Abstract: The article tries to give 'a definition' and an evaluation of modernity, and analyze historical evolution of its relationship with the West. Modernity emerged as a European success; as the USA became a major actor in the global affairs modernity evolved from being a European project to a project that has a strong association with the West. Today, the relative weight of the West in conceptualization of the modernity is strongly debated. 'The West' is not monolithic; it is a 'constructed concept' rather than a natural entity. Still, the West represents a certain type of society and level of development. It is still possible to argue that there is a strong association between modernity with the West. Clearly, modernity and the West cannot be identified and efforts to reach new conceptualizations of modernity which allows to valuable contributions from the voices, legacies and new experiences in the non-Western contexts are important to reach a more accurate understanding of global modernity. The articles also argue that it is possible to see the rise of Europe and the West as a historical phase and many non-Westerners think that it is achievable to regain the lead from the West. Nevertheless, it is concluded, the West still enjoys a dominant position in conceptualization of modernity. Perhaps, this is more so when looked from the regions that witnesses practical dominance of the West.

Key Words: Modernity, West, History of Modernity

Introduction

In this article, I will try to give ‘a definition’ and a brief evaluation of modernity and analyze historical evolution of the relationship between modernity and the West. Modernity has started as a West European experience and success. Although it is not possible to define modernity in an acceptable way for all experts, there may be...
‘a list’ of relevant developments, which receives prominent mention in the relevant literature, which arguably make a society modern; and it is helpful to look at these developments in a historical perspective. Thus, the article tries to touch upon the relevant and important developments that in a combination and in favorable conditions enabled the West to ‘mature’ to modernity.

The article then tries to analyze the complex relationship between modernity and the West. I share the view that the original, epoch-making social changes occurred in Europe and later globalized in their repercussions (Giddens 1990). It is important to analyze underlying factors of these changes and the characteristics that Western societies have acquired through them. Because of the lack of space, the article only briefly touches upon some of the factors such as the dynamic and rational nature of Europe, the positive environmental factors, technical and scientific change and the industrial revolution.

Finally, the article briefly offers a current view of the relationship between modernity and the West. It is shown that, the place of the West in recent conceptualizations of modernity is subject to a debate and many see [western] modernity as a historical phase and because of attribution of modernity to some ethnocentric factors that emerged in the West, the discourse on modernity in the West is frequently West-centric. Nevertheless, it is argued, it is still possible to contend that modernity still has a strong association with the West. For the non-western societies the only viable option seems to be trying to become more influential in practical (e.g. economic, political and cultural) terms if they want to gain more relative weight in current conceptualization of global modernity.

2. Modernity

Modernity was initially a West European experience. It makes sense of and facilitates a clearer understanding if one looks at this experience without losing the historical perspective. Even if the consequences of modernity is globalized (Giddens 1990), there is “a loss of consensus over the institutional and intellectual content of modernity” (Dirlik 2003: 279; see also, Cahoone 1996: 12). As Wagner succinctly puts, an attempt to understand modernity may seem “tautological” or “impossible”. But it is worth trying to “gain some perspective on modernity” (1994: ix). For various disciplines and scholars, different aspects of modernity seem worth emphasizing (Friedman 2001: 500). Since the thinkers and experts are not immune to the effects of their socio-economic milieu, it seems very difficult to escape from ethnocentric
conceptualizations of modernity as one tends to see modernity in that way\(^1\). This was the case for all great observers of modernity and this trend continues to a certain extent. It has been almost always the case that modernity is associated or reduced to one or a few of the most important core processes seen as the factors making a society modern. For Marx, modernity was associated primarily with class struggle as the source of schism in the capitalist order and the eventual emergence of a more humane social system. According to Durkheim, expansion of industrialism with increasing division of labor and moral individualism would establish a harmonious social life. Weber was the most pessimist. In his view, material progress was obtained at the expense increasing bureaucracy which undermined individual creativity and autonomy (Giddens 1990: 7; also Harvey 1990: 15). Weber saw the culture (i.e. Protestant Ethic) as a key for emergence of capitalism and hence the modern society. Although there is no universally accepted definition of modernity, Ethnocentric (i.e. West-centric) understandings of modernity have been dominant in the literature, while non-Western conceptualizations of modernity constitute some resistance to this.

