

MODERNITY AND NATION-MAKING IN INDIA, TURKEY AND IRAN

Tadd Graham Fernée

New York University

E-mail tfernee@hotmail.com

This essay compares nation-making in India, Turkey and Iran through differing visions of modernity and Enlightenment as temporal horizons. The comparison is traced through the Islamic Triumvirate (Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal empires) focused upon the Mughal Emperor Akbar's multi-religious experiment in early modern empire consolidation. The essay then analyses the national independence movements which defined – through either violent or non-violent practice, direct seizure of state power or civil society transformation – the post-independence political formations of India, Turkey and Iran between democracy and authoritarianism. As ideal types, these experiences constitute two distinctive temporal horizons: the movement (involving the masses in nation-making as a multi-centred process) and the programme (nation-making from above employing a blueprint of rupture). The political tradition being highlighted is nation-making based upon an ethic of reconciliation over totality. This tradition links development and public freedom in creating a democratic society.

Keywords: Nation-making; modernization; mass movements; India; Iran; Turkey; early modern history; twentieth century

INTRODUCTION

This essay compares the nation-making experiences of India, Turkey and Iran in terms of the differing visions of modernity and the political heritage of the Enlightenment. It focuses upon the national movements and independence struggles which defined the political and cultural identities of India, Turkey and Iran as modern nations. A briefly sketched theoretical groundwork regarding the terms “nation-making,” “modernity” and “Enlightenment” precedes the analysis. The first section on spatially constructed empires aims to establish three points: firstly, early modernity as a circulatory phenomenon that precipitated state-centralization processes within the Islamicate region; secondly, the varying components that later shaped the distinctive Iranian and Turkish national movements – and visions of Enlightenment and modernity – in the transition from semi-colonized land-based empire to variants of the modern nation-state; thirdly, the distinctive quality of the Mughal regime under Emperor Akbar as a multi-religious experiment employing an emerging secular temporal horizon linking an epistemic limit to an ethic of reconciliation. As a strategy of imperial consolidation, it is compared to coterminous

developments in Philip II's Spain. The second section on temporally self-organizing nations shows how this distinctive temporal horizon (an ethic of reconciliation) was subsequently reproduced in the Indian National Movement among the Moderates and later developed into a mass politics under Gandhian leadership, competing with and successfully displacing alternative temporal horizons (grounded in the French Revolutionary experience) within the orbit of Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment political projects. We see moments of emergence of a comparable temporal horizon (a pluralistic ethic of reconciliation) within the multiplicity of the Turkish and Iranian components as a mass mobilization phenomenon, but it failed discursively to consolidate into a sustained region of density as in the Indian case. A more conventional discourse of modernity, based on an inside/out dichotomy, prevailed and led to a comparatively elitist and authoritarian nation-making practice.

THEORETICAL GROUNDING

The impact-response idea of a fountainhead for modernity or Enlightenment, grounded monolithically in European civilization and spread historically via colonialism, is rejected as an essentialist myth echoing the inside/out metaphysic.¹ Instead, a multi-centred historicity of temporal horizons² is used where – following Amartya Sen – modern democratic ideas reside in mobile “constitutive elements” rather than a “whole.”³ Sen’s notion of traditions is used to map political movements in terms of “constitutive elements”/“selected components” instead of the Hegel-Comtean tendency to “essential blocks” and “unbroken lines” typified by – for example – Bernard Lewis’s⁴ conception of Islam or Hegel’s conception of the West in his *Philosophy of History*. The embrace of “components” rather than the “whole” entails the dialectic of the thinkable/unthought over the vista of totality, as articulated in Michael Polanyi’s theory of the “tacit dimension.”⁵ Although Polanyi’s critique of the teleological universality of the End (one modernity, one nationhood, etc.) bears comparison to Foucault’s,⁶ Polanyi’s tacit dimension does not conceive integrated grids as constituting a historical epoch but multiple local logics without definite place in historical time.⁷ It is thereby closer to John Dewey’s “theory of inquiry” from within a cultural matrix, permitting certain problems to arise, and grounded in a “non-recurring temporal sequence.”⁸

1 See Bachelard 1957, IX, “La dialectique du dehors et du dedans.”

2 Temporal horizon refers to Husserl’s phenomenological time, where the lifeworld is prior to totalizing cosmic time, and a three-dimensional “thickened” present imbricates the past and the future in an irreversible interplay of presence and absence (implying the interactive thinkable/unthought components of the tacit dimension).

3 See Sen 2000, pp. 232–34.

4 This is notably in “The Roots of Muslim Rage,” 1990.

5 See Sen’s introduction to Polanyi 2010, where he identifies the importance of Polanyi’s theory in his view.

6 See Foucault 1973.

7 This is explained in terms of a “civic culture.” See Polanyi 1974, p. 214.

8 Dewey 1981, p. 410.

Viewed concretely, nation-making, modernity or Enlightenment are always plural and porous, emerging discursively and practically within the field of tensions produced between globalizing capitalisms, nation-states and populations in distinctive circulatory processes. The Enlightenment, following Franco Venturi, is explored as a pluralistic phenomenon in precisely those “peripheral” areas (for him, the Balkans, Hungary, and Russia) where the tensions and strains constituting it bear traces.⁹ We need not assume that nation-making in practice implies either homogeneity or rupture with the past. Nation-making, in the modern context of Turkey and Iran, suggests the prolonged and adaptive survival struggle over power and meaning under long-term semi-colonial conditions of European colonial penetration. India experienced the struggle against colonial domination following the gradual destruction of the traditional political orders and their replacement by the colonial state. Each of these national experiences, however, faced similar problems in the mobilization and independence periods: of nation-making with a religiously and ethnically diverse population, the struggle of new democratic political configurations against older hierarchic orders invested with “traditional” sacred value, and the creation of new “imaginary” foundations for legitimacy following radically unprecedented change. Thus they also faced (and here we might identify a dialectic between emancipatory and authoritarian lines, pacifism and violence) the issue of forced assimilation of minorities to create a unified national culture, the prospect of a war of modern ideas and values against the traditional past, and attempts to lay absolute intellectual claims corresponding to the new power of the modern state.

THE MUGHAL AKBARIAN COURT AS A FORMATIVE MOMENT IN INDIAN ENLIGHTENMENT, WITHIN THE ISLAMIC TRIUMVIRATE AS A FIELD FOR COMPARATIVE EARLY MODERN NATION-MAKING

The sixteenth-century Islamicate – a world of mobile wealth, long-distance trade, extensive monetization, and purchasable or recruitable military slaves – included the Mughal (1526–1857), Ottoman (1299–1922) and Safavid (1501–1736) empires in their distinctive mutations within the newly expanding power terrain opened up by the modern age. The fates of these three empires were linked – and profoundly altered – by the British colonial interest in India. Constantinople’s 1453 fall to the Turks, Columbus’s 1492 arrival in the Americas and the destruction of Muslim Grenada in Spain, and the 1498 Portuguese arrival in India, constitute a constellation symbolizing the onset of the modern world. Sixteenth-century Europe saw waning feudal traits and greater cohesion within national territories, increased productivity and trade expansion aligning new absolute monarchy and the rising burgher class. These centralizing “new monarchies” were linked to the acquisition of colonies, slaves and American wealth (Portugal), these combined with the unifying tool of the Inquisition (Spain), or with the futile dream of fully restored Christendom employed to repress disobedient local princes within vast and heterogeneous hereditary possessions (Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor from 1519).

