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Civilizational States, Secularisms and Religions

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This paper cuts against the grain of much writing on international relations. It does *not* start with the assumption that, by privatizing religion, the Peace of Westphalia left international politics fully secular. Furthermore, it does not assume that secularism should be conceived of in the singular. Secularism in international relations is central to substantively different arguments about international relations – realist power politics, liberal cosmopolitanism, and Marxist class struggle. All three view religious conflicts as relics of a bygone era, a sideshow to the struggle over primacy, the coordination of conflicting objectives, and the dynamics of class conflict. There is something appealing and implausible about this view. Appealing is the search for simplification and a parsimonious understanding of international politics. Implausible are the denial of the continued relevance of religion for world politics and a view of secularism in the singular despite the fact that many aspects of secular politics – state, capitalism and democracy -- are so variegated empirically.

Bringing the state (in the singular) back into focus was the flag under which sociologically-inclined scholars rallied in the early 1980s. After a couple of decades of writings about interest group liberalism and Marxism, reemphasizing the importance of the state brought a welcome shift in perspective. This was less true for students of international relations and comparative politics who had never thrown the state out. Realists held firmly to the view that the state was the basic unit of analysis and that states were like units. Where realists saw only sameness, students of comparative politics saw the state in the plural. Varieties of social and political coalitions and state-society

relations created different objectives and capacities for political action. In this view states could only be conceived of in the plural.

Unraveling the mysteries of capitalism yielded the same conclusion. The project of Marxist international political economy was to understand the logic of Capitalism, with a capital C and in the singular. While liberal scholars focused on the convergences that industrialism, welfarism, and mass society was creating across the advanced industrial world, Marxists were pointing to the structural contradictions of capitalism, which they saw reflected in both domestic and international life. The empirical results suggested that capitalism conceived in the singular was not offering a sharp tool for understanding. A different cohort of scholars interested in comparative political economy developed an institutional argument so as to better understand what eventually came to be known as the varieties of capitalism. Welfare capitalism, developmental capitalism, neo-liberal capitalism, Leninist capitalism, among others, share one characteristic -- they are capitalisms which take multiple institutional forms. And the differences in form are politically and economically consequential.

Finally, as with the state and capitalism, so with democracy. Nuanced conceptual and rich empirical studies of democratic politics yielded in the 1970s and 1980s one important conclusion. Democracy could only be understood in the plural. American polyarchy, for example, differed greatly from Britain's Westminster model of Parliamentary government, multiple strands of consociational and corporatist democratic politics, and one-party dominant democracies. The theory of democracy has yielded to an astonishing variety of models of democratic politics.

States, capitalisms, and democracies are variegated and complex and must be understood in their multiple manifestations. This conclusion is not the result of a playful post-modernism, but of disciplined social science research. If three core components of secular politics are not well conceptualized in the singular, why should secular politics in the international system?

Section 1 of this paper explains why scholars of international relations focus on secularism in the singular and all but disregard religion in their analyses. Seeking to show the intermingling of secularisms and religions in world politics, Section 2 develops the

concept of the 'civilizational state' as an alternative to the 'rational state'.[1] Informed by the writings of Yasusuke Murakami, Section 3 inquires into the topic of cultural commensurabilities in world politics. Section 4 offers a brief conclusion.

1.International Relations Theory, Secularism and Religion[2]

International relations scholarship in the United States has pivoted around the traditional divide between liberalism and realism. These two schools of thought have been reformulated numerous times in the 20th century to adjust to changing currents in world politics and new fashions in academia. Despite important agreements on some fundamental assumptions, they retain clearly discernible analytic and political commitments that make them distinct (Hurd 2004. Katzenstein 1996). Commercial, political, and institutional versions of liberalism, for example, differ on the relative importance of trade, democratic institutions and international institutions. Yet they all hold to the perfectability of a secular international politics in a system that is fundamentally anarchic. Traditional realism, structural realism and neo-classical realism differ on the role of non- material capabilities and domestic politics for the international system and the foreign policies of states. But they are united in the insight that material capabilities matter greatly in an anarchic, secular system of states.

Liberalism is sweet common sense for many American scholars of international relations. For them it remains an article of faith, so to speak, that secularization is the dominant trend characterizing the process of modernization. For Francis Fukuyama (1989, 1992) history ended with what he saw as Liberalism's decisive victory over Fascism and Communism as its two most serious ideological competitors in the 20th century. The end of the Cold War, Fukuyama argued, had left rationalist secularism without any serious ideological and political rivals. Yet the defeat of the Soviet Union was brought about not only by the high-tech arms race the United States accelerated in the 1980s but also by the ideological challenges posed by a devout Polish Pope

[1] The restriction of this paper's analysis to civilizational states leaves open future reformulations to include stateless polities such as Islam.
[2] This section deepens and extends a line of argument developed first in Katzenstein (2006).

hollowing the Soviet empire from within and fervent Islamicist *muhajadeen* fighting it from without.

