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The Reconstruction of Religious Arenas in the Framework of 'Multiple Modernities'

S.N. Eisenstadt

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'.¹ 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 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

1. 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.

Millennium

religious components and identities become central, evidently relegating the classical model of the modern nation-state to a secondary position.²

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.³

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.⁴

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 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

The Reconstruction of Religious Arenas

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

2. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

3. 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.

4. On the developments of these themes, see S.N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change, and Modernity* (New York: Wiley, 1973).

its autonomy, and of its place in the flow of time.⁵ 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 another modernity can emerge, only as the legitimacy of the postulated cosmos ceases to be taken for granted and beyond reproach. Countermovements 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.⁶

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.

5. 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.

6. James D. Faubian, *Modern Greek Lessons: A Primer in Historical Constructivism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1993), 113-15.

Within this framework, a distinct modern political program developed. Its central core was the battle against the traditional legitimization of the social and political order, the opening up of different possibilities of legitimization, and the contestation over the different ways in which political order was to be constructed by human actors.⁷ The modern program entailed the combination of 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 of sectarian utopian visions into central components of the political and cultural program.⁸

In a parallel fashion, the construction of the boundaries of modern collectivities and collective identities was continually problematised in reflexive ways.⁹ 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'.

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

7. See Eisenstadt, *Paradoxes of Democracy*.

8. Eric Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, ed. John H. Halliwell (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1974); Adam Seligman, ed., *Order and Transcendence* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989); and Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolution*.

9. 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.

Millennium

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.¹⁰ 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.

V

It was the conjunction of the continual structural changes inherent in the development and expansion of modernity with the dynamic interplay between the aninomies 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

10. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolution*.

The Reconstruction of Religious Arenas

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.¹¹

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

11. See Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Revolutions, and Modernity* and the essays in S. N. Eisenstadt and Yael Azmon, eds., *Socialism and Tradition* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J. Humanities Press, 1975).

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 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.¹²

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 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

12. 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, 1993); Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economics 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).

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.¹³ 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,

13. 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).

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 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 compelling particularist visions.¹⁴

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, 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 perfectibility 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

¹⁴ Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, eds., *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999).

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.¹⁵

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.¹⁶ 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.¹⁷

On the other hand, in stark contrast to such traditionalist 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 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.

15. S.N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies* (New York: Free Press, 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 Ideals and Institutions*, eds. Liah Greenfeld and Michel Martin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

16. Martin Riesebrodt, *Fundamentalismus als Patriarchats- und Protestbewegung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1990).

17. John F. Burns, 'The West in Afghanistan, Before and After', *New York Times*, 18 February 1996; John F. Burns, 'Misery is Still Afghanistan's Rule', *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-Hauser, 'Afghanistan im Eigenen Land', *Die Zeit*, 23 December 1994; 3; M. Lauer, 'Alles Wahrheit im Computer', *Die Zeit*, 16 September 1994; 49; and E. Hunziker, 'Qom—heilige Stadt der Mullahs', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 20/21 November 1993; 84-86.

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 *majlis*, 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 *majlis* 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 legitimisation 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'.¹⁸

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 movements 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 latter 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

18. 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 Boroumand and Roya Boroumand, 'Reform at an Impasse', *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 4 (2000): 114-29.

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 totalitarian-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 Obeyesekere has shown, apolitical fundamentalist orientations, groups, or movements may in these circumstances develop.¹⁹ 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 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.²⁰

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 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.

19. Gananath Obeyesekere, 'Buddhism, Nationhood, and Cultural Identity: A Question of Fundamentals', in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*. See also H.L. Senewiratne, *The Work of King: The New Buddhism in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

20. Renzo de Felice, *Il Fascismo: Le Interpretazioni dei Contemporanei e degli Storici* (Bari: Laterza, 1970) and Ernst Jünger, *Le Fascisme, un Totalitarisme à l'Italiane* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1988).

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.²¹

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 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.²²

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 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.²³ 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.²⁴ 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.²⁵

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.²⁶ 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

21. 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.

22. Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural Identity and Global Process* (London: Sage, 1994) and Ulf Hanetz, *Cultural Complexity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

23. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolutions*.

24. *Ibid*.

25. Eisenstadt and Azmon, *Socialism and Tradition*.

26. S.N. Eisenstadt, *European Civilization in a Comparative Perspective* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1987).

distinguish them from these earlier ones. The crucial difference lies in their perception of the confrontation between the basic premisses 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 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 premisses 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' premisses, 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 premisses of their respective religions or civilisations, as newly interpreted by them.²⁷ 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.²⁸

27. Farhad Khosrokhavar, 'L'Universel Abstrait, le Politique et la Construction de l'Islamisme comme Forme d'Altérité', in *Une Société Fragmentée?*, ed. Michel Wieviorka (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1996) and Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

28. See Timur Kuram, 'The Economic Impact of Islamic Fundamentalism', in *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economics and Militance*, eds. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Timur Kuram, 'Islam and Underdevelopment: An Old Puzzle Revisited', *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 153, no. 1 (1997): 41-79; and Timur Kuram, 'The Genesis of Islamic Economics: A Chapter in the Politics of Muslim Identity', *Social Research* 64, no. 2 (1997): 301-38.

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.²⁹ 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, 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

²⁹ Eickelman and Anderson, *New Media in the Muslim World*.

Millennium

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.³⁰

XYII

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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30. Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural Identity and Global Process* (London: Sage, 1994); Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); George E. Marcus, ed., *Postmodern States: Conversations on Culture, Politics, and Nation* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993), and 'The Road to 2050: A Survey of the New Geopolitics', *The Economist*, 31 July 1999, 5.