9 See Venturi 1989 and 1971.

Within the Islamicate world space, meanwhile, the sixteenth century also saw new state centralization dynamics largely in the military-technological aspect of emerging global modernity.¹⁰ The three shared an imperial concept accommodating ethnic and religious difference within large heterogeneous empires, valuing tolerance given the understanding of Islamic supremacy. The Islamicate was a multi-ethnic and transregional world space sharing political norms (the “Mirror for Kings”), cultural values and aesthetic tastes (wearing apparel, court etiquette). Among largely non-Muslim populations, the political, literary and aesthetic influence of Islam fused with the locally dominant religion, within a transregional zone encompassing East Christian, Hindu and Theravada Buddhist peoples. The Ottoman and the Safavid empires, expanding from Timurid (1370–1526) disintegration during the late fifteenth century, clashed continuously from the early sixteenth century over the control of Bagdad, South-Western Iran and Azerbaijan in a conflict given bitter sectarian dimensions by the Sunni/Shi’i split. The appalling 1514 Battle of Chaldiran saw the use of European cannons and muskets for the first time in Central Asia, following their invention near Calais (1347) and first deployment in the French 1494 invasion of Italy.¹¹ This dramatically strengthened the power position of large states in relation to local rulers, a significant military touch of the fifteenth-century technological “revolutions” in artillery, printing and ocean navigation. These new powers of military violence were the antecedent condition for the large-state formation processes that followed.¹² It was likewise the new foundation for conquest in artillery that pulled Afghanistan into Babur’s new India-based empire from 1529, ensuring military control of the northern gates of Kabul and Qandahar for the first time since antiquity. This strengthened Mughal security by fixing access to multiple foreign trade routes from China to West Asia, making India a primary player in Central Asian politics and guaranteeing the close diplomatic attentions of the Ottomans and Safavids. Artillery made killing faster and easier, destroying the old noble “life worlds” based on slow, ritualized and graceful modes of combat much as we see in fifteenth-century Europe, in Japan after 1543, and most fatally of all in the total massacre of the Incas by Pizarro in 1532.¹³

The reigns of Akbar and Philip II of Spain, coterminous from 1556, present contrasting strategies of imperial consolidation. Both inherited large realms which they expanded and consolidated with great determination, acting within the space of the “modern world” opened up by the discovery of the Americas and the shift to Atlantic trade routes.¹⁴ The silver mined in Philip’s American colonies financed his continuous wars and much found its way to India to help monetize the land revenue which was the basis of Akbar’s expanding power. Akbar and Philip faced the common problem of organizing an early modern state, depending on expensive artillery and a large standing army requiring a reliable tax base and efficient territorial administration. Both relied on the personal ties of the monarch with the ruling elite of his realm rather than impersonal institutions.

10 Bayly 2004, pp. 34–220.

11 Chandra 2008, p. 42.

12 Braudel 1973, p. 285.

13 Diamond 1998, pp. 257–68.

14 Rothermund 2006, p. 1.

This presented the ethical alternative between tolerance and intolerance as two possible strategies of imperial consolidation faced with heterogeneous and recalcitrant local nobles. Philip II undertook an Inquisitional campaign of Catholic purification while Akbar attempted the creation of a multi-religious ruling class. Akbar corresponded with Philip II in 1582 over political and religious principle, voicing a rationalist outlook: “men most (being) fettered by bonds of tradition, (and) imitating the ways followed by their fathers,” and ignoring “arguments and reasons,” were thus “excluding (themselves) from the possibility of ascertaining the truth, which is the noblest aim of the human intellect.” He requested that “we associate at convenient seasons with learned men of all religions, thus deriving profit from their exquisite discourses and exalted aspirations.” This call for the development of an independent reason – as opposed to following “the religion in which (one) was born and educated” – has striking secular implications at a time of religious sectarian massacre in Europe.¹⁵ A study of the court of Akbar reveals the emergence of a new thinkable within the early modern space. Jesuit Father Monserrate, while visiting Akbar’s court, said that “the king cared little that in allowing everyone to follow his religion he was in reality violating all.”¹⁶ Mulla Badauni, Akbar’s severest orthodox critic, similarly noted scathingly that participants in the *Ibadat Khana* “only settle things with appeal to man’s reason.”¹⁷ These critics were attacking a vaguely emergent pluralist principle of secularism, the term being thinkable to them only as a betrayal of monotheism’s absolute truth claims. Akbar corresponded, in much the same spirit, with Shah Abbas I (r. 1587–1629) of the Safavid Empire in 1594, suggesting the Mughal example of “making no distinctions among his subjects on the basis of cult or creed.”¹⁸ At this time, numerous Persian poets fled to “Akbar’s land of religious freedom” where Iranian Shiites were permitted to practice openly.¹⁹ It thus became a refuge and new home to Persian refugees fleeing the religious persecution of the Safavid court, and these often scientifically-inclined individuals contributed to the emerging Mughal court culture of tolerance.²⁰

Safavid Persia was socially complex and regionally diverse, with a population fragmented geographically into villages, towns and tribes, multiple languages (Persian, Armenian, Arabic and Turkish) and religions (Shi’a/Sunni Muslims, Nestorian/Catholic Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians). We see the components that distinguish a temporal horizon of openness in traditional Iranian Shi’i Islam in the logic of the “precipice,” where the future is conceived as open and unmade in relation to a fixed moment in the future.²¹ This mode, harbouring multiple roots, tended to revolt against the status quo and away from teleological schemes. Following the declared occultation of the Twelfth Imam in 874, the “ideal truth [was declared] beyond men’s reach in the present era of occultation.”²² Thus the

15 Emperor Akbar 1887.

16 Quoted in Rizvi 2006, p. 14.

17 Abul-Fazl 2008, p. 206.

18 Khan 2002.

19 *Ibid.*

20 Chandra 2008, p. 174.

21 Baraheni 2010.

22 Bayat-Philipp 1981.

Ismailis conceived religion through historicity rather than fixed doctrines, implying concern over present societal welfare. The sixteenth century saw the unprecedented innovation of a loyal standing army and new taxation system in Shah Abbas I's bid for centralization, ending the previously tribal and provisory basis for military power, following growing *qizilbash* recalcitrance after the Battle of Chaldiran.²³ Within this centralizing political context of altering power relations, the philosopher Mulla Sadra (1571–1641) combined various Muslim philosophical traditions in a deepening of the Persian imminentist tendency through his doctrine of “substantive movement.” Rejecting the historical determinism of orthodox theologians (*fuqaha*), he articulated a vision of existence where movement occurs in the substance and qualities of things. He thereby introduced elements of a humanist temporal horizon in progressive evolution towards perfection, excluding knowledge as an imagined totality, to the anger of orthodox theologians who fought to retain their monopoly on public meaning through public persecution of *urafa*.²⁴

Nineteenth-century Shi'ism developed two major schisms in Shaykhism and Babism, each challenging the shah during the first half of the century. In the 1840s, Ismaili and Babi revolts erupted, led by the *Bab* (1819–1850) in movements sometimes expressing reformist intellectual components.²⁵ The Baha'is (1863), for example, introduced a “cosmopolitan, pacifist and liberal doctrine.”²⁶ Shaykhism reproduced Sufi concepts in viewing the “community (...) in constant motion toward improvement,” echoing Mulla Sadra's temporal horizon of social progress.²⁷ These discourses expressed re-evaluations of old certainties under deepening political disorder imposed by new international imperial pressures. The later nineteenth century saw a group of educated men – including Mirza Malkom Khan (1833–1908) and Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani (1854–1896) – distinguish itself from the ulama and the *urafa* class. Inspired by the antitheological philosophers of eighteenth-century Europe, they privileged the “pragmatic solution of particular problems” over the “mystery of life.” They also showed continuities with the *urafa*, however, in Kermani's notion of religion as a “pragmatic, useful instrument” following the Isma'ili, Shaikhi and Babi idea of Revelation evolving to a “constantly changing, progressing, world.” Yet he broke with Sadra's vision of “yearning for divine love” in favour of “man's thirst for knowledge and social progress” in a secular scientific moment. Kermani was familiar with the works of Descartes, Rousseau, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Spencer and Darwin.²⁸ This heritage of components comprising diverse traditions and new ideas evolving under global imperialist pressures provided the temporally profound and complex interaction of thinkable/unthought underlying the modern nation-making project of the 1906 Constitutional Revolution.

A long centrifugal moment similarly drove Ottoman modernization. A pragmatic rationality, diverging from the Islamic code, shaped administrative practices from the

23 Savory 1980, pp. 78–79.

24 See Jambert 2006.

25 Mansfield 1991, p. 143.

26 Abrahamian 1983, p. 48.

27 *Ibid.*, pp. 14–16.