In the 1990s other scholars have argued the same point. Ernst Haas (1997, 2000), for example, insisted that liberal, secular nationalism can, but must not, produce progress. Religion, like race and language, is a cultural building bloc of national identity that permits leaders to articulate a collective national vision to which mass publics respond for instrumental reasons. The triumph of liberalism is procedural rather than substantive. According to Haas, liberalism rejects fixed dogma in favor of rules that remain devoid of moral content and that permit vigorous debate and conflict among competing interests and values, none of which can claim inherent superiority. Diffuse reciprocity and compromise not moral ends are at the core of this procedural understanding of liberal, secular nationalism. Its story starts in the 18th century with the Enlightenment, the idea of progress, and the possibility of policy based on scientific reasoning. By the end of the 20th century liberal nationalism has transformed itself at least in part to a new kind of multilateral cosmopolitanism. The conjoining of the European welfare state with the European integration movement in the second half of the 20th century is the prime case for Haas' vision of secular liberalism.

That vision, Haas (2000) argues, is challenged by the delayed and rapid modernization efforts undertaken under the banner of syncretist nationalism. Syncretism affords religion a central role. Modernization thus does not yield progress by default, as Fukuyama argues. Significant modernization and rationalization can be achieved through non-liberal forms of nationalism that mobilize religion to the task of government at home and governance abroad. In the end, however, Haas remains convinced that it is the secular, liberal variant of nationalism that has the best historical record and holds forth the greatest promise for bringing about modernity.

Cultural realism (A. Johnston 1995. Nau 2002. See also Niebuhr 1940. D. Johnston 2003) is more open to acknowledge the importance of religion in world politics, among them. Samuel Huntington's (1993, 1996) political intuition differed sharply from Fukuyama's. Huntington's argument about the likelihood of a 'clash of civilization' draws a pessimistic picture. In Huntington's view, the historical turn of 1989-91did not end ideological rivalry but substituted one ideological conflict for another. For

Huntington, civilizations with their different religious cores have become the relevant cultural context for states and non-state actors alike. Activated by religion, civilizational clashes are for Huntington the defining characteristic of a new era of international politics.

Since their building blocs are variable constellations of religion, culture, language, values, traditions, and memories, Huntington concedes that civilizations cannot be defined easily and with any degree of precision. Like Doctor Doolittle's push-me-pull-you, Huntington's argument appears to have two heads and thus can take on all comers. Under the wide umbrella of civilization, identities are contested and can be reconstructed quite easily through a politics that is forever in flux. Kemalist reformism thus can be explained within the context of Islam as can significant reform efforts in Mexico, Australia or Russia (Huntington, 1993, 24, 42-44, 48)**.** Yet this is not the central thrust of Huntington's argument which stresses instead that the basic factors defining civilizations are objective and unchanging. Underneath civilizational multipolarity Huntington thus discovers, ominously, a profound split between the "West" and the "rest."

In this formulation cultural realism operates with static and totalizing concepts such as "totalitarian, godless Communism" and "democratic, Christian capitalism" during the Cold War, and "Islam" and "Christianity" after the Cold War had ended. Casting world politics in terms of such dualisms, or the generic "East" vs "West," yields an overly simplified and truncated view. Orientalist vocabulary recalls Oswald Spengler's (1933) warning that "the Yellow Peril" posed a great threat for western civilization. Such racial overtones are no longer common currency today. But as Edward Said (1978) argues Orientalism remains fraught with ideological undercurrents that often seek to divide sharply between civilizational identities that in reality are highly variegated and blurred. This is equally true of Occidentalism. Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit (2004) show that Occidentalism can take a highly critical form focusing on the stipulated corrosive influences of the City, the Bourgeois, Reason and Feminism. Each of these concepts points to the alleged feebleness, greed and decadence of the Occident. Alternative accounts of Occidentalism underline instead only positive elements, the glory of Greece and Rome, Christiantiy, the Rennaissance, the Enlightenment, and finally the French and Industrial Revolutions. Such accounts are to be found not only among those living in the

West. Xiaomai Chen (2002) depicts an unremittingly favorable picture of the West prevailing in China during the first post-Mao decade. The deep tension between different images of the "West" (O'Hagan 2002) has brought into the open a deep chasm separating proponents of the "extreme West" in the Bush administration and their domestic and European critics. On the issue of Iraq a fierce trans-Atlantic disagreement has pitted a European "Venus" against an American "Mars" (Kagan 2003). Evidently, there exists no stable and uncontested Western identity that clashes with the rest.

Even more important, could the "de-Westernization" of the United States also lead to its "de-Americanization"? Of all the criticisms of his core claim, this is the one that Huntington took most seriously and that prompted him to write still another book (Huntington 2004a, 2004b). Cultural and ethnic diversity is rapidly increasing in the United States. Muslims now outnumber Episcopalians and will soon outnumber Jews (Rudolph 1997a, 3). In a world where "our" Japanese can beat "their" Japanese, will "our" Muslims fight "theirs"? The social statistics of the United States belie the assertion of cultural homogeneity and coherence. The majority of the American population is projected to be non-White by 2050. Echoing European concerns over an Islamic demographic time bomb, Huntington is deeply worried about its Hispanic equivalent in the United States. The entangling of the United States and Mexico, Huntington argues, may well become the death knell for America with its Anglo-Protestant cultural core as we have come to know it.[3] In the analysis of cultural realism the clash between homogenous and coherent civilizations is inevitable. And so is, with a slight shift in perspective, the clash between groups inside civilizations.

