Hungarian minorities in the former East European Communist states.

The phenomenon of new diasporas is closely related to some major aspects of globalisation, the growing autonomy of world financial and commercial flows, intensified international migrations, and the concurrent development on an international scale of such social problems as spread of diseases, prostitution, organised crime, and youth violence. In the cultural arena, processes of globalisation are evident, through the hegemonic expansion, through the major media in many countries, of what are seemingly uniform Western—but above all American—cultural programs or visions. All these processes have served to reduce the control of the nation-state over its own economic and political affairs, despite continuing efforts to strengthen technocratic, rational secular policies in various arenas. Nation-states have also lost a part of their monopoly on internal and international violence, which was always only a partial monopoly, to local and international groups of separatists or terrorists.

The common denominator of many of these new movements and settings is that they do not see themselves as bound by the strong homogenising cultural premises of the classical model of nation-state, especially by the places allotted to them in the public spheres of such states. All these developments precipitated the resurrection, or rather reconstruction, of hitherto 'subdued' identities—ethnic, local, regional, and transnational—and their positing into the centre of their respective societies, and often also in the international arena. It is not that the new social movements do not want to be 'domiciled' in their respective countries. Indeed, part of their struggle is to become so domiciled, but rather on new, as compared to classical models of assimilation, terms. They aim to be recognised in the domestic public spheres, in the constitution of the civil society in relation to the state as culturally distinct groups, and not to be confined only to the private sphere. They do indeed make claims, as illustrated among others in the recent debate about *laïcité* in France, for the reconstruction both of new public spaces as well as the reconstruction of the symbols of collective identity of their respective states.

At the same time, while the identities which are promulgated in these movements and settings are often very local and particularistic,

they tend also to be strongly transnational or trans-state, connected with broader civilisational or religious frameworks, often rooted in the great religions: Islam, Buddhism, and different branches of Christianity, but reconstructed in modern ways. In this transnational capacity, the new social movements have also become active on the arena of world politics.<sup>13</sup> Many of the separatist, local, or regional settings, as well as for instance the ecological movements, develop direct connections with transnational frameworks and organisations such as the European Union. But it is mainly the various religious, especially fundamentalist movements—Muslim, Protestant, Jewish—that rose to prominence on the international scene through the utilisation of intensive social networks of an intra-religious or inter-religious character.

The pivotal new development amounts to the transposition of the religious dimension, which was delegated or confined to private or secondary spheres in the classical model of the nation-state, into the central political and cultural arenas, and its significance in the constitution of novel collective identities. But, as this essay argues, the resurgence of religion did not entail a simple return of some traditional forms of religion, but rather a far-reaching reconstitution of this religious component.

## VIII

The emergence of the new social movements and new types of diasporas strongly challenges the model of the modern nation and revolutionary state. It does indeed attest to the weakening of the ideological and symbolic centrality of the nation-state, its position as the charismatic locus of the major component of the cultural program of modernity and collective identity. But do these developments signal the 'end of history', the end of the modern program—epitomised in the development of different 'postmodernities'—and above all in the retreat, as it were, from modernity in the fundamentalist and the

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<sup>13</sup> Dale Eickelman, ed., *Russia's Muslim Frontiers: New Directions in Cross-Cultural Analysis* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993) and James P. Piscatori, 'Asian Islam: International Linkage and Their Impact on International Relations', in *Islam in Asia: Religion, Politics, and Society*, ed. John Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

communal religious movements which have been portrayed, and in many ways have also presented themselves, as *diametrically* opposed to the modern program?

## IX

A closer examination of these movements, primarily the fundamentalist, and to some extent the communal-religious ones, presents a much more complex picture. A meticulous analysis of the fundamentalist movements indicates that they evince distinct modern Jacobin characteristics and that they promulgate distinct visions of modernity formulated in the terms of the discourse of modernity, while attempting to appropriate modernity on their own terms. Whereas extreme fundamentalist movements elaborate seemingly antimodern, or rather anti-Enlightenment themes, they paradoxically share many Jacobin revolutionary components—sometimes in a sort of mirror-image way—with the communist ones. The similarity with communist movements lies in the project to establish a new social order, rooted in the revolutionary universalistic ideological tenets, in principle transcending any primordial, national, or ethnic units and new socio-political collectivities. Both the communist and the fundamentalist movements—mostly, but not only, the Muslim ones—have been international in scope and activated by very intensive transnational networks, which facilitated the expansion of their universalistic messages, but at the same time, continually confronted them with other competing particularist visions.<sup>14</sup>

The distinct modern characteristics of these fundamentalist movements are manifest, first of all, in the use of modern communication technologies, and of modern propaganda techniques, and principally, in many of their organisational characteristics, such as the tendency to very strong discipline, often a party-like discipline, or a discipline epitomised in obedience to a semi-sanctified leader. It is, however, with respect to some of their ideological features, to the mode of construction of their ideologies and traditions which constitutes the core of their ideologies, that the modern characteristics of these movements are most conspicuous. Most importantly,

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<sup>14</sup> Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, eds., *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999).

there is the appropriation by these movements, side by side with the anti-modern, especially anti-Enlightenment ideology, and with the denial of claims of the sovereignty and autonomy of reason and of the perfectability of man, of some central aspects of the political program of modernity, especially of various—especially Jacobin—participatory totalistic and egalitarian (even if this egalitarian component is in most of these confined to men) orientations.

The strong, potentially totalitarian, Jacobin components or tendencies are manifest first in the attempts by fundamentalist movements to reconstruct their respective societies by political action; in the almost total conflation of centre and periphery, negating thus the existence of intermediary institutions and associations of what can sometimes be called civil society, and conflating civil society with the overall community. Second, these potential Jacobin orientations can be observed in the strong tendency to the sanctification of the reconstruction of the centre as a continuous liminal arena, sanctification often connected with ritual violence and terror.

The roots of these distinctive modern characteristics, of the combination of utopian sectarianism with strong Jacobin, political tendencies are located in the close relation of fundamentalist movements to the cultural and political program of modernity, and to the modern political processes as they developed in the Great Revolutions and especially in the post-revolutionary regimes. The Great Revolutions were closely associated with some of the heterodoxies of the Axial civilisations and were indeed rooted in them. Similarly, fundamentalist movements, especially those emerging in the context of monotheistic civilisations, are rooted in the heterodox tendencies of proto-fundamentalist groups that developed earlier in their respective religions, but have subsequently developed full-fledged modern political programs with potentially missionary visions. Primarily, many of the fundamentalist movements share the Jacobinist belief in the primacy of politics, albeit in their case, religious politics—or at least of organised action—guided by a totalistic religious vision to reconstruct society, or sectors thereof. It is indeed, as I indicated above, the ideological and political heritage of the Revolutions which epitomised the victory of gnostic heterodox tendencies to bring the Kingdom of God on Earth, that constitutes the crucial link between the cultural and political program of modernity and fundamentalist movements.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies* (New York: Free Press,



## X

One of the most interesting and paradoxical manifestations of this combination of modern Jacobin mobilisatory dimension of modern fundamentalist movements and regimes with their 'anti-modern', or at least anti-liberal ideology, is illustrated in their attitude to women. On the one hand, most of these movements, as Martin Riesebrodt has shown in his incisive analysis, promulgate a strong patriarchal, anti-feminist attitude which tends to segregate women and to impose far-reaching restrictions on them seemingly, but only seemingly of a type which can be found in many of the Arab regimes like Saudi Arabia.<sup>16</sup> Significantly enough, one of the first acts of the new government installed by the Afghan group of the Taliban which evinced more proto-fundamentalist than modern fundamentalist Jacobin tendencies in early October 1996 was to force out women from the public sphere from schools and even from work, and in June 1997, the Taliban rulers in Kabul ordered the Iranian Ambassador to leave the country accusing Iran of attempts to undermine Taliban rule.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, in stark contrast to such traditionalistic regimes, the modern fundamentalist movements mobilise women, be it in demonstrations, paramilitary organisations, or the like. Indeed, the reshaping of the social and cultural construction of women, and the construction of a new public identity rooted in the Islamist vision, constituted a very important component in the fundamentalist programs in Iran or Turkey, and were very often supported by educated and professional women who felt alienated in the preceding secular public space. In the 1996 Iranian elections women not only voted, but also stood as candidates to the parliament and were

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1978); S.N. Eisenstadt, 'Frameworks of the Great Revolutions: Culture, Social Structure, History, and Human Agency', *International Social Science Journal*, no. 133 (1992): 385–401; and S.N. Eisenstadt, 'Transcendental Vision, Center Formation, and the Role of Intellectuals', in *Centre and Ideas and Institutions*, eds. Liah Greenfeld and Michel Martin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

<sup>16</sup> Martin Riesebrodt, *Fundamentalismus as Patriarchalische Protestbewegung* (Tuebingen: Mohr, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> John F. Burns, 'The West in Afghanistan, Before and After', *New York Times*, 18 February 1996, 3; John F. Burns, 'Misery is Still Afghanistan's Ruler', *New York Times*, 23 April 1995, 4; Charles Hedges, 'Islam Bent into Ideology: Vengeful Vision of Hope', *New York Times*, 23 October 1994, 2; Charles Schmidt-Hauer, 'Afghanistan im Eigenen Land', *Die Zeit*, 23 December 1994, 3; M. Luders, 'Allahs Wahrheit im Computer', *Die Zeit*, 16 September 1994, 49; and E. Hunziker, 'Qom—heilige Stadt der Mullahs', *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, 20/21 November 1993, 84–86.

elected, one of them (Ms. Rafsanjani, the daughter of the then President) claiming that there is nothing in Islamic law which forbids women to take public office. Later on women constituted a very important element in the contestations between the more open and conservative forces.

The strong modern components of many of the fundamentalist movements can also be seen in some aspects of their institutionalisation as regimes. When the Islamic revolution triumphed in Iran, it did not abolish most of the modern institutions—basically without any roots in Islam—such as the parliament, the *majilis*, and elections to it, and even the Presidency of Republic. The importance of the presidential elections was demonstrated in May 1997, when against the implicit advice or recommendation of the clerical establishment, a more ‘open-minded’ candidate, Muhammad Khatami, was elected, supported mainly by the vote of women and younger people. Both the *majilis* and the mode of election to it were reconstructed, with some very strong Jacobin elements, clothed in an Islamic garb. Interestingly enough, one of these garbs, the institutionalisation of a special Islamic court or chamber to supervise ‘secular’ legislation, was not so far removed from the special place of juridical institution which is characteristic of modern constitutional regimes, even from the principle of judicial review of legalisation. Moreover, the basic mode of legitimation of this regime as stated in the constitution contained some very important modern components. It declared, without attempting to reconcile, two different sources of sovereignty, God and the people—albeit indeed ‘people as the faithful’.<sup>18</sup>

Because of this Jacobin tendency or predisposition, modern fundamentalist movements face a continuous tension inherent in most sectarian movements, but which is exacerbated in the contemporary context. It amounts to the strain between a strong participatory orientation rooted very much in modern conceptions of centre-periphery relations, and authoritarian tendencies inherent in their basic sectarian ideologies. Concomitantly there developed in these move-

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<sup>18</sup> See for instance, Said Amir Arjomand, ‘Shi‘ite Jurisprudence and Constitution Making in the Islamic Republic of Iran’, in *Fundamentalisms and the State*, eds. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 88–109; and Ladan Borumand and Roya Baroum, ‘Reform at an Impasse’, *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 4 (2000): 114–29.

ments a continual tension between the more instrumental and pragmatic, potentially secular orientations, and the more radical Jacobin religio-political ones.

## XI

Here it might be worthwhile to compare the fundamentalist movements with some of the more extreme, seemingly communal-nationalist movements and the various communal-religious movements. The later have become very prominent recently—albeit containing earlier historical roots—in many Asian countries, especially in India and in Buddhist countries in South and South East Asia, and have been often mistakenly lumped together with the fundamentalist movements.

The communal-national movements share with the fundamentalist movements some very important characteristics, especially attempts to construct a new religious communal identity, communal boundaries, tendencies to ritualisation of violence, and a strong anti-secular stance. They constitute, together with fundamentalist movements and with many Western social movements, a shift from the hegemony of some of the ideals of the Enlightenment in the construction of modern nation-states, its institutions, and in the collective consciousness or identity of modern societies. Yet most of these movements differ in several very crucial ways from the 'pristine' fundamentalist movements analysed above, as well as from the European fascist and national-socialist movements. First, their major orientations are particularistic, primordial, and not universalistic. Indeed, they are consciously anti-universalistic, emphasising the distinctiveness of their community, and they distance themselves from the secular order of modernity. Unlike, however, the European fascist or national-socialist movements, communal-religious movements do not conceive of the universalistic components of the cultural and political program of modernity as an *internal* reference point, or a component of the constitution of their internal cultural face, but, in a way 'negate' it altogether, as an external feature.

Second, they do not espouse strong conceptions of the reconstruction of the social order according to a vision rooted in an ontological conception. In the case of these communal-national religious movements, the construction of very strong communal boundaries and the promulgation of many sectarian tendencies, symbols, and

rituals, especially those which emphasise the distinctiveness of and purity of its own collectivity as against the pollution of the others, does not necessarily entail a totalitarian reconstruction of society, although such tendencies may indeed develop within them. Most of them harbour a strong particularistic vision of exclusion, but very few develop into a fully totalistic-Jacobin direction, as they refrain from advocating the reconstruction of society by a politically active centre.

Some of these movements attempted to develop new doctrinal moral contents or canons, in ways contrary to whatever was seen as the centre of 'classical' Hinduism. These inventions entailed attempts at a soteriological revaluation of the political arena, far beyond what was prevalent in the historical tradition of these civilisations. The Hindu movements which attempted to construct such a totalistic view tended usually to invent some of the religious elements like the 'holy script' which are central in contemporary fundamentalist movements. But the promulgation of religious overtones and themes was not on the whole very successful or as in the case of the reconstruction of Vedic rituals, limited to particular sectors of the population.

The same is true—even if, given the stronger political orientations of Theravada Buddhism, to a smaller extent—of Buddhist countries, especially Sri-Lanka, even if, as Gananath Obeyeskeyere has shown, apolitical fundamentalist orientations, groups, or movements may in these circumstances develop.<sup>19</sup> It is only insofar as such national components are closely interwoven with strong universalistic orientations based, as is the case, on scriptural exegesis, that such movements do develop such strong Jacobin orientations and organisational characteristics.

## XII

The basic attitudes of the communal-religious movements to modernity can be compared not only to those of socialism or communism, as was the case with respect to the fundamentalist movements, but

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<sup>19</sup> Gananath Obeyeskeyere, 'Buddhism, Nationhood, and Cultural Identity: A Question of Fundamentals', in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*. See also H.L. Seneviratne, *The Work of Kings: The New Buddhism in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

to those of the fascist or national-socialist ones. Both have aimed at the construction of new collective identities, new collective boundaries, as well as the materialisation of a new vision through political action. These latter movements differed, however, in their basic attitudes to modernity both from the socialist and communist movements, which they actually confronted, as well as from the later fundamentalist ones. These national movements, especially the extreme fascist or national-socialist, aimed above all at the reconstruction of the boundaries of modern collectivities, and entailed the confrontation between universalistic and more particularistic or ascriptive components of construction of collective identity of the modern regimes. Their stark criticism of the existing modern order included an extreme negation of the universalistic components of the cultural program of modernity, especially in its Enlightenment version, hence they also showed less missionary zeal transcending national boundaries.<sup>20</sup>

A rather similar picture developed with respect to the attitude of the fascist and national socialist movements to technology. In their acceptance of the technological or instrumental aspects of modernity together with the denial of any sovereignty or autonomy of reason and of the individual, they were seemingly similar to the fundamentalist movements. However, the fascist and national socialist movements strongly emphasised the primacy and autonomy of human will—even if not of reason, indeed in many ways against abstract reason—thus sharing a basic Enlightenment component of the cultural program of modernity. As against this, fundamentalism criticised this program from, as it were, the outside, emphasising in principle the submission of human will to divine commandments, even if at the same time emphasising—paradoxically enough—in a strongly modern mode, the importance of moral choice.

Similarly, contemporary communal-religious movements, such as those which developed in Indian and in some South and South-East Asiatic societies, do not exhibit such extreme Jacobin characteristics, yet are in ideological and in some institutional dimension very similar to the earlier fascist movements, except that they do indeed promulgate very strongly the religious component in the construction of

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<sup>20</sup> Renzo de Felice, *Il Fascismo: Le Interpretazioni dei Contemporanei e degli Storici* (Bari: Laterza, 1970) and Ernst Junger, *Le Fascisme, un Totalitarisme à l'Italienne* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1988).

their national collective identity. In all these ways these movements and their programs constitute part and parcel of the modern political agenda: they all attempt to appropriate and interpret modernity on their own terms.

### XIII

Such attempts to appropriate and interpret modernity in their own terms have not been confined to the fundamentalist or communal-national movements. They constitute a part of a set of much wider developments which have been taking place throughout the world, in Muslim, Indian, and Buddhist societies, seemingly continuing, yet indeed in a markedly transformed way, the contestations between different earlier reformist and traditional religious movements that developed throughout non-Western societies. In these movements, the basic tensions inherent in the modern program, especially those between the pluralistic and totalistic tendencies, between utopian or more open and pragmatic attitudes, between multifaceted as against closed identities, are played out more in terms of their own religious traditions grounded in their respective Axial religions than in those of European Enlightenment, although they are greatly influenced by the latter and especially by the participatory traditions of the Great Revolutions, especially indeed their Jacobin orientations or components.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, one can identify some very significant parallels between these various religious, and the different postmodern movements, such as environmental and women's movements. All these movements share a concern which constituted a basic theme of the discourse of modernity from its beginning in Europe: the relations between their identities and the universalistic themes promulgated by the respective hegemonic programs of modernity. Today above all this concern is reflected in the relation between such 'authentic' identities and the presumed American cultural and political ideological hegemony on the contemporary scene. The fear of erosion of local cultures and the impact of globalisation is also continuously

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<sup>21</sup> See S.N. Eisenstadt, 'The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics', *European Journal of Sociology* 23, no. 2 (1982): 294-314.

connected with an ambivalence towards these centres giving rise to a continuous oscillation between this cosmopolitanism and various 'particularistic' tendencies. Within all these different movements there develop different combinations of diverse cultural themes and patterns, and they continually compete about who presents the proper 'answer' for the predicament of cultural globalisation and ambivalences to them.<sup>22</sup>

The continuing salience of the tensions between pluralist and universalist programs, between multifaceted versus closed identities, and the continual ambivalence to new centres of modernity toward the major centres of cultural hegemony, attest to the fact that, while going beyond the model of the nation-state, these new movements have not gone beyond the basic problematics of modernity, and such problematics constitute a central component in their discourses. They all are deeply reflexive, aware that no answer to the tensions inherent in modernity is final. Even if each in its own way seeks to provide final, incontestable answers to modernity's irreducible dilemmas, they have reconstituted the problem of modernity in these new historical contexts, in new ways.