28 Mirsepassi 2000, p. 61.

sixteenth century.²⁹ Late seventeenth-century military disasters against Peter the Great's (1672–1725) newly modernizing Russia forced Ottoman modernization as a survival requirement in the logic of Norbert Elias's "monopoly mechanism."³⁰ This reform drive took on an uninterrupted if contested momentum from the end of the eighteenth century.³¹ Efforts to protect autonomy through changing institutional ethics presented a multi-centred struggle transcending a linear inside/out clash between modernity and tradition. While the changing techno-military apparatus and tax system fermented resistance from regional or occupational vested interests (i.e. Janissary, ulama), many clerics participated in the modernization process provided they retained a presence in government and reform was accommodated under Islamic precepts.³² With the empire's shrinking borders and defensive wars from 1683 a new privileging of diplomacy over war downgraded the military in favour of the administrative profession. The 1699 Karlowitz treaty inflicted considerable loss of European territory, forcing a panicked mass migration of rural Muslims to Istanbul. A growing urban underclass thus emerged during the 1720s' reformist Tulip Era (1718–1730). Following the Treaty of Belgrade in 1739, France was for the first time positioned to demand trading privileges previously viewed as a gracious bestowal by the Ottomans.³³ In Anatolia the "traditional village economy sank (and communities) remained inaccessible to any development" with the result that peasants "swarmed into the new towns where there were no modern industries to absorb or transform them."³⁴

The new diplomacy's negation of traditional ideological foundations in ceaseless religious warfare paralleled a new wave of pacifist thought among the developing Ottoman elite and the expanding urban public. The Tulip Era reformer Damad Ibrahim Pasha expressed his commitment to a policy of international peace.³⁵ In 1781, Ahmed Resmi Efendi publicly rejected Ottoman–Russian warfare in favour of peace perpetuated through diplomacy and negotiation. In 1787 "for the first time the people of Istanbul were prompted to express their opposition (to war with Russia) by means of posters, stuck up on public buildings – such as the palace – or distributed in mosques."³⁶ We see an instance of self-protection of society in the triple-movement of unrestricted market expansion, defensive state-power consolidation and counter-movements to prevent violence against multiple lifeworlds. Global pressures in the Ottoman Empire created a "countermovement of protection" in "institutional reform" from above and "local rebellion" from below.³⁷

Ottoman efforts to reform and survive regularly employed Enlightenment discourses, expressing the struggle between thinkable/unthought in coping through unfamiliar conditions. At the twilight of the Tulip Era Ibrahim Muteferrika (1674–1745) – who

29 Cinar 2005.

30 Elias 1994, p. 345.

31 Cinar 2005, p. 15.

32 Finkel 2007, p. 476.

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 350–68.

34 Berkes 1964, p. 141.

35 Finkel 2007, p. 349.

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 377–82.

37 Kasaba 1997.

established the first printing press in 1726³⁸ – presented Mahmud I with his *Rational Basis for the Politics of Nations* in 1731, which distinguished “Divine Prescriptions” from “laws and rules invented by reason” and introduced sovereignty based on the people as one political option.³⁹ On the eve of the French Revolution in 1788, the French consul noted that the *Encyclopedie* had been translated into Turkish.⁴⁰ In 1847, at the height of the Tanzimat era, students at the School of Medicine in Istanbul were read Baron D’Holbach’s *System of Nature* and Diderot’s *Jacques the Fatalist*.⁴¹ In 1876, following the creation of the new Constitutional government through popular uprisings led by Midhat Pasha, discussions of constitutionalism penetrated the walls of the consultative chambers and were disseminated among the popular classes whose longstanding conditions invested them with relevance.

In each of these stories, we see a struggle between the thinkable and the unthought, grounded in the everyday realities of the lifeworlds, rather than a nation as a whole upon a singular destiny toward crossing a unique and universal threshold. The Enlightenment discourse appealed to societies being forced from the spatial political mode of traditional empire into the turbulent zone of modern temporality as a mode of thinking suited to uncontrolled change.⁴² The most surprising moment in this thinkable/unthought interaction presents itself in the reign of Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605), prior to the generally identified European age of Enlightenment beginning with the 1688 Glorious Revolution.

The sixteenth-century Mughal state under Akbar saw a political experiment comparable in spirit to the later European Enlightenment, yet drawn from local cultural resources in response to early modern global conditions. This state-making experiment and its self-consciously articulated philosophy of cosmopolitan tolerance presented continuities with existing Indo-Islamic political traditions, as well as intellectual innovations suggesting the formation of a secular rationalist worldview. The rationalist free thinkers at Akbar’s court rejected the “chill blast of inflexible custom.” Akbar commended “obedience to the dictates of reason” and reproached “a slavish following of others.”⁴³ The Mughal experiment in Universal peace (*Sulh-i-kul*), according to the court historian Abul Fazl (1551–1602), was an “earnest search for truth” to dispel “the darkness of the age by the light of universal toleration.”⁴⁴ This movement sought to reconcile multiple religious perspectives with a broad principle of public reason, making it comparable to the European “moderate Enlightenment” rather than the more “radical” stream culminating in French Revolutionary *tabla raza* politics.⁴⁵ They promoted a universal religiosity based on an

38 Finkel 2007, p. 366.

39 Berkes 1964, p. 44.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 117–18.

42 This was the underlying message of Paul Hazard’s groundbreaking study on the Enlightenment (Hazard 1935).

43 Vanina 2009, p. 91.

44 Quoted in Rizvi 2006, p. 15.

45 See Israel 2008.

epistemic limit defining the human condition, where no certainty of possessing absolute truth was possible. In seeing all religions as equal, this implied a secular reformist orientation based on moral norms independent of specific religion doctrines. This new attitude to the past and readiness to alter the future entailed the emergence of a new temporal horizon, which lent itself to state patronage in science and technology, translation, secularization of the arts, and where talent was recruited irrespective of religious affiliation.

Universal peace, above all, confronted the practical threat of violence in state-making, identifying the cause of “silence” and “fear” in “fanatics who lust for blood.”⁴⁶ This elite Mughal movement sought to break the truth-violence-monotheism triangle: “Each one regarding his own persuasion alone as true, has set himself to the persecution of other worshippers of God, and the shedding of blood (has become) the symbol of religious orthodoxy.”⁴⁷ Violence was identified with “clinging to an idea,” as opposed to the autonomy of people “judging for themselves.” For with “reflection,” people “shake off the prejudices of their education (and) the threads of the web of religious blindness break.”⁴⁸ Akbar anticipated the Lockean privileging of faith based on reason rather than coercion: “What constancy might one expect from those converted under duress?”⁴⁹ The *Ibkahat* (House of Worship) became an open symposium for all religions – Sunnis, Shi’as, Hindus, Jains, Zoroastrians and Christians – to dialogue non-violently in the search for truth. Abul Fazl argued that since “persecution” thwarts “earnest inquiry,” the state is “obliged” to provide “friendly assemblies” under the “guidance of impartiality” where “calmness of mind and freedom of expression” may “discuss” and “sever” truth from error.⁵⁰ He thus acknowledged, albeit at the elite level, the need for institutional defences of freedom that was later articulated by Montesquieu. Although the *Ibkahat* was created as a dialogical “public sphere” within the composite nobility, the pattern of the *Sulh-i kul* was preceded by a broad Hindu–Muslim unity impulse at the popular level through bhakti and Sufi movements united through convictions about tolerance. The Chishti treatises of Akbar’s time expressed a “plea for the illegitimacy of considering Islam as superior to any other religion,” arguing that there is “no precedence of one religion over another.”⁵¹ In 1575, Akbar concluded in humanist fashion that “there are wise men to be found ready at hand in all religions, and men of asceticism and recipients of Divine revelations and workers of miracles among all nations. Truth is the inhabitant of every place; and how could it be right to consider it necessarily confined to one religion or creed.”⁵²

This happened only some years after the Massacre of the Night of St. Bartholomew in France, in 1572, the culmination of the Religious Wars since 1562, where 30,000 people were killed in a single night.⁵³ Akbar initially welcomed the Portuguese as traders bringing

46 Abul-Fazl 2008, p. 171.

47 Abul-Fazl 2008, vol. 3, pp. 5–6. On the truth-violence-monotheism triangle see Arkoun 2002.

48 Abul-Fazl 2008, vol. 1, p. 171.

49 Quoted in Mukhia 2004, p. 38.

50 Abul-Fazl 2008, vol. 3, p. 5.

51 Alam 2009, p. 28.

52 Quoted in Rizvi 2006, p. 9.

53 Curtis 2008, p. 263.

silver to India and as protectors of Mughal ships taking Muslim pilgrims to Arabia. He declared, regarding new commodities arriving from Europe, that “we must not reject a thing that has been adopted by people of the world, merely because we cannot find it in our own books; or how shall we progress?”⁵⁴ This surprising dismissal of the finality of Revelation, and affirmation of the positive value in historical change, was very much in the spirit of the Enlightenment worldview. It was also, with hindsight, a radical underestimation of the dangers to local sovereignty posed by European ascendancy in emerging global capitalism.