Cultural realism offers a truncated analysis of world politics. It concludes that a clash will dominate over many other possible outcomes that also deserve close attention. These outcomes include, among others, absorption, hybridity, hegemony, rejection and resurgence, obliteration and genocide, isolation and suspicion, and cross-fertilization (Puchala 1994). Other scholars have explored some of these avenues. Unlike Huntington, Karl Deutsch for example, takes an entirely different view in analyzing the

[3] In developing this pessimistic analysis of America Huntington (1996, 150) contradicts an argument he made earlier when he wrote that "the cultural distance between Mexico and the United States is far less than that between Turkey and Europe."

relations between “the West and the rest.” The distinctiveness of the West, Deutsch argues, is greatest with respect of political and social institutions. Equally significant, virtually all Western traits can be found in one or more non-Western civilizations. “The peoples and culture of the West are like those of other regions, only more so. This is why the West and the rest of the world could learn from each other in the past and can continue to do so in the future” (Deutsch, 1981, 86).

Analytical perspectives that draw on liberal secularism or cultural realism feel quite familiar. Yet both suffer from limitations that invite us to move beyond them. Secular liberalism looks to history as a teleological process. And cultural realism is undercut by the fact that diversity and difference, not unity and homogeneity, are at the core of civilizations and the collective identities they foster. This is not to argue that well-established concepts, such as efficiency and power, are unimportant in our understanding of the role of secularism and religion in world politics. Relative differences in power, understood as material capabilities, by themselves, do not yield a compelling answer to the mocking question that realists traditionally have posed to students of religion: “how many divisions has the Pope?” After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet empire, students of international relations are likely to give a very different answer than those they offered in the1930s and 1940s and during the Cold War. Furthermore, efficiency which figures prominently in liberal theories of world politics does not engage well many of the identities, motivations, and strategies of religious actors whose calculations can often not be reduced only to instrumental reasoning (Thomas 2000. Rudolph 1997b).

Realist and liberal concepts are more useful in combination with others that seek to capture some of the ideas that motivate varieties of secular and religious politics. Specifically, they are more compelling if we graft them onto complementary sociological approaches. Constructivism, for example, as one variant of the sociological turn in international relations theory, insists that the material world itself does not determine actor identities and interests; the creation of a social world through processes of interaction does. Social structures contain shared knowledge, material resources and political practices; knowledgeable agents use these resources to construct variable and ever-changing norms and identities; and through practice these agents change themselves and the

structures in which they operate. Vendulka Kubálková (2000, 686, 688, 693), for example, has attempted to develop a theory of International Political Theology. Following Nicholas Onuf (1989) she has adopted a "rule-oriented" constructivism that focuses on rules as ordering the basic linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of human existence. Although she is interested in the productive effects of language, she does not reduce reality to text. Other analysts take somewhat different sociological approaches displaying a bent for either more (Almond, Appleby and Sivan 2003) or less (Esposito and Watson 2000) theoretical self-consciousness and positivist commitment. Such sociological approaches contradict many strands of realist and liberal international relations scholarship. They do not give analytical primacy to actors, such as unitary, rational states, or particular levels of analysis, such the international system. Because they are more open to alternative concepts, sociological approaches may help us shed more light on the dynamics of religious and secular forces in world politics.

2.Civilizational States

How can we conceive of the intermingling of secularisms and religions in contemporary world politics? As talk of Latin Christendom declined, references to European civilization became increasingly popular in mid-18th century. Historically rooted in religion, today's global civilization is marked by a belief in scientific and technological progress and human betterment. These beliefs are enacted in different civilizational states, embodying multiple modernities. The US, Europe, China, Japan and Islam are civilizational states or polities that are connected in the American imperium by processes, such as Americanization, Europeanization, Sinicization, Japanization or Islamicization that are more (as in Sinicization) or less (as in Islamicization) regionally grounded. What do I mean by civilization, state and polity, civilizational process, and imperium?

Transcending individuals and societies, *civilizations* are social and operate at the broadest level of cultural identity in world politics. They are not fixed in space or time. Civilizations are both internally highly differentiated and culturally loosely integrated. Because they are differentiated, civilizational ideas and institutions transplant selectively,

not wholesale. Because they are culturally integrated civilizations can assume a reified identity when encountering other civilizations. Civilizations constitute a world that is neither a Hobbesian anarchy nor a Habermasian public sphere, neither empire nor cosmopolis (Adamson 2005. Dallmayr 2005). Instead it is a weakly institutionalized social order consisting of a variety of processes.