#### XIV

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 crystallised in the framework of monotheistic—Muslim, Jewish and some Christian—civilisations, in which even in their modern post-revolutionary permutations, the political arena has been perceived as the major arena of the implementation of the transcendental utopian visions. In contrast, the ideological reconstruction of the political centre in a Jacobin mode has been much weaker in civilisations with 'other-worldly' orientations—especially in India and to a somewhat smaller extent in Buddhist countries—in

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<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural Identity and Global Process* (London: Sage, 1994) and Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

which the political order was not perceived as an area of the implementation of the transcendental vision, even though very strong modern political orientations or dimensions tend to develop also within them.<sup>23</sup> Concomitantly, some of the distinct ways in which modern democracies developed in India or Japan, have indeed been greatly influenced by the respective cultural traditions and historical experience of those societies.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup>

This, however, has of course also been the case with the first, European modernity which was deeply rooted in specific European civilisational premises and historical experience.<sup>26</sup> But, as was indeed the case in Europe, all these 'historical' or 'civilisational' influences did not simply perpetuate the old 'traditional' pattern of political institution or dynamics. In all of them both the broad, 'inclusivist' universalisms of seemingly traditional and primordial 'exclusivist' tendencies are constructed in typically modern ways, and continually articulate, in different concrete ways in different historical settings, the antinomies and contradictions of modernity.

## XV

While the contemporary fundamentalist and communal-religious-national movements are indeed modern, comparable in many ways to communist or to fascist ones, they do yet evince some very important distinct characteristics which distinguish them from these earlier ones. The crucial difference lies in their perception of the confrontation between the basic premises of the cultural and political program of modernity as it crystallised in the West and the non-Western civilisation, with very far-reaching implications for the domestic and international political arenas. These new interpretations of modernity contain some very important new features, especially the re-interpretation of the relation between modernity and the West. These

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<sup>23</sup> Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolutions*.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Eisenstadt and Azmon, *Socialism and Tradition*.

<sup>26</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *European Civilization in a Comparative Perspective* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1987).



movements, including significantly many of the postmodern ones which emerged in the West, attempt to dissociate completely Westernisation from modernity. They deny the monopoly or hegemony of Western modernity, and the acceptance of the Western modern cultural program as the epitome of modernity. This highly confrontational attitude to what is conceived as Western, is closely related to an effort to appropriate modernity and the global system on their own non-Western, often anti-Western, yet modern terms.

Contemporary social movements, however, display a seeming negation of at least some premises of modernity, as well as a confrontational attitude to the West. In contrast to communist and socialist movements, including the Muslim or African socialists, the contemporary fundamentalist and religious communal movements promulgate a radically negative attitude to some of the central Enlightenment—and even Romantic—components of the cultural and political program of modernity, especially to the emphasis on the autonomy and sovereignty of reason and of the individual. Fundamentalist groups propose an ideological denial of these ‘Enlightenment’ premises, and a basically confrontational attitude not only to Western hegemony but to the West as such, usually conceived in totalistic and essentialist ways. These fundamentalist movements, while minimising in principle, if not in practice, the particularistic components of the communal-national ones, ground their denial or their opposition to the Enlightenment in the universalistic premises of their respective religions or civilisations, as newly interpreted by them.<sup>27</sup> Significantly, in all these movements socialist or communist themes or symbols were no longer strongly emphasised. Themes of social justice were usually discussed in terms of their own traditions, often portrayed as inherently superior to the materialistic socialist ‘Western’ ones. In this context, it is very interesting to note that the activists especially in various Muslim Arab countries, who were drawn to different socialist themes and movements became very active in the fundamentalist and also in some of the communal movements of the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Farhad Khosrokhavar, ‘L’Universel Abstrait, le Politique et la Construction de l’Islamisme comme Forme d’Alterité’, in *Une Société Fragmentée?*, ed. Michel Wieviorka (Paris: Editions La Decouverte, 1996) and Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>28</sup> See Timur Kuran, ‘The Economic Impact of Islamic Fundamentalism’, in

In the context of these new social movements, the confrontation with the West does not take the form of a search to become incorporated into hegemonic civilisation on their own terms, but rather of attempting to appropriate the new international global scene, indeed modernity, for themselves. They intend to diffuse modern idioms within their traditions as the former are ceaselessly promulgated and reconstructed under the impact of their continual encounter with the West.

At the same time, the rising political importance of fundamentalist movements entails a shift of the major arenas of contestations and of crystallisation of multiple modernities, from the nation-state to new sub-national and transnational spaces. All these movements aim for a worldwide reach and diffusion through various media.<sup>29</sup> They are highly politicised, formulating their programs in highly political and ideological terms, continually reconstructing their collective identities in reference to the new global context. The debate and confrontation in which they engage may indeed be formulated in 'civilisational' terms, but these very terms—indeed the very term 'civilisation' as constructed in such a discourse—are already couched in modernity's new language, in totalistic, essentialistic, and absolutising terms. Indeed the very pluralisation of life spaces in the global framework endows these movements with highly ideological absolutising orientations, and at the same time allows them to occupy the central political arena.

## XVI

All these developments attest to the continual reinterpretation, reconstruction of the cultural program of modernity, of the construction of multiple modernities and of multiple interpretations of modernity; to attempts by various groups and movements to reappropriate modernity and redefine the discourse of modernity in their own new terms;

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*Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies and Militance*, eds. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Timur Kuran, 'Islam and Underdevelopment: An Old Puzzle Revisited', *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 153, no. 1 (1997): 41–79; and Timur Kuran, 'The Genesis of Islamic Economics: A Chapter in the Politics of Muslim Identity', *Social Research* 64, no. 2 (1997): 301–38.

<sup>29</sup> Eickelman and Anderson, *New Media in the Muslim World*.

and more crucially, to the de-Westernisation of modernity, to the attempt of depriving the West from monopoly of modernity. In this broad context, European or Western modernity or modernities are not seen as *the* only real modernity, but as one of multiple modernities. Whilst the common starting point of many of these processes was indeed the cultural program of modernity as it developed in the West, more recent developments gave rise to a multiplicity of cultural and social formations which go far beyond the very homogenising and hegemonising aspects of this original version. The de-Westernisation of modernity involves the growing diversification of the visions and understanding of modernity, of the basic cultural agendas of different sectors of modern societies, far beyond the homogenic and hegemonic visions of modernity that were prevalent in the 1950s.

The challenge of the Western monopoly of modernity by 'modern' non-Western movements does not signify the 'end of history' in the sense of the end of ideological confrontational clashes between different cultural programmes of modernity. Nor does it entail a 'clash of civilisations' which seemingly deny the basic premises of modernity. The importance of the historical experiences of various civilisational 'traditions' and historical experience in shaping the concrete contours of different modern societies does not mean that these processes give rise to several closed civilisations which constitute continuations of their respective historical pasts and patterns. Rather, these different experiences influence the ways in which continually interacting modernities, cutting across any single society or civilisation and constituting incessant mutual reference points, crystallise in continually changing ways. The presence of multiple modernities has certainly undermined the old hegemonies, but at the same time it has been closely connected—perhaps paradoxically—with the development of new multiple common reference points and networks, through the globalisation of cultural networks and channels of communication, far beyond what existed before.<sup>30</sup>

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## XVII

Such developments may indeed give rise also to highly confrontational stances—especially against the West—but these stances are expressed in continually changing modern idioms. These movements may develop in contradictory directions, into a more open pluralistic way as well as the opposite contestational directions, manifest in growing inter-religious or inter-ethnic conflicts. When such clashes or contestations become combined with political, military, or economic struggles and conflicts they usually lead to an intensification of violence. It is mainly the combination of religious and ‘modern’ components and orientations which is characteristic of many of these movements, and brings out on the contemporary scene the dark side or potential of modernity as well as of religion. This attests to the fact that the continual expansions of modernity throughout the world were not very benign or peaceful, they did not constitute the continual progress of reason.

These processes were continually interwoven with wars, violence, genocides, repression, and dislocation of large sections of populations, sometimes of entire societies. Although in the optimistic view of modernity such wars, genocides, and repressions were often portrayed as being against the basic grain of the program of modernity, often as ‘survivals’ of premodern attitudes, it became recognised that in fact they were very closely interwoven with it. They were inherent in the ideological premises of modernity, as well as its expansion, and within the specific patterns of the institutionalisation of modern societies and regimes. Wars and genocide which were not, of course, new in the history of mankind, became radically transformed and intensified, generating continuous tendencies to specifically modern barbarism. The most important manifestation of this transformation was the ideologisation of violence, terror, and war that became most vivid first in the context of the French Revolution. Ideologisation became a central component of the constitution of nation-states, with those states becoming the most important agent—and arena—of constitution of citizenship and symbols of collective identity.

The Holocaust, which took place in the very centre of modernity, became a symbol of the negative, destructive potentialities of modernity, of the barbarism lurking within the very core of modernity. Moreover, the crystallisation of modernity in Western and Central

Europe and its later expansion, especially under the aegis of imperialism and colonialism, were continually interwoven with wars, repression, and dislocations which were very often legitimised in terms of some of the components of the cultural programs of modernity.

Whilst such destructive potentialities are indeed inherent in modernity, and their most extreme manifestations develop in close relation to some components of the cultural program of modernity, they have also very strong roots in the world's major religions. The cultural program of some of the great religions—especially the monotheistic—with their claims to be the bearers of absolute truth and with their strong universalistic, missionary tendencies, contains some very aggressive and destructive potentialities. These potentialities were manifest in the actions of the proto-fundamentalist sects, some of which presented the harbinger of the cultural program of modernity. Above all, they infused the Jacobin components of modernity, and can return again to the fore by becoming fused with the religious dimension of contemporary social movements.

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## INDEX OF NAMES

- Ackerman, Bruce 523  
 Adorno, Theodor 190  
 Allinson, Gary 740  
 Almagor, U. 181, 182–183  
 Althusser, Louis 614  
 Ando Shoeki 448  
 Appendurai, Arjun 532  
 Appleby, Joyce 754  
 Arai Hakuseki 486  
 Arendt, Hannah 401  
 Arévalo de León, Bernardo 267, 273  
 Arjomand, Said 416, 417, 420, 604, 638, 941  
 Arnason, Johann 545, 663  
 Aron, Raymond 46, 669  
 Asad, Talal 403  
 Asoka (ruler of India) 791, 796  
 Augustine 645  
 Al Azmeh, Aziz 422, 423–424
- Baechler, Jean 579, 580, 583, 584, 606  
 Baer, Jizchak Fritz 382, 383  
 Bailey, Susan 793–794  
 Baron, Salo 776  
 Basu, A. 822  
 Befu Harumi 447  
 Beidelman, O. 182  
 Beinart, Haim 382  
 Beit-Arieh, Malachi 377  
 Bell, Daniel 752  
 Bellah, Robert N. 396, 676, 723, 727, 749, 753, 754, 755  
 Ben-David, J. 593, 604  
 Bercovitch, Sacvan 753  
 Berlin, Isaiah 667  
 Besancon, Alan 570  
 Bloch, Marc 71, 840  
 Bobbio, Norberto 665–666  
 Bowersock, G. 350  
 Buber, Martin 2, 219  
 Burton, ? 905
- Castoriadis, Cornelius 493  
 Chadda, Maya 824–827  
 Chandragupta (emperor of India) 334, 800  
 Chirot, Daniel 579, 580, 693
- Cochin, Albert 620, 628, 650  
 Cohen, Erik 190  
 Cohen, Gershon S. 380  
 Cohen, Shaye 365  
 Collins, R. 581–582, 583  
 Constantine 271, 347, 350
- Da Matta, Roberto 718  
 Dahrendorf, R. 908  
 Das Gupta, Jyotirindra 806–807, 810  
 De Bary, Theodore 283, 287  
 Descartes, René 500, 542, 656  
 Diamond, ? 908  
 Drijvers, H.J.W. 350  
 Dubnov, Simon 383  
 Dumont, Louis 332, 347, 787, 800  
 Durkheim, Emile 79, 168, 169, 210, 249, 503, 521, 535, 724, 877, 954
- Eickelman, Dale 428, 555  
 Eisenstadt, S.N. 281  
 Elias, Norbert 79, 109, 500, 658  
 Eliot, T.S. 191  
 Elon, Menachem 772  
 Erasmus, Desiderius 500, 542, 656  
 Ertman, Thomas 901–902
- Faubian, James D. 105, 495, 537–538, 563, 882, 956–957  
 Field, Norma 485  
 Fingarette, Herbert 285–286, 474  
 Firth, Raymond 220  
 Fisher, Shlomo 272  
 Foucault, Michel 16, 109, 406, 407–408, 500, 658  
 France, Anatole 907  
 Franke, Herbert 283  
 Fukuyama, Francis 511, 519, 953  
 Furet, F. 620, 628, 650
- Gallait, R. 788  
 Gamliel, Rabban 769  
 Gandhi, Indira 784, 785, 815, 820  
 Gandhi, Mahatma 806, 807  
 Gellner, Ernest 246, 422, 580, 581, 582, 688  
 Gerber, Haim 415  
 Giddens, Anthony 614

- Ginsberg, Morris 219  
 Gluckman, Max 182  
 Goldstone, Jack 625-626, 631  
 Göle, Nilüfer 546, 555, 559  
 Goodwin-Raheja, Gloria 788, 799  
 Gould, Elina H. 751  
 Gramsci, Antonio 404, 406, 604, 637  
 Grimm, T. 303  
 Gunther, ? 905  
  
 Habermas, Jürgen 190, 400, 530  
 Hakuseki, ? 486  
 Hall, John 579, 580, 581, 583, 584  
 Hannerz, Ulf 532  
 Hansen, T.B. 408  
 Harrison, Selig 781, 784  
 Hartman, Harriet 274-275  
 Hartz, Louis 701  
 Havel, Vaclav 680, 686, 696-699  
 Hayashi Razan 314  
 Heesterman, Jan 329, 330, 331,  
     332-333, 339, 787  
 Heffner, Robert 416  
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich 399  
 Heideking, Jürgen 548  
 Helman, Sarit 265, 275  
 Herder, J. 657  
 Herzog, Tamar 117-118  
 Heyd, Michael 188, 189  
 Highley, ? 905  
 Hintze, Otto 587, 837  
 Hirschman, Albert O. 400  
 Hobhouse, L.T. 219, 220  
 Hobsbawm, Eric 620  
 Hodgson, Marshall 405, 409, 415  
 Hoexter, Miriam 409, 410, 415-416  
 Hofstadter, Richard 730  
 Homans, G. 166  
 Honneker, E. 682  
 Horwitz, Elliot 381  
 Humboldt, Alexander von 702  
 Humphreys, S.C. 230  
 Huntington, Samuel P. 511, 519,  
     531, 537, 710, 730, 862, 953-954  
  
 Ibn Khaldoun 246, 422, 424-425  
 Inden, Ronald 471, 801  
 Inkeles, Alex 106, 496, 538  
 Innis, Harold 702  
  
 Jalal, A. 819  
 Jaspers, Karl 183, 197-198, 221, 250,  
     282, 288, 359, 763, 833  
  
 Jepperson, Ron 109  
 Jositt, K. 681  
 Jowett, Ken 700  
  
 Kaplan, Steve 188, 189  
 Katz, Elihu 192  
 Katz, Jacob 372-373, 393, 772  
 Kaviraj, Sudipta 814-816, 820  
 Khatami, Muhammad 968  
 Khilnani, Sunil 804  
 Koebner, Richard 219  
 Kohli, Atul 808-809, 820  
 Kolakowski, Leszek 518, 560, 570,  
     571, 924  
 Konrád, György 686, 928  
 Koschmann, Victor 449  
  
 Lefort, Claude 663  
 Lerner, Dan 106, 496, 538  
 Levi, Margaret 878  
 Levi-Strauss, C. 614  
 Levtzion, Nehemia 409, 410, 415-416  
 Lewis, Bernard 246, 412, 422  
 Lijphart, Arend 809, 813, 814  
 Lipset, Seymour 702, 710, 850, 897  
 Lubbe, H. 667  
 Luther, Martin 649  
 Luthy, R. 592, 596  
  
 MacNeill, W. 579  
 Maimonides, Moses 386, 389, 765,  
     774  
 Malinowski, B. 166  
 Malla, Martin 570  
 Manabe Kasufum 447  
 Mann, M. 581  
 March, James G. 605, 638  
 Marcus, Maria 945  
 Marx, Karl 2, 55, 169, 503, 521,  
     535, 724, 906, 954  
 Marx, Leo 732  
 Matsumoto, Shigeru 307-308  
 Mehta, Pratap 792, 802, 806,  
     827-828  
 Metzger, Thomas A. 287, 303  
 Meyer, John 109  
 Momigliano, Arnaldo Dante 383  
 Montaigne, Michel Eyquem de 500,  
     542, 656  
 Moog, Vienna 707  
 Mosca, G. 731  
 Moses (prophet) 768  
 Muir, Edward 181

- Munson, Henry 422  
 Muramatsu, Michio 740  
 Mus, Paul 189, 312  
  
 Naipaul, V.S. 473  
 Nehru, Motilal 808  
 Nettel, R. 709, 862  
 Neusner, Jacob 769 n1  
 Nolte, Sharon 738  
 Nosco, P. 746 n42  
  
 Obeysekere, Gananath 184, 200, 970  
 Offe, Claus 878  
 Okimoto, D. 449  
 Olsen, J. 605, 638  
 Ortiz, Renato 548  
 Ozouf, Mona 650  
  
 Parsons, Talcott 58  
 Perdue, P. 320  
 Perot, Ross 741  
 Poggi, G. 593, 604  
 Pollock, Sheldon 406-407, 469, 472, 792  
 Price, Pamela 800, 802  
 Przeworski, Adam 893  
 Pye, Lucian 607  
  
 Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 166  
 Rao, Narayana 472  
 Reiniche, M.L. 788-789, 795, 800, 828  
 Riesebrodt, Martin 967  
 Robertson, Roland 532  
 Rodinson, Maxime 411, 619  
 Rokkan, ? 897  
 Roniger, Luis 4, 10, 117-118, 858  
 Rosaldo, Renato 614-615  
 Rosetti, Carlo 27-28  
 Rudolph, L.L. 790  
 Rudolph, S.H. 790  
 Rustow, A. 905  
  