A major wave of humanitarian measures came after 1579 in the second phase of Akbar’s reign with the abolition of slavery (1582), forced labor (1597), the decree concerning monogamy (1587), forbidding of child marriage (1595) and the outlawing of *sati* or widow immolation as a duty of the wife (1583). We see numerous policies concerning animal welfare: the Jain saint Hariji Sur persuaded the Emperor “to issue an edict forbidding the slaughter of animals for six months (...) and to set free many snared birds and animals.”⁵⁵ This demonstrates the multi-religious input shaping Akbar’s policy. These reforms, however, were articulated in a language of rationality based on compassion rather than appeal to any specific religious authority. From a religious discursive universe we enter a new secular realm of ethics and policy. In 1580, for example, Akbar announced that “no man or woman, minor or adult, was to be enslaved and that no concubine or slave of Indian birth was to be bought or sold, for this concerned priceless life.”⁵⁶ It is hard to imagine a more secular category than life, which in traditional Islamic thought would be merely a bridge upon which one is tested on the road to infinitely more ontologically weighted worlds of either paradise or hell.

COMPARING THE MODERN NATION-MAKING EXPERIENCES OF INDIA, TURKEY AND IRAN WITHIN THE HERITAGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT: NODES OF COMPARISON AND IDEOLOGICAL RECURRENCES

The Enlightenment was selective and creative, not derivative, as a force in the transformation of India, Turkey and Iran from self-spatializing empires into modern self-temporalizing nations. Like all discourses, the Enlightenment heritage is subject to historical regions of density. It is grounded within specific geographic or historical moorings, with no underlying metaphysical identity. We may identify certain ideal Enlightenment values in political liberty and social equality, communication over violence, and tolerance in situations of diversity. The practical means to these ideal ends orient the movement ethically, namely the means constitute a temporal horizon. This comparison in modern nation-making contrasts opposed temporal horizons of closed ontological totality and an open ethic of reconciliation, currents struggling for predominance in each case through heterogeneous movements impacting bodies and minds. Unlike the classical problematic of

54 Quoted in Sen 2005, p. 291.

55 Prasad 1997, p. 99, “Akbar and the Jains.”

56 Quoted in Habib 1993, p. 301.

Enlightenment, centring the spread of philosophical ideas to a population's minds, the temporal point of departure must be everyday life (*habitus*, values, public gaze and representations unrelated necessarily to writing/reading) as prior to "pure" ideas. The actions and ideas of intellectuals, from civil servants to clerics, become relevant within the everyday lifeworld as the site of nation-making. The overwhelming region of density for the Enlightenment heritage in these experiences was the French Revolutionary tradition, to which the Gandhian mass movement embodied a practical and imaginative alternative variation.

In rejecting the impact-response model, the Enlightenment is analysed through complex and multiple interactive formations on the margins of global capital. The nodes of comparison for these temporally self-organizing nations are three: firstly, *structural compulsions*, where the semi-colonial context (Turkey, Iran) dictated institutional adaptation and change as imperatives in the survival struggle of traditional empires through emerging military, political and economic conditions. Empires were forced into the mode of temporalization. The Ottomans suffered inter-imperial economic penetration from the eighteenth century (the 1739 Treaty of Belgrade) and outright military domination from the nineteenth, linked to protecting British colonial interests in India. These were the geo-political factors underlying progressive loss of sovereignty for – and eventual collapse of – the Ottoman Empire in 1923. Safavid Persia was suffering the loss of trade routes by the late seventeenth century, the onset of Safavid decline leading to the long Qajar period of disorder under inter-imperial pressures (1794–1925). By 1800, European imperial rivalry was impacting Persia and the 1857 Treaty of Paris divided the empire to defend British India from Russian designs – followed by a pattern of economic penetration (the 1872 foreign concessions, rather than providing hoped-for capital for military modernization, created political conditions rendering independence a legal fiction). In the colonial context (India), the struggle against colonial domination followed destruction of the traditional political orders through progressive wars of conquest/economic integration throughout the eighteenth century (the 1757 Battle of Plassey saw Bengal seized and inter-imperial rivalry ended) and the nineteenth (the 1803 occupation of Delhi by the East India Company and the 1857 Indian Revolt whose aftermath saw Delhi subsumed under the British crown).

Secondly, negotiating structural compulsions fostered *ideological carriers* in the creation of centralized military-administrative institutions, which impacted the modes of conceiving nationalism, modernity and Enlightenment, or the nation-making process as a multi-centred site of competition over power, ideas and practices. The decentralized structure of Mughal authority was replaced by a centralized power with a strong army and state-controlled administrative/judicial functions. In nineteenth century Iran Nasir al-Din's (1848–1896) modernization efforts pursued administrative stability and military security through creating a state-wide bureaucracy and standing army. Ideological carriers in the Ottoman Empire included new secularized state ministries and schools for training elite army officers and civil servants, which marginalized traditional religious law courts and schools. These new classes based on position and skills – prior to the emergence of the modern working classes in the later nineteenth century (India) and the early twentieth century (Turkey/Iran) – became important actors in the nation-making struggle over independence. The highly influential Iranian modernist Malkom Khan (1833–1908), the leading Young Ottoman Namik Kemal (1840–1888) and the key Bengali Renaissance figures

from Rammohun Roy to Bankimchandra Chatterjee (1838–1894) were all in the civil service. The Young Turks (1908) issued from the new Ottoman military schools of the 1880s, while Reza Khan (1925–1941) hailed from the Persian Cossack Brigade formed in 1879.⁵⁷

Interacting structural compulsions and ideological carriers suggest a dialectical counterpart to state-formation in nation-making as multiple emerging counter-movements of protection and self-assertion at different levels of the mutating structure of the state/civil society assemblage. The failure of modernization efforts in preserving political autonomy and industrialization (1840s Ottoman industrialization efforts failed under imperial pressures and the Raj construction of “foreign investment” as development deepened Indian economic malaise) that produced a crisis of hegemony, that is, a struggle between political order and civil society constituted of a multiplicity of associations with competing ideological commitments.

Hence the third comparative node is the *hegemonic struggle* over power, public meanings and values, and the dialectical creation of subjectivities in response to the colonial crisis of modernity at the level of mass politics. We see the emergence of multiple civil society groups, most famously the Young Ottomans (the 1876 revolution and the National Assembly); the Iranian Popular Movement (the 1891–1892 Tobacco Revolt, the 1906–1911 Constitutional Revolution and Mosaddeq’s 1949–1953 National Front coalition); and the Indian National Independence Movement as a mass phenomenon to emerge (from its prior existence as an elite group) under Gandhi’s leadership from 1920. These instances exemplify hegemony as grassroots national leadership preceding the winning of governmental power, the front of cultural struggle upon the irreducible terrain of meanings, where consent may be wrested from the dominant group by opposition forces over an extended temporal duration through organizational modes of mass mobilization.⁵⁸

The interaction of popular masses, elites and ideologies in these revolts/movements (with their differing degrees of success) upheld, reinvented and newly created varying streams of nationalist thought which were not derived from a (European) essence but were relational, context-specific and productive. The global context for the ideological forms of nationalism within the colonial conjuncture were, firstly, the aggressive new imperial nationalism emerging from the Austrian succession (1740–1748) and the Seven Years War (1756–1763) and, secondly, the aftermath of the 1789 French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars: nationalism as an experience meaning that a nation can be freed from foreign (subject to an imaginative variety of definitions) control by the collective efforts of its population constituted as a people.⁵⁹