States are centers of political authority with distinct identities and institutions, and endowed with the capacity of collectively mobilizing resources in the achievement of political objectives. States are not the only such centers of authority. *Polities* describe broader centers of authority that are not necessarily territorially based (Ferguson and Mansbach 1996. Ferguson, Mansbach et al. 2000). States are often nested in such broader authorities, both older ones like historical empires and newer ones like emerging governance structures. Far from being unitary, states take on very different forms. Their hall-mark, centralized-territorial rule, persists today in many parts of the world, not unchallenged, but as part of overlapping and intersecting networks of rules in which states hold a preeminent position. States are one of many sources of political identity and loyalty, among them nations, groups, movements, and localities. The degree of stateness is thus variable (Nettl 1968). For example stateness is high in the case of the United States and Japan; it is somewhat lower in the case of China, if we refer to China as the combination of the territorial state of China and the communities of overseas Chinese; it is still lower the case of Europe's emerging polity; and it barely exists in the case of Islam. What varies also is the socio-cultural embeddedness of the state. State policies and practices can be totally dominated by domestic norms; they might be guided by domestic rules; or they might be merely permissible under domestic rules and not constituted by them (Andrews 1975). In contrast to rational conceptions of the efficient state, social conceptions posit a thicker context of state purpose. The international standing of civilizational states is determined by the perceived credibility of current power and prestige, the perceived salience of an active historical memory, and the prospect of an appealing, imagined future. If such appeals are acknowledged as politically authentic, civilizational states are consequential.

Civilizational states and the peoples they rule are engaged in practices that, in the aggregate, sum to civilizational *processes* such as Americanization, Japanization,

Sinicization, Europeanization and Islamicization. Past scholarship has for the most part sought to capture the integrating aspects of such processes, as in Max Weber's "rationalization" or today's "globalization." At the same time, however, such processes are also differentiating (Arnason 2004, 104-05). They shape politics, and are shaped by it, through different mechanisms, including outright imitation, selective adaptation, negotiation, and violent imposition (Kocka 2001, 7). And they can be tracked in different empirical domains.

As was true of Rome, the American *imperium* joins territorial and nonterritorial power (Katzenstein 2005, 2-6. Richardson 1991). It combines traditional elements of an old-fashioned European- and American-style imperialism with elements of rule that are relatively new. The system of far-flung military bases and the power of the American military illustrate the importance of the territorial-military aspects of America's imperium. At the same time the United States is also a central actor that is creating systems of non-territorial rule, for example in the evolution of governing mechanisms in financial markets or in the standards that help define the evolution of consumer society.

Randall Collins **(**2004. 2000. 1999. 1998) has provided an admirably pithy and highly plausible view of civilizations as zones of prestige that have one or several cultural centers.[4] The attractiveness of these zones of prestige radiates outward with variable strengths. Distances are not only geographic but take the form of networks of attraction that carry prestige through various channels, passing over or penetrating other civilizational zones. This conceptualization focuses our attention on social activity and cultural variety. It avoids regarding civilizations as cultural codes, as patterns which govern beliefs and institutions that are endowed with an enduring essence. Civilization is not an actor or an attribute of actors; it is a set of relationships and activities.

The power of a civilization depends on the practices that promote or diminish its magnetism. Such magnetism reflects creativity, typically shaped by rival positions and disagreements in stances that command attention. Competing schools of thought that are in vigorous debate and disagreement thus are crucial to civilizational prestige. Civilizations are marked by dialogue, debate, and disagreement that generate intellectual and artistic tension. In their engagement of the world, both attraction and propagation

[4] The following discussion draws heavily on Collins 2004.

characterize zones of civilizational prestige which are composed of multiple, competing networks and distant connections. Such zones attract students and visitors of different kind, some from very far away. Conversely, zones of high prestige also send out teachers and missionaries, both to civilizational peripheries and to other civilizations. Zones of prestige are not free-standing, monolithic and unchanging essences. Diversity and active debate among rival positions spur creativity and stymie uniformity of opinion.

Civilizational ruptures can occur for many reasons, as they did in the relations between China and Japan during the Tokugawa period. In that case, as well as the earlier Chinese resistance to the import of Indian Buddhism, cultural resistance was not derivative of a broader struggle against geopolitical and economic hegemony. This contrasts with the case of anti- and post-colonial movements in the second half of the 20th century. Then the shift away from European- and Western-centered cultural domination in many parts of the world typically was also a move against the cultural imperialism of a civilizational zone of prestige that, together with its political preeminence, had lost much of its cultural magnetism. Conversely, struggles for political liberation, such as the Indian independence movement, and moves for economic advancement, such as Japan's rise after 1945, have occurred without a simultaneous rejection of the cultural imports of existing zones of civilizational prestige. The dynamics of civilizational politics cannot be reduced simply to political or economic factors.

This is confirmed by those historical instances when militarily weak or defeated parts of the world that were economically lagging remained zones of civilizational prestige with deep sources of attraction to many members of the military or economic centers of domination. Ancient Greece and 20th century France are good examples. Despite Rome's military conquest, Greek civilization did not lose its prestige and absorbed Rome culturally. Greece had institutionalized networks of opposing schools of thought and creativity in a system of higher education that fostered the kind of intellectual rivalries that created cultural attraction; Rome did not. Twentieth century France offers another example of a zone of civilizational prestige that persisted as France relinquished its central position in the global and European capitalist system. Despite this slide Paris has remained an important center of intellectual creativity and fashion in literary theory, philosophy and parts of the social sciences. In sharp contrast to the

relatively isolated, world-class universities that emerged in the United States, Paris had developed intersecting networks of intellectuals who focused on academic subjects and connected their subjects to a broader intellectual life and the worlds of high-culture entertainment, journalism and politics. In the natural sciences and engineering, in sharp contrast, the links between university-based research, government, and the world of corporate or start-up capitalism was more developed and vibrant in the United States than in France. In contrast to France the infrastructure of military and economic primacy was much better served by the evolving American than the French pattern of creativity.