 Saberwal, Satish 821  
 Said, Edward 402, 418  
 Sartre, J.P. 76-77  
 Schild, E.O. 10  
 Schluchter, Wolfgang 17, 282, 582  
 Schneider, D.M. 78  
 Schwartz, Benjamin 198, 284-285, 401, 474  
 Seligman, Adam 265, 273, 752-753  
 Seth, D.L. 816-818  
  
 Shabbetai Zvi 272  
 Sharon, M. 413  
 Shils, Edward 2, 3, 12, 31, 60, 136, 181, 191, 249, 264, 523, 543, 667  
 Shulman, David 472, 795  
 Silber, Ilana F. 187, 188  
 Sisson, Richard 807  
 Sivan, Emanuel 423  
 Skinner, William 296  
 Smith, R.G. 749  
 Sofer, Hatam 947  
 Sombart, Werner 521, 675-677, 719, 728, 850, 851, 931  
 Sonoda Hidehiro 443  
 Sprinborg, Patricia 418  
 Subrahmanyam, Sanjay 795  
 Swidler, Ann 15-16  
  
 Talmon, S. 364  
 Tambiah, Stanley J. 237, 322-323, 324, 552, 803  
 Tanaka, Stefan 123  
 Tao 284-285  
 Timer, T. 738  
 Tinbergen, Jan 925  
 Tiriyakian, E. 652  
 Tito, Marshal 690  
 Tocqueville, Alexis de 624, 702, 751, 815, 827-828, 847, 906  
 Tonnies, F. 169  
 Toulmin, Stephen 499, 542, 656  
 Toynbee, Arold Joseph 359, 376, 379  
 Tu Weiming 560  
 Turner, Victor 165, 180  
 Twersky, I. 386  
  
 Van der Lieuw, G. 853  
 Vico, G. 657  
 Voegelin, Eric 198, 390-391, 650, 668  
 Voll, John 425-426  
  
 Wagner, Peter 500, 542  
 al-Wahhab, Abd 425, 426  
 Wahida, M. 309-310  
 Walzer, Michael 619, 763  
 Warren, Mark 896  
 Watanabe, H. 746-747 n43  
 Waterbury, John 426  
 Webb, Hershel 623

- Weber, Max 2, 79–80 n11, 105,  
136, 161, 169, 197, 220, 269, 279,  
280, 281–283, 295, 299, 302, 345,  
357, 358, 359, 378, 383, 398, 407,  
408, 435, 474, 495, 500, 503, 521,  
535, 537–538, 562, 575, 577–578,  
580, 582, 583, 589, 590, 591, 596,  
637, 647, 649, 658, 676–677, 724,  
766, 842, 882, 906, 954, 956–957
- Weiner, Myron 811–812
- Weiss-Halivni, David 362
- Wilson, J.P. 166–167
- Wink, André 330, 336, 790
- Wittfogel, Karl 418
- Wittrock, Björn 537
- Yanaeus, Alexander (Hasmonean King)  
769
- Yehoshua, Rabbi 769
- Young, M. 181
- Yuval, Israel 380
- Zarett, D. 593, 604
- Zhivkov, Todor 682
- Zhu Xi 746–747 n43
- Zingerle, A. 302, 303

## INDEX OF SUBJECT

- Abbasid revolution 618, 630  
absolutism 626, 634  
absolutizing tendencies 569, 570  
accountability of rulers 37, 184,  
185–186, 206, 743, 945  
in Axial civilizations 22, 37, 184,  
185–186, 206, 225, 251, 257, 289,  
363, 422, 604, 620, 629, 648,  
661, 764, 834  
in European civilization 242–243  
institutionalization of 241, 242–243  
in Japanese civilization 310,  
745–747  
in post-Axial civilizations 232, 233,  
235, 239, 240, 241, 245–247  
in pre-Axial civilizations 222  
activists  
in modernity 107–108  
political 529, 650–651  
Afghanistan, Taliban regime in 967  
Africa  
centers in 63–64  
societies in 65, 182–183  
age groups 4  
agency  
comparative approach to 56  
human 537, 562, 638–639, 652,  
659  
problem of 407–408  
and social structure 2, 9, 54,  
613–614  
*Ahavat Israel* (Love of Israel) 761  
alienation 844  
alternative modernities 545  
ambivalence  
towards globalization 129, 513–514  
towards modernity 128–129,  
512–513, 550, 557  
towards social order 166–167, 168,  
170, 174, 175, 561, 562  
towards the West 549, 550  
American civilizations  
collective identities in 116–120,  
703–704, 710, 712–714, 718, 728,  
748–754  
confrontations with Western  
civilization 704, 706  
elites in 714–715, 721  
institutional patterns in 707–708  
interaction between settlers,  
indigenous population and slave  
population 716–717, 718  
liberalism in 721  
modernity in 547–548, 675,  
701–703, 704–705, 721–722  
political dynamics in 719, 740–742  
populism in 720–721, 729, 741  
protest movements in 719–720,  
726–729, 730–731, 733, 739, 742,  
756, 848, 862, 863  
*see also* Canada; Latin America;  
United States  
American cultural programmes 509,  
514, 556, 730, 972  
American revolution 712, 748, 749,  
751  
the ‘American Way’ 732  
anarchic impulses in society, and social  
order 645, 646  
anarchism, in Jewish political tradition  
761–762, 763, 764, 765–766, 770,  
775–776  
ancient Egypt 221, 222  
ancient Greece 251, 834  
ancient Israelite civilization 225, 251,  
362–363, 834  
anthropologists, symbolic 14  
anti-modernism 511, 512, 530–531,  
536, 552  
of fundamentalist movements 946,  
965  
anti-politics 686  
anti-systems 831–832  
anti-Westernism 130, 516–517, 536,  
552, 557, 920, 962, 975–976  
antimonian tendencies  
in Jewish civilization 386–387  
in modernity 541, 544, 654–655,  
886, 959  
anxiety, existential 166, 561–562  
Arabic, sacred language of Islam 412  
archaic societies 90  
armies, attachment to 927  
asceticism  
Christian 346, 349–350, 351  
Jewish 387

- ascriptive collectivities 96, 216, 235  
 Asian mode of production, Marxist  
   discussion on 418, 419  
 Asian societies, Western analysis of  
   403, 405–406  
 assimilation, of Jews 393  
 associational life, and political parties  
   901–902  
 auspiciousness, Hindu value orientation  
   towards 331–332, 466–467, 789,  
   799  
 authentic identities 556, 972  
 authenticity  
   search for, in Japanese civilization  
     447  
   traditional, ideologies of 547  
 autonomy  
   of elites 66, 67, 201–202, 227, 234,  
     235–236, 240, 253, 261, 291,  
     297–298, 311, 317, 337, 445–446,  
     629, 715  
   institutional 155  
   of law 38, 206, 241–242, 251, 834  
   of man 47, 252, 339, 562, 564,  
     652–653, 654, 655, 658, 957  
   and modernity 496, 500, 538–539,  
     542, 883  
   of religious organizations 162,  
     256–257  
   of social sectors  
   in China 479–480  
   in India 471, 801–802  
 Axial age 197, 221, 282  
   revolutions 198–200  
   second 494, 501  
 Axial civilizations 36–38, 67, 91n 35,  
   183–184, 223, 250, 288–289, 359,  
   628–630, 763, 938  
   analysis of 17–18, 62, 66–69, 195,  
     676, 833–835  
   centers in 92, 98, 188, 189,  
     204–205, 289  
   change in 95–96, 213–214  
   Christian 45  
   civilizational dynamics in 18–19,  
     40, 184, 200–201, 208–210  
   civilizational frameworks in 465,  
     636  
   collective identities in 91–94, 95–96  
   collectivities in 92, 93–94, 96, 185,  
     223  
   cultural creativity in 261  
   cultural programmes of 92, 93  
   discontinuities in 485, 487  
   elites in 17–18, 38–39, 41–42, 44,  
     67, 92–93, 201–202, 211, 212,  
     225–226, 253, 256, 274, 604, 634,  
     647  
     clerics 201, 211, 250, 252–253,  
       833  
     intellectuals 67, 92, 201, 202,  
       211, 212, 225, 250, 252–256,  
       628, 763–764, 833  
   new 156–157, 201–202, 225, 227,  
     290–291, 763  
   encounters with other civilizations  
     42, 487  
   expansion of 41–42, 94  
   heterodoxies and sectarianism in  
     18–19, 187, 189, 212, 276,  
     279–280, 290, 318, 390, 494,  
     502, 620, 647, 648–649, 668,  
     889, 938–939, 960  
   institutional dynamics in 44  
   law and human rights 206  
   liminal situations in 186–190  
   mundane order, reconstruction of  
     184–186  
   noncongruent societies in 69–70  
   orthodoxies in 211  
   political dynamics in 629  
   political order in 251  
   political systems in 98, 634  
   popular culture in 186  
   protest  
     movements 40, 187, 211–213,  
       268, 290, 300  
     themes of 647  
   reflexivity in 209, 266, 290, 643,  
     645  
   religions of 81  
   rituals in 186–187  
   rulers in 206, 604, 764, 834  
     accountability of 22, 37, 184,  
       185–186, 206, 225, 251, 257,  
       289, 363, 422, 604, 620, 629,  
       648, 661, 764, 834  
   salvation, conceptions of 632–633,  
     764  
   social conflict in 207  
   social division of labor in 18, 187  
   social hierarchies in 206–207  
   social integration in 210  
   social movements in 18, 39–40,  
     647, 909  
   solidarity in 210–211  
   tensions between reason and  
     revelation 643–644, 655



- transcendental order, tensions  
 between mundane order and  
 197, 198, 199–200, 202–203,  
 208, 225, 250, 252, 266–267,  
 268–269, 331, 474, 479, 643,  
 763, 798, 833
- transcendental visions in 628,  
 642–643, 646  
 multiplicity of 208–209, 643
- transformative capacities of 44–45
- trust in, extension of 880, 881
- universalistic components of 100
- utopian visions in 40, 209–210,  
 212, 265–266, 267–277, 390,  
 422–423, 425, 642, 646–648,  
 650, 668
- vernacularization in 101–104
- barbarism 561, 570  
 modern 114, 508, 546, 561, 571,  
 978
- behavior  
 and biology 166–167  
 and culture 14, 54  
 natural 165  
 reconstruction of 200  
 social 9, 16
- beliefs *see* religions
- Bhakti cults 597
- bhikkhu*, Buddhist ideal of 326,  
 601–602
- biological endowment of man  
 166–167, 169
- biology, and behavior 166–167
- BJP (Bharatiya Janta Party, India)  
 781, 811, 821–822, 825, 826
- The Black Book of Communism* (Besancon)  
 570
- bonding relations 167
- boundaries  
 construction of 75–76, 80, 91,  
 167–168, 541  
 crossing of 79, 176  
 institutionalization of 85  
 political, in Europe 104, 581  
 territorial, as part of collective  
 identities 103, 108–109, 541,  
 662, 704
- Brahminic ideology 322–323, 331,  
 467, 798
- Brahminization, of sectarianism in  
 India 795
- Brahmins, caste of 798, 799–800
- Brazil, collective identities in 718
- breakdown of regimes 22, 618–619,  
 620, 625–626, 636, 900–901  
 Communist 679–700  
 partial 908
- Buddhism 188–189, 260, 276, 312,  
 320–323, 338, 597  
 in China 300  
 expansion of 319–320, 327  
 fundamentalist movements in 951,  
 970  
 in Japan 305, 306–310, 311, 314,  
 315–317  
 Theravada 235–236, 321, 324
- Buddhist civilization 235–238  
 attitude towards mundane order  
 320, 601–602  
 compared to Christian civilizations  
 348  
 elites in 321–322, 326  
 political participation in 324–327  
 sectarianism and heterodoxies in  
 632  
 social hierarchies in 323–324
- Buddhist elites 235–238, 311,  
 321–322, 326
- Buddhist monks 601–602
- Buddhist sects 312, 313, 325,  
 326–327, 597, 599  
 in India 337–338  
 in Japan 307–308, 311, 314
- bureaucracy, in China 233–234, 258,  
 259, 297
- bureaucratic-cultural elites, in South  
 Vietnam 305–306
- bureaucratization, of social life 906
- Byzantine Empire, pluralism in 352,  
 587, 836
- Calvinism 585, 649
- Calvinists 161
- Canada 707, 719, 720
- capitalism  
 and democratic regimes 894  
 and Protestantism 583  
 and socialism 931  
 Weber's analysis of 435
- caste system in India 336, 466, 467,  
 584, 792–794, 797–798, 799–800,  
 933  
 changes in 814, 816–819  
 during colonial rule 805–806
- Catholicism 273, 357–358  
 compared to Protestantism  
 591–594, 596, 950–951

- in Europe 589, 705
- sectarian 649
- centers 12, 31, 60, 61, 249
  - ability to generate change 66
  - access to 862, 865, 883
  - and the charismatic dimension 136, 171, 660
  - differences between 61–62, 64–65, 69–70
  - of empires 61, 587–588
  - in feudal societies 837
  - hierarchies of 342
  - model-based 64, 66
  - of modern societies 108, 191, 262–263
  - of modernity
    - political 660, 661–662, 725
    - shifts in hegemony 127, 511, 553, 914
  - multiple 342, 352, 354, 580, 588, 606, 837–838, 841
  - organizational 63, 66
  - patrimonial 68
  - political 188, 189, 354, 468, 599, 685, 791, 921
    - of modernity 660, 661–662, 725
  - (re)construction of 37, 353, 457–458, 685–686, 710, 740
  - relations with periphery 48, 60–61, 63, 64, 92, 263, 293, 355–356, 459, 479, 497–498, 540, 587–588, 660, 661–662, 687–688, 689, 726, 791, 838, 841, 860, 867–868, 885
  - religious 354, 468
  - rituals of 179, 186
  - secularization of 263
  - strong 137, 157, 159
  - symbolism of 182
  - in traditional societies 139, 145
  - weak 137, 157, 158, 159
- change
  - attitudes towards 41, 143–153, 155–159, 160–161, 213–214
    - of elites 148–149, 152, 158–159, 160
  - centers' ability to generate 66
  - civilizational 183
  - continual 51
  - in democratic societies 894, 903
  - dimensions of 457
  - and heterodoxies 604
  - historical 638
  - ideological 909
  - institutional 140, 298–301, 303, 465–466, 912
  - in international system 909
  - in modern societies 191, 662, 875, 885, 906, 911–913
  - patterns of 613, 638
  - political, and civil society 901–902, 906–907
  - potentialities for 35, 180, 183, 638, 832
  - processes of 3, 27–28, 55, 289, 605, 615, 636
  - of regimes 422, 908
    - see also* breakdown of regimes
  - revolutionary 617–623, 627–628, 630–632, 636
  - structural 140–141, 145, 147–148
  - in traditional societies 139–141, 143
- chaos, fear of 77
- charisma
  - concept of 12, 60, 249
  - constructive and destructive aspects of 174–175
  - and institution building 12–13
  - and its routinization 2
- Charisma and Institution Building* (Eisenstadt) 12
- charismatic activities 77, 78, 138
- charismatic dimension
  - and centers 136, 171, 660
  - of life 171, 172, 174, 249–250
  - of social order 136, 249
- Chinese cities 295
- Chinese civilization 189, 230–235, 258, 261, 275, 284–288, 291, 298–303, 312–313, 421
  - bureaucracy in 233–234, 258, 259, 297
  - centers in 292–293, 298–299, 302, 475–476, 479–480
  - change in 475–478, 481, 484
  - civil society in 479–480
  - civility in 292, 479
  - (Neo-)Confucianism in 189, 230–231, 275–276, 281, 282–283, 285–286, 313, 474–476, 478
  - economy in 294–296
  - elites in 233–234, 258–259, 276–277, 296–298, 300–301, 480–481
  - historical consciousness in 478–479
  - intellectuals in 123, 233–234
    - see also* Confucian literati
  - mode of structuring the world 292–294, 296, 298
  - and modernity 288, 301–303

- political arena in 473, 479  
 protest movements in 475-477  
 sectarian movements in 299-300, 475-477  
 transcendental order, tensions  
     between mundane order and 474, 475, 479  
 utopian visions in 275-277  
 Weber's analysis of 281, 282-284, 295, 302, 474
- Christ**  
     central place of 349  
     institutional mediation of 585
- Christian civilizations** 243, 339-340, 345  
     compared to Buddhist civilization 348  
     crystallization of 347-348, 350  
     European 45, 351-356  
     utopian visions in 272-274
- Christianity** 339  
     asceticism in 346, 349-350, 351  
     centrality of eschatology 349  
     Church in 347, 355  
     conception of God 349  
     early 586  
     and Judaism 270-271, 345-346, 347, 358, 375, 379, 380, 586  
     monastic orders 349-350  
     sectarianism in 649  
     transcendental visions in 346, 348-349, 350  
     *see also* Catholicism; Protestantism
- Church, Christian** 347, 355
- cities**  
     Chinese 295  
     comparative analysis of 20  
     European 840
- citizenship**  
     conceptions of 109, 717, 750  
     redefinition of 127, 661, 912  
     in United States 750-751
- civic codes** 80, 85
- civil religion, in United States** 120, 396, 708, 713, 727, 749, 753-756, 861
- civil service, in India** 808
- civil society** 115, 399-400, 401, 569-570  
     in China 479-480  
     erosion of 908  
     in Europe 343-344, 460-461, 581, 690-691, 900, 928, 933  
     in India 336-337, 339, 471, 802, 825, 827, 829, 933  
     in Islam 633  
     in Jacobin ideology 665  
     in Japan 450, 451  
     and political change 901-902, 906-907  
     reconstruction of 907  
     in United States 752
- civil war, and revolution** 635
- civility**  
     in China 292, 479  
     in Israel 760  
     in Japanese civilization 745-747  
     in Jewish civilization 773
- civilizational change** 183
- civilizational collectivities** 7, 38, 41-42, 43-44, 237
- civilizational dynamics** 581  
     in Axial civilizations 18-19, 40, 184, 200-201, 208-210  
     in China 298  
     in India 465
- civilizational frameworks** 579  
     in Axial civilizations 465, 636  
     construction of 184, 185  
     in post-Axial civilizations 232-233, 235, 237
- civilizational religions** 319-320
- civilizational theory** 54, 56
- civilizations** 34-36  
     comparative analysis of 3, 17, 25, 28, 31, 54, 62, 70-71, 214-217, 255-264, 329-344, 579, 616, 782, 831  
     conflicts between 511, 517, 519, 531, 537, 558, 923, 953-954  
     crystallization of 701  
     historical experiences of 531, 652, 754, 786, 874, 977  
     modern 23, 24, 45-49, 52-53, 491, 493, 520, 522, 874-875  
     monotheistic 189, 238-243, 240, 262, 274-275, 379, 557-558, 644, 763, 921, 973  
     pagan 199  
     reflexivity of 37, 46-47, 457  
     world 42, 214
- civilized man, image of** 109
- civilizing mission, of modernity** 109
- clash of civilizations thesis (Huntington)** 511, 517, 519, 531, 537, 558, 923, 953-954, 977
- class consciousness** 913  
     in Europe 838-839, 840, 852, 855, 864-865  
     in Japan 734, 864-865, 870