Three ideological recurrences – or visions of nation-making – traverse the Indian, Turkish and Iranian cases. The first two form opposing sides of the paradigmatic modern imagination: firstly, the modernist discourse of historical *rupture* with tradition (the late 1820s in India with Henry Derozio and more especially his followers, the 1860s–1880s in Iran and the Ottoman Empire with the Persian modernists/Reza Shah and Ziya

57 See Katouzian 1981, Finkel 2007, Chandra 2009.

58 Gramsci 2004, p. 56.

59 See Breunig 1977.

Gokalp/the Young Turks); secondly, the religious “revivalist” discourse of cultural *authenticity* as a reconstructed bid for modern nationhood (1870s–1890s in India with Bankimchandra Chatterjee’s novels, Dayananda Saraswati’s Arya Samaj, the Age of Consent Controversy, in Iran Shaykh Fazallah Nouri’s 1908 intervention). Underlying both was the discourse of cultural *homogeneity* as the uniquely viable basis for a modern nation, widely assumed throughout the late nineteenth century among both “revivalists” and “modernists.” Saraswati, for example, argued that although it is “difficult to do away with differences in language, religion (and) education,” it is a necessity of nation-making.⁶⁰ Gokalp argued that “only those states (...) based on a single-language group (...) have a future.”⁶¹ Both, utopically imagining either a pure religious or pure modern community, linked this principle to a politics of violence. A temporal horizon of the universal or the authentic was prioritized over those of existing people in the everyday. These recurrent permutations on French Revolutionary assimilation and the European Romantic celebration of community, each with problematic implications for multi-cultural democracy, reproduced the polarized inside/out temporal horizon as the dominant mode of imagining modernity and the nation.

The third recurrence – reflecting the existing multi-cultural makeup of these lifeworlds – links non-violence to the ideal of multi-cultural democracy, and thereby rejects the authenticity/rupture dichotomy in favour of a many-sided vision of modernity. It is based on an ethic of reconciliation, rather than revenge or final closure. In the experiences of India, Turkey and Iran, we see specific democratic movements and individuals committed intellectually and practically to transcending the limits of the French Revolutionary model as an inside/outside construction dichotomizing modernity (identified with European culture) and tradition (identified with non-Western cultures): notably in Turkey’s Young Ottomans (1865–1876), Mosaddeq’s National Front in Iran (1949–1953) and the Indian national independence movement under Gandhi’s leadership (1920–1947). We might describe them as an ideal of nationalism without essence, or without enemies, an aspiration to inclusive and multi-centred modernity with emphasis on institutionalized rights and division of power. It follows that these movements explicitly rejected Nativist bids for authentic identity as the basis for political organization. Both the Turkish and Iranian movements in this direction were destroyed by a combination of domestic and foreign adversaries upholding different ideological conceptions of modernity and nation-making. It is only the Indian experience which carried through this tendency to its ultimate conclusion – and conceived it in the clearest fashion – in the birth of the independent and democratic Indian Republic in 1947.

In each of these moments, the most striking phenomenon is the non-violent mass-based forms of practice anchored in civil society and everyday life. Each was grounded in a prior temporality of creative political groundwork among the popular masses. Midhat Pasha, the spiritual father of the Young Ottoman movement, spent 1861 to 1865 creating public works including credit cooperatives, councils, mixed schools and newspapers to serve Muslim and non-Muslim populations equally – that is, he struggled to foster public self-reliance and a

60 Quoted in Sharma 2003, pp. 14–15.

61 Gokalp 1959, pp. 80–81.

secular democratic culture at the grassroots level. His open 1873 struggle for a national assembly was the visible culmination of years of hegemonic activism in network creation and public opinion formation. The 1876 mass mobilization of Istanbul's population that caused the Sultan's fall was articulated in hegemonic terms.⁶² The Young Ottomans argued that the Tanzimat reform – a Metternich-inspired programme of “Enlightened despotism” – lacked democratic legitimacy in permitting foreign domination and modernizing without the support and involvement of the population.⁶³ The new 1877 Parliament represented Christians, Jews, Turks and Arabs, with a foreign observer noting the secular rather than religious/ethnic character of parliamentary cleavages.⁶⁴ The Young Ottomans, even as they urged the integration of traditional values into a modernization process seen to be without restraint, were secularists. Mustafa Fazil Pasha, the organizational founder, argued that “there are no Christian politics nor Muslim politics, for there is only one justice.”⁶⁵ Most notably, the Young Ottomans made the case – the very opposite of the Tanzimat and later Atatürk's view – that development and freedom must be inextricably bound. The thinker Namik Kemal – committed to a dialogic principle and rejecting state intervention in the “meaning of life” – argued that to deprive a person of freedom is “as if it were to deprive him of food.”⁶⁶ This promising interval in nineteenth-century Ottoman politics – combining European Enlightenment ideas and streams in Islamic philosophy – was crushed as a result of Russia's assault in the Russo-Turkish War (1877–1878).

In Iran, the Popular Movement as a mass phenomenon was marked by the Tobacco Crisis (1891–1892) with the state forced to yield to popular opinion in response to widespread urban rebellion. This popular intervention, protesting imperial domination and demanding constitutional government, employed modes of resistance grounded in traditional and largely non-violent practices such as general strike, boycott and sit-ins. The successful 1905 Constitutional Revolution employed primarily the same popular tactics in a multi-class protest that overturned the existing order and instituted a National Assembly.⁶⁷ However, this popular potential was inadequately appreciated by leading modernist intellectuals of the Constitutional Revolution committed dogmatically to the temporal horizon of rupture. Malkom Khan, following Comtean positivism, favoured social engineering from above. Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh urged “absolute (cultural) submission to Europe” as the unique road to modernity.⁶⁸ This inside/out discourse justified Reza Khan's 1924 coup d'état, which aimed to reconstruct Iran entirely from above through a modernist authoritarian regime that crushed independent expressions of civil society, violently imposed a single national identity, and remained within an imperial power orbit. Mohammed Mosaddeq, with a multi-centred and democratic ideal of modernity, was the thinker, leader and nationally elected prime minister who fully recognized a long-term

62 Finkel 2007, p. 464.

63 Mardin 2000, p. 179.

64 Berkes 1964, p. 249.

65 Quoted in Mardin 2000, p. 281.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 297.

67 See Abrahamian 1983.

68 Quoted in Mirsepassi 2000, p. 54.

democratic horizon in the Iranian popular movement. Mosaddeq was committed to fostering public self-reliance and multi-centred civil society as the road to democratic modernity, urging the need for “the people (to become) interested in social issues and partake in public affairs.”⁶⁹ Like Namik Kemal, he emphasized the crucial link between freedom and development in building a democratic society. He favoured “peaceful means to move the society” while respecting its “national and religious traditions.”⁷⁰ While committed to democratic institutions and public freedom of speech, he insisted that they could flower only in a nation freed from foreign political and economic domination. Mosaddeq rejected both discourses of authenticity and rupture, striving to develop the democratic aspects of Iranian and Islamic traditions. Highly skilled as an organizer, his National Front coalition provided an Iranian alternative to many Left-inclined individuals disillusioned with the Tudeh Party following the Azerbaijani crisis (1945–1948). In spite of his wide popularity and capacity to mobilize the Iranian masses, his nationalization of Iranian oil led to the U.S.-sponsored coup d’etat that overthrew him in 1953 and re-established the Shah’s unpopular dictatorship.

In India, with its history of civil society activism, nation-making efforts were preceded in eighteenth-century Indian states by popular movements of dissent that emerged prior to British intervention: heterodox sects based on equality, which addressed each other as brother and sister and translated Sanskrit of the Vedas into simple Hindi for the common man. These sects, some with a following of twenty to thirty thousand, reveal a developing trend of social protest and religious dissent in eighteenth-century Indian public life. Nineteenth-century India saw three principle discursive tendencies. The first, in Rammohun Roy’s intervention, centred the lifeworld based on many-sided truth and an ideal of epistemic modesty. This combination, centring an ethic of reconciliation, extends the Akbarian legacy to the colonial context. He remained anchored in living Indian traditions in a multi-centred way (Hindu philosophy, the *Mutazilite* tradition in Islamic philosophy, Tibetan Buddhism and Jainism) while absorbing new European traditions from a specific modernity framed by the obscurities of colonial domination.⁷¹ His institution-building included the 1829 Brahma Samaj, the 1825 Calcutta English school (mechanics and Voltaire’s philosophy), and the 1825 Vedanta College (Indian traditions, Western social science and physics).⁷² His journalistic work involved publishing newspapers in Bengali, Persian, Hindi and English, promoting scientific ideas and discussing social issues, which helped to create a literate, self-imagining and simultaneous community within several logospheres.⁷³ An admirer of the French Revolution, the 1821 failed revolution in Naples upset him, while he was overjoyed at the 1823 revolution in Spanish America.⁷⁴ We have the paradox of a man building the foundations of a nation through civil society in numerous languages and for a variety of different religious cultures, in combination

69 Musaddiq 1988, p. 149

70 Katouzian 2009, p. 218.

71 Panikkar 1995, pp. 66–69; Chandra 2009, pp. 128–33. Quoted in de Bary 1958, p. 571.

72 Chandra 2009, p. 131.

73 Term coined by Mohammed Arkoun.

74 Chandra 2009, p. 133.

with elements of the French Revolutionary legacy (notably the rights of man in his struggle for women's emancipation and press freedom).

The second nineteenth-century stream, while also aspiring to democratic modernity, embraced the French Revolutionary temporal horizon of modernity as dichotomous rupture and so tended to denigrate Indian traditions in favour of a single modern road – this was initiated by Henry Derozio and adopted with greater vigour by some of his followers. Henry Derozio (1809–1831) led the influential Young Bengal movement, his language evoking the experience of the French Revolution (a “torch (of the youth) shall dissipate the gloom / That long has made your country but a tomb, / or worse than tomb, the priest's, the tyrant's den”).⁷⁵ In embracing the iconoclastic dimension of the French Revolutionary heritage he repudiated the multi-religious ethic of reconciliation that had defined Akbar's court and Rammohun Roy. Among some of Derozio's later followers (who lacked his complexity) we see forms of behaviour offensive to the ordinary Indian population: the students of the Hindu college in Calcutta “adopted an aggressive attitude to everything Hindu and openly defied the canons of their inherited religion (...) such as drinking to excess, flinging beef-bones into the houses of the orthodox, and parading the streets shouting ‘we have eaten Mussalman bread.’”⁷⁶ Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar (1855–1923) spoke of the “narcotic influence of custom” and declared that the “whole existence must be renovated,” considering the Indian past a “death in life that we have been living for two thousand years.”⁷⁷ This second temporal horizon, based on rupture, was lacking in hegemonic resonance among the broad population.

By the 1860s, the Raj faced a crisis of hegemony resulting from thwarted Indian efforts at political participation, the famines attending Queen Victoria's 1877 assumption of the title of Empress, the open racism of the 1883 Ilbert Bill controversy, and the famines and epidemics of the 1890s compounded by Naoroji's “drain theory.”⁷⁸ Rammohun Roy's Brahmo Samaj extended his legacy to the Moderate wing of the Indian National Congress (1885). Moderate founders of the INC (Mohadev Govind Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjea and Keshub Chunder Sen) focused on transforming civil society/the lifeworld and affirmed multi-centred political lines over rupture.⁷⁹ The views of Ranade (1842–1901) show the stakes in alternative temporal horizons. He argued that revivalist claims to ontological authenticity were inherently a choice, being “at sea as to what it is they seem to revive.” He urged a temporal horizon rooted in pluralism and choice over fixed claims to collective truth in an ethic of reconciliation.⁸⁰ While critical of aspects of Indian tradition, he valued the Akbarian traditional past: “no progress is possible unless (all Indians) follow the lead of the men who flourished in Akbar's time.” He constructed the Indian past in a more democratically empowering way than the ideology of the

75 Henry Derozio, “India's Youth – the Hope of Her Future” in de Bary 1958, p. 570.

76 Heimsath 1964, p. 17.

77 Quoted in Heimsath, p. 17.

78 Bandyopadhyay 2009, pp. 213–54.

79 de Bary 1958, pp. 688–89.

80 Mahadev Govind Ranade, “Revivalism versus Reform” in de Bary 1958, pp. 682–88.

colonial state, and in a more pluralistic way than the Saraswati or Derozio lines of vision.⁸¹ The Moderate phase (1885–1907) was characterized by efforts to transform civil society through public discourse – petitions, memoranda, speeches, public meetings and press campaigns with a view to gradual reform – with all of the limits this entailed in terms of language and concepts.

The 1860s–1870s saw the third stream in a discourse of religious or cultural authenticity: Saraswati's *Arya Samaj*, Bankimchandra's novels, Aurobindo Ghose's revolutionary terrorism linked to religious authenticity, and Tilak's Ganesh Festival in its connection to organized religious riots.⁸² These developments were linked to the new Benthamist-Hobbesian authoritarianism driving Raj politics under Fitzjames Stephen (1869–1872) and the progressively visible emptiness of the constitutional power-sharing arrangement. Sensing the mobilizing potential in Saraswati's appeal to the Indian popular masses, the Extremist wing of the INC employed many non-violent techniques of extra-constitutional protest centred on civil society/the lifeworld: boycott and public burning of foreign cloth, boycott of government schools, courts, titles and services, and strikes. The three nationalist streams each harboured a different reconstruction of India's historical and cultural past with a correspondingly different vision of independent India's political future, that is, temporal horizons.

As also in Turkey and Iran, terrorism played a role in nation-making bids. Violence as a direct line to power through individual acts of public assassination was often aligned to the Extremist faction as a secular revolutionary ideology. This constituted a new temporal horizon in politics in the immediacy of seizing power to initiate a new order. Facing a lack of legitimate protest channels and inspired by the tradition of 1857, many young Indians of the urban, middle class, educated and unemployed strata embraced "violence as the only available mode of action." The movement modelled itself on the "new scientific discipline of sociology," founded by Comte and popularized by Herbert Spencer, where reality is "struggle, violence, national solidarity and subordination of the individual to the needs of the 'national organism.'"⁸³ This was a discourse of rupture, where "Revolution is Truth" and the "eternal conflict between the Old and the New." Bhagat Singh (1907–1931), a martyr and iconic leader, wrote that "the sacrifice of individuals at the altar of Revolution (...) will bring freedom to all" as a matter of historical "inevitability."⁸⁴ Their views were utopian, projecting "a new order of society in which political and economic exploitation will be an impossibility."⁸⁵ That the popular masses would rise up in spontaneous insurrection following such "propaganda by deed" proved without basis, demonstrating the hegemonic limits of such violent forms of practice and intoxicatingly imagined temporal horizons.

From 1920 we see the emergence of an alternative temporal horizon in practical politics. Gandhi, through intensive work at the grassroots level, transformed the INC from an

81 Ranade, "Hindu-Muslim Cooperation" in de Bary 1958, pp. 688–89.

82 Jaffrelot 2001, p. 281.

83 Parekh 1989, p. 142.

84 Singh 2007, p. 11.

85 Quoted in Chandra 1980, pp. 234–36.

elite entity into a nationwide mass-based organization capable of presenting – merely through the combined power of ordinary people in everyday life – a counterforce to the power of Empire. The achievements of the Indian national movement in the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–1922) and the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930–1932), in combination with Constructive Work (i.e. the element of temporal duration), represent a historical archetype of mass-based/multi-class non-violent struggle through hegemonic mobilization of the population as multiple lifeworlds. In the Akbarian spirit, Gandhi argued that all religions – and even atheism – were potentially different roads to truth. Because of its non-violent character it involved more women in the struggle than both the Russian and Chinese revolutions combined.⁸⁶

The highest value in Gandhi's vision of nationalism, very likely, was in overcoming the dominant French Revolutionary paradigm and the shortcomings which have haunted so many national projects: the forcible assimilation of minorities, a war of modern ideas on the traditional past, and a dogmatic epistemic ideal striving for absolute dimensions as a state project. Gandhi argued that "the spirit of democracy is not a mechanical thing to be adjusted by the abolition of forms."⁸⁷ His worldview, however, preserved core elements of the French Revolutionary inheritance: (1) a new concept of legitimacy based on the provisional nature of political institutions, and rejecting the transcendental value linked to the sanction of antiquity; (2) the logical consequence in the recognition of the immanent values in political action. A population has the right to take a course of action "to compel justice from" the ruler;⁸⁸ (3) the legitimization of conscience as a force of political judgement and eventual action, or the principle of human autonomy in relation to tradition and history. Gandhi called himself "humanitarian first and to the end."⁸⁹ In the tradition of Enlightenment and the French Revolution, he identified conscience with "standing up for truth and reason" and opposing "bigotry, lethargy, intolerance, ignorance (and) inertia."⁹⁰ Perhaps Gandhi's most vivid insistence in favour of secular humanism as the basis for a multi-cultural and democratic Indian public sphere occurred in a 1925 debate about a recent episode of stoning in Afghanistan. Responding to a *Young India* reader's claim that millions of Muslims might be disillusioned by his condemnation of stoning in the contemporary world, he wrote: "I wish that they could say with me that even if it could be established that the practice of stoning to death could be proved (in accordance with holy scripture) they could not defend it as being repugnant to their sense of humanity."⁹¹ (4) Finally, Gandhi shared in common with the French Revolutionary tradition the conviction that "political emancipation means the rise of mass consciousness."⁹²

Gandhian nationalism and the French Revolutionary paradigm, however, present strikingly different ideas of truth: the French Revolutionary discourse makes the absolute

86 Chandra 1989, pp. 46–47.

87 Quoted in Dalton 1993, p. 50.

88 Tendulkar 1992, vol. 1, p. 300.

89 Gandhi, *CW* 26, p. 241

90 Quoted in Tendulkar 1992, vol. 2, p. 62.

91 Gandhi, *CW* 26, p. 415.

92 Quoted in Tendulkar 1992, vol. 2, p. 227.

absence of limits the condition for living in Truth, as limits to the public space imply hidden conspiracies or doubts, and therefore a compromise of the Truth which is necessarily whole. Hegel wrote, adopting this philosophically as a temporal horizon, that the “True is the whole” and the “whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development.”⁹³ The essence guarantees the identity of Truth, and in the historical process functions as the Final End in which the Truth already exists as a complete yet unrealized whole or ontological figure. In Gandhi’s thought, conversely, the existence of a strict limit (that is, the pledge of non-violence) is the precondition for even the possibility of seeking the Truth. There being no ideal or universal blueprint, social conflicts may only be confronted in the complexity of the everyday world where they are lived. Once violence is introduced, the outcome becomes the random consequence of brute force. He thus argued that “there is no way to find Truth except the way of non-violence.”⁹⁴ Gandhi thereby articulated the philosophical basis of the ethic of reconciliation that had existed as a longstanding Indian tradition, introducing it into the realm of the thinkable. He argued that “all knowledge was partial or corrigible,” and that people “saw the world differently,” and that “violence denied these fundamental facts.”⁹⁵ Because “man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth (he) is not (therefore) competent to punish;” the “inability to know this absolute truth (requires the maintenance of) an unceasingly open approach to those who would differ from him.”⁹⁶ It follows that Indian Muslims, whose political rights and cultural prestige were upheld by Gandhi, played important roles in the Indian national independence movement. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, President of the Indian National Congress (1940–1945), exemplified those Muslims who – despite being branded “traitors” by political Islamists – continued to uphold a secular and multi-cultural democratic politics in conformity with certain longstanding traditions of Indian Islam. Azad is reinterpreted today as an intellectual figure who defied the modernity/tradition dichotomy and tragic identity politics of the Partition, in a democratic commitment that simultaneously celebrated religious values and secular principles.⁹⁷

NATION-MAKING AS TEMPORAL HORIZONS

In 1924 Gandhi said that while he may admire the Bolsheviks’ “motives” (the ideal ends) he was an “uncompromising opponent of violent methods” (the means), and did not “believe in short-violent-cuts to success.”⁹⁸ Thus he emphasized the temporal horizon. Previously, he had criticized Bolshevism in 1919 for its obsession with “materialistic advancement as a goal” at the expense of “liberty.”⁹⁹ Gandhi identified himself with Enlightenment

93 Hegel 1977, p. 11.

94 Quoted in Tendulkar 1992, vol. 2, p. 236.

95 Parekh 1989, p. 156.

96 Bondurant 1965, p. 16.

97 See An-Na’im 2008, pp. 157, 180.

98 Quoted in Dalton 1993, p. 10.

99 Quoted in Tendulkar 1992, vol. 1, p. 248.

values, for example, in calling untouchability a “denial of the rights of man.”¹⁰⁰ His principal difference with the French Revolutionary paradigm concerned the issue of *means*, which, on closer examination, seems to be a different perception of the problem of time. Gandhi certainly saw the deepest sense of his own life in *Moksha*; but he expressly argued that he could never extend his own religious priorities to a national movement or even party.¹⁰¹ Gandhi’s immanentism concerned the moral virtue of practice over preconceived Final Ends: “Our explorations should take place in the direction of determining not the definition of an undefinable term like *Swaraj* but in discovering the ways and means.”¹⁰²

Modernity as competing temporal horizons – or varying relations to collective memory and notions of means to realizing the collective future – can be generalized into two tendencies for the Indian, Turkish and Iranian cases in the *movement* versus the *programme*. Practically, these oppose a lightning flash of violent insurrection targeting the political apex under a pre-consolidated ideological banner, and prolonged non-violent campaigns of transformation aimed at the broader terrain of multi-centred civil society prior to the transfer of power. The first rests upon a conviction of theoretical correspondence to pre-existing objective reality (here Comte was influential) as an elite *programme*, the second concerns the public struggle over meanings and values in a broad democratic *movement* seeking popular hegemony. The programme, laying claim to an extra-subjective transcendent reality, is grounded in cosmic time; the movement, critically engaging the heterogeneous consciousness of ordinary people, is grounded in phenomenological time (i.e. the primacy of the life-world). The logic of the programme entails the tacit investment of violence with an ontological legitimacy in resolving power conflicts: the state is an *instrument* wielded by the “knowing” elite. Nation-making follows power seizure and a new beginning. This is a mimicking of colonial power or state coercion by those aspiring to power. By contrast, the inclusive and participatory capacity of the heterogeneous mass movement is expanded in proportion to a non-violent line – showing the state-civil society structure as a mobile assemblage of *relations*. Nation-making is the road to power, with prolonged struggle to democratically reorganize and consensually mobilize everyday life and civil society its prerequisite. Both tendencies were present – and seriously in conflict – in India, Turkey and Iran throughout their struggles for national independence as thinkable/unthought interactions.

The administrative elite of the Tanzimat wrested power following Mahmud II’s death, but constituted its own *programme* espousing equality before the law without national representation. Under the inspiration of Metternich’s ideal of “enlightened despotism,” the programme privileged efficiency over liberty, the population being harnessed to empower the empire but denied participation. The Young Ottoman *movement* – led by radicalized lower-level administrative elite – challenged the Tanzimat in seeking to integrate the population into national modernization, and embedding this process within traditional popular values. This movement led to the short-lived parliamentary interim. Following Abdulhamid II (1876–1909), the Young Turks negated the *movement* claiming the religious ignorance of the masses, and implemented a Comtean *programme*. In Iran, Reza Khan –

100 Gandhi, *CW* 26, p. 330.

101 Gandhi, *CW* 85, p. 328.

102 Quoted in Tendulkar 1992, vol. 2, p. 240.

rejecting the “chaos” of the mass movement of the Tobacco/Constitutional Revolution – seized power to implement a Comtean *programme* similar to Atatürk’s. Mosaddeq revived the movement, but with the 1953 coup Iranian civil society (i.e. trade unions, political parties, and independent press) was again systematically crushed by the Shah in the name of the *programme*. In India, colonialism justified its authoritarianism on the basis of claims to be a programme of teleologically deferred emancipation. The colonial programme reconstructed India on the basis of a historicist temporal horizon: firstly, new state-defined spaces linked to standardized law, administration and education which constituted subjects and populations, transforming self-consciousness, each religious community having an official “definition” and regionally identified majorities/minorities creating new vulnerability; secondly, a narrative of “origins” combining the William Jones Orientalist and James Mill liberal schools to construct the Indian past in a Hindu period (a lost golden age) and the Muslim period (a time of stasis or “the dark age”).¹⁰³ Certain modes of resistance doubled these temporal images (i.e. discourses of authenticity), and other power seekers envisioned programmes excluding popular participation in a deferred temporality. Gandhian leadership struggled against these worldviews, and envisioned different and more pluralistic temporal horizons (undoubtedly slower and less unilateral) based on an attempted democratic reconstruction of India’s living traditions.

Post-independence India shows linkages between Nehruism and the independence movement under Gandhi. Out of competing forms of political loyalty and mobilization strategies, Nehru upheld the secular national-democratic principle following the Gandhian ideal. Pakistan embraced the modern ideological option of authenticity inspired by creative thinkers like Muhammad Iqbal, making this undemocratic choice despite a common Indian heritage of struggle under the Raj. Nehru followed Gandhian learnings in crucial ways: the ideal of non-violence as a means, an inclusive moral universalism rather than epistemic totality as the basis for national belonging, a subordination of politics to liberal democratic institutional procedure, and a context-specific groundedness in the everyday as an approach to political change. Thus the Gandhian modifications of the Enlightenment tradition were transferred to India’s post-independence politics in the Nehru period, in the shift from a mass movement to a political party, via a mode of institutional ethics. These ethics were visible in the pluralist and non-interventionist solutions to the various centre/state and civil society dilemmas facing the new republic. Through pluralistic mechanisms power was negotiated through a many-sided politics grounded in the principle of self-reliance and an ethic of reconciliation. Examples include the post-independence language policy, linguistic state reorganization, the accession of Princely states and tribal policy as a pluralistic and many-sided politics that rejects historicist-authoritarian political modes of imagining where a single centre of power oversees a linear unfolding of truth (i.e. as a fixed narrative or programme). These experiences make clear that Nehru saw liberty as multiple, conflicting and sometimes mutually subverting freedoms – and that he did not conceive nation-making as a single scientifically determined destiny. Nehru attempted to seriously reckon with existential issues of selfhood, loyalty and values, rather than steamrolling such differences under a programme

¹⁰³ Bandyopadhyay 2009, p. 245.

of Utilitarian uniform interest. He followed a middle road between traditional claims to being (values, identity) and modern political-economic becoming through a critical democratic framework based on humanist ethical principles inherited from the national movement. The precondition for this politics was the non-negotiability of secularism – not as a substantive ideology dictating the truth, but as a public space open to multiple points of view and lines of action based on the principle of non-violence. The historical prerequisite for these political experiments was the prior popularization of democratic politics on the ground during the struggles of the national movement – or the long-term struggle over hegemony concerning legitimate political authority, ideas, values and meanings. It follows that Nehru – who clearly saw the link between dogmatic ideological certainty and political violence in the Soviet Union and China – did not envision development based on a discourse of universal laws where science and technology are linked to a specific and whole claim to truth. Nehru undertook the unprecedented experiment of combining national development with full popular franchise and political freedom in a largely illiterate and poor country. It is for this reason that Nehru, in contrast to many of his political contemporaries, regularly emphasized the crucial role of the dialogic and insisted upon the irrelevance of forcing any ideas upon the diverse Indian population. In one of his letters, Nehru speculates about the creation of a classless society through non-violent methods, denouncing coercion and the “language of violence” in favour of “peaceful democratic pressures.” He denies that “a principle can only be stoutly defended by language of violence” in a political imaginary where “there are no shades, (but) only black and white.” This tendency he likens to “the old approach of the bigoted aspect of some religions,” and contrasts it with “the approach of tolerance of feeling that perhaps others might have some share in the truth also.”¹⁰⁴ This temporal horizon, with its deep lineage, was wedded to Nehru’s ideal of the scientific approach as an open-minded basis for thought and action.

We may compare Nehru to Atatürk, who embodied the alternative temporal horizon in nation-making as a programme.¹⁰⁵ The Young Turks (1889) contrasted with the openness and ambiguity of the Young Ottomans in advancing a rigidly unified ideological outlook that heralded back intellectually to the “mechanist” strain in the Ottoman-Turkish experience. The multi-religious inclusivity and ideal of broad popular participation in a hegemonic project of transformation yielded to a different Enlightenment ideology of ethnic homogeneity and the revolutionizing of cultural life from above based on sociologically imagined “laws of nature,” rupture, “general will” and the restoration of “essence” through assimilationist notions of antecedent identity. The ideal of democracy was sacrificed to this singular end, or temporal horizon. The Young Turk tendency, itself a response to demographic changes resulting from military defeat, new military schools, and the specific political environment created by Abdul Hamid II (1876–1909), culminated in Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s historicist vision of a linear, teleological modern “essence,” with the state as an “instrument” where all means are justified in transforming society according to a “universal” blueprint of “modern civilization.” Atatürk was a radical political thinker and adherent of a vision of Enlightenment influenced by the seminal Turkish intellectual Ziya Gökalp.

104 Nehru 1989, p. 83.

105 See Jevakhoff 1989.

In practice Ataturk's Enlightenment ideal involved the negation of civil society and manifestations of public self-reliance on the grounds of national "immaturity." Thus even as traditionally marginalized sections of the population such as women were given public visibility and new rights, women along with the general population were disempowered as autonomous social activists in being denied the possibility of creating state-independent organizations (i.e. civil society). Certain sections of the population not fitting the conceptually-laden state plan of "modernity" were deemed, in historicist terms, primitive throwbacks or not to exist (i.e. Kurds). Above all, Ataturk self-consciously cemented a link between violence and truth in a politics of direct seizure of state power where the dialogic is suppressed in the name of epistemic totalization. The impressive if troubled Turkish democracy of today is the product of the long-term struggles of the Turkish population partly as a result of, but also in spite of, the Kemalist political legacy as a self-conscious programme envisioning democracy as secondary to the revolutionizing of "culture" according to a "universal" blueprint. In 1927 Ataturk ridiculed the dialogic aspect of democracy as "unnecessarily lost in a labyrinth of theories."¹⁰⁶ He dismissed opposition voices as "but an echo of the twaddle of misguided and ignorant brains."¹⁰⁷ Sovereignty, he insisted, "is acquired only by force, by power, and by violence." It was now the time, he continued, for the "nation to revolt against the usurpers, to put them in their place, and to exercise the facts of sovereignty." He concluded with the threat that "heads should roll" in the event of further disagreement.¹⁰⁸

The nation-making experiences of India, Turkey and Iran were constituted of competing temporal horizons with varying relations to collective memory and notions of means to realizing the collective future. We may therefore define modernity as the complex of tensions produced where such historical constructions form political and ideological regions of density, rather than a positive identity (i.e. a modern self opposed to a traditional self). In the politics introduced by Gandhi through the Indian National Movement the means became the focus, as a process of growth, over Final Ends, implying an open and communicative (i.e. temporal) rather than teleological and fixed absolute rationality. It evokes Dewey's insight that those "who are less absolutist may be content to think that, morally speaking, growth is a higher value and ideal than is sheer attainment."¹⁰⁹ This outlook rejected the premise of ontology that characterized the dominant French Revolutionary paradigm of modernity in its philosophical ambitions. The French Revolutionary paradigm of "rupture" was a quest for a-temporal "foundations" in "the goodness of unmasked human nature" or "the infallibility of the people."¹¹⁰ This had its roots in Rousseau's idea of *l'ame dechiree*. To recover the "foundation" in these "original men," it was necessary only to unmask the artificiality of the socially and politically accumulated institutions to undo the corrupting work of time and lay bare the timelessly pure.¹¹¹ This temporal horizon

¹⁰⁶ Ataturk 1927, p. 65.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 583.

¹⁰⁸ Ataturk 2005, p. 125.

¹⁰⁹ Dewey 1934, p. 18.

¹¹⁰ Arendt 1965, p. 111.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

of “man’s nature” defined the metaphysic of development, justifying change at any cost, with the function of providing certainty or closure where modern social conflicts maintain the situation in perpetual unrest. Gandhi, like Mosaddeq or Namik Kemal, sought to devise tactics for living harmoniously in the continual openness, diversity and uncertainty of a large multi-religious nation-state linked to the wider world of globalization. The ethic of reconciliation was given practical basis in the *Satyagraha* technique. Because of the technique, the masses of India, unlike those in other nations seeking independence and radical social democratic transformation, did not become the victims of the very means they employed to attain liberation under the post-independence regime.

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