Cultural prestige and military or economic primacy thus should not be equated unthinkingly. Robert Gilpin (1981, 30-31) argues quite correctly that numerous factors such as respect and common interest underlie the prestige of a state as the every day currency of international relations. "Ultimately, however, the hierarchy of prestige in an international system rests of economic and military power . . . the fact that the existing distribution of power and the hierarchy of prestige can sometimes be in conflict with one another is an important factor in international political change." Even in such situations, however, it seems plausible to assume that struggles for military and economic catch-up will involve a good deal of emulation of the practices that characterize zones of civilizational prestige. And emulation and rejection are often deeply intertwined. The cultural dynamic in such processes often reflects the intellectual interests and career aspirations of elites no longer dependent on travel to or imports from zones of prestige and eager as well as able to exploit and build up further the creativity of a zone that is no longer a civilizational periphery. For this to happen two conditions must be met. The material conditions for cultural production must have advanced to a threshold level. And rival schools of thought and creativity must have come into being to create vibrant debate within this emerging zone of prestige as well as between it and the former center from which it is beginning to break away.

In his voluminous writings on civilizations Shmuel Eisenstadt's perspective complements that of Collins. Eisenstadt starts with a key distinction between two types of civilizations. Axial Age civilizations emerged together with the major world religion around the 6th century BC. The civilization of modernity by way of contrast is a product

of the very recent past, starting with the European Enlightenment and the scientific and technological revolution.

Eisenstadt takes the concept of the Axial Age from Karl Jaspers (1953. Levine 2004, 1995). It denotes a formative period in world history when a number of powerful cultural developments occurred independently in China, India, Iran, Palestine and Greece. Humankind then moved from an instinctual disposition to a self-reflexive striving for transcendence and self-determination. For Jaspers and Eisenstadt the 6th century is an axis that divides history, a transformative break brought about by the appearance of the world's great religions and the onset of the spiritualization of humankind. Jasper's argument was anchored in 18th and 19th century German philosophy and social theory (Fichte, Schelling and Hegel) and its pre-occupation with autonomous human self-direction (Kant) and cultural creativity (Herder). In the 20th century Weber's sociology of world religions, Scheler's philosophical anthropology, and Simmel's argument of a transformative turn to the ideational in human life all were important precursors to Jaspers insights. In all of these formulations the autonomous role assigned to ideational factors is the same as in Jaspers (Levine 2004. 1995): a shift in religion from serving as a tool to satisfy human needs to a guide for following divine norms (Weber); a move from adaptive rationality and practical intelligence to the capacity for self-consciousness and self-reflexion that distinguishes between essence and existence (Scheler); and the elevation of the realm of human freedom above the realm of human purpose (Simmel).

Eisenstadt's (2004, 2003, 2002, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 1999a, 1999b, 1998a, 1998b, 1996, 1992a, 1992b, 1987, 1986, 1982, 1963) comparative analyses of Axial age civilizations is important for his core argument – the delayed impact that the different religions embodied in these civilizations had on the eventual emergence of one global civilization containing multiple modernities.[5] Following Max Weber, Eisenstadt argues that the different religious cores and cultural programs of the Axial age civilizations are historically grounded and continually reconstructed traditions. The religious cores of civilizations thus continue to have a strong impact on the unending restructuring of their

[5]My summary of Eisenstadt's encompassing and voluminous thought is indebted to Spohn's (2001) discussion. Eisenstadt's scholarship on this topic is a partial revision of his own writings on modernization dating back to the 1950s and 1960s, and a forceful dissent from contemporary globalization theory and the philosophical discourse on modernity and post-modernity.

core states. Eisenstadt dissents from Weber's Euro-centrism by insisting that this reconstruction is shaped in all civilizations by specific antinomies: transcendental and mundane, universalistic and particularistic, totalistic and pluralistic, orthodox and heterodox. And these antinomies motivate political struggles that have a strong impact on political institutions, social and economic structures, and collective identities. All Axial age civilizations have generated proto-fundamentalist movements. In the West, Jacobinism became an oppositional movement in European civilization that exploded in the 20th century under the banners of Communism and Fascism. Modern fundamentalism in non-Western civilizations combines the impact of Western Jacobinism with indigenous fundamentalist movements. Jacobin impulses in modernity thus are not passing phenomena in the history of civilizations. They are permanent features. Fundamentalism is an engine of change in all civilizations and a core aspect of the civilization of modernity.

The first modern civilization was West European. Based on the Enlightenment and crystallized politically in the American and French revolutions it develops in the specific context of European Christianity. Its cultural core is a bundle of cognitive and moral imperatives for more individual autonomy, less traditional constraints, and more control over nature. The first modernity was constructed and reconstructed in the specific context of Judeo-Greek-Christian cultural universalism and the political pluralism in its center-periphery relations, social movements and political protest. West European modernity spread to Central and Eastern Europe, North and South America, and other non-European civilizations. For Eisenstadt the civilization of modernity is defined not by being taken for granted, but by becoming a focal point of contestation, an object of uninterrupted conflict engaging both pre- and post-modern protest movements (Kocka 2001, 6).The civilization of modernity embodies a multiplicity of different cultural programs and institutions of modernity that derive from the interaction between West European modernity and the different civilizations of the Axial age.

Modern societies are not converging on a common path involving capitalist industrialism, political democracy, modern welfare regimes and pluralizing secularisms. Instead the different religious traditions act as cultural sources for the enactment of different programs of modernity. For example, West European modernity was

transformed in the United States under the specific circumstances of a settler and immigrant society. The continued relevance of fundamentalist movements have had a profound impact on the multiple traditions and various dimensions of social structure, political institutions and collective identity of the American state.[6] A second example is offered by Japan's reconstruction of modernity. Japan is the only civilization that did not experience a break in the Axial age. It is based on specific patterns of emulation and selection that evolved a distinctive set of protest movements, social structures and collective identities. Based on a deeply anchored syncretism of religious belief systems, since the Meiji revolution Japanese civilization has been highly eclectic in the values it has adopted and flexible in the interpretation of the dramatic shifts in political context it has confronted.

The legacies of different world religions thus create multiple modernities as sources of cultural innovation. In the evolution of the socio-economic, political-legal and technical-scientific dimensions of the civilization of modernity, forces of convergence are always balanced against forces of divergence. Modernity is inescapably multiple and undergoing a constant process of reinvention in which all traditional elements that rebel against it have themselves a modern, Jacobin character. In sum, although the aspirations of the world's important civilizational states may be totalistic, they are pluralistic in their cumulative impact on the multiple traditions that define and intermingling of secularisms and religions in one civilization of modernity (Arjomand and Tiryakian 2004, 3).

3. Cultural Commensurabilities[7]

We live in a civilization of globalization which creates convergences around some of the values of modernity and which is marked by divergences that derive from the enactment of cultural programs grounded in different religious traditions. This condition invites two problematic responses. To argue, as some do, that the global world is flat is to follow the example of the one-eyed Nelson at the Battle of Copenhagen (2 April, 1802) -- reversing the telescope and putting it on one's blind eye. (Nelson knew what he was

[6] The parallelism and divergence between Eisenstadt (2000a, chapter 2) and Huntington (1968, chapter 2) probably deserve further attention.
[7] This section builds on Katzenstein 1997.

doing; this is less certain of today's breathless admirers of a new, brave and global world). Conversely, to deny the force and power of globalization in its various manifestations, as some of the critics of globalization do, is to play Peter Pan with reality, closing one's eyes and wishing really hard.

The prospect for cultural commensurabilities in the relations between civilizational states are unavoidably shaped by both homogenizing and differentiating tendencies. Commensurabilities cannot emerge simply from the growth of community and universal standards as defined by science. And commensurabilities are not denied simply by the existence of diverging legacies, religious and otherwise. They emerge instead from the partial overlaps of the multiple secular and religious traditions that mark all civilizational states. Adapting Murakami's (1996. Yamamura 1997) and Michael Mann's (1993, 44-91) terminology, that partial overlap creates space for what I call here a polymorphic globalism. In such a globalism various intersections of secularisms and religions are created through never-ending processes of mutual cooperation, adaptation, coordination, and conflict.

Two such intersections command attention. The first intersection pits the secular world against the religious world. Both of these worlds have profound impacts on world politics. Both are based on transcendental thought. The religious world holds to an unquestioned belief in the divine. The secular world has an unshaken belief in the attainability of ultimate truth. Both seek to deny or undermine the existence of the other. And both have offered radically different foundations to different world orders in history.

Andrew Phillips(2007) inquires into the constitution, operation, and eventual decay of two such world orders: Latin Christendom before the mid-17th century and the Sino-centric world order in the 19th century. Latin Christendom and its decaying canon law was undermined by the confessional splintering that accompanied the Protestant Reformation. Sectarian violence increased at the very time that technological innovations increased the cost, scale and destructiveness of warfare. After Habsburg had failed to shore up a unified Christendom along imperial lines, Europe's princes began enforcing confessional conformity in their own realms. Religious heresy came to be equated with political treachery and a century of warfare ensued. At its end the Westphalian system of

sovereign states began the attempt of separating an international, secular order from private, religious ones.

The 19th century Sino-centric world order confronted not only endogenous but also exogenous shocks. Dynastic decline was accelerated by millenarian peasant rebellions and an incipient military revolution that destroyed the East Asian world order and plunged China and much of the region into a century of upheaval. Emboldened by a revolution in naval warfare, imperialist Western powers opened China by force to satisfy their commercial and cultural interests. The Taiping rebellion was a puritanical millennial movement that incorporated evangelical Christianity into Chinese folk religion, thus creating a ferocious insurgency. Although it was ultimately defeated, this rebellion hollowed out the Chinese state by accelerating the unraveling of China's system of centralized control, and thus opened the path toward the system's ultimate demise, civil war, Japanese occupation, and, after a bloody civil war, the Communist seizure of power.