- in Scandinavian countries 856
- in United States 728, 862
- class structure, in European civilization 854, 855
- class struggle 855, 913
- classical sociological theory 2
- classical studies of modernization 24, 45, 503, 520, 521, 535, 724, 954
- clerics
  - in Axial civilizations 201, 211, 250, 252–253, 833
  - see also* religious elites
- clientelistic relations
  - analysis of 4, 10–11, 19
  - in European societies 847, 858–860
- codes
  - of collective identities 79–81, 83, 85–86, 90, 94, 108, 111
  - crystallization of 603–604, 637
  - and institutional formations 604
- coercive elites 150, 152–153
- collective identities
  - codes of 79–81, 83, 85–86, 90, 94, 108, 111
  - and globalization 129
  - in modernity 30, 104, 107, 108–115, 498–499, 530, 541, 565–566, 567, 568–569, 662, 666–667, 742, 884–885, 887, 897, 958, 959
  - multiplicity of 89
  - and nation states 510–511, 547, 567
  - new patterns of 88, 125–126, 510, 551, 552–553
  - in non-Western societies 525, 961–962
  - and personal identities 145, 150–151
  - primordial components of 89, 116, 743, 748, 756
  - (re)construction of 31, 48, 75, 78–84, 86–90, 91–96, 129–130, 756, 757, 897–900
  - and fundamentalist movements 942–943
  - and institutional conditions 115
  - in modernity 104, 107, 108–115, 568–569, 662, 666–667, 742, 887, 897, 959
  - structure and symbols of 182
  - territoriality as component of 103, 108–109, 541, 662, 704
  - totalistic visions of 111–112
  - traditions as part of 138
  - and vernacularization 103–104
- collective memories 110, 111, 761
- collective rituals 82
- collectivist movements 394–395
- collectivities
  - ascriptive 96, 216, 235
  - in Axial civilizations 92, 93–94, 96, 185, 223
  - European 341, 353–354, 355, 460, 756
  - Jewish 362
  - civilizational 7, 38, 41–42, 43–44, 237
  - construction of boundaries of 75–76, 80, 91, 541
  - see also* collective identities, construction of
  - distinctiveness of 82–83
  - modern 107, 110–111, 498–499, 541, 544
  - national 108, 543, 566
  - in post-Axial civilizations 204, 239
  - in pre-Axial civilizations 221–222
  - religious 92, 185, 224
  - (re)structuring of 231–232, 260
- colonial rule, in India 803, 805–806
- commemorative artifacts 111
- common good
  - multiple interpretations of 497, 539, 564, 659, 663–664, 883, 892, 959
  - representatives of 907
  - revised notions of 888, 921
- communal religious movements 510, 512, 552, 560, 891, 909, 915, 924
- compared to fundamentalist movements 969–970
- and modernity 970–972, 974–975
- communication technology, role in revolutionary processes 681
- Communism
  - end of 696, 697
  - and National Socialism 570–571
- Communist Eastern Europe
  - centers of 685–686, 687–688, 689
  - civil society in 690–691
  - constitutional change in 683–684
  - contradictions within 687–691, 693, 694
  - elites in 683
  - intellectuals in 680, 682, 686
  - modernity in 692–694
  - movement to disintegration 679, 926

- religious elements in 687
- rulers in 682–683
- ruling groups in 694–695
- state and society in 926
- symbols of state in 684
- transformability of 699
- utopian and missionary elements, weakness of 685, 686
- Communist ideology 656
- Communist movement 545–546, 890, 965
  - Jacobin characteristics of 512, 554
  - in Japan 734, 736
- Communist regimes 121, 128, 554, 922, 926
  - breakdown of 679–700
  - compared to fundamentalist regimes 944–946
  - legitimation of 689, 692
  - transformability of 699
- Communist revolution in China 301–302, 303
- communities
  - delinquent 146
  - Jewish 388, 391–392, 393–394, 767
    - leadership in 768, 772–773
    - medieval 368, 772
    - in United States 397
  - national, in Japan 309–310, 451, 734, 743–745
  - submergence of individual in 554, 945
- comparative analysis 219, 329, 639
- civilizational 3, 17, 25, 28, 31, 54, 62, 70–71, 214–217, 255–264, 579, 616, 782, 831
- institutional 2, 17, 33, 578–579, 582
- of liminality 165, 181–183, 186–192
- of religions 281, 435
- comparative macro-sociology 57, 60, 62, 577–579, 605, 606, 613, 615–616, 639
- comparative political studies 2
- complex societies 157–158, 160
- conflict
  - civilizational 511, 517, 519, 531, 537, 558, 923, 953–954
  - class 855, 913
  - cultural 930
  - ethnic 518, 560, 682, 690, 924
  - industrial 851, 852
  - in Japanese civilization 869, 870
  - patterns of 544–545
  - political 207, 226, 227, 232, 238, 289, 293, 809
    - see also* political struggle
  - potentialities for 832
  - religious 797, 897–898
  - social 207
  - trade 930
- Confucian education 444, 445
- Confucian elites 305–306
- Confucian literati 233–234, 258–259, 275, 276–277, 282, 296–298, 300–301, 312–313, 480–481
- Confucian orthodoxy 312, 313
- Confucian tradition, in China 189, 230–231, 474–475
- Confucianism 312
  - in China 189, 230–231, 281, 282–283, 285–286, 313, 474–476
  - Neo 275–276, 286, 313, 476, 478
  - institutionalization of 305, 310
  - in Japan 305, 306–307, 308–310, 314, 315–317, 746–747 n42, n43
  - in Korea 305, 306
  - Neo 275–276, 286, 313, 476, 478, 746–747n 43, 869
  - in Vietnam 305, 306
- Congress Party (India) 806, 808, 813, 825
- congruent societies 65, 66, 68
- conservatism, in United States 721
- consociational features, of democratic regimes 809
- constitutional change, in Communist Eastern Europe 683–684
- constitutional-pluralistic regimes, transformability of 699
- constructivist approach, to politics 49, 523, 663
- contemporary societies, change in 911–913
- Continental Divide* (Lipset) 702
- contracts
  - importance of precontractual elements 877
  - social 645–646, 659–660
- control
  - elites exercising 228, 874
  - and freedom, in modernity 542, 658
  - mechanisms of, in China 299, 301
  - social, processes of 26–27, 34, 604

- convergences  
   and globalization 925  
   in modern societies 53, 435, 454,  
     503, 519, 521, 527, 535, 726,  
     849, 873–874, 921, 954–955  
   theory of 23, 45  
 conversion 100  
   of Constantine 271, 347, 350  
   to Judaism 379–380, 382  
 cosmic systems  
   Hindu 472  
   transcendental 43, 215, 229, 269  
 cosmopolitanism  
   and localism 547, 973  
   and particularistic tendencies 129,  
     556  
 cosmos, naturalization of 653  
 countermoderns 495  
 covenantal relationship, between God  
 and the people of Israel 361–362,  
 765  
 creativity  
   cultural 26, 83–84, 93, 261–262  
   limitations of 1–2, 170, 171, 172,  
     174, 175  
   and social order 168, 171  
 crises  
   biological, of life 166  
   in sociology 13  
 critical sociology 190–191, 522  
 cultural conflicts 930  
 cultural creativity 26, 83–84, 93,  
 261–262  
 cultural dimension, of social order  
 15–16, 62–63, 638  
 cultural elites 38–39, 67, 92, 202,  
 620  
 cultural globalization 551, 556, 963,  
 973  
 cultural innovations 172  
 cultural order  
   alternative conceptions of 268,  
     274, 290  
   utopian 646–648, 939  
   consciousness of arbitrariness of  
     168, 170  
   models of 62, 64, 81–82, 637  
   rebellion against 166  
   (re)construction of 167, 170–172,  
     175, 615  
   and traditions 135  
 cultural orientations 43, 214–216,  
 229, 279  
   in Christian civilizations 340  
     European 351–352, 835–836  
   disembodiment of 58–59  
   institutional implications of 589  
   in Islamic civilization 244–245  
   in Japanese civilization 866–867  
   and political systems 220, 228, 242  
   and structure of elites 874  
 cultural programmes  
   American 509, 514, 556, 730, 972  
   of Axial civilizations 92, 93  
   of modernity 46–49, 51–52,  
     104–106, 112, 130, 419, 452,  
     453–454, 494–497, 523, 527,  
     535, 563–564, 651–654, 658,  
     670, 882, 884, 956  
   historical roots of 652  
   internal antinomies and  
     contradictions of 566,  
     658–659, 663, 667  
   and non-Western societies 406  
   reconstruction of 517, 923  
   reinterpretations of 529, 558  
 cultural visions 637–638  
 culture  
   concept of 14, 15  
   emphasis on 8  
   and human behavior 14, 54  
   and institutional formations 17, 26,  
     54, 67  
   mass 190–191, 913  
   popular, in Axial civilizations 186  
   and power 404, 406, 407, 409, 428  
   religious dimension of 724  
   and social structure 15–16, 25–27,  
     55, 581, 582, 602–603, 605–606,  
     614–615, 638  
   and society 580, 616  
 de-Axialization, process of 511  
 de-Westernization, of modernity  
 517–518, 559, 977  
 deep structure, emphasis on 8, 613,  
 614  
 delinquent communities 146  
 demagogues, political 647  
*Democracy in America* (de Tocqueville)  
 702  
 democratic politics 663  
 democratic regimes 263–264,  
 892–893, 895, 906  
   and capitalism 894  
   consociational features of 809

- continuity of 895–896, 900–901, 902–907  
 formation of 400, 661, 922  
 in India 781–782, 786, 805, 807, 808–810, 813, 815–816, 823–827, 828–829, 930  
 openness of political process 888, 893, 894  
 transformability of 894, 903, 907  
 and trust 896, 904–905  
 democratization, processes of 909, 915  
 destructive potentialities  
   of charismatic dimension of life 174–175  
   of modernity 113–114, 491, 508–509, 518, 546, 560, 561–562, 566, 567–571, 924, 978–979  
   of religions 979  
 development studies 934–935  
*dharma*, conception of 789, 812  
 diasporas  
   Jewish 272, 364, 374, 387  
     ambivalence towards host civilizations 380, 381  
     *see also* Jewish communities  
   new 510, 552, 915, 962–963  
 differentiation, structural 7, 33, 57–58, 59, 62, 64–67, 74, 587, 742  
 discontinuity, consciousness of 461–462, 463, 472, 485–486  
 disenchantment  
   development of 190  
   with political arena 927  
 disintegration, in Communist Eastern Europe 679, 926  
 dissent, potentialities of 177–179  
 distribution, of power 741, 903, 906  
 diversification, of modernity 559  
 divine nation, conception of 99  
 division of labor, social 13, 18, 57, 59, 62, 74, 169–170, 187  
 dynamics  
   civilizational 18–19, 40, 184, 200–201, 208–210, 298, 465, 581  
   institutional 21, 44, 54, 66, 260, 582  
   political 339, 343, 469–470, 629, 630, 719, 740–742, 801–802  
   of traditions 32, 143–163  
   movement to disintegration 926  
   *see also* Communist Eastern Europe  
 ecological patterns, and institutional dynamics 21  
 economic activities, and Protestantism 595–596  
 economic development  
   in Indian civilization 599  
   as part of modernization 453  
   in Scandinavian countries 857  
 economic ethics, Weber's concept of 637  
 economic power, converted into political power 840–841  
 economic structures, role in revolutionary processes 681  
 economy  
   in China 294–296  
   market 934  
   in Soviet Union 688  
 education, Confucian 444, 445  
 egalitarianism, functionalistic 443  
 Egypt, ancient 221, 222  
 elite functions 57, 59, 60, 62  
   in model-based centers 64  
   in organizational centers 63  
   and structural differentiation 64–67, 74  
 elites  
   autonomy of 66, 67, 201–202, 227, 234, 235–236, 240, 253, 261, 291, 297–298, 311, 317, 337, 445–446, 629, 715  
   building cohesiveness and solidarity 3  
   and change 148–149, 152, 158–159, 160  
   coercive 150, 152–153  
   in complex societies 157–158, 160  
   Confucian 305–306  
     *see also* Confucian literati  
   control by 228, 874  
   cultural 38–39, 67, 92, 202, 620  
   and institutional structure of societies 17, 67  
   in monotheistic civilizations 240, 262  
   new 156–157, 201–202, 225, 227, 250, 290–291, 364, 763  
   non-coercive 151, 152  
   in non-Western societies 505, 525, 526, 549, 961  
   political 201, 202, 226, 240, 263, 581

Eastern Europe  
   compared Western Europe 926–928

- in post-Axial civilizations 228,  
233–236
- religious 235–238, 256, 257, 326,  
414–415, 581, 589  
*see also* clerics
- secondary 160, 253, 589
- structure of 34–35, 242, 874
- struggles between 647
- in traditional societies 148–150
- transformations of 39, 201–202,  
225, 253
- transformative capacities of  
149–150, 158–159, 160, 637
- and trust in societies 11, 19  
*see also* intellectuals
- emancipation  
and freedom 667  
of Jews 393, 396–397  
of man 48, 659
- empires 279
- Byzantine 352, 587, 836
- centers in 61, 587–588
- Great Archaic 88
- organizations within 6
- as political systems 21
- rulers of 5
- end of history thesis (Fukuyama) 511,  
512, 517, 519, 537, 553, 558,  
922–923, 934, 935, 953, 964, 977
- Enlightenment 568, 656, 975
- Entzauberung*, potentialities of 843–844
- equality  
and hierarchy 525, 743  
in European civilization 340,  
353, 459, 705–706, 726, 838,  
841, 843, 855  
international dimension of 961  
in Japanese civilization 443, 747,  
848 n18, 869, 870–872, 873  
in Jewish civilization 765  
in United States 709, 717, 718,  
748, 749–750, 847, 862  
in Indian civilization 794, 814–815  
in Islamic civilization 411, 415  
in Latin America 711  
in modern societies 929
- eschatological history, Jews excluded  
from 383–384
- eschatology, centrality in Christianity  
349
- Essays in Comparative Institutions*  
(Eisenstadt) 9
- ethics 603
- Ethiopia 189
- ethnic components, of religions 270
- ethnic conflicts 518, 560, 682, 690,  
924
- ethnic identities, in India 806
- ethnic minorities, new 510
- ethnic movements 510, 552, 915
- ethnic organizations, in United States  
728–729
- European civilization 46, 96–97,  
340–341, 351–356, 558
- accountability of rulers in 242–243
- centers in 243, 341–343, 353,  
354–355, 357, 458–459, 587–588,  
839, 842, 844, 845
- multiplicity of 342, 352, 354,  
580, 588, 837–838, 841
- (re)construction of 457–458, 461
- relations with periphery 355–356,  
459, 587–588, 838, 841
- change in 353, 356–357, 458,  
459–460, 461–462, 592–594,  
841–842
- cities in 840
- civil society in 343–344, 460–461,  
581, 900, 928, 933
- class consciousness in 838–839,  
840, 852, 855, 864–865
- class structure in 854, 855
- clientelistic relations in 847,  
858–860
- collective identities in 756, 897–900
- collectivities in 341, 353–354, 355,  
460, 756
- comparison with Indian civilization  
329–330, 339, 584, 606, 784–785,  
790, 931–933
- confrontations with other civilizations  
462–463, 516, 557
- cultural orientations in 351–352,  
835–836
- discontinuity in 461–462, 463
- elites in 69, 356–357, 460,  
588–589, 841, 846, 855
- feudal institutions in 837
- heterodoxies and sectarian  
movements in 342, 460, 493,  
590, 649, 705
- hierarchy and equality in 340, 353,  
459, 705–706, 726, 838, 841, 843,  
855
- historical experiences of 652
- ideological struggle in 461
- institution building in 842
- meta-narratives in 652



- modernity in 575, 843, 922  
 monastic orders in 589–591  
 nation states in 932  
 pluralism in 756, 784–785, 835, 836  
     structural 340, 351, 352–353, 459, 580–581, 586–587, 836  
 political arena in 341, 343  
 political boundaries in 104, 581  
 political struggle in 344, 353  
 political tradition of 852, 853  
 political unification in 469, 790, 925–926, 932  
 principled orientations in 844–845  
 protest  
     movements in 342, 353, 460, 726, 727, 845–846, 855–860  
     themes of 844, 852  
 and Protestantism 584–587, 591–592, 705, 842  
 rationality in 463, 843  
 reflexivity in 462, 463, 653  
 Reformation in 649  
 revolutionary movements in 854  
 rulers in 838  
 social mobility in 839–840  
 socialist movement in 736, 850, 851–854, 860, 931  
 state and society in 344, 848, 926, 927  
 status hierarchies in 838, 841  
 traditions in  
     reconstruction of 463–465  
     tribal 340  
 vernacular languages in 104  
*see also* Eastern Europe; Western Europe  
 European histories, Jewish attempts to enter 396  
 European societies 112, 113, 243  
     differences between 846–847, 917–918  
 evolution, religious 723  
 evolutionary assumptions  
     of structural-functional analysis 6, 616  
     of studies of modernization 6–7, 454, 578, 616, 875  
 evolutionary theories 220  
     criticism of 58  
 exchange models 9–10, 11  
 exclusivism 570, 571  
 exile, Jewish experience of 374–375, 383  
 existential anxiety 166, 561–562  
 expansion  
     of American cultural programmes 509, 513, 556  
     of Axial civilizations 41–42, 94  
     of Buddhism 319–320, 327  
     of centers, in European civilization 342–343, 459  
     human tendency towards 57, 58, 74  
     of Indian civilization 468  
     of Islam 412–413, 425, 619  
     of modernity 24, 49–50, 52, 53, 502–504, 520, 522, 531, 548–549, 606–607, 875, 890, 954, 960, 961  
     to Americas 547–548  
     of the range of the political game 894  
     of scientific and technological knowledge 843  
 family and kinship identities, in Europe 839  
 fascist movements 545, 546, 899, 971  
 federalism, in India 808  
 feudal regimes, in Japan 71, 634  
 feudal societies 837  
 flexibility, structural 154, 155, 156  
 Founding Fathers of sociology 59, 169–170, 603, 606, 637  
 fractured sovereignty 790–791  
 France, legitimation of regimes in 114–115, 569, 899  
 free resources, concept of 5  
 freedom  
     and control, in modernity 542, 658  
     and emancipation 667  
     potential range of 1–2  
 French Revolution 46, 391, 547, 669, 751  
 friendship, analysis of 10–11  
*From Generation to Generation* (Eisenstadt) 4  
 functionalistic egalitarianism 443  
 fundamentalist movements 46, 53, 127–128, 428, 510, 514–516, 532, 552, 560, 891, 909, 915, 917, 924, 937–938, 949–950, 964  
     attitude towards the West 516–517  
     attitude towards women 943, 967–968  
     in Buddhism 951, 970  
     compared to communal religious movements 969–970

