Introduction

The Challenge of Integrating Social Theory and Regional Studies

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The recognition of the simultaneous emergence of the natural and then social sciences and the formation of modernity in Western Europe is the inescapable starting point for any theorist wishing to lay a claim to the understanding of modernity in whatever form, be it modernity heavy, as in Habermas's Enlightenment project of modernity that represents a sociologized version of central value-ideas of the Western Age of Reason, or modernity lite, whose variants include multiple, alternative, connected, entangled, and subaltern modernities examined in this volume. Social theory as born in Europe was the theory of "modern society," a term that is only recently being replaced by "modernity." What I call modernity heavy implies that there is no significant change beyond it in history, in effect making the concept of modernity "refer to only a single and unique experience"—that of the West. Much of the criticism it has provoked for doing so, however, "tended to discard rather than aim to rethink key concepts of the social sciences" (Wagner 2009, 248–49). The varieties of modernity lite presented in this volume are, by contrast, attempts to rethink and qualify rather than reject and discard the concept of modernity. A set of chapters on comparative analysis of civilizations goes even further, proposing to decenter modernity in social theory altogether by historicizing it as a distinct evolutionary or developmental pattern.

I

The late Reinhard Koselleck, the German historian who did more than anyone to establish conceptual history as a discipline in the latter part of the twentieth century, saw the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Western Europe as the "saddle period" (*Sattelzeit*) in world history when the major shifts in the fundamental categories underlying the rise of social sciences as a part of the formation and cultural constitution of modernity. From the latter part of the eighteenth century onward, there emerged a new "space of experience" that gave certain key political notions such as democracy, freedom and the state "an anticipatory content they did not have before" (Koselleck 2002, 5). Alongside these were constructed in the early nineteenth century fundamental substantive concepts of the social sciences such as society, class, the people. Temporal concepts of the rising social sciences, such as progress, evolution, and development, were likewise constructed within the new, modern horizon of expectation, to use another key term of Koselleck's.

As Björn Wittrock points out in chapter 2, social sciences were first conceived in France in the 1790s as the new kind of knowledge for understanding the modern world. Elsewhere, following Koselleck's conceptual history of Western modernity closely, Wittrock (2005, 87–90) highlights certain key modes in the formulation of the new discourse of the social sciences. The first is the historicization of abstract reason, which generates the social sciences in the matrix of history. The second is textual and hermeneutic efforts to historicize the language and linguistic development itself, which leads to hermeneutics in the latter part of the nineteenth century and to the linguistic and conceptual contextualism, notably of Quentin Skinner, in our generation. Thirdly, there is the emergence of new collective identities within the body politic, most notably in the form of modern nationalism, alongside notions of society, state, and civil society. Classical sociology was closely tied indeed to the emergence of the European nation-states, and to the notion of civil society and social class as variously defined by Hegel and Marx. Consequently, as Alain Touraine puts it, "sociology remained absent from colonized countries as well as from those where traditional leaders continued to hold power" (Touraine 2007, 185–86, as cited in Boatcă and Costa 2010, 14). Last but not least is the theme of the nature of human agency and the motivation to social action. As Wittrock points out in chapter 2, this new categorization of agency and society entailed the autonomy of the social scientific discourse from Christian moral philosophy and thus its secularization.

Premised on these fundamental conceptual shifts, social theory can be said to have begun in nineteenth-century Europe as a theory of social evolution. Hegel, Comte, and Marx emphasized a common pattern of evolution for "society" (the new abstraction) with Europe in the lead, and were not interested in different patterns of change in other world regions. Marx was forced to deny the possibility of change for his "Asiatic mode of production" and refused to envisage an alternative evolutionary path for Russia. In the same period, as Western historical reality was exoteric, Orientalism as the study of the other became esoteric. Social theory was derived from Western experience and claimed universality, making the exotic reality of the Oriental other theoretically irrelevant. This specious dichotomy, captured in Kipling's "East is East and West is West; and never the twain shall meet," is untenable in the global age, however, and runs against the reality of the compression of the world and intensification of communication within and between the world regions.