Modernity is not monolithic but it is possible to talk about a ‘Western modernity’; which many observers, often unconsciously, do in practice when they discuss modernity. For example, after giving a somewhat tautological, but useful, definition as, “‘Modernity’ is that distinct and unique form of social life which characterizes modern societies” (my emphasis, Hall et al. 1992: 2), Hall et al. continue to treat modernity as highly unified and equal to Western modernity: “The idea of ‘the modern’ was given a decisive formulation in the discourses of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, modernity became identified with industrialism and the sweeping social, economic and cultural changes associated with it”. Modernity was constituted by the articulation of a number of different historical processes. “Modernity is the sum of these different forces and processes” (Hall et al. 1992: 2). Modernity can be associated with a number of institutions like the nation-state, and an international system of states; an “expansionist capitalist economic order based on private property; industrialism”, growth of bureaucracy, “the dominance of secular, materialist, rationalist and individualist cultural values”, separation of the private from the public sphere (Hall et al 1992: 3). This is one possible answer to the question voiced by Wittrock “which institutions and practices are the defining ones when we use the term modern? [...] we have to have an idea which institutions and habits are modern and which are not. A society is modern if some key defining institutions and types of behavior can be said to be modern” (2000: 32).

\(^1\) I would argue that, a person’s definition of modernity, at a given time, is almost always connected to his/her ideological position and his/her perception of the social change in societies, which he/she perceives as ‘most advanced’ in the world.
Thus, certain aspects of the distant or recent history of the modernization processes of societies, which are now considered modern, are highlighted by observers as important aspects of modernity in the literature. Therefore, based upon an extensive reading of the relevant literature largely written by Western experts, I would argue that, a list of important factors that make a society or individual modern may be put forward without discounting the ethnocentric biases:

- increasing use of inanimate sources of energy
- increasing share of industrial and service sector in the national economy as opposed to agriculture
- social mobility, urbanization
- emancipation from the tradition, secularization
- increasing scientific knowledge, application of this knowledge in the form of technology which brings mastery over the nature (including over other human beings as parts of that nature), meeting human needs more effectively by using this technology
- effective socio-economic organization (e.g. an effective state: tax collection, defense industry, health system); a strong economy
- Democracy, realized by emancipated, communicative individuals, who realized impersonal application of the rules, decreasing importance of ascriptive statuses.

Naturally, not all experts agree that these are undisputed characteristics of modernity; but these phenomena receive prominent mention in the literature as associated with modernity. It is often the case that modernity is understood by associating it

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2 This list can be seen as Eurocentric, but I am aware of the limitations of a Eurocentric approach to modernity as raised for example by McLennan (2000) and Dussel (2000). To repeat, I am simply arguing that these are the concepts and developments that are frequently raised by predominantly Western experts whom I read extensively for my PhD thesis. I am also aware that each item on this list can be shown perhaps as not the defining characteristics of modernity as it developed in Europe or as also existing in other parts of the world in a parallel way. Perhaps, it is more accurate to argue that a special combination of these factors in a favorable (lucky?) condition enabled Europe to break away to modernity (Abu-Lughod 1989; Goldstone 2002).

3 For example, Bryant points out the specialist research addresses a vast number of those facets of culture and social structure which are deemed "contributory to the European passage to modernity": (i) its distinctive patterns of civic urbanization; (ii) legal-juridical developments that extended rights and protections to persons, subjects, and their claims to property; (iii) productive innovations in agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing; (iv) reforms in military organization and decisively lethal upgrades in weaponry and logistical capabilities; (v) the rise of bureaucractized, territorially consolidated polities, as legitimized by representational and constitutional compacts with the governed; (vi) unprecedented advancements in scientific understanding, and an accelerating capacity for technological application; (vii) the onset of a vibrant and popular print culture; (viii) shifting relations and mobilities between classes and estates; (ix) nationalist stirrings and mobilizations; (x) a demographic transition that sustained expanding internal markets and ventures in colonialism; and, not least, (xi) a massive fissure within Latin Christendom that facilitated, quite unintentionally, a multi-faceted secularizing dynamic that would re-
with different important processes that have either occurred in the West or are happening in ‘modern’, advanced industrialized societies (Hall 1992a: 6; also Giddens 1990). Some of these, important in my view, can be described in the following main, connected, categories:

**Economic Growth:** Modernization cannot be conceptualized without a kind of economic growth defined in terms of increasing production per capita strongly associated almost always with industrialization. Analyses of the emergence and advent of modernity need to mention the escape from ‘the agrarian trap’. Thanks to the piecemeal technical developments, West European societies were able to make a break from being pre-dominantly agrarian. Agricultural output increased, different technologies were developed, increasing the power of the Western societies vis-à-vis others. Being technologically and industrially advanced has been a strong component in definitions of modernity. A historical analysis shows that those who were considered modern have always been technologically superior and industrially more developed (large scale, efficient production and consumption). A strong industrial base not only ensured the production of daily-consumed products but also of military superiority in most cases.

**Secularization:** Overall, I would argue that the decline of the influence of traditional religions has been an unmistakable and very important part of the modernization process. The emergence of secular modern ideologies owes much to the general modernization/secularization trend. Thus, for example, there emerged new ways and criteria to define the political and economic groups (e.g. the nation). Secular nationalism certainly has been challenging religions in most countries. Secularization is strongly connected to the decline of the community in the modernizing societies, which meant the decline of the communitarian spirit, rise of materialist, individualist culture, promotion of the individual vis-à-vis the social group.4

**Centralization of Politics:** Emergence of the modern state, “which is large, interventionist, administratively bureaucratic and which intervenes to organize large

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4 I am saying this despite my awareness that many important scholars argue to the contrary (see, for example, Stark 1999). For example, Berger summarizes the secularization thesis as that modernization leads to secularization. Berger withdrew his support from the theory by pointing out that the world we live in is not secularized but very religious, quite often fanatically religious (Berger 1996/97; cf. Berger 1967). However, very importantly, he observes that in Western Europe “the old secularization theory seems to hold. With increasing modernization there has been an increase in the key indicators of secularization: on the level of expressed beliefs...and dramatically on the level of church-related behavior...and finally, with respect to recruitment to the clergy. These phenomena had been observed for a long time in the northern countries of the continent; since the Second World War they have quickly engulfed the south. Thus Italy and Spain have experienced a rapid decline in church-related religion—as has Greece” (Berger 1996/97).
areas of social life” (Hall et al 1992: 3), has been one of the most important modern developments (Carnoy 1984; Held 1989).

Today, widespread association of modernity with capitalism and democracy owes much to frequently equating modernity with, what may be called, Western modernity. From a historical perspective it must be admitted that there have been non-capitalist and non-democratic routes too (e.g. socialist, fascist) to modernity (see, for example, Moore 1973; also Arnason 2000). Thus, it is possible to argue that overall, some aspects of modernity, like economic growth (industrialization, technological progress), decline of the tradition (e.g. secularization), growth of state/ bureaucratic structures and processes that are associated with these, seem more core-like components of it, as they are much more often included in conceptualizations of modernity in the world.

It should also be noted that, in daily life, modernity of a country is often associated with being advanced and understood by comparisons with others in terms of such indicators as education facilities, health standards (number of doctors, hospital beds, infant mortality), housing, wages, democracy, industrialization, technology (high value-addition to the products, military technology), bureaucratic efficiency, impersonal application of and obeying to rules (e.g. traffic rules).