- compared to Great Revolutions 941–942, 966  
 and construction of collective identities 942–943  
 heterodox roots of 941, 948–949, 966  
 in Hinduism 951, 970  
 ideologies of 939, 940–941, 946–947, 965–966  
 in Islam 423, 425–426, 428, 939  
 Jacobin components of 128, 512, 554, 671, 937, 940, 942, 946, 965, 966–967, 968  
 in Judaism 949  
 and modernity 128, 512–513, 530–531, 554, 555, 557, 939, 943–944, 946, 964–969, 971, 974–975  
 in monotheistic civilizations 557–558, 921, 973  
 post-modern themes in 555  
 in Protestantism 950–951  
 proto 423, 425–426, 938, 939, 979  
 reconstruction of traditions 946–947  
 ritualization tendencies 948  
 tensions within 943, 968–969  
 fundamentalist regimes  
   compared to Communist regimes 944–946  
   Islamic 554  
 fundamentalist traditionalism 947–948  
  
 galactic polities 237, 324  
*galut* (exile), Jewish experience of 374–375, 383  
 gender designations 83  
   of modern collectivities 110  
 Germany  
   failed revolution in 635  
   religious question in 897–898  
   Weimar republic, breakdown of 900–901  
*Gesammelte Aufsätze für Religionssoziologie* (Weber) 280, 407, 676  
 globalization 124, 503, 509, 532, 549, 909, 928, 935  
   ambivalence towards 129, 513–514  
   and collective identities 129  
   contemporary 913–914, 922–923, 963  
   and convergence 925  
   cultural 551, 556, 963, 973  
   and homogenization 519  
   and modernity 558–559  
   and weakening of nation states 551, 914  
 goals  
   in human interaction and exchange 9–10  
   political 5, 894  
 God  
   city of 645  
   conceptions of 269, 270, 349  
   covenantal relationship with, in Jewish civilization 361–362, 765  
   place of 653  
 governability, problem of, in India 933  
 Great Archaic Empires 88  
 Great Religions 435  
 Great Revolutions 262, 390, 438, 441, 445, 461, 494, 564, 617, 642, 648, 649–651, 658, 661, 665, 668–669, 843  
   compared to breakdown of Communist regimes 679–682, 684–687, 688, 695  
   compared to fundamentalist movements 941–942, 966  
   compared to Meiji Restoration (Ishin) 621–623, 631, 634, 871  
 Great Traditions 141, 143, 145, 177, 205  
 Greece, ancient 251, 834  
 groups  
   age and youth 4  
   harmony 872  
   primary 3  
   religious 257–258, 325, 581  
   ruling 694–695  
   solidarity 153, 155, 156  
  
 Halakhic Judaism 270, 272, 361, 367–368, 369–370, 371, 372, 390, 394, 770  
 Hassidic movement 272  
 Heaven, Mandate of 72–73, 232, 476, 746  
 hedonistic impulses in society, and social order 645, 646  
 Hellenism, and Jewish civilization 365  
 heterodoxies  
   analysis of 20, 408, 582  
   in Axial civilizations 18–19, 187, 189, 212, 276, 279–280, 290, 390, 502, 620, 647, 889, 960

- European 342, 460, 493, 590, 705
- Jewish 360, 366, 370-374, 387-389, 395-396, 398, 770-772
- and change 604
- confrontations with orthodoxy 18, 40, 189, 212, 290, 312-313
- development of 177, 241, 647
- fundamentalist movements as 941, 948-949, 966
- and monastic orders 590
- utopian 938
- see also* sectarianism
- hierarchical orientations, in Latin America 711, 713-714, 717, 718
- hierarchies
- of centers 342
- of collectivities 204
- and equality 525, 743
- in European civilization 340, 353, 459, 705-706, 726, 838, 841, 843, 855
- international dimension of 961
- in Japanese civilization 443, 747, 848 n18, 869, 870-872, 873
- in Jewish civilization 765
- in United States 709, 717, 718, 748, 749-750, 847, 862
- social 323-324
- in Axial civilizations 206-207
- in Buddhist civilization 323-324
- in Chinese civilization 295
- in Indian civilization 323
- in Japanese civilization 868
- status 838, 841
- urban, in China 296
- higher authority, conception of 224-225, 251
- Hindu civilization *see* Indian civilization
- Hindu identity, promulgation of 811
- Hindu nationalism 821, 825
- Hinduism 320, 322, 323, 798
- fundamentalism in 951, 970
- purity, value orientation towards 331-332, 466-467, 789, 799
- sects in 188, 311-312, 596-598
- historical change 638
- historical consciousness
- in Chinese civilization 478-479
- in Indian civilization 472-473
- historical experiences
- of civilizations 531, 874, 977
- American 754
- European 652
- Indian 786
- Jewish 762-763
- and modernity 514-515, 557-558, 930, 974
- of non-Western societies 528
- of Scandinavian countries 857-858
- historical processes, re-examination of 22
- historical progress 657
- historical roots, of cultural programme of modernity 652
- histories
- conflation of mundane and sacred 391
- eschatological 383-384
- European, Jewish attempts to enter 396
- of modernity 508
- multiple paths of 657
- totalizing visions of 656-657
- world 42, 94, 197, 214
- history, end of (Fukuyama) 511, 512, 517, 519, 537, 553, 558, 922-923, 934, 935, 953, 964, 977
- Hobbesian man 167
- Holocaust 547, 561, 978
- Homo Hierarchicus* (Dumont) 332
- homogeneity, of population of nation-states 109
- homogenization, and globalization 519
- human action
- charismatic dimension of 12
- formation of society through 564
- human agency
- conceptions of 537, 562, 652
- constructing political arena 659
- and institutional formations 638-639
- and structure 613-614
- human behavior
- explanations of 9, 16
- reconstruction of 200
- regulated by biology 166-167
- regulated by culture 14, 54
- human bonding 167
- human creativity
- cultural 26, 83-84, 93, 261-262
- limitations of 1-2, 12, 170, 171, 172, 175
- and social order 168, 171
- human freedom, potential range of 1-2

- identities
  - authentic 556, 972
  - collective *see* collective identities
  - ethnic, in India 806
  - family and kinship, in Europe 839
  - personal 145, 150–151, 202, 834–835
  - politics of 552
  - religious 511, 820, 917
  - subdued, reconstruction of 915, 963–964
  - transnational 916, 964
- ideological change 909
- ideological dimension
  - of modernity 606–607, 953
  - of revolutions 626, 628, 631
- ideological politics
  - lack of 222–223
  - modes of 247
  - origins of 220–221, 224, 227–228, 230
  - in post-Axial civilizations 228, 235, 242
- ideological struggle 484
  - in European civilization 461
  - in Japanese civilization 482–483, 484
  - in modernity 541
- ideologies
  - American 730
  - Brahminic 322–323, 331, 467, 798
  - Communist 656
  - of fundamentalist movements 939, 940–941, 946–947, 965–966
  - Jacobin 501, 566, 642, 886–887, 959
  - Japanese 442, 444, 445
  - kokutai* 123
  - of modernity 606–607, 953
  - of monotheistic civilizations 238–239
  - political 358, 396, 443, 708–709, 712, 749, 752–753
  - racial 728
  - revolutionary 664–665, 669
  - totalistic 501, 543, 555, 566, 665, 886, 887, 939, 940, 959
  - of traditional authenticity 547
  - transformative capacities of 162–163, 631
  - universalistic 100, 412–413
  - Zionist 381, 397
- ideologization
  - of politics 665
  - of violence 113, 508–509, 547, 567, 571, 924, 978
- imagination, human 76–77
- immigrants, absorption into Israeli society 3
- immortality, search for 200
- independence movements, in India 782, 806–807
- India, The Dangerous Decades* (Harrison) 781
- Indian civilization 97, 421
  - caste system in 336, 466, 467, 584, 792–794, 797–798, 799–800, 805–806, 814, 816–819, 933
  - centers in 332, 333, 335, 468, 599, 783–784, 791, 801, 821
  - change in 465–466, 470–471, 472, 484, 796, 805, 813, 814–815
  - civil service in 808
  - civil society in 336–337, 339, 471, 802, 825, 827, 829, 933
  - civilizational dynamics in 465
  - collective identity in 469, 787, 792, 802, 804, 810–811
  - colonial rule in 803, 805–807
  - comparison with European civilization 329–330, 339, 584, 606, 784–785, 790, 931–933
  - conflicts in
    - political 809
    - religious 797
  - democracy in 781–782, 786, 805, 807, 808–810, 813, 815–816, 823–827, 828–829, 930
  - discontinuity in 472
  - economic developments in 599
  - elites in 69, 335, 336
  - encounters with other civilizations 469, 473, 792, 793
  - equality in 794, 814–815
  - ethnic identities in 806
  - expansion of 468
  - federalism in 808
  - governability, problem of 933
  - historical consciousness in 472–473
  - historical experience of 786
  - independence movements in 782, 806–807
  - legitimation of regimes in 789
  - middle class formation in 817–819
  - modernity in 804
  - Moghul period 787
  - nationalism in
    - Hindu 821, 825

- movements 806–807
  - regional 822, 826
- pluralism in 784–785
- political arena in 330–331, 332–335, 467–468, 469, 786–787, 794, 796, 932
- political dynamics in 339, 469–470, 783–784, 785, 801–802
- political institutions in, decay of 820–821, 822, 824, 827–829
- political participation in 814–815, 821, 822
- political symbolism in 792
- political system in 809–811, 823
- political tradition of 821
- political unification of 469, 781, 790, 808, 932
- power sharing system in 809, 812, 813–814, 823, 828
- pragmatic-accommodative attitude in 785–786, 790, 803, 805, 807, 809, 812, 828
- protest movements in 337, 782–784, 785, 794–795, 806–807
- religious identities in 820
- religious realm in 468
- rulers in 332, 333–335, 468, 787–789, 791, 793–794, 802, 811–812
- sectarian movements in 319, 337–339, 466, 469–470, 596–602, 632, 794–795
- social order in 797, 800, 801–802, 811–812, 829
- sovereignty, concepts of 468, 789–791
- states in 468–469
  - formation of 335–336, 791
  - legitimation of 819
  - and society 471, 827
- traditions in 472
- trust in, extension of 801
- vernacular languages, use of 104
- wars of religion, absence of 470, 796
- Indian National Congress Party 806, 808, 813, 825
- indigenous populations
  - in Latin America 714
  - in United States 713, 716
- individualism
  - lack of, in India 815
  - in United States 751–752
- individuals
  - as autonomous entities 252, 339
  - behavior of 54
  - charismatic predispositions of 174
  - conception of 15
  - submergence in community 554, 945
- industrial conflict 851, 852
- innovations, cultural 172
- institution building 173
  - and charisma 12–13
  - drive within socialist movement 853
  - in European civilization 842
  - and trust 877, 879
- institutional analysis 2, 17, 33, 578–579, 582
- institutional autonomy 155
- institutional change
  - in China 298–301, 303
  - in contemporary societies 912
  - in India 465–466
  - partial 140
  - through revolutions 619–620
- institutional developments 6–7
  - of modernity 500
- institutional dynamics 260
  - analysis of 54, 66
  - in Axial civilizations 44
  - and political-ecological formations 21
  - role of religion or ideas 582
- institutional formations 279
  - and codes 604
  - and culture 17, 26, 54, 67
  - and exchange 9–10
  - explanations of 7–8, 11, 16–17, 54
  - and human agency 638–639
  - in Japanese civilization 437–438
  - and sectarianism 600
- institutionalization
  - of accountability of rulers 241, 242–243
  - of boundaries 85
  - of charismatic visions 172
  - of Confucianism 305, 310
  - processes of 171
  - of transcendental visions 201, 202–203, 642–643, 646
- instrumental rationality *see* *Zweckrationalität*
- intellectual activities 254–255
- intellectual pilgrimages 264
- intellectuals
  - analysis of 249
  - in Axial civilizations 67, 92, 201, 202, 211, 212, 225, 250, 252–256, 628, 763–764, 833

- Chinese 123, 233–234  
 emergence of 38–39, 201, 240  
 Jacobin elements among 264  
 Japanese 123, 443, 448, 736, 738,  
 746, 865–866, 869  
 in modernity 262–263, 914  
 in monotheistic civilizations 262  
 and political elites 263  
 and revolutions 620, 650–651, 680,  
 682, 686–687  
 vernacular 102
- interaction  
   intersocietal 88  
   limited ranges of 173  
   social 9–10, 26, 59–60, 76
- intercivilizational relations 41, 52–53,  
 88, 94, 377–381, 384, 396, 469,  
 487, 511  
   analysis of 579–580, 616
- intercultural relations 579
- international systems  
   Buddhist 327  
   changes in 909  
   emergence of 51, 111  
   non-Western societies in 52, 524  
   relations between 520  
   Western hegemony of 52, 505,  
   524–525
- intersocietal interactions 88
- intolerance 210–211
- Iran 414  
   Islamic revolution in 943–944, 968  
   position of women in 967–968  
   Islam 412  
   ambivalence towards Judaism 380  
   Arabic sacred language of 412  
   equality of all believers 411, 415  
   expansion of 412–413, 425, 619  
   universalistic ideology of 412–413  
   Islamic civilization 465  
   centers in 70  
   civil society in 633  
   confrontations with European  
   civilization 462–463  
   cultural orientations in 244–245  
   elites in 413–414, 633  
   (proto-)fundamentalist movements in  
   423, 425–426, 428, 554, 939  
   messianic orientations in 426–427  
   and modernity 427–428  
   pluralism in 427  
   political dynamics in 630  
   political participation in 424  
   political thought in 410  
   political-religious collectivity,  
   emphasis on 411–412  
   public spheres in 409, 410–411,  
   415–417, 421, 427–428  
   reform movements in 423–425  
   regime changes in 422  
   and revolutions 246, 633, 943–944,  
   968  
   rulers in 410, 414, 416–417, 420,  
   421, 422, 426–427  
   legitimation through descent from  
   the Prophet 412, 413, 426  
   sectarian movements in 423–425,  
   648  
   tribal traditions in 424–425  
   *ulama* (interpreters of Muslim  
   religious law), central place of  
   409, 410, 414–415  
   *umma* (community of believers), ideal  
   of 411, 415  
   utopian visions in 422–423, 425  
   Western views of 403, 405, 409,  
   419–420, 428–429
- Islamic fundamentalist regimes 554
- Islamic revolution, in Iran 943–944,  
 968
- Islamic societies 246, 426
- Israel  
   absorption of new immigrants 3  
   ancient 225, 251, 362–363, 834  
   civility in 760  
   establishment of state of 1, 395,  
   397, 776–778  
   Jewish fundamentalist movements in  
   949  
   land of, Jewish attitude towards  
   374–375  
   law in 777–778  
   political anarchies in 762  
   politics in, turbulence of 759–760,  
   779–780  
   rabbinical courts in 778–779  
   solidarity in 761
- Jacobin ideologies 501, 566, 642,  
 886–887, 959
- Jacobin movements, modern 46, 128,  
 512, 531, 554–555, 665–666, 671,  
 887, 899
- Jacobin orientations  
   in Communist movement 512, 554  
   in fundamentalist movements 128,  
   512, 554, 671, 940, 942, 965,  
   966–967, 968

- in modern political program 46,  
114–115, 264, 523, 529–530, 543,  
554, 641–642, 651, 665, 669–670,  
693, 891, 940, 979  
and revolutions 685, 693  
in United States 720
- Jainism 597
- Japanese civilization 221, 222, 261,  
584, 627
- Buddhism and (Neo-)Confucianism  
in 305, 306–310, 311, 314,  
315–317, 746–747 n42, n43, 869  
centers in 307, 450, 482, 865,  
867–868  
change in 452, 481–484, 485–486,  
487, 869–870  
civil society in 450, 451  
civility in 745–747  
class consciousness in 734,  
864–865, 870  
collective identity in 30, 99–101,  
122–124, 447–448, 482, 483, 486,  
743–747  
compared to United States 723,  
726–727, 739–742, 756  
conflict in 869, 870  
cultural orientations in 866–867  
cultural programme of modernity in  
441–442, 444, 448–449, 452  
discontinuity in 485–486  
education in 444, 445  
elites in 73, 100–101, 307, 311,  
314, 317, 445–446, 488, 868, 870,  
872  
emphasis on group harmony 872  
encounters with other civilizations  
487, 743  
feudal regimes in 71, 634  
hierarchy and equality in 443,  
747, 848 n18, 868, 869, 870–872,  
873  
ideological struggle in 482–483,  
484  
ideologies in 442, 444, 445  
intellectuals in 123, 443, 448, 736,  
738, 746, 865–866, 869  
loyalty, conceptions of 746–747  
Meiji Restoration (Ishin) 438,  
440–444, 445–446, 621–623, 627,  
631, 871  
and modernity 315–316, 435–438,  
440–441, 446–489, 550  
national community in 309–310,  
451, 734, 743–745  
political system in 450–452, 736,  
740, 867, 871  
protest  
movements in 439–440, 450,  
726–727, 733–739, 742, 848  
n18, 866, 870–872  
themes of 445, 735–736,  
738–739  
rationality in 448, 486  
reflexivity in 486  
regimes, legitimization of 745–747  
religious movements in 735,  
737–738  
rulers, accountability of 310,  
745–747  
search for authenticity 447  
search for universal essence 448  
sectarian movements in 307–308,  
311, 314, 444–445, 484–485  
socialist movements in 734–735,  
736–737, 851, 864–865, 870, 873,  
931  
state and society in 449–450, 451  
Tokugawa regime 435–436,  
438–440, 627, 746 n42, 872  
traditions in, reconstruction of 486  
uniqueness of 19, 42, 70–73, 280,  
435, 436–438, 606, 745  
utopian orientations in 442, 743  
violence in 446
- Jewish asceticism 387
- Jewish civilization 279, 345  
ambivalence towards host  
civilizations 380, 381, 384  
antimonian tendencies in 386–387  
centers in 766, 767  
civility in 773  
collective identity in 345, 365,  
394–395  
collectivity in 362  
confrontations with European  
civilization 462  
covenantal relationship with God  
361–362, 765  
elites in 362–364, 385, 766,  
767–768  
exile experience 374–375, 383  
fossilization of 359–360, 367,  
376–377
- Halakhah, hegemony of 368–370,  
372–374, 379, 384–385, 386, 390,  
394  
and Hellenism 365  
hierarchy and equality in 765