Is today's international order likely to go the way of Latin Christendom and the Sino-centric world? The intermingling of secular and religious elements in contemporary world politics is not just a matter of the different type of actors – state vs non-state, secular vs religious -- vying for primacy. It is also a matter of the principles that constitute contemporary world politics. Do secular or religious elements provide the core organizing principles (Mendelsohn 2007)? Although the Westphalian system is organized along secular lines, the weakening of a large number of states in recent decades has given more political space to religious actors. And in seeking to substitute religious for secular principles in the organization of world politics, some of these actors pose a radical challenge to secular authorities. The current wave of jihadist politics is one such effort. It does not seek to advance its preferred outcomes within the existing Westphalian system. It wants to create a new order. The secular state system is organized around multiple sovereign centers of authority that respect territorial borders, subscribe to the sanctity of law and the legitimacy of international organizations, and deny that there exists one single truth governing world politics. A religious world order would recognize only one center of authority, might not respect territorial borders, would deny the sanctity of law and the legitimacy of international organizations, and would insist on the existence of only one source of divine Truth. Calling for such a order poses a systemic and total

threat, not national or regional and partial ones. Today there is no state seeking to affect such a dramatic change, and only a few non-state actors, among them the AlQaeda-led jihadist movement and, according to Mendesohn (2007, 23-45), possibly Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Polymorphic globalism is possible also at a second and less familiar intersection that is of particular interest to Murakami (1996) in his magisterial book. Rather than dividing secularism from religion, Murakami underlines the similarities in the transcendental tendencies of historical religions *and* modern science in the West and contrasts their revolutionary aspirations and impact with the conservative historiological and hermeneutic tendencies of East Asian civilizations. The former is possessed by the belief in progress. The latter remains firmly grounded in the world of the profane which lends itself to limitless reinterpretations and the living in multiple realities.

Murakami argues that polymorphic liberalism is based on hermeneutic not transcendental reflection. In developing his argument, Murakami follows Weber in his sociological treatment of historical religions. Distinctive of Christianity and the Western civilizations based on it is a transcendental orientation. Divided into a high-level, intellectual and a low-brow, popular form, Eastern religions and civilizations lack this transcendental orientation. The coexistence of various religions in Japan is an example of the hermeneutic principle of reflexive action. For Murakami a decline in progressive and a rise in polymorphic liberalism is not the end of history. It is merely the end of a historical era dominated by Western states -- specifically two great empires, British and American, that have dominated world politics during the last two and a half centuries. History will continue, sustained by the dialectical relations between two kinds of reflexive practices: transcendental, scientific-religious on the one hand and hermeneutic, historical-practical on the other. Flirting with an essentialist view of East and West, Murakami sees reflexive action shaped by two axes crossing almost at right angles: religion and science on the one hand, history and practice on the other.

For Murakami the religions that are part of the Judeo-Christian tradition have an absolute character, promise salvation in the afterlife, and are prone to violence. In their high-brow, intellectual and low-brow, popular forms Eastern religions are marked instead by syncretism, promise salvation in the earthly life, and tend toward peaceful coexistence. The prospect for cultural commensurability in a polymorphic globalism,

according to Murakami, depends on a partial move away from universal justice-based standards and a transcendental style of thought in a world dominated by the West to accommodate contextual, rule-based standards and a hermeneutic style of thought in a world inhabited also by East Asian and, we might add, a number of other civilizational states.

Polymorphic globalism as the institutional order for world politics is not captured well by the combination of philosophical speculation and psychological intuition that characterizes Murakami's work. It is served better by an institutional perspective that John Meyer (1989) has provided. Meyer argues that the culture of Latin Christendom has shaped the organizational form rather than the substance of a secular world polity. Christianity brought together both strong, local mobilization of individual effort and general, universalistic long-distance relationships. Christianity offered an institutional model of collective life that accorded political prominence to states as ideologically validated units. It thus avoided global segmentation and disintegration. For many centuries the Church owned much of the world's productive land and provided the ideology that defined both the content of the political practices of princes and that justified the management of the Church's vast worldly affairs. Christianity offered a general civilizational frame that brought together both elites and mass publics as well as the organizational life that was central and peripheral to the world polity. It created and sustained the political and economic vitality and imperialist thrust of the West.

Karl Deutsch (1944) has provided a compelling account of why the civilization of Latin Christendom was able to unie and why subsequently it was fated to split apart. He argues that the spiritual, linguistic and cultural unity of medieval Christendom – its common Latin language, the shared legal and spiritual authority of the Pope, the common political leadership provided by the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, the collective enterprise of the crusades, and the common style of Romanesque and Gothic art and architecture -- was a transitory stage in history which was destroyed by the very forces that gave rise to it.

Scarcity was the economic foundations of the international civilization of Latin Christendom, scarcity in goods, services, and skilled personnel. Scarcity permitted the growth of a thin web of supranational trading communities sharing in a common language, customs, sprit, laws, traditions and family connections. And in this web specialized nodes of productive skill sets arose that diffused over long distances – provided, for example, by

Irish monks, German knights, Lombard traders, French master builders, and Flemish peasants knowledgeable in advanced agricultural techniques. While at the local level the linguistic fractionalization of an immobile peasantry persisted, the thin web of supranationalism created the conditions for a superficial internationalization of several civilizations knit together by commerce, intellectual life, and politics. Deutsch identifies three major European civilizations: Latin Christianity in Western and Central Europe, Byzantium in South-Eastern Europe, and Islam on the Iberian Peninsula and in the Middle East. And he includes two trading people -- Jews with a Pan-European and Vikings with a North European presence -- which had incomplete civilizational traits in that they lacked adequate contact with advanced skills and centers of production. By the 13th century four of these civilizations had given way to Latin Christendom. Yet increasing contacts between village, manor and town, eventually gave rise to the conditions that led to the demise of Latin Christendom, as the rate of national mobilization began to outpace the rate of international assimilation in subsequent periods of the rise of modern nationalism.

Deutsch ends his discussion with two scenarios. In the first, the world would try to return to the medieval unity of thin internationalism, based on a rigid system of social and political stratification around continent-wide or world-wide civilizational barriers of entry of the diverse and unassimilated majority of mankind into conditions of economic advancement. In the second, the world would go through a prolonged period of internationalization and globalization that would spread economic advancement across the globe, permit the flowering of national cultures and languages into an era marked by a rapid rise in social mobilization and national differentiation. Nazi victory in World War II might have advanced the first scenario around the concepts of “master race” and “high culture.” Allied victory has created instead the global civilization of modernity, with its characteristic mixture of secular and religious elements in world politics, with nationalism often playing the role of secular religion.

With the desacralization of Christianity and the rise of science and technology since the 18th century the content of the emerging global polity has become more secular than religious. Yet the historical foundations of that polity and the continued or renewed vibrancy of several of the world’s major religions have made religion once again an increasingly important part of world politics in recent decades. The commensurability of culture that

interests Murakami is rooted in the legacy of a diffusion of organizational forms and institutional practices in a world marked by the continued relevance of religious beliefs. Cultural commensurabilities result from global social processes that derive from the institutional model created by Christianity's impact on other civilizations – including institutionally differing models of modern statehood, contemporary varieties of market capitalism, and different democratic regimes. The emergence of such a global context -- constituting, transforming and reforming the identities and norms that define political interests -- makes cultural commensurability an important link in the relations between different civilizational states.

4. Conclusion

To those who scan the headlines of the daily news and to the readers of Mark Juergensmeyer's (2000) analysis of religious violence in world politics, the need for examining the interaction between secularism, religion and international relations is self-evident. Yet, international relations scholarship has barely begun this task, as the rejection of religion "seems to be inscribed in the genetic code of the discipline of IR" (Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003, 1). Since the main actors, purposes and constitutive practices of the modern international state system were established at the end of the Wars of Religion in Europe (Philpott 2001, 2000), Westphalia has become a short-hand for an interstate system that was assumed to have banished religion to the domestic and private realm. The principle of *cuius regio eius religio* and the doctrine and practice of state neutrality on religious matters in Europe supposedly set the tone world-wide (Madeley 2003a, 2003b). Religious pluralism among states eventually became the rule, as did the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs.

This is a skewed reading not only of European politics but also of the principles of Westphalia. The historical evolution from an international politics dominated by religion to a secular state system was anything but smooth and simple. Historians like Anthony Marx (2003) and Linda Colley (1992) argue that strong exclusionary religious elements were present at the birth of modern states, such as Spain and Britain, convulsed, respectively, by the Spanish Inquisition and the Protestant Reformation. Religious conflict mobilized people into politics and gave leaders an opportunity to consolidate

power. European states such as Britain, Sweden and Holland saw themselves as the new Israel. Whether religion is also a bedrock of modern nationalism is more controversial (Stille 2004). It was only after the French Revolution, as Eugen Weber (1976) argues, that peasants were made into Frenchmen, as only about a quarter of France's population actually spoke French in 1789. Yet language and the printing press as the source of modern national consciousness might not be the beginning of the history of nationalism. Deutsch's argument makes us ponder whether developments that led to the breakdown of Latin Christendom perhaps helped create the modern secular state system on the back of a religiously infused, bloody-minded proto-nationalism. Intent on securing absolute power over their subjects European states both mobilized religious passions and privatized religion (Cavanaugh 1995). Secularization and religion thus were deeply entangled at the outset of the modern state system and have remained so ever since, illustrated by the state-imposed solution of religious depoliticization through privatization. The sociological turn in international relations theory makes it possible to deploy now commonly accepted categories of analysis --culture, identity, norm, idea, ideology – to probe once more the connections between secularism and religion in international politics.

Our conventional understanding of the origins of a secular international politics has concealed the continued relevance of religious motivations, often cast in the guise of civilizational language. For example, Gerrit Gong's (1994. Finnemore 1996) analysis of the standards of civilization that informed state practices in the 19th century was predicated on Christian, white notions of who was considered to be a human. And a burgeoning literature on sovereignty demonstrates that the canonical view of sovereign states governed by the principle of non-intervention is bad history (Krasner 1999, 2001). Many elements of the secular relations among sovereign states have religious roots (Schmitt (1985 [1922]). James Kurth (1998), for example, traces the antecedents of the contemporary human rights revolution, especially in Europe, to the missionary zeal of Protestantism of centuries past. In its war on terror America's religiously rooted sense of nationalism has become a defining element. Varieties of secularisms and religions remain a vital force in the international politics of the civilizational state we call America.

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