3. Modernity and the West

Modernity has a complex relationship with the West. Modernity started as a Western project/ experience (Giddens 1990). Thus, in the formation process of the identity of the West, the modernization process occupied a central place. Therefore, according to one interpretation, modernization of the West and the rest of the world differ qualitatively:

“The West forged its identity and interests in relation to endogenous developments in Europe and America, and through relations of unequal exchange (material and cultural) with the Rest- the frequently excluded, conquered, colonized and exploited ‘other’ “ (my emphasis, Hall et al 1992: 2).

Since modernity emerged in Europe and continued to develop under Western domination for a long time, causes of transition from the pre-modern to modern have been being searched for by many observers within the history of the West. Could

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5 Here, I emphasize the unprecedented increase in the capacity of the nation-state to control our lives. Needless to say, in many modern countries there is also much decentralization which is considered more democratic in certain ways (see, for example, Berger 2005).

6 For the non-European contributions to European context that enabled the emergence of modernity see for example Abu-Lughod (1989); Goldstone (2002); Lewis (1997).
the greatest factor effecting the transition be considered as a form of Christianity (Protestantism), or development of a rational, scientific outlook, or was it emergence of capitalism and internal economic development or just plunder of other continents? The issue at stake here is none other than the identity of modernity. It is important for those who are critical of the West but in favor of modernization that modernity can be conceptualized as separable from the Western experience.

The European (later the Western) pattern, developed and spread throughout the world by Western economic, technological and military expansion into different Asian societies, to the Middle Eastern countries and to Africa. This expansion of Western modernity undermined the cultural premises and institutional cores of other societies. Elites and intellectuals have been either adopting Western modernity or opposing a non-selective appropriation in the name of native values and interests (Eisenstadt, 2000).

Obviously, ‘the West’ is not monolithic; it is more of a constructed concept than a natural entity. The West represents a certain type of society and level of development; thus no longer confined to Europe and not all European countries are in ‘the West’ (Hall 1992b). Nevertheless, it can be seen that, quite often, ‘the West’ is used to mean West European and North American countries who have certain common qualities like being economically developed or having liberal democracies (Cahoone 1996:11). Thus, especially from a distance ‘Western modernity’ and the West may seem more unified than it may seem from within itself. Thus, it is possible to talk about ‘the West’ (Özcan 2002: 117; Belge 2002: 43; Hall 1992b).

The West as a concept carries out different functions depending on the context. It allows one who chooses to use it as a touchstone, to characterize or classify societies, conveys images, and provides standards for comparison. It provides criteria of evaluation against which other societies are ranked, “it functions” like an “ideology” (Hall 1992b: 277).

If modernity is understood predominantly in terms of what existed or exists in the West or in other countries which are considered modern, one can even ‘gauge’ the degree of modernization of developing countries by using these perceived standards. For example, it is possible to argue that, in many Muslim countries, the state has been modernized but the extent of this modernization seems limited as it stopped short of full control by the elected representatives of the people. In other words, it did not become as democratic as in modern countries.

Obviously, especially in the modernizing countries, major sections of the elite do not see modernity just in terms of material progress; for them, secularization of people’s worldviews is a goal in itself, and is considered as a major force that has contributed strongly to the creation of the modern world with all its technological and
industrial successes. Nevertheless, other elites and sections of modernizing societies, who refused to conceptualize and accept modernity as an indivisible whole as represented by the West, responded and respond to modernity in a selective way by trying to strike a ‘happy balance’ between their native culture and material progress (Eisenstadt, 1992).  

3.1. Beginning of Modernity With the Rise of Europe  

It makes sense to look at the initial development of modernity as a historical phenomenon that was strongly associated with the rapid rise of Europe vis-à-vis other parts of the world. Indeed, the momentous economic, social and political developments that occurred in Western Europe over the last several centuries are often described as extraordinary. There is even talk of ‘A European Miracle’ (Jones 1987). Moreover, like every extraordinary phenomenon, the European miracle does call for an explanation and analysis. Of course, this miracle, which meant, *inter alia*, the rise of Europe vis-à-vis other continents, was a result of a chain of fundamental changes. As a result, the West European experience manifested itself mainly as a successful economic development closely interrelated to social and political developments. This experience diffused to other parts of Europe and the rest of the world, albeit unevenly. This spread of the European experience and the impact of the progress of West European peoples brought about the unprecedented increase of international or intersocietal contacts through which, in Marx’s words: “The country that is more developed industrially only” showed, “to the less developed, the image of its own future” (1954:19).  