- historical experience of 762–763  
 intercivilizational relations 378–379, 396  
 Land of Israel (*Eretz Israel*) ideology 374, 375  
 law in 362, 768–769, 772–773, 774–775  
 leadership in 366–367, 385  
 martyrdom in 376  
 messianic movements in 375, 380, 384  
 and modernity 392–396  
 mundane order in 368, 766–767  
 orthodoxy in 367, 388, 390, 770  
 pluralism in 388–389, 396  
 political anarchism in 761–762, 763, 764, 765–766, 770, 775–776  
 political participation 360, 368–369, 381–383, 390, 392–394, 397–398  
 political tradition of 761, 764–765, 768, 773, 779–780  
 prophecy, end of 769  
 Second Temple period 363–364, 766  
 sectarian and heterodox tendencies in 345, 360, 365–367, 370–374, 384–385, 387–389, 395–396, 398, 770–772  
 segregation of 378, 379, 391–392  
 solidarity in 376, 387, 388, 773–775  
 tension between learning and mysticism 771  
 transcendental visions in 361  
 utopian visions in 271–272  
 Weber's analysis of 359, 378, 383, 398
- Jewish communities 388, 391–392, 393–394, 767  
 leadership in 768, 772–773  
 medieval 368, 772  
 in United States 397
- Jewish diasporas 272, 364, 374, 380, 381, 387
- Jewish philosophers, medieval 377–378
- Jewish religion *see* Judaism
- Jews  
 ambivalent attitude by Christians and Muslims towards 380  
 assimilation of 393  
 emancipation of 393, 396–397  
 as pariah people 359, 360, 367, 378, 398  
 in Spain and Portugal 382
- Judaism  
 and Christianity 270–271, 345–346, 347, 358, 375, 379, 380, 586  
 competition with other religions 345  
 conversion to 379–380, 382  
 covenant between God and the people of Israel 361–362, 765  
 definitions of 360  
 fundamentalism in 949  
 Halakhic (Rabbinical) 270, 272, 361, 367–368, 369–370, 371, 372, 390, 394, 770  
 Kabbalists 372–373  
 Karaite 272, 370–371, 771  
 medieval 771–772  
 messianic orientations in 386–387  
 prophets in 362  
 and realm of sacred 346, 363, 385, 765  
 Torah, revealed and hidden 373–374  
 transcendental visions in 361, 394  
 utopian visions in 271–272
- Kabbalist 372–373  
 Karaites 272, 370–371, 771  
*khalifas*, and sultans 413, 414, 426  
 Khazars 379–380, 382  
 King-God 185, 206, 225, 251, 834  
 kingship  
 Hindu 788–789  
 secular conception of 236
- knowledge  
 expansion of 843  
 sociology of 203 n10  
 worlds of 203
- kokutai* ideology 123, 450  
*Konfuzianismus und Taoismus (The Religion of China, Weber)* 281, 282
- Korea 305, 306
- Ksatriya, caste of 789, 799
- Ku Klux Klan 728
- labor, social division of 13, 18, 57, 59, 62, 74, 169–170, 187
- land, image of, in United States 752–753
- Land of Israel (*Eretz Israel*) ideology, in Jewish civilization 374, 375
- languages, local versus ecumenical 101–102
- Latin America  
 collective identities in 117–119, 710, 713–714



- differences between societies 714  
 elites in 715, 721  
 hierarchical orientations in 711,  
 713-714, 717, 718  
 indigenous populations in 714  
 institutional patterns in 707-708  
 modernity in 548, 702, 722  
 patrimonial states in 711-712  
 political dynamics in 719  
 political order in 710  
 populist movements in 721  
 protest movements in 720  
 settlers in 706-707  
 slavery in 716
- law  
 autonomy of 38, 206, 241-242,  
 251, 834  
 in China 294  
 Islamic 410, 411  
 in Israel 777-778  
 in Jewish civilization 362, 768-769,  
 772-773, 774-775  
 Protestant orientations towards 593
- leadership  
 in Jewish civilization 366-367, 385  
 in Jewish communities 768,  
 772-773  
 new type of 620, 650
- legitimacy, of protest 699-700,  
 725-726
- legitimation  
 of political order 341, 646, 659  
 processes of 59-60, 169-170  
 of regimes  
 Communist 689, 692, 945  
 in France 114-115, 569, 899  
 fundamentalist 945  
 in India 789  
 in Japan 745-747  
 modern 523, 543, 569, 667, 926
- Leninist civilization 681
- Levites 362
- liberalism  
 in American civilizations 721  
 concepts of 252
- life  
 biological crises of 166  
 charismatic dimension of 171, 172,  
 174, 249-250  
 social 906
- liminality 32, 175, 176  
 comparative analysis of 165,  
 181-183, 186-192  
 types of 180-181, 192
- limits  
 of human creativity 1-2, 170, 171,  
 172, 174, 175  
 of modernity 560
- literature, Nihonjinron 429
- Little Traditions 141, 205
- liturgical communities, in Japan  
 309-310
- localism, and cosmopolitanism 547,  
 973
- loyalty, conceptions of, in Japan  
 746-747
- Lutheranism 649
- macro-sociology, comparative 57, 60,  
 62, 65, 577-579, 605, 606, 613,  
 615-616, 639
- Mahayana Buddhism 321
- Malaka 416
- man  
 autonomy of 47, 252, 339, 496,  
 500, 538-539, 542, 562, 564,  
 652-653, 654, 655, 658, 883,  
 957  
 biological endowment of 166-167,  
 169  
 city of 645  
 civilized 109  
 emancipation of 48, 659  
 imperfectionability of 644  
 model of ideal 202  
 naturalization of 653
- Mandate of Heaven 72-73, 232,  
 476, 746
- market economies 934
- market mechanism, as explanation of  
 social division of labor 169
- markets, structure of 863, 866
- Marranos 370, 371
- martyrdom, in Jewish civilization 376
- Marxists 15, 624
- mass-culture, development of  
 190-191, 913
- mass-media, development of 192
- meaning, processes of 59-60,  
 169-170
- media of exchange 10
- Meiji Restoration (Ishin) 438,  
 440-444, 445-446, 627  
 compared to great revolutions  
 621-623, 631, 634, 871
- memories, collective 110, 111, 761
- messianic movements 272  
 in Jewish civilization 375, 380, 384

- messianic orientations
  - in Islam 426–427
  - in Judaism 386–387
- meta-narratives, in European civilization 652
- meta-relations 167
- metaphysical order 184, 199, 200
- middle class formation, in India 817–819
- military-religious rulers 245, 413
- millenarian visions, in pre-Axial civilizations 265
- minorities
  - ethnic 510
  - new types of 963
- missions
  - civilizing, of modernity 109
  - universalistic 120–121, 122, 619, 686, 887
- model-based centers 64, 66
- modern barbarism 114, 508, 546, 561, 571, 978
- modern civilizations 23, 24, 45–49, 108, 493, 520, 522, 874–875
- modern collectivities 107, 110–111, 498–499, 541, 544
- modern Jacobin movements 46, 128, 512, 531, 554–555, 665–666, 671, 887, 899
- modern politics 263, 726
- modern regimes
  - incorporation of protest in 893, 895
  - legitimation of 523, 543, 569, 667, 926
  - transformability of 699–700
- modern societies 24–25, 109, 499, 535–536, 607, 724, 928–929
  - centers of 108, 191, 262–263
  - change in 191, 662, 875, 885, 906, 911–913
  - convergences in 53, 435, 454, 503, 519, 521, 527, 535, 726, 849, 873–874, 921, 925, 954–955
  - crystallization of 50, 955
  - European 112
  - historical experiences of 514–515
  - liminal situations in 181
- modernity
  - ambivalence toward 128–129, 512–513, 550, 557
  - antimonies and contradictions of 541, 544, 566, 654–655, 658–659, 663, 667, 886, 959
  - and autonomy of man 496, 500, 538–539, 542, 883
  - centers of
    - incorporating themes of protest 498
    - multiple 580
    - political 660, 661–662, 725
    - relations with periphery 263, 497–498, 540, 660, 661–662, 726, 885
    - shifts in hegemony 127, 511, 553, 914
  - change in 51, 191, 662, 875, 885, 906, 911–913
  - as a civilization 23, 24, 45–49, 52–53, 454–455, 491, 493, 520, 522, 874–875
  - civilizing mission of 109
  - collective identities in 30, 498–499, 530, 541, 565–566, 567, 958
  - (re)construction of 104, 107, 108–115, 568–569, 662, 666–667, 742, 887, 897, 959
  - and communal religious movements 970–972, 974–975
  - criticism of 523–524, 530, 546
  - cultural and political program of 46–49, 51–52, 104–105, 112, 130, 419, 452, 453–454, 494–497, 498, 500, 523, 527, 535, 537, 563–565, 651–654, 881–882, 884–885, 920, 956–958
  - reconstruction of 517, 923
  - reinterpretations of 529, 532, 558
  - de-Westernization of 517–518, 559, 977
  - destructive potentialities of 113–114, 491, 508–509, 518, 546, 560, 561–562, 566, 567–571, 924, 978–979
  - discourse of 516, 536–537, 547, 670, 920
  - diversification of 559
  - early 22–23, 626–627, 636
  - emergence of 45, 104, 105–106, 190, 262–263, 358, 493–494, 495, 538, 563, 580, 617, 882, 929, 956–957
  - end of 511, 512, 553–554, 696–699, 953
  - expansion of 24, 49–50, 52, 53, 502–504, 520, 522, 531, 548–549, 606–607, 875, 890, 954, 960, 961 to Americas 547–548

- and fundamentalist movements 128,  
512–513, 530–531, 554, 555, 557,  
939, 943–944, 964–969, 971,  
974–975
- and globalization 558–559
- and historical experiences 514–515,  
557–558, 930, 974
- history of 508
- ideological dimension of 541,  
606–607, 953
- institutional developments of 500
- intellectuals in 262–263, 914
- Jacobin orientations in 46,  
114–115, 264, 523, 529–530, 543,  
641–642, 669–671, 979
- liminal situations in 190, 192
- limits of 560
- and nation-states 505, 509
- and non-Western societies 128,  
130, 406, 452–455, 504–508,  
513–515, 526–529, 535–536,  
549–550, 670, 955, 972
- pluralism in 499–500
- political arena in 497, 523, 527,  
540, 888–889
- political order in 106–107, 108,  
497, 539–540, 654, 660, 742, 884
- political participation in 497, 885
- political processes in 498, 540, 661,  
726, 881, 885, 893
- protest
- legitimacy of 699–700, 725–726
  - movements in 190, 191–192,  
263, 501–502, 540, 543–544,  
662, 675–676, 725, 849–850,  
884, 960–961
  - themes of 498, 540, 565, 660,  
725, 726, 884, 893, 958
- public sphere in 109, 885
- rationality in 500, 527–528, 542,  
566, 655–656, 657
- reflexivity of 105, 495–496, 499,  
516, 537, 538, 563, 653, 883,  
884–885, 957
- and religion 641
- sectarian roots of 575, 670
- self-correction of 546, 559
- social movements in 107–108,  
112–113, 529, 543–544, 662, 885,  
889–890, 960–961
- new 125–126, 192, 510,  
551–557, 891, 914–919, 928,  
962, 963–964, 975–976
- social order in 106, 538, 742–743
- tensions within 522–523, 566,  
654–655, 663–664, 919, 972
- between freedom and control  
542, 658
  - between pluralistic and totalistic  
ideologies 112, 113, 499–500,  
501, 513, 523, 529, 542,  
555–556, 566, 567, 641–642,  
655–657, 663–664, 671, 886,  
887, 907, 919, 959
- themes of 696, 961
- totalistic ideologies in 501, 543,  
566
- and traditions 504, 929–930
- transcendental visions of 495–496,  
540, 726
- universalistic components of 546,  
556
- utopian visions in 500, 539, 542,  
618, 725, 884, 889, 927, 958
- visions of, new 914–915, 918
- wars and genocide components of  
50, 113, 508, 546, 978
- Weber's analysis of 105, 406, 495,  
537–538, 563, 676–677, 882,  
956–957
- Western 520–521
- confrontations with non-Western  
societies 52–53, 525, 704, 706,  
721–722, 920
  - and Westernization 130, 131, 517,  
522, 531, 536, 549–550, 557, 724,  
920, 923, 955–956, 974–975, 977
- see also* multiple modernities
- modernization
- economic development as part of  
453
  - in Japanese civilization 440–441
  - new perspective on 24
  - studies of 22, 23, 404, 435, 522,  
538
  - classical 24, 45, 503, 520, 521,  
535, 724, 954
  - evolutionary assumptions of 6–7,  
454, 578, 616, 875
- Moghul India 787
- monastic orders
- in Christianity 349–350
  - in European civilization 589–591
- monastic rule, in Buddhism 321–322
- monopoly
- of resources 580
  - of violence, nation states losing 51,  
124–125, 509, 914, 918, 963

- monotheistic civilizations 189,  
 238–243, 274–275, 379, 644  
   elites in 240, 262  
   fundamentalist movements in  
     557–558, 921, 973  
   political anarchism in 763  
 monotheistic religions 43, 215, 229,  
 269, 979  
 moral conscience, of societies  
 236–237  
 moral order 199, 200  
 morality, based on reason 656  
 multiculturalism 552, 555  
 multiple centers 606  
   in European civilization 342, 352,  
     354, 588, 837–838, 841  
   of modernity 580  
 multiple interests, legitimacy of  
 669–670  
 multiple modernities  
   emergence of 52, 53, 130–131,  
     502, 504, 507–508, 517–518, 520,  
     522, 531–532, 548, 558, 559, 875,  
     923, 929, 954–956  
   notion of 535, 536, 575, 607, 675,  
     921, 977  
   possibility of 452–455, 491, 501,  
     722, 723–724, 757  
 multiplicity  
   of collective identities 89  
   of transcendental visions  
     in Axial civilizations 208–209,  
       643  
     in modernity 883  
 mundane histories, conflated with  
   sacred histories 391  
 mundane order  
   attitude towards  
     Buddhist 320, 601–602  
     Christian 339  
     Confucian 475  
     critical 286–287  
     Hinduist 331, 466, 601–602,  
       789, 798–799  
     Jewish 368, 766–767  
   reconstruction of 287, 288–289,  
     764, 834  
   in Axial civilizations 184–186  
   in Christianity 349  
 tensions between transcendental  
   order and 36, 37, 43, 66, 91–92,  
     183–184, 221, 223–224, 284  
   in Axial civilizations 197, 198,  
     199–200, 201, 202–203, 208,  
     225, 250, 252, 266–267,  
     268–269, 331, 474, 479, 643,  
     763, 798, 833  
   cultural definitions of 229  
   in post-Axial age civilizations  
     203–204, 287  
   resolutions of 208–209, 211, 215,  
     227, 251, 252, 285–286, 287,  
     288, 339, 474, 497, 539, 564,  
     629, 644, 659, 834, 883  
 myths 168  
 nation, divine 99  
 nation states  
   and collective identities 510–511,  
     547, 567  
   emergence of 108–111, 113, 909,  
     978  
   in Europe 932  
   losing monopoly of violence 51,  
     124–125, 509, 914, 918, 963  
   and modernity 505, 509  
   variety of 111, 115–116  
   weakening of 124–125, 126–127,  
     509–510, 512, 553, 917, 918,  
     926–927, 963, 964, 976  
     and globalization 551, 914  
 national boundaries, and  
   vernacularization processes 104  
 national collectivities 108, 543, 566  
 national community, in Japan  
 309–310, 451, 734, 743–745  
 National Socialism 545, 546, 899,  
 971  
   and Communism 570–571  
 nationalism, Hindu 821, 825  
 nationalist movements 546, 565, 726,  
 727, 728, 885, 891, 958  
   in India 806–807  
 Native Americans 120  
 natural behavior 165  
 natural laws, exploration of 653–654  
 nature, mastery of 654, 655, 656, 843  
 negotiated order, emphasis on 8  
 Neo-Confucianism 275–276, 286, 313,  
 476, 478, 746–747n 43, 869  
   in Japan 869  
 Nihonjinron literature 429  
 non-charismatic activities 137  
 non-coercive elites 151, 152  
 non-Western societies  
   analysis of 402–403, 404–409  
   collective identities in 525, 961–962  
   elites in 505, 525, 526, 549, 961

- historical experiences of 528  
 incorporation in world systems 550  
 in international systems 52, 524  
 and modernity 128, 130, 406,  
 452-455, 504-508, 513-515,  
 526-529, 535-536, 549-550, 670,  
 955, 972  
 social movements in 955, 960, 961  
 noncongruent societies 65, 66, 68  
 in Axial civilizations 69-70  
  
 occupational roles 912  
 official spheres 400  
 ontological visions 91  
*Order and History* (Voegelin) 198  
 ordinary activities 137  
 organizational centers 63, 66  
 organizations  
 in empires 6  
 ethnic 728-729  
 religious 162, 256-257  
 Oriental despotism 403, 409, 418  
 criticism of 417, 418-419, 420  
*Oriental Despotism* (Wittfogel) 418  
 Orientalism  
 criticism of 402-403, 404-405,  
 419-420  
 inverted 429  
 orthodoxies  
 in Axial civilizations 211  
 confrontations with heterodoxies  
 18, 40, 189, 212, 290, 312-313  
 Confucian 312, 313  
 in Japan 314-315  
 Jewish 367, 388, 390, 770  
 others, definition of 79  
  
 pagan civilizations 199  
 pariah people, Jews as 359, 360, 367,  
 378, 398  
 parrhesia 408  
 partial change 140, 908  
 partialization, of traditions 142  
 particularistic tendencies, and  
 cosmopolitanism 129, 556  
 patrimonial centers 68  
 patrimonial states, in Latin America  
 711-712  
 patrimonialism 149  
 patron-client relations *see* clientelistic  
 relations  
 peasantry, independence of 5  
 periphery-center relations 48, 60-61,  
 63, 64, 92  
  
 in Chinese civilization 293, 479  
 in Communist Eastern Europe  
 687-688, 689  
 in European civilization 355-356,  
 459, 587-588, 838, 841  
 in Indian civilization 791  
 in Japanese civilization 867-868  
 in modern societies 263, 497-498,  
 540, 660, 661-662, 726, 885  
 in Southern Europe 860  
 personal identities  
 and collective identities 145,  
 150-151  
 formation of 202, 834-835  
 personality, reconstruction of 252  
 philosophers, Jewish medieval  
 377-378  
 pluralism  
 in Byzantine Empire 352, 587, 836  
 in European civilization 756,  
 784-785, 835, 836  
 structural 340, 351, 352-353,  
 459, 580-581, 586-587, 836  
 in Indian civilization 784-785  
 in Islamic civilization 427  
 in Japanese civilization 740  
 in Jewish civilization 388-389, 396  
 in modernity 499-500  
 pluralistic versus totalistic tendencies,  
 in modern program 112, 113,  
 499-500, 501, 513, 523, 529, 542,  
 555-556, 566, 567, 641-642,  
 655-657, 663-664, 671, 886, 887,  
 907, 919, 959  
 political activists 529  
 and revolutions 650-651  
 political anarchism  
 in Jewish political tradition  
 761-762, 763, 764, 765-766, 770,  
 775-776  
 in monotheistic civilizations 763  
 political arena  
 access to 895-896, 903  
 in Chinese civilization 473, 479  
 diminishing position of 927, 928  
 in European civilization 341, 343  
 as focus for salvation 632, 633  
 in Indian civilization 330-331,  
 332-333, 467-468, 469, 786-787,  
 794, 796, 932  
 in modernity 497, 523, 527, 540,  
 888-889  
 (re)construction of 340-341, 634,  
 659, 892

- religious dimensions in 909, 917, 964
- in revolutionary processes 621, 668  
and sectarian heterodox groups 648, 651
- political boundaries, in Europe 104, 581
- political centers 188, 189  
in Communist Eastern Europe 685  
ideological reconstruction of 921  
in Indian civilization 468, 599, 791  
in modernity 660, 661–662, 725
- political change, and civil society 901–902, 906–907
- political conflict 207, 226, 227, 289  
in Buddhist societies 238  
in China 232, 293
- in India 809  
*see also* political struggle
- political demagogues 647
- political dynamics  
in American civilizations 719, 740–742  
in Axial civilizations 629  
in European civilization 343  
in Indian civilization 339, 469–470, 783–784, 785, 801–802  
in Islamic civilization 630
- political ecological settings 279
- political economy, different types of 934
- political elites 201, 202, 226, 240, 263, 581
- political game 894
- political goals 5, 894
- political ideologies 358, 396, 443, 708–709, 712, 749, 752–753
- political instability, in India 335, 336
- political movements, autonomous 40
- political order 37  
alternative conceptions of 338, 600  
in Axial civilizations 251  
in Latin America 710  
legitimation of 341, 646, 659  
in modernity 106–107, 108, 497, 539–540, 654, 660, 742, 884  
and social contract 645–646  
and transcendental order 185, 206, 224, 251, 289, 629, 642–643, 764, 834  
in United States 749–750, 755
- political participation  
in Buddhist civilization 324–327  
in Indian civilization 814–815, 821, 822  
in Islamic civilization 424  
in Jewish civilization 360, 368–369, 381–383, 390, 392–394, 397–398  
in modernity 497, 885  
of religious groups 257–258, 325  
and sectarianism 313–314, 315, 317–318, 650–651
- political parties, and associational life 901–902
- political power, economic power  
converted into 840–841
- political processes  
in democratic regimes 888, 893, 894  
in modernity 498, 540, 661, 726, 881, 885, 893
- political program of modernity 45–46, 49, 51–52, 104–105, 112, 391, 453, 494–497, 543, 564–565, 651–652, 884–885, 920, 957–958  
heterodox traditions of 650  
internal antinomies and  
contradictions of 566, 658–659, 663, 667
- Jacobin orientations in 46, 114–115, 264, 523, 529–530, 543, 554, 641–642, 651, 665, 669–670, 891, 940, 979  
religious roots of 46, 671
- political realm *see* political arena
- Political Sociology* (Eisenstadt ed.) 61
- political struggle 207, 226, 227, 256, 894  
in Buddhist societies 238  
in China 232  
in democratic regimes 893–894  
in Europe 344, 353  
in India 338–339  
participation of religious groups in 257–258  
*see also* political conflict
- political studies, comparative 2
- political symbolism, in India 792
- political systems  
in Axial civilizations 98, 634  
and cultural orientations 220, 228, 242  
empires as 21  
in Indian civilization 809–811, 823  
in Japanese civilization 450–452, 736, 740, 867, 871  
and religions 256

- The Political Systems of Empires*  
(Eisenstadt) 5–7, 20, 57, 60–61
- political thought, in Islamic civilization 410
- political tradition  
of European civilization 852, 853  
of Indian civilization 821  
of Jewish civilization 761, 764–765, 768, 773, 779–780
- political unification  
in European civilization 469, 790, 925–926, 932  
in Indian civilization 469, 781, 790, 808, 932
- political-ecological formations, and institutional dynamics 21
- politicization, of religion 917
- politics  
anti 686  
constructivist approach to 49, 523, 663  
democratic 663  
of identity 552  
ideological 220–221, 222–223, 224, 227–228, 230, 235, 242, 247  
ideologization of 665  
Israeli, turbulence in 759–760, 779–780  
modern 263, 726  
as a non-zero-sum game 895, 896  
post-modern 698–699  
primacy of 543, 566, 665, 886, 928, 940, 942, 959
- popular culture, in Axial civilizations 186
- popular sovereignty  
concept of 661  
in United States 750, 751, 752
- populism, in American civilizations 720–721, 729, 741
- Portugal, Jews in 382
- post-Axial civilizations 214–217, 221, 225–226  
civilizational frameworks in 232–233, 235, 237  
collectivities in 204, 239  
elites in 228, 233–236  
ideological politics in 228, 235, 242  
rulers, accountability of 232, 233, 235, 239, 240, 241, 245–247  
tensions between mundane order and transcendental order 203–204, 287
- post-modern era 530, 696–699
- post-modern movements 128–129, 130, 511, 513, 517, 555, 557, 920, 972–973, 975
- post-modern politics 698–699
- post-modern societies 911–912
- power  
access to 895  
in India 334  
and culture 404, 406, 407, 409, 428  
distribution of 903, 906  
in United States 741  
economic, converted into political power 840–841  
monopoly of 580  
regulation of 59–60, 62, 169–170  
sharing systems, in India 809, 812, 813–814, 823, 828
- pre-Axial civilizations 221  
collectivities in 221–222  
millenarian visions in 265  
rulers, accountability of 222
- preliterate societies 90
- premodern societies, collective identities in 90–91
- primary groups 3
- primitive societies 154, 179
- primordial attributes 227
- primordial components, of collective identities 89, 116, 743, 748, 756
- primordially 80, 89, 101
- principled orientations, in European civilization 844–845
- principled political anarchism, in Jewish political tradition 761–762, 763, 764, 765–766, 770, 775–776
- principled traditionalism 463–464
- private interests, distinct from public interests 401–402
- private spheres 400
- progress, historical 657
- prophecy, end of, in Jewish civilization 769
- prophets, in Judaism 362
- protest  
against misrepresentations of modernity 694  
incorporation of, by modern regimes 893, 895  
legitimacy of 699–700, 725–726
- movements  
in American civilizations 719–720, 726–729, 730–731, 733, 739, 742, 756, 848, 862, 863

- in Axial civilizations 40, 187, 211–213, 268, 290, 300
- in China 475–477
- in Europe 342, 353, 460, 726, 727, 845–846, 855–860
- in India 337, 782–784, 785, 794–795, 806–807
- in Japan 439–440, 450, 726–727, 733–739, 742, 848 n18, 866, 870–872
- in modernity 190, 191–192, 263, 501–502, 540, 543–544, 662, 675–676, 725, 849–850, 884–885, 960–961
- in post-Axial civilizations 241
- utopian orientations of 739
- orientations of 178–179, 526
- themes of 48, 175–177, 179–180, 212, 267
- in Axial civilizations 647
- in European civilization 844, 852
- in Japanese civilization 445, 735–736, 738–739
- in modernity 498, 540, 565, 660, 725, 726, 884, 893, 958
- in United States 729–733
- Protestant countries, religious conflict in 898
- Protestant Ethic Thesis (Weber) 161–162, 575, 577, 583, 591, 595–596, 649, 676
- Protestantism 270, 273–274, 279, 281, 357–358
- and capitalism 583
- compared to Catholicism 591–594, 596, 950–951
- and economic activities 595–596
- and European civilization 584–587, 591–592, 705, 842
- fundamentalist movements in 950–951
- orientations towards law 593
- rulers adopting 592–593
- sectarian 568, 585
- transformative potentials of 594–595
- proto-fundamentalist movements 938, 979
- in Islamic civilization 423, 425–426, 939
- public interests, distinct from private interests 401–402
- public spheres
  - autonomous 896
  - in Chinese civilization 421
  - concept of 400–401, 409
  - development of 903
  - in Indian civilization 421
  - in Islamic civilization 409, 410–411, 415–417, 421, 427–428
  - in modernity 109, 885
  - religious component in 917
- Pure Land Shin Buddhist sect 308, 314
- Puritan conceptions, in political ideology of United States 708–709
- purity
  - of American life 730, 733, 741
  - distinction between pollution and 939
  - Hindu value orientation towards 331–332, 466–467, 789, 799
- rabbinical courts, in Israel 778–779
- Rabbinical Judaism 270, 272, 361, 367–368, 369–370, 371, 372, 390, 394, 770
- racial ideologies 728
- Rajputs, caste of 792
- rational choice approaches 15, 16–17, 26, 54, 877
- rationality
  - in European civilization 463, 843
  - in Japanese civilization 448, 486
  - in modernity 500, 527–528, 542, 566, 655–656, 657
  - see also Wertrationalität; Zweckrationalität*
- reality, social construction of 171
- reason
  - conception of 655, 656
  - human morality based on 656
  - man's possession of 167
  - and revelation, tensions between 643–644, 655
- rebellions
  - against cultural and structural order 166
  - against misrepresentations of modernity 694
  - rituals of 179, 182
- redemption, conceptions of 380–381
- reflexivity of civilizations 37, 46–47, 457
  - Axial 209, 266, 290, 643, 645
  - European 462, 463, 653
  - Japanese 486
  - modern 105, 495–496, 499, 516, 537, 538, 556, 563, 653, 883, 884–885, 957



- reform movements, in Islam 423-425
- Reformation 649
- regimes
- breakdown of 22, 618-619, 620, 625-626, 636, 679-700, 900-901
  - Catholic European 705
  - changes, in Islamic civilization 422
  - Communist 121, 128, 554, 922, 926
    - breakdown of 679-700
    - compared to fundamentalist regimes 944-946
    - legitimation of 689, 692, 945
    - transformability of 699
  - constitutional-pluralistic, transformability of 699
  - democratic 263-264, 888, 892-893, 893, 895, 906
    - and capitalism 894
    - consociational features of 809
    - continuity of 895-896, 900-901, 902-907
    - formation of 400, 661, 922
    - in India 781-782, 786, 805, 807, 808-810, 813, 815-816, 823-827, 828-829, 930
    - transformative capacities of 894, 903, 907
    - and trust 896, 904-905
  - feudal 71, 634
  - legitimation of 945
    - French 114-115, 569, 899
    - Indian 789
    - Japanese 745-747
  - modern
    - early 22-23
    - incorporation of protest in 893, 895
    - legitimation of 523, 543, 569, 899, 926
    - transformability of 699-700
  - Soviet 121-122, 679, 687-688, 690, 691
- regional nationalism, in India 822, 826
- The Religion of China (Konfuzianismus und Taoismus, Weber)* 281, 282
- religions
- of Axial civilizations 81
  - civil, in United States 120, 396, 708, 713, 727, 749, 753-756, 861
  - civilizational 319-320
  - comparative analysis of 281, 435
  - destructive potentialities of 979
  - ethnic components of 270
  - Great 435
    - and modernity 641
    - monotheistic 43, 215, 229, 269, 979
    - new, in Japan 737-738
    - and political systems 256
    - politicization of 917
    - as source of social power 581
    - transformative capacities of 162-163
    - wars of, absence in Indian civilization 470, 796
    - and the West 581-582
    - world 197
  - religious arena
    - in Indian civilization 468
    - tensions with political arena 340
  - religious centers 354, 468
  - religious collectivities 92, 185, 224
  - religious conflicts
    - in Europe 897-898
    - in India 797
  - religious dimension
    - in political arena 909, 917, 964
    - resurgence of 953-954, 964, 979
    - of social order and culture 583, 603, 605, 637, 724, 757
  - religious elites 235-238, 256, 257, 326, 414-415
    - in Europe 589
    - relations with political elites 581
    - see also* clerics
  - religious evolution 723
  - religious groups 581
    - political participation of 257-258, 325
  - religious identities 511, 917
    - in India 820
  - religious movements 128-129, 130
    - communal 510, 512, 552, 557, 560, 891, 909, 915, 924, 969-970, 970-972, 974-975
    - in Japan 735, 737-738
    - new 953
    - in United States 729
  - religious organizations, autonomy of 162, 256-257
  - religious roots, of modern political program 46, 671
  - religious virtuosi 268, 647
  - renouncer (Sanyassin), in Hinduism 331, 332, 466, 601-602, 799

- renunciation
  - acts of 332
  - ideal of 348, 601, 799
- resources
  - assuring availability of 173
  - free 5
  - monopoly of 580
- resurrection, concept of 349
- revelation, and reason, tensions
  - between 643-644, 655
- revolutionary change 617-623, 627-628, 630-632, 636
- revolutionary ideologic 664-665, 669
- revolutionary movements, in Europe 854
- revolutionary orientations, and religious orientations 898
- revolutionary potential, in Axial civilizations 764
- revolutionary states 120-122, 619, 909
  - weakening of 510
- revolutions 45-46, 440, 679
  - Abbasid 618, 630
  - American 712, 748, 749, 751
  - analysis of 22-23, 618-621, 623-626
  - Axial age 198-200
  - causes of 623-628, 630-632, 635-636, 681
  - and civil war 635
  - Communist, in China 301-302, 303
  - failed 634-635
  - French 46, 391, 547, 669, 751
  - Great 262, 390, 438, 441, 445, 461, 494, 564, 617, 642, 648, 649-651, 658, 661, 665, 668-669, 843
  - compared to breakdown of
    - Communist regimes 679-682, 684-687, 688, 695
  - compared to fundamentalist movements 941-942, 966
  - compared to Meiji Restoration (Ishin) 621-623, 631, 634, 871
  - historic context of 626
  - ideological components of 626, 628, 631
  - and intellectuals 620, 650-651, 680, 682, 686-687
  - in Islamic civilization 246, 633, 943-944, 968
  - Iran 943-944, 968
  - Jacobin orientations in 685, 693
  - modern themes promulgated by 618
    - and political activists 650-651
    - and violence 682
  - rights, conceptions of 206, 242, 659, 668-669, 834
  - rigidity, structural 154, 156
  - ritualization, tendency towards, among fundamentalist movements 948
  - rituals
    - in Axial civilizations 186-187
    - of centers 179, 186
    - collective 82
    - of rebellion 179, 182
  - roles, social 637, 912
  - rulers
    - accountability of 37, 184, 185-186, 206, 743, 945
    - in Axial civilizations 22, 37, 184, 185-186, 206, 225, 251, 257, 289, 363, 422, 604, 620, 629, 648, 661, 764, 834
    - institutionalization of 241, 242-243
    - in European civilization 242-243
    - in Japanese civilization 310, 745-747
    - in post-Axial civilizations 232, 233, 235, 239, 240, 241, 245-247
    - in pre-Axial civilizations 222
    - adopting Protestantism 592-593
    - in Axial civilizations 206, 604, 764, 834
    - in Buddhist civilization 325
    - in Communist Eastern Europe 682-683
    - of empires 5
    - in European civilization 838
    - in Indian civilization 332, 333-335, 468, 787-789, 791, 793-794, 802, 811-812
    - in Islamic civilization 410, 414, 416-417, 420, 421, 422, 426-427
    - legitimation through descent from the Prophet 412, 413, 426
    - in Japanese civilization 309-310
    - military-religious 245, 413
    - secular 185, 206, 225, 236, 259-260, 629, 834
    - ruling groups, in Communist Eastern Europe 694-695
    - Russian civilization 243-244

- Sabbatean movement 189, 272, 370, 384, 387, 771
- sacrality, attributes of 96
- sacred
- access to 765, 950
  - codes 79–80, 86
  - and construction of social and cultural order 170–171
  - fear of 78
  - opposition to 174
  - realm of 77, 80, 249, 270
    - in Christianity 346
    - construction of 77, 80, 249
    - in India 332
    - in Judaism 346, 363, 385, 765
- sacred histories, conflated with mundane histories 391
- salvation
- attainment of 252, 339, 349
  - attributes of 216
  - conceptions of 43, 185, 187, 188, 215, 223–224, 229, 255–256, 266, 269, 288, 348
    - in Axial civilizations 632–633, 764
    - in Buddhism 236, 320–321, 323
    - in Christianity 349, 350
  - problem of 184, 200
- salvationist visions, of Communist and fundamentalist regimes 944–945
- samurai 438, 439, 443, 746–747 n43
- sanctification, of violence 446, 682
- Sangha 188–189, 235, 312, 321–322
- Sanyassin (Indian renouncer) 331, 332, 466, 601–602, 799
- Scandinavian countries
- class consciousness in 856
  - economic development in 857
  - elites in 857
  - historical experiences of 857–858
  - socialist movement in 856, 857–858
- scholarly environment, influence of 1
- scientific and technological knowledge, expansion of 843
- Second Temple period, in Jewish civilization 363–364, 766
- secondary elites 160, 253
- in Europe 589
- sectarianism 45, 97, 187, 274
- in Axial civilizations 279–280, 318, 390, 648–649, 938–939
  - in Buddhism 312, 313, 325, 326–327, 597, 599
  - in Chinese civilization 299–300, 475–477
  - in Christianity 649
    - Protestant 568, 585
  - in European civilization 493, 649, 705
  - in Hinduism 188, 311–312, 596–598
  - in Indian civilization 319, 337–338, 337–339, 466, 469–470, 596–602, 632, 794–795
  - and institutional formations 600
  - in Islamic civilization 423–425, 648
  - in Japanese civilization 307–308, 311, 314, 444–445, 484–485
  - in Jewish civilization 345, 360, 365–367, 395–396, 398, 770
  - and modernity 575, 670
  - and political arena 648, 651
  - and political participation 313–314, 315, 317–318, 650–651
  - utopian 938
    - see also* heterodoxies
- secular orientations, of Enlightenment 568
- secular rulers, emergence of 185, 206, 225, 236, 259–260, 629, 834
- secularization, of centers 263
- segregation, of Jewish civilization 378, 379, 391–392
- self-correction, of modernity 546, 559
- settlers, in American civilizations 706–707, 748, 753
- shari'ra* (Muslim religious law) 410, 411
- Shi'ite Islam, rulership in 426–427
- slavery, in American civilizations 716, 750
- social actors, and construction of
- collective identities 84–85
- social behavior, explanations of 9, 16
- social change *see* change
- social conflict, intensification of 207
- social contract, conception of 645–646, 659–660
- social control, processes of 26–27, 34, 604
- social division of labor 13, 57, 59
- in Axial civilizations 18, 187
  - organization of 61, 169–170
  - and structural differentiation 62, 74
- social hierarchies 323–324
- in Axial civilizations 206–207
  - in Buddhist civilization 323–324
  - in Chinese civilization 295

- in Indian civilization 323
- in Japanese civilization 868
- social integration, in Axial civilizations 210
- social interaction 9–10, 26, 59–60, 76
- social mobility, in Europe 839–840
- social movements
  - in Axial civilizations 18, 39–40, 647, 909
  - in modernity 107–108, 112–113, 529, 543–544, 662, 885, 889–890, 960–961
  - new 125–126, 192, 510, 551–557, 891, 914–919, 928, 962, 963–964, 975–976
  - in non-Western societies 955, 960, 961
- social order
  - ambivalence to 166–167, 168, 170, 174, 175, 561, 562
  - and autonomy of man 655
  - conceptions of
    - alternative 268, 274, 290, 600
    - in United States 755
    - utopian 646–648, 939
  - consciousness of arbitrariness of 168, 170, 174, 179, 562
  - and creativity 168, 171
  - dimensions of 59, 61, 79, 169–170, 172, 192
  - charismatic 136, 249
  - cultural 15–16, 62–63, 638
  - religious 583, 603, 605, 637, 724, 757
  - and dissent 177–179
  - and hedonistic and anarchic impulses in society 645, 646
  - in Indian civilization 797, 800, 801–802, 811–812, 829
  - models of 81–82, 86–87, 179, 637
  - in modernity 106, 538, 742–743
  - (re)construction of 4, 12–13, 135–136, 167, 168, 170–172, 175, 287, 289, 554, 615, 638, 654, 757, 883
  - and traditions 135
- social roles 637, 912
- social structure 14–15
  - and agency 2, 9, 54, 613–614
  - and culture 15–16, 25–27, 55, 581, 582, 602–603, 605–606, 614–615, 638
- socialism, and capitalism 931
- socialist movements 545–546, 726, 890
  - in Europe 736, 850, 851–854, 860, 931
  - Scandinavian countries 856, 857–858
  - Southern 857–858
  - in Japan 734–735, 736–737, 851, 864–865, 870, 873, 931
  - in United States, weakness of 727, 728, 850, 851, 861, 862–863, 931
- societies
  - active construction of 941–942
  - African 65, 182–183
  - archaic 90
  - Asian, Western analysis of 403, 405–406
  - Buddhist 235–238
  - clienteleistic relations in 11, 847, 858–860
  - complex 157–158, 160
  - congruent 65, 66, 68
  - contemporary 911–913
  - and culture 580, 616
  - European 112, 113, 243, 846–847, 917–918
  - feudal 837
  - flexibility or rigidity of 154
  - Islamic 246, 426
  - modern 24–25, 50, 53, 109, 181, 499, 535–536, 607, 724, 928–929
  - centers of 108, 191, 262–263
  - change in 191, 662, 875, 885, 906, 911–913
  - convergences in 53, 435, 454, 503, 519, 521, 527, 535, 726, 849, 873–874, 921, 925, 954–955
  - crystallization of 50, 955
  - European 112
  - historical experiences of 514–515
  - liminal situations in 181
  - moral conscience of 236–237
  - non-Western 52, 402–403, 404–409, 524, 528
  - collective identities in 525, 961–962
  - elites in 505, 525, 526, 549, 961
  - and modernity 128, 130, 406, 452–455, 504–508, 513–515, 526–529, 535–536, 549–550, 670, 955, 972
  - social movements in 955, 960, 961

- noncongruent 65, 66, 68, 69-70  
 pagan 199  
 post-modern 911-912  
 preliterate 90  
 premodern 90-91  
 primitive 154, 179  
 and states 399, 449, 903  
   in European civilization 344, 848, 926, 927  
   in Indian civilization 471, 827  
   in Japanese civilization 449-450, 451  
   in United States 709, 752, 847-848, 862  
 traditional 138-139, 139-141, 143, 145, 148-150  
 tribal 90, 180-181  
 sociological analysis 249, 577  
   basic concepts of 13-16, 54  
   civilizational dimension in 33  
 sociological theory 2, 3  
*The Sociologies of Talcott Parsons and George C. Homans* (Turk & Simpson eds.) 9  
 sociology  
   comparative macro 57, 60, 62, 65, 577-579, 605, 606, 613, 615-616, 639  
   crises in 13  
   critical 190-191, 522  
   Founding Fathers of 59, 169-170, 603, 606, 637  
   of knowledge 203 n10  
 solidarity 3, 169-170, 215-216  
   in Jewish civilization 376, 387, 388, 761, 773-775  
   (re)construction of network of 3, 4, 59-60, 62, 896, 900  
   of a social system 153, 155, 156  
 South Vietnam, bureaucratic-cultural elite in 305-306  
 Southern Europe  
   center-periphery relations in 860  
   clientelistic relations in 859-860  
   elites in 859  
   socialist movements in 857-858  
 sovereignty  
   concepts of 330, 750  
   in Indian civilization 468, 789-791  
   of the court, in Jewish political tradition 761, 766, 768-769, 772, 773  
   fractured 790-791  
   of the people 661, 750, 751, 752  
 Soviet regime 121-122  
   contradictions within 687-688, 690, 691  
   disintegration of 679  
   nationalities, question of 690  
 Soviet Union, economy in 688  
 Spain, Jews in 382  
 states  
   conceptions of 545  
   as a distributive agency 913  
   formation 279  
   in Indian civilization 335-336, 791  
   nation 108-111, 567, 909, 978  
   and collective identities 510-511, 547, 567  
   in European civilization 932  
   and modernity 505, 509  
   and monopoly of violence 51, 124-125, 509, 914, 918, 963  
   weakening of 124-125, 126-127, 509-510, 512, 551, 553, 914, 917, 918, 926-927, 963, 964, 976  
   origins of 62, 63  
   patrimonial 711-712  
   revolutionary 909  
   universalistic mission of 120-121, 122, 619  
   weakening of 510  
   and society 399, 449, 903  
   in Europe civilization 344, 848, 926, 927  
   in Indian civilization 471, 827  
   in Japanese civilization 449-450, 451  
   in United States 709, 752, 847-848, 862  
   symbols of 684  
 status hierarchies, in European civilization 838, 841  
 stratification, criteria of 207  
 strong centers 137, 157, 159  
 structural change 140-141, 145, 147-148  
 structural differentiation 7, 33, 57-58, 59, 587, 742  
   and division of labor 62, 74  
   and elite functions 64-67, 74  
 structural flexibility 154, 155, 156  
 structural order, rebellion against 166  
 structural pluralism, in Europe 340, 351, 352-353, 459, 580-581, 586-587, 836

- structural rigidity 154  
*Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Habermas) 400  
 structural-evolutionary theory 57–58, 74  
   reappraisal of 59, 60–62  
 structural-functional analysis 5, 6, 60, 614  
   criticism of 6–9, 13, 578, 616  
 structuralists 14, 25, 614, 615  
 structuration 614  
 structure  
   deep 8, 613, 614  
   economic 681  
   of elites 34–35, 242, 874  
   of markets 863, 866  
   social 14–15  
   and agency 2, 9, 54, 613–614  
   and culture 15–16, 55, 581, 582, 602–603, 605–606, 614–615, 638  
   urban 20, 21  
 student movements 192  
 subaltern studies 404–405  
 subdued identities, resurrection of 915, 963–964  
*The Success of Democracy in India* (Kohli) 808–809  
 sultans, and *khalifas* 413, 414, 426  
 Sung-period (China) 275, 276  
 Switzerland, army in 927  
 symbolic anthropologists 14  
 symbolic order 141, 147, 154  
 symbolism, of centers 182  
 symbols  
   articulation of 173  
   of collective identities 182  
   gendered 110  
   political 792  
   of state, in Communist Eastern Europe 684  
 Taliban regime, in Afghanistan 967  
 Taoism 276, 300  
 territoriality, as component of collective identities 103, 108–109, 541, 662, 704  
 Theravada Buddhism 235–236, 321, 324  
 time, conceptions of 199, 209, 267, 472, 474, 478, 485, 486–487, 657, 755  
 Tokugawa regime (Japan) 435–436, 438–440, 627, 746 n42, 872  
*Tokugawah Religion* (Bellah) 676  
 Torah (Judaism) 373–374  
 totalistic ideologies 555, 665, 886, 887, 959  
   of fundamentalist movements 939, 940  
   in modernity 501, 543, 566  
 totalistic tendencies  
   in American protest movements 733  
   versus pluralistic tendencies, in modernity 112, 113, 499–500, 501, 513, 523, 529, 542, 555–556, 566, 567, 641–642, 655–657, 663–664, 671, 886, 887, 907, 919, 959  
 trade conflicts 930  
 traditional authenticity, ideologies of 547  
 traditional societies 138–139  
   centers in 139, 145  
   change in 139–141, 143  
   elites in 148–150  
 traditionalism 142–143, 149  
   fundamentalist 947–948  
   principled 463–464  
 traditionality, structural implications of 138–139  
 traditions  
   active commitment to 155  
   an collective identities 138  
   basic orientations towards 263  
   Confucian, in China 189, 230–231, 474–475  
   content of 161  
   contradictory orientations within 177  
   cultural 220  
   dynamics of 32, 143–163  
   in European civilization 340, 463–465  
   Great 141, 143, 145, 177, 205  
   in Indian civilization 472  
   in Japanese civilization 486  
   layers of 141, 142, 144  
   Little 141, 205  
   and modernity 504, 929–930  
   partialization of 142  
   political  
   of European civilization 852, 853  
   of Indian civilization 821  
   of Jewish civilization 761, 764–765, 768, 773, 779–780  
   reconstruction of, by fundamentalist movements 946–947

- reservoirs of 151, 152  
 and social and cultural order 135  
 tribal 340, 424–425
- transcendent, code of 80–81
- transcendental conceptions, in Axial civilizations 198, 201
- transcendental cosmic systems 43, 215, 229, 269
- transcendental order  
 and political order 185, 206, 224, 251, 289, 629, 642–643, 764, 834
- tensions between mundane order  
 and 36, 37, 43, 66, 91–92, 183–184, 221, 223–224, 284  
 in Axial civilizations 197, 198, 199–200, 201, 202–203, 208, 225, 250, 252, 266–267, 268–269, 331, 474, 479, 643, 763, 798, 833  
 cultural definitions of 229  
 in post-Axial age civilizations 203–204, 287  
 resolutions of 208–209, 211, 215, 227, 251, 252, 285–286, 287, 288, 339, 474, 497, 539, 564, 629, 644, 659, 834, 883
- transcendental visions  
 in Axial civilizations 208–209, 628, 642–643, 646  
 in Christianity 346, 348–349, 350  
 implementation of 644–645, 647, 650, 668  
 institutionalization of 201, 202–203, 642–643, 646  
 in Islam 422  
 in Judaism 361, 394  
 in modernity 495–496, 540, 726  
 multiplicity of 208–209, 643, 883
- transcendentalism 161  
 in China 281, 284–285, 287–288, 302
- transformative capacities 143–144, 156  
 of Axial civilizations 44–45  
 of elites 149–150, 158–159, 160, 637  
 of regimes  
 Communist 699  
 democratic 894, 903, 907  
 modern 699–700  
 of religions and ideologies 162–163, 631  
 Protestantism 594–595
- transmundane world 199
- transnational identities 916, 964
- transnational movements 554, 916–917
- tribal societies 90, 180–181
- tribal traditions  
 in Europe 340  
 in Islam 424–425
- trust 878  
 and democracy 896, 904–905  
 and elites 11, 19  
 erosion of 905, 908  
 extended 173–174, 183, 801, 879–881  
 and institution building 877, 879  
 and institutional formations 11  
 maintenance of 878–879  
 (re)construction of network of 3, 59–60, 62, 169–170, 173, 877–878, 896, 900  
 transference from family groups to societal settings 4
- ulama* (interpreters of Muslim religious law) 409, 410  
 central place in Islamic civilization 414–415
- ummah* (Muslim community of believers) 244–245, 246, 410, 411, 415
- unification, political 469, 781, 790, 925–926, 932
- United States  
 American ideology 730  
 attitude to authority 741, 751  
 centers in 709–710, 847  
 access to 862  
 citizenship in 750–751  
 civil religion in 120, 396, 708, 713, 727, 749, 753–756, 861  
 civil society in 752  
 class consciousness in 728, 862  
 collective identities in 119–120, 712–713, 718, 728, 748–754, 861  
 compared to Japanese civilization 723, 726–727, 739–742, 756  
 conservatism in 721  
 elites in 715, 848, 863  
 ethnic organizations in 728–729  
 hierarchy and equality in 709, 717, 718, 748, 749–750, 847, 862  
 historical experience of 754  
 indigenous populations in 713, 716  
 individualism in 751–752  
 Jacobin orientations in 720

- Jewish communities in 397  
 Jewish historical experience in 396–397  
 land, image of 752–753  
 market economy in 934  
 modernity in 548, 722  
 political dynamics in 719, 740–742  
 political ideology of 358, 396, 708–709, 712, 749, 752–753  
 political and social order in 749–750, 755  
 protest  
   movements in 719–720, 726–729, 730–731, 733, 739, 742, 756, 848, 862, 863  
   themes of 729–733  
 settlers in 706, 707, 748, 753  
 slavery in 716, 750  
 socialist movement, weakness of 727, 728, 850, 851, 861, 862–863, 931  
 sovereignty of the people in 750, 751, 752  
 state and society in 709, 752, 848–849, 862  
 utopian visions in 729, 730, 732, 733, 739, 741, 754–755  
 universal essence, search for, in Japanese civilization 448  
 universalistic components  
   of Axial civilizations 100  
   of modern program 546, 556  
 universalistic ideologies 100  
   of Islam 412–413  
 universalistic mission  
   absence of, in breakdown of Eastern European Communist regimes 686  
   of Jacobin movements 887  
   of revolutionary territorial states 120–121, 122, 619  
 universe, potential mastery of 654  
 urban hierarchies, in China 296  
 urban structure, studies of 20, 21  
*Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (Jaspers) 197–198  
 utopian heterodoxies 938  
 utopian visions  
   absence of, in breakdown of Eastern Europe Communist regimes 685, 686  
   in Axial civilizations 40, 209–210, 212, 265–266, 267–277, 390, 422–423, 425, 642, 646–648, 650  
   of cultural and social order 646–648, 939  
   implementation of 668, 941  
   Japanese 442, 743  
   modern 500, 539, 542, 618, 725, 884, 889, 927, 958  
   of protest movements 739  
   in United States 729, 730, 732, 733, 739, 741, 754–755  
   value rationality *see Wertrationalität*  
   *Venture of Islam* (Hodgson) 405  
   vernacularization, processes of 101–104  
 Vietnam, Confucianism in 305, 306  
 violence  
   ideologization of 113, 508–509, 547, 567, 571, 924, 978  
   nation-states losing monopoly of 51, 124–125, 509, 914, 918, 963  
   and revolutions 682  
   sanctification of 446, 682  
   tendencies to 562  
 Viraisva movement 795  
 virtuosi, religious 268, 647  
 visions  
   cultural 637–638  
   millenarian 265  
   of modernity, new 914–915, 918  
   ontological 91  
   salvationist 944–945  
   *see also* transcendental visions;  
   utopian visions  
 Wahhabites 425–426  
 wars  
   and genocide  
     components of modernity 50, 113, 508, 546, 978  
     *see also* destructive potentialities  
     of modernity  
   of religion, absence in Indian civilization 470, 796  
   weak centers 137, 157, 158, 159  
 Weber symposia 579, 580, 582  
 Weberian analysis 17, 351  
   of Chinese civilization 281, 282–284, 295, 302, 474  
   of Jewish civilization 359, 378, 383, 398  
   of modernity 105, 406, 495, 537–538, 563, 676–677, 882, 956–957



- of Protestantism 161–162, 575,  
577, 583, 591, 595–596, 649, 676  
of world religions 197
- Weimar republic, breakdown of  
900–901
- Wertrationalität* (value rationality) 448,  
463, 486, 500, 527, 566, 656, 657
- West  
ambivalence towards 549, 550  
attitude of fundamentalist movements  
towards 516–517  
confrontational attitude towards  
130, 557, 920  
origins of 577  
and religions 581–582  
*see also* anti-Westernism
- Western Europe  
compared to Eastern Europe  
926–928  
movement to unification 925–926
- Western hegemony, of international  
systems 52, 505, 524–525
- Western modernity 520–521  
confrontations with other civilizations  
52–53, 525, 704, 706, 721–722,  
920
- Western views, of Islamic civilization  
403, 405, 409, 419–420, 428–429
- Westernization  
and modernity 130, 131, 517, 522,  
531, 536, 549–550, 557, 724, 920,  
923, 955–956, 974–975, 977  
*see also* de-Westernization of  
modernity
- Why is there no Socialism in the United  
States?* (Sombart) 728, 931
- Wirtschaftsethik* (Weber) 79–80 n11, 603
- women, attitude of fundamentalist  
movements towards 943, 967–968
- world, attempts at re-ordering 202
- world civilizations 42, 214
- world histories 42, 94, 197, 214  
Japan within 123–124
- world religions, Weber's study of 197
- world systems  
incorporation of non-Western  
societies in 550  
Western hegemony in 52, 505,  
524–525
- worlds, of knowledge 203
- youth groups 4
- Zionist ideology 381, 397
- Zionist movement 392, 396, 776
- Zweckrationalität* (instrumental rationality)  
448, 463, 486, 500, 527, 566, 656,  
657