The radical postcolonial critique of social theory as Eurocentric, whatever its value in illuminating "the geopolitics of knowledge and the colonial difference" (Mignolo 2002), remains a utopian epistemology so long as it cannot produce alternative conceptions of time, agency, society to those embedding social sciences during the formation of modernity. The interplay of local histories and global designs greatly illuminates the production of knowledge in the era of Western imperialist hegemony but does not involve an epistemic break in social theorizing. It is hard to see, for instance, how Mignolo's (2002, 90) proposal for an alternative to the admittedly Eurocentrist postmodernist critique, "diversity as a universal project rather than the reinscription of [any] abstract universal," can dispense with these fundamental conceptual premises of contemporary social science any more than the postmodernist theory he attacks. The constructive alternative to both these equally utopian critiques is surely to retrieve, modify, and extend basic concepts of Eurocentric social theory in the light of distinctive historical experiences of other world regions. The rich stock of concepts and theories that are mainly embedded in Western historical experience can be modified in the direction of greater universality through their dialogical engagement with concepts which are at last being formed on the basis of the vast, understudied, and analytically untapped historical and cultural experience of other regions and civilizations. Hence, the promise of comparative sociology for our generation, and of the present venture to realize this promise by integrating the findings of regional studies into social theory.

Let me illustrate my claim for the utility of retrieval of categories impaired in the production of knowledge under Western imperialist hegemony

as against their rejection in expectation of radical epistemic breakthroughs with reference to the much maligned "Orientalism." Orientalism as a discipline studying the civilizations of the East developed about the same time as social sciences, or somewhat earlier, being so designated by its European practitioners in the nineteenth century. Said (1978) redefined the concept in a much broader sense, conflating Orientalism in the narrow sense as the self-designation of a scholarly discipline with the much broader stereotypical perception of the Oriental other in the era of colonialism.[1] Orientalism as a scholarly discipline may well have been tainted by imperialism, as the late Edward Said charged. Nevertheless, it was epistemologically revolutionary because it was methodical. While considering many European Orientalists charlatans and pained by the blatant attempt of the French Orientalists to recruit him for propaganda against Germany during World War I, the greatest Iranian scholar of the first half of the twentieth century, Mohammad Qazvini (1999[1924]), acknowledged his immense debt to Orientalism. The Orientalists had taught him critical method, which, for him, distinguished modern critical scholarship he was pioneering in Iran from the traditional *madrasa* scholarship in which he had originally been trained in Shi'ite seminaries. The Brahmins who helped Max Müller establish as canonical the celebrated series *The Sacred Books of the East* were similarly trained in method by him and other Orientalists. Sujata Patel's postcolonial criticism of this Indological basis of the Indian sociology of G. S. Ghurye and his followers in chapter 16 is cast in epistemological terms, but if my argument is correct, it could just as well be taken as sociological rather than epistemological. As such it would primarily be a critique of the *savrana* or upper-caste view modernized through the application of critical method in the edition of texts rather than an alien view imposed by imperialism. It did not reflect the Hinduism of the excluded classes, nor the worldview of the non-Sanskritic and Muslim Indians, but it was *not* a European view of the Hindu Other.

It should further be noted that Orientalism as the discipline developed in the nineteenth century constituted an elaborate framework for civilizational analysis. Indeed, it has been cogently argued that Orientalism in India at the end of the eighteenth century led to a "Copernican-like revolution" in the shift from the unitary to the pluralist conception of civilization. "The Sanskrit-based civilization of the 'Hindus' challenged the idea that Europe was *the* world civilization" (Rudolph and Rudolph 1997, 227, 229). Consonantly with Dilthey's hermeneutics, language rather than religion was the basis and decisive marker of civilization for Orientalism (Rudolph 2010, 144). However, it took another century and a half for the rise of nationalism in the non-Western world in the era of the League of Nations

to institutionalize the shift from the singular to the plural conception of civilizations and give it some international political purchase (Duara 2001).

Although Raymond Aron (1968) included Montesquieu as a theorist of human diversity in his classic *Main Currents of Sociological Thought,* the latter's influence on the subsequent development of social theory remains to be demonstrated. Nor did Herder's equally important and exceptional interest in the cultural diversity of humankind (Herder 1968; Berlin 1976) generate any theoretical development in social sciences. Both Wittrock (in chapter 2) and I (in chapter 7), therefore, consider Max Weber's comparative work on the world religions, beginning with the "intermediate reflections" of 1915, as the starting point of current civilizational analysis. In chapter 1, I survey three generations of comparative sociologies that have flourished in the twentieth century, albeit with abrupt discontinuities. As I show, the Durkheimians in France made an honorable start at about the same time as Max Weber. When the United States became the center of social sciences after World War II, the mainstream developed the putatively universal theory of social evolution as modernization. However, there was also an alternative project for bringing the East and West together without imposing the latter's developmental pattern on the former, as the modernization theory tended to do. This alternative project was the work of the second generation of comparative sociologists who thus sought to make social theory less parochially Eurocentric and, at the same time, Oriental studies less esoteric. It was an ambitious attempt at integrating social theory and regional studies that has not received the attention it deserves. Be that as it may, the second generation, too, failed to fulfill the promise of comparative sociology because social sciences and regional studies in the United States drifted apart and developed in divergent paths.

In view of these false starts, Max Weber, or perhaps the later of the two Webers—the Weber who proposed the seminal idea of the world religions of salvation as the core around which civilizations grow, seems the most promising starting point of the study of differences among cultures and civilizations and thus the starting point of the genuine comparative sociology needed for the understanding of the different and yet tightly integrated worlds of the global age. Puchala (2003, 51–72, 119–42), it is true, has developed a concept of civilization through Toynbee rather than Weber that is not based on world religions but instead offers a gradation of civilizations at various stages of maturity and uses it to determine of their type of interaction—assimilation, dialogue, or clash. Though very ambitious in its intent, Puchala's conceptualization seems methodologically problematic in that it blends the outcome of encounters between civilizations with their putative

stages of development, instead of defining each independently. It therefore seems less promising to me than Weber's admittedly less comprehensive paradigm based on the evolution of the world religions.

The present, third generation of comparative sociologists faces the challenge of understanding diversity stemming from the varied historical experiences of different world regions (more than one global center, and a highly diverse periphery). The ideas of "multiple modernities" and "axial civilizations," as formulated by the late S. N. Eisenstadt and leading to the plea for "civilizational analysis" by Edward Tiryakian and me (2004) and by Peter Katzenstein (2010), represent the latest attempts to meet the challenge of understanding diversity in the global age.

In his historical-sociological reconceptualization of the Axial Age, Eisenstadt gradually shifted from the historical to the typological conception of axiality as a cluster of features of civilizations explaining the breakthrough to transcendence rather than any specific age, finally opting for the term *axial civilizations* and dropping the word *Age* (Eisenstadt 2005). The most recent contribution to civilizational analysis, *The Axial Age and Its Consequences* (Bellah and Joas 2012), however, moves in the opposite direction of shifting back to the Axial Age in the first millennium BCE in order to unpack the notion of axiality. The roots of modernity are now sought in the key features of transcendence, differentiation, and disembeddedness that were first institutionalized in the revolutionary breakthrough or axial shift in that period of human history. Robert Bellah returns after a half-century to his celebrated analysis of religious evolution (Bellah 1964) so as to amplify it into a general theory of the stages of social evolution encompassing culture and civilization. Drawing on Eric Voegelin's fundamental distinction between the Greek "anthropocentric" path to transcendence through philosophy and the Near Eastern "theocratic" path through religion, Bellah (2012) analyzes the Buddhist path to transcendence as yet another distinctive axial breakthrough.

The search for the roots of modernity gives most of the contributions in *The Axial Age and Its Consequences* a distinctly teleological mode. This is in line with Jaspers's original teleological plea for post–World War II mutual understanding through recognition of the plurality of universalisms among the humankind (Joas 2012, 22). Charles Taylor (2012) illuminatingly unpacks the concept of "embeddedness" with the hindsight of his celebrated study, *A Secular Age* (2007), while Jung (2012, 95) similarly unpacks the idea of "transcendence" in order to establish a sequential relationship between the Axial Age and modernity that highlights the "gap of historic contingency between developmental possibilities and their reflective appropriation."

Two other important contributions point to the heuristic value of centering civilization analysis on the development of world religions, an analytical frame that I claim for Max Weber in chapter 7. Bellah's reconceptualization of social evolution is heavily influenced by Merlin Donald's psychology of the evolution of the cognitive system. In drawing the implications of this account of human cognitive evolution as the successive emergence of Episodic, Mimetic, Mythic, and Theoretic cultures, Donald himself ends with the critical observation that the religious thinking of the Axial Age was the source of the regulative cognitive principles or "the absolute cutting edge of human experience at the time" (Donald 2012, 74). Donald's conclusion of the centrality of religion is reinforced by Jan Assmann's densely historical analysis of the axial role of canonization in disembedding religion from its sociohistorical context and thus abstracting it as "the criterion of absolute and universal truth" (Assmann 2012, 390). Assmann's (2012, 394) "common denominator of most of the axial features," namely the distanciation and disembedding that result from canonization, is in fact the very basis of Weber's analysis of the religious of salvation versus "the world" from which they are disembedded by scriptural abstraction. One again, we are back to Weber's seminal idea of the world religions as the core around which distinctive civilizations grow.

In chapter 2, Björn Wittrock traces the development of a distinctly Eurocentric conception of world history since Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of history, which ignored the relationship between the European trajectory and global historical developments. This was followed by the European great nationalist historiography of the era of German and Italian unification. By the end of the nineteenth century, Wittrock argues, their divergent paths of development led to a permanent divide between history and the social sciences. Wittrock sees the civilizational analysis of the third generation of comparative sociologists, building on Weber's sociology of the world religions, as the effective means to repair this divide. He analyses Karl Jaspers's idea of the axial age and Eisenstadt's development of that idea into "axial civilizations." The axial paradigm as reformulated by Eisenstadt and Wittrock was rightly criticized by Peter Wagner (2005, 97, 104–105) as a retrojection of the characteristics of modernity, notably agency and reflexivity, to historical civilizations. In chapter 2, Wittrock tries to meet this criticism by redefining reflexivity in terms of the textual articulation of reflexive consciousness and institutionalized ability of the civilizations called axial to use reason to transcend the immediately given. Nevertheless, as Arnason shows in chapter 6, historicization is indeed the major challenge in moving forward in civilizational analysis. He argues that generalizing

the axial model is premature and conducive to cultural determinism, and therefore suggests discarding the category of axiality for a "return to a more strictly and exhaustively historical conception of the Axial Age."

In chapter 3 on civilization in the global age, Edward Tiryakian, who coined the term *civilizational analysis* more than a decade ago, sees a turn in macro sociology to a new paradigm: "to a *renewed* focus on 'civilizations' as key units of analysis, arguably more appropriate than the 'nation-state.'" After reviewing the stages of civilizational analysis in social theory,[2] Tiryakian reviews stages of globalization to arrive at three possible scenarios for the present, leaving us with the question: Do we now have one civilization, or many or none?

In his concluding reflections in *Axial Civilizations and World History,* S. N. Eisenstadt (2005) put increasing emphasis on the intertwinement of culture and power in the symbolism and institutional patterns in axial civilizations, highlighting two important consequences of this interplay of the symbolism of culture and power. First, the interpretation of central symbols and values by the orthodoxy could be contested, opening the possibility of radical transformation by heterodoxies, which could thus play a crucial role in civilizational dynamics. Second, the same interplay of culture and power generated collective identities that were distinctive of each axial civilization. In chapter 4, the late Willfried Spohn sympathetically extends the discussion of the culture and power nexus in axial civilizations to the same in relation to multiple modernities. His analysis of power from the perspective of axial civilizations and multiple modernities is put in the context of a critical survey of the literature on alternative approaches to power in historical and comparative sociology, and ends with a discussion of Roland Robertson's work on the world society and globalization, which he finds closest to the perspective on multiple modernities. Spohn thus opens a new and innovative approach to power that provides a focal point for a number of contributions in this volume.

Weber, it should be noted, did not adopt the term *civilization* but rather refers to civilizational zones as "cultural regions" (*Kulturkreise*)[3] or "cultural worlds."[4] While the French historians of the *Annales; Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* made the concept of civilization more robust sociohistorically (Braudel 1987), Max Weber's brother, Alfred Weber (1998[1921]), developed the distinction between culture and civilization. Despite the shift in the normative valence, this distinction bore the hallmark of German social thought. The conception of civilization in distinction from culture is not exclusively German. The Turkish Durkheimian, Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924), independently developed a very similar distinction between culture and

civilization, defined as the techniques and methods learned by society (Gökalp 1959[1918], 142). His goal as a late Ottoman thinker was to accommodate nationality and religion within the modern technoscientific civilization: "We belong to the Turkish nation (*millet*), the Islamic religious community (*ümmet*) and the European civilization (*medeniyet*)" (Cited in Heyd 1950, 149). Following the seminal article by Durkheim and Mauss (1913) on the notion of civilization, Gökalp made a distinction between civilization and culture, which he linked to language and the nation. The only place left for Islam was in the sphere of civilization, where the religious sphere was to be increasingly differentiated with modernization (Gökalp 1959, 184–85, 200–205). Islam was thus to be superseded by European civilization and became the diminishing junior partner in Gökalp's trinity, Turkism, Islam, Westernism (Heyd 1950, 150; Arjomand 1982, 96–97; 2013). Closer to us in time in the 1980s, David Wilkinson, longtime president of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations and editor of its organ, *Comparative Civilizations Review,* offered a somewhat similar social-transactional definition of civilization that excluded cultural elements and culminated in the evolution of a global civilization resulting from the universal extension of transactional networks (Puchala 2003, 121–22).

Wolf Schäfer, in this volume as in his earlier contribution to civilizational analysis (Schäfer 2004[2001]), develops the German distinction between particular cultures and a universal civilization in contrast to the pluralistic conception of civilization proposed by his colleagues. Indeed, he considers the civilizational unity produced by technoscience as underlying the current reunification of the globe into a single new continent, Pangaea II (Schäfer 2003, 76). However, in chapter 5, Schäfer accommodates variations in cultural worlds in his pluralistic conception of culture and accordingly offers his recommendations for the integration of regional studies and their reconfiguring for the global age. Consistently with the plea for opening the social sciences (Wallerstein et al. 1996), Schäfer argues for the defragmentation of area studies into comparative studies centered on the global/local nexus, maintaining that "past and present processes of globalization have displaced civilization as the core unit of analysis of global history."

II

The focus on modernity was the birthmark of social sciences in general and of classical sociology in particular. This focus is retained by Therborn in chapter 9, albeit with an emphasis on divergent paths to modernity. The

three other essays in Part II broaden their focus much more, tending to sever the umbilical cord linking classical sociology to modernity in different ways: by proposing historicization of the axial age (Arnason), de-linking the directionality of developmental patterns in axial civilizations from modernity (Arjomand), and shifting the mode of conceptualization from modernization to evolution of complex societies (Levine).

In chapter 6, Arnason takes a pioneering step in the direction of historicizing the axial paradigm by surveying the history of the important world regions around the middle of the last millennium BCE. While agreeing that historicization of the model is badly needed before secure generalizations can be made, many of us think discarding it is going too far. For my part, I suggest that in Weber's conception of world religions as the core institution in the growth of different civilizations, if not a typology of axiality, we at least have an analytically precise starting point for moving from the sociology of world religions to civilizational analysis.

Endorsing Arnason's plea for historicization of the axial paradigm in preceding chapter, I examine, in chapter 7, the ideas of historical breakthrough, crystallization of a distinct civilization around the basic premises of Islam as a world religion, and the distinctive developmental patterns set by such crystallization in the formative periods of its history. Weber's earlier work is not irrelevant to this purpose. In his methodological essay on "objective possibilities and adequate causation" (Weber 1949[1905]), Weber formulated his idea of "adequate" (as distinct from "chance") causation of significant historical events, which represented a compromise between the "nomological" and "ideographic" positions in the contemporary German methods debate. With great concision, Karl Jaspers (1986, 481–82) conjoins the logic of this historical method of assessing adequate causation in the light of objective possibilities in any historical situation with that of Weber's comparative method to highlight alternative possibilities in a small number of cases with certain common features. Comparative analysis in terms of the *absence* of certain preconditions thus remains valuable. For example, I have highlighted the absence of political autonomy of Muslim cities as an obstacle to the development of modern democracy as a value-idea that generates research questions for social theory in our generation (Arjomand 2004a).

As history is open-ended, it is possible for what Koselleck was to call "futures past" to have had objectively conceivable alternatives to what actually occurred. This can only be plausibly explained by "adequate causes." Comparisons similarly demonstrate the range of variation in structural alternatives and developmental patterns. Comparative method can thus supplement counterfactual analysis of our determination of adequate causation.

What is much more important is, however, that comparative method is crucial for what Weber called adequacy at the level of meaning.

Elsewhere, Arnason (2003, 89–97) has challenged the prevalent interpretations of Weber's idea of rationalization by Schluchter and Habermas, which detach rationality from its cultural context. According to Arnason, such a detachment is unwarranted in the light of Weber's conception of "*cultural human beings*" as "endowed with the capacity and the will to take a deliberate attitude towards the world and to lend it significance" (cited in Arnason 2003, 89; emphasis in the original). Instead, Weber's conception links rationality to cultural premises of each civilization, albeit implicitly, explaining why "rationalizing processes unfold in divergent and discontinuous ways." This is very much the case with Weber's conception of value-rationalization, as I have argued in a similar vein. Value-rationalization as a process, not only of modifying institutions to embody values more adequately but also of bringing heterogeneous values into a measure of meaningful consistency, I have argued, is in fact the most important process of rationalization in world history. Furthermore, it is the most useful general concept of rationalization for describing the culturally specific directionality of a certain type of developmental pattern (*Entwicklungsform*) distinctive of each axial civilization (Arjomand 2004b). In chapter 7, I apply this concept of value-rationalization as a developmental pattern to the formative periods of Islamic civilization.

Weber's idea of the normative autonomy (*Eigengesetzlichkeit*) of different spheres of social life entailed the analytical division of the social world into different spheres or domains. Conflicting patterns of meaning and principles of rationality can prevail in each of these. Each normatively autonomous sphere has its own logic, and the developments of different logics take different directions. Accordingly the directionality of specific historical trends *within* each civilization should not be overlooked. In chapter 7, I therefore avoid the temptation to search for a monistic pattern of Islamic rationalization and instead offer a more circumscribed analysis of the developmental pattern of legitimation and contestation of power confined to the political sphere.

Donald Levine has the unusual distinction of having divided his career between history of social theory (Levine 1995) and Ethiopian studies, begun with his postdoctoral research as a member of the second generation of comparative sociologists.[5] In chapter 8, Levine shows how the application of theoretic constructs can illuminate the historical reality in the Ethiopian case. Taking the most venerable of the nineteenth-century social theories in its latest metropolitan formulations by Parsons and Bellah, Levine modifies the stages of the theory of social evolution into five grades:

(1) kinship, (2) communal, (3) archaic, (4) axial, and (5) modern societies, and proceeds to finds instances of each grade in different parts of Ethiopia, formerly a patrimonial empire and now a nation-state. Societies of different evolutionary grades can thus coexist within the same complex society. Levine's demonstration of the coexistence of different evolutionary grades in different components of complex societies is highly original, and has important theoretical implications for our understanding of social pluralism. As he points out in conclusion, it also tends to raise serious questions about the application of the modernity-tradition dichotomy.

In analyzing "different regional paths to modernity" in chapter 9, Göran Therborn by contrast leans toward a conception of modernity heavy—modernity as "a singular culture, but manifested in different areas at different times." Therborn considers civilizations, defined as "enduring ancient, large-scale cultural foundations surpassing individual polities," the substratum of the historical geology of modernity. However, he emphasizes family and gender structure, as the distinctive feature of a civilization, as compared to either religion in the axial paradigm or language in the Orientalist paradigm. Furthermore, he rests the burden of explanation on the newest geological layer, namely the timing of the reception of modernity in four different regions: Europe, its settler overseas offshoots on other continents, the colonial zone, and the region of reactive modernization in Eurasia and North Africa. He then relates the typological characteristics of nationhood, capitalism, and social stratification to the four different paths to modernity as their respective effects.

III

Different aspects of the innovative approach to power discussed in general terms by Spohn in chapter 4 are applied in several other chapters in this volume. In chapter 7, I attempt to historicize the relation between culture and power in the Islamicate civilization. The comparison of divergent political development in settler societies in the Americas and South Africa by Peter Wagner in chapter 10 hinges on the superiority in power of the new settlers over the native populations. Comparisons of the labor regimes in the global periphery by Manuela Boatcă in chapter 13 similarly hinges on the concept of coloniality of power. In chapter 11, Wolfgang Knöbl extended the discussion of culture and power to contrasting patterns of revolution and political development in the settler societies of British and Hispanic Americas. Babak Rahimi in chapter 14 defines subaltern modernity in terms

of subversion of power, while Sujata Patel's colonial modernity in chapter 16 focuses on power and the production of knowledge in colonial India.

Chapters 10–13 are on different modern patterns of economic and political organization in important settler zones. In chapter 10, Wagner draws on the neglected work of Louis Hartz (1964) on multiple modernities *avant la lettre* in order to offer a comparative analysis of new settler societies in the Americas and South Africa. Indeed, Wagner sees Hartz's work as enlarging the range of variation in modernity beyond that envisioned by Eisenstadt. In creating new societies in the Americas and South Africa, Hartz argued, the settlers innovatively combined the European "fragments" they took along with them with their varying responses to the "racial encounters" with the native populations and their respective cultures, and developed markedly different syntheses. Hartz accordingly offered a typology of new settler societies to capture the range of variation in their respective paths to modernity.

In chapter 11, Knöbl compares the revolutions against colonial rule in British and Hispanic Americas as the formative factor shaping divergent paths of subsequent political development. Having surveyed a broad range of comparative studies purporting to explain the divergent long-term developmental patterns in North and South America, including those by Eisenstadt and his followers from the multiple modernities perspective, he finds a consequential missing link in the historically contingent revolutions or settler rebellions against the British and Spanish colonial empires that led to the creation of independent American republics. He thus integrates the crucial dimension of historical contingency and path dependency into civilizational analysis.

In chapter 13 on the labor regimes of the global periphery, Boatcă significantly amplifies the comparative discussion of capitalism by bringing in the analysis of power with regard to the economic function of slavery. Inspired by Anibal Quijano's (2000) idea of coloniality of power, Boatcă introduces the concept of coloniality of labor. Since its revolution in the early nineteenth century, Quijano (2000, 226–27) argued, Latin America has had independent states but colonial societies. There were no "national interests" unifying the political elite and the Indians and their Mestizos (and in Brazil, where independence came much later, the Negroes and their Mestizos), and the pattern of economic exploitation followed the logic of the capitalist world system. Boatcă forcefully rejects the treatment of slavery and "second serfdom" as modes of production distinct from capitalism, arguing that they have constituted the labor regimes of the capitalist mode of production on its Central and South American periphery and thus integrally belong to the capitalist world system. Furthermore, she shows the continued relevance of

coloniality of labor relations as "yesterday's colonies have largely tended to become today's peripheries."

Varieties of capitalism was touched upon by Therborn in chapter 9 and more focally analyzed by Boatcă in chapter 13. In chapter 12, Jeremy Smith focuses on the distinctive features of "Atlantic capitalism." Smith turned to the concept of world regions, or more precisely to the idea of "regionality," as the key to rethinking varieties of capitalism in the Americas. His regional approach brings out the different cultures of capitalism in Canada, the United States, the Caribbean and South America. Smith thus illustrated the usefulness of the concept of "region" as the other innovative focal point of the comparative analysis offered by our volume.

In chapter 14, Rahimi considers another variant of alternative modernity, defined on account of its subversion of power as subaltern modernity, and applies it in his analysis of the Arab community in the city of Bushehr in southern Iran on the Persian Gulf. The community he has chosen is an excellent site for studying the global/local nexus because of its double peripherality—its marginality to the Iranian nation-state as an Arab minority nested in Iran, itself on the global periphery. He is accordingly able to reveal not just the multiple aspect of modernity among the Arabs of Bushehr but also the subversive element of their alternative modernity which justifies its description as "subaltern." To use his own words, Rahimi shows how "subversion of power is creatively played out in subaltern circumstances" through his detailed analysis of the modernized ritual of martyrdom of Imam Hosayn through public media. The subaltern modernity of the Bushehr Arab community is thus presented as a contestational, if not heretical, interpretation of tradition where "what is globally modern and what is traditional become intricately connected in the local."

IV

World religions and civilizations are loosely integrated unities that are sub-global and yet transcend society and the nation-state. This intermediate property is shared by the concept of "region" or "world region" that is also the focal point in Theorborn's analysis contrasting regional paths of modernization and is implicit in chapter 8 on social evolution in Ethiopia and chapter 11 on capitalism in the Americas. The concept of region is taken up explicitly in chapter 14 on the construction of regional identities in East Asia by Kern, Mayer, and Nam. As these chapters open an innovative

approach and a new focal point for future comparative analysis, let me dwell briefly on the idea of "region."

The classic essays on geopolitics in the first years of the twentieth century, F. Ratzel's *Lebensraum* (1901) and H. Mackinder's "The Geographical Pivot of History" (1904), made the geography of world regions central to metropolitan political science. The conceptual appreciation of the region in sociology, by contrast, came from the Indian periphery. In 1916, Radhakamal Mukerjee, a lecturer in economics in his twenties, proposed the "region" as the appropriate unit of analysis in *The Foundations of Indian Economics*. A year later, he "emphasized the essential need for Regional Economics" as the foundation for "General Economics." Mukerjee was deeply influenced by Brajendranath Seal, son of a leading Bengali follower of August Comte, who had moved in the opposite direction from Comte's allegedly universal evolutionary Law of the Three Stages to propose the "comparative method in the study of civilizations" (Madan 2011, 121–22). As the region was, for Mukerjee, a geographical, economic, social, and cultural complex, he proceeded in the following decades from economic regionalism to comparative sociology, publishing *Regional Sociology* (1926) and *The Regional Balance of Man: An Ecological Theory of Population* (1938). His sociological conceptualization of the region presented it as a dynamic "field" of interplay between environment and culture. The region is thus a "configuration," an intricate network of interrelations (Madan 2011, 129–31). Under the impact of globalization some three-quarters of a century later, dealing with world regions is back on the agenda of metropolitan social theory. Notable among the more recent elaborations of the concept of world regions as the intervening institutional order between the aging nation-states and the vigorously evolving world society is Peter Katzenstein's (2005; 2007).

In chapter 15, Kern, Mayer, and Nam focus on the indeterminacy of regional identity and the competing current narratives underlying it. Historically, a strong case can be made for the constitution of a world region by the Chinese empire since the Tang dynasty (Woodside 2006). Kern, Mayer, and Nam turn to more recent history and examine the emergence of a transnational communicative space resulting from globalization on regional integration. Their analysis highlights the tension between the collective memory of the trauma of Japanese colonialism in the first half of the twentieth century for the rest of the region, on the one hand, and the striving, on the other hand, for the construction of a universal collective identity due to the growth of a global civil society and its communicative space.

In chapter 16, by contrast, Patel considers D. P. Mukerji and A. R. Desai, two other pioneers of sociology in India as it moved from colonialism to independence, as exponents of Marxian conceptions of a distinctive Indian path to modernity. She examines the historical conditions and colonial context of the production and organization of knowledge about Indian society in the early twentieth century, while analyzing the Marxian conceptions of the distinctive Indian pattern of modernity by Mukerji and Desai as a major challenge to the mainstream Hinduist sociological vision of G. S. Ghurye, and thus to the colonial modernity that produced it.[6] She thus completes our range of variation in modernity lite by introducing colonial modernity. Coming from the usually monistic Marxian tradition, the insistence of Patel's pioneers of Indian sociology on civilizational difference and distinctiveness of the Indian pattern of development is most refreshing and interesting.

V

In conclusion, the efforts to integrate social theory and regional studies in this volume represent a major departure from the foundational focus of classical sociology on modernity. They seek to de-center modernity heavy in social theory in two directions: by historicizing social evolution and developmental patterns in different civilizations as well as varying regional paths of modernization, and by introducing varieties of modernity lite in the overlapping forms of multiple, colonial, subaltern, and peripheral modernities. Unjustly ignored by social scientists for too long, regional studies are at last being theorized and are thus poised to inject new life into stagnant social theory, and to reopen the way for the arrested advancement of comparative sociology in the global age.

Notes

1. For a careful critique of Said's treatment of Orientalism, see Arnason 2003, 336–39.

2. These partially overlap with my survey of three generations of comparative sociologists in chapter 1.

3. Arnason (2003, 100) translates the term into "culture areas."

4. This is hardly surprising and shows him as a true German, like Thomas Mann (1918), who was hard on his brother, Heinrich, for opting for the effete French term, civilization.

5. See chapter 1, pp. 26–29 below. Levine enumerates the ways area studies can fructify social theory with illustrative reference to his earlier work on Ethiopia in chapter 8.

6. In highlighting the contribution of Indian sociologists to the understanding of the place of tradition in civilizational processes in chapter 1, I similarly suggest that D. P. Mukerji be considered a forerunner of the project of an alternative Indian modernity, though without characterizing it as Marxian.

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