The contacts between the more developed countries of Western Europe and the less developed countries took an unfortunate form in which the dominant and powerful countries, depending on the conditions, exercised different levels of control over the dominated (So 1990). Peoples of the so-called backward countries were bombarded with ‘images’ and ‘pictures’ of their future by their self-styled masters. Accordingly, during the colonial and economic imperialistic era, there was the talk of India as Anglicized or Indochina as Gallicized. However, long periods of colonization showed important similarities among the imperialist regimes and these parochial terms were abandoned; and the term Europeanization was employed. World War II marked the decline of the European empires and rise of the American presence and influence in many places including Europe; and thus one spoke of the Americanization of Europe but for much of the rest of the world, the term was ‘Westernization’. However, even this larger term seemed inadequate to explain swift  

7 Bellah (1983) argues that “a right relation between tradition and modernization is difficult to attain, precarious when attained, and in today’s world is largely a hope rather than a reality”.
and enormous social change in many underdeveloped and developed countries that gained momentum especially after the war.

In response to this, a new term, ‘modernization’ evolved. It enabled scholars to speak of similarities of achievements observed in all ‘modernized’ societies - Western or non-Western (such as the Soviet Union or Japan)\(^8\). The term also referred to similarities of aspirations of all ‘modernizing’ societies regardless of their locations and traditions (Lerner 1968: 386-7). Modernization and aspirations to modernity are among the most overwhelming features of the last two centuries. Modernization is a historical process and it is not uncommon to find it defined as a form of social, economical and political change that took place in Western Europe (e.g. Eisenstadt 1966:1; cf. Giddens 1990), which later spread to North America and other European countries. In other words, modernity emerged as a European success and other societies were either forced or ‘choose’ to strive to attain the ‘necessary’ sophistication as the pupils of West Europeans.

In this sense, Europeanization was equal to modernization for a certain period and for a given society. The terms ‘Europeanization’, ‘Americanization’ or ‘Westernization’ were and are employed to describe the influence of the more advanced countries on the less advanced. However, although they might be accurate in describing the modernization processes in many places for certain historical periods, they fail to take into account both the original transformation within West European countries and the impact of the less advanced countries on the still less advanced. Thus, one cannot talk about the ‘Westernization’ of England and France, or ‘Europeanization’ of Manchuria by Japan. Given these considerations, especially after World

\(^8\) For example, a school of thought known as ‘Modernization theory’ was developed and popularized in 1950s and 1960s by a number of scholars (e.g. W. Rostow, S. Smelser, D. McClelland and A. Inkeles) in a response to the particular historical conditions. For the lack of space, it is not possible here to explain the theory in detail and its defects as pointed out by its ideological rivals (e.g. Dependency theory) and by more neutral later generation of experts. Briefly put, the theory argued that Western countries are the most developed, and the rest of the world will eventually reach the same level provided that they pass through the necessary stages by taking the former as the model. In other words, the West has a positive effect in modernization of the rest (strongly disputed by the Dependency theory) and development stages are unilinear. The theory has been very much discredited because of its pro-Western bias and some of its basic assumptions that went contrary to the facts as indicated by experts critical of this school and perception that it was designed as a program explicitly directed to the non-Western world and devoted to the promotion of Western institutions and values there. However, based on an extensive reading of the recent literature on modernity, which try to be much more neutral, I would argue that many processes (e.g. industrialization, secularization, urbanization and democratization) that were also emphasized upon by the ‘Modernization Theory’ are been seen by many experts, social groups and elites too as important components of modernity. Therefore, in this study explanation of modernity by some of the themes and concepts that were also employed by the Modernization theory should only be understood as an indicator that the theory had also highlighted some of the important (and arguably obvious) processes as parts of modernization as also widely accepted today. For more on Modernization theory and its ideological rivals, see for example, So (1990) and Spybey (1992).
War II, ‘modernity’ became widely used to refer to the characteristics common to countries that are seen as the most advanced in technological, political, economic and social terms; and thus, ‘modernization’ refers to the process by which these characteristics were and are acquired. Therefore, in this study, the word modernization is used to cover a vast array from original developments in Western Europe to present modernizing policies pursued by all societies who wish to be more modern. Although, generally speaking, the modernization process is much more easily observed in developing countries where it seems to have a faster pace.

Since, the original, epoch-making social changes occurred in Western Europe and then in time became globalized in their repercussions, it is fundamentally important to analyze underlying factors of these changes and the characteristics that Western societies have acquired through them. There are basically two ways of looking into the rise of Europe: the historical and the comparative. A historical explanation of the rise of Europe, however brief, must underwrite environmental factors, history of scientific and technical change, the stimulus of the discoveries, colonialism, the formation of markets and the implications of the constantly changing European state-system.

According to one view, the economic success of Europe compared to Asia owes much to the ecological contrasts of the continent which forced Europeans to trade goods such as grains, meat, fruit, wine, olives, salt, metal, wood, animal skins and furs -which were produced in different places of Europe- right across the continent. Transport costs were low due to high proportion of coastlines and navigable rivers. States had no interest in plundering these commodities but only in taxing them in return of providing basic social order (Jones 1987: 90-91).

There were other gifts of geography. One was the fact that Europe and especially Western Europe was a long journey from Central Asia, home of invaders who captured some other parts of the Eurasian periphery, importantly India and China. This distance and a forested landscape, unsuited to cavalry, provided some protection. Another locational advantage was, once suitable sailing ships were built (Jones 1987: 59), the West European coasts were conveniently opposite to some of the richest seas and most exploitable but least defended lands in the world. Having a developed shipping technology makes the geography seem not so important a factor, but the layout of the world does affect the relative costs of economic activity involving transportation. What is more in this context was the fact that if Europe were to expand, ecology and climate ensured that it would not be towards the north or south. And during the period West Europeans had developed sailing capabilities adequate to cross the oceans, their expansion would not be eastwards either, because Europe never remotely threatened to defeat its eastern neighbors which were the Huns, Mongols or Tartars in the steppes or the Ottomans who penetrated deep into South-
Eastern Europe (Mann 1988: 17; Jones 1987).

Needless to say, the unprecedented European superiority, starting from 18th century onwards, was mainly result of the Industrial Revolution, which is taken either as what really mattered in economic history, or as a very convenient starting point or a negative development. The Industrial Revolution had provided Europeans not only with all sorts of peaceful consumables but also with deadly weapons assuring invincible military might. Europeans enjoyed a sustained agricultural growth and then an ‘agricultural revolution’ before Industrial Revolution that roughly took place in the second half the 18th century (Cipolla 1976:159-60). The effect was by far the most productive system of agriculture the world has ever seen. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that a number of scholars have all argued that economic revival in Europe occurred well before 1000 AD (Duby 1974; Postan 1975; Mann 1988). However, many popular explanations begin much later- with developments of the towns in the twelfth, the struggles in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries between peasants and lords, fourteenth century capitalist accounting methods, the Renaissance of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the fifteenth century-navigational- revolution, the scientific revolutions between 1400 and 1600, sixteenth-century Protestantism, seventeenth-century Puritanism, English capitalist agriculture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries...(Mann 1988: 9)

One thing must be clear - medieval Europe was already very dynamic. In fact, historians frequently use the term restless to describe the medieval culture. For example, McNeill writes, “it is not any particular set of institutions, ideas or technologies that mark out the West but its inability to come to a rest”. No other civilized society has approached to such restless from which true uniqueness of Western civilization stems (1963: 539). However, such restlessness did not need to produce socio-economic development. A Hobbesian war of all against all or similar types of aimless vicious struggles among the people were also likely, if there were no social control or a sense of ‘direction’.

Weber and Durkheim, two classical sociologists, tried to explain why not anarchy or anomie but social development took place by emphasizing cultural factors. For Weber, the restlessness of Europe was always integrated to another peculiarity: the rationality. Rational restlessness was the psychological make up of Europe. Weber found rational restlessness especially in Puritanism. This rational restlessness was put in the service of social improvement by a mechanism identified by Durkheim. Not anarchy or anomie but normative regulation was due firstly and primarily to Christianity (Mann 1988:12-3). In fact, although most of the people had more than one identity, the most powerful and extensive source of social identity was Christianity; and various churches that were preaching consideration, decency and charity
to all Christians provided a normative pacification substituting costly coercive pacification (Werner 1988: 172-3).

From a materialist perspective, the ecumene was both infrastructure and superstructure. Until the thirteenth century it monopolized education and written communication. The church also provided the lingua franca: Latin. The state bureaucracies and trading associations and manorial estates all had access to useful knowledge through church infrastructures. In short, the common culture of medieval Europe was Christianity. In addition, it was an achievement of Christianity to create, however minimal, a normative society across state, ethnic, class and gender boundaries. Its other achievement was integrating two major parts of Europe, the Mediterranean lands with their cultural heritage, their historic and predominantly extensive power techniques and north-western Europe with its relatively intensive power techniques. The European development owes much to their creative interchange. The fact that medieval Europeans were primarily concerned with exploiting their locality intensively and a certain level of social norms provided a favorable environment to natural sciences, penetrating beneath the appearance and finding physical, chemical and biological ‘explanations’. In a sense, medieval Europeans surpassed other civilizations in production of knowledge about agricultural and scientific matters (Mann 1988: 14-15).

One source of European development was its almost uninterrupted production of unprecedented amount of knowledge. And if we define technology as the application of knowledge about nature, to create tools, machines, new ways of production, to train people in new techniques, in short, to increase mastery over the natural world, it was only a matter of time for Europeans to start their unprecedented technological progress. As with the agricultural technological developments, sometimes there was need for great time spans, and the effect might be regionalized but unlike Asia, Europe was one technological community where change in one cell tended to diffuse to the others. Cultural homogeneity and competitive state-systems forced continuous borrowing, which meant that if a problem were solved in one country, soon the same would be true for others (Jones 1987: 45; Goldstone 2002).

3.2. Modernity As A Concept In History

Clearly, modernity has a very long and complex history and therefore to place the birth of modernity and its spread geographically in a historical setting is crucial to explore its relationship with some very important historical developments and concepts like the Enlightenment, capitalism, nationalism and industrialization that also initially occurred in Europe and spread to other parts of the world.

The Enlightenment can be described as the interconnected philosophical, scien-
tific and social beliefs that developed in Western Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This was a broad European intellectual movement that constituted the origins of many modern worldviews of today. The dominant Enlightenment thinking, in contrast to the previous generations, rejected superstition and belief in the supernatural as ways of living. For most Enlightenment thinkers the natural world was to be understood through objective, detached and unemotional science; reason and rationality were the sole source of knowledge. Moreover, the knowledge generated by many individuals working freely was to be used for the human emancipation and to make the daily life easier. Among the nineteenth-century sociologists, Auguste Comte, in particular, had much faith in this freely produced scientific knowledge. For him, the ‘modern’ society would be dominated by science; a positivist science would replace the influence of religion, superstition and philosophy.9 (Hamilton 1992).

Industrialization was another very important factor in differentiating Western Europe from the rest of the world. Nineteenth-century classical sociologists, such as Comte, Durkheim, Marx and Weber all interested in the social change accompanying this industrialization that had reshaped the world. Marx and Durkheim, unlike Comte, placed less emphasis on scientific and rational thinking but they both strongly believed that society was developing progressively; for Marx, towards a communist utopia, free from the exploitation - characteristic of a capitalist society-, and for Durkheim, towards a complex society based on organic solidarity. According to Weber, rationalization10 and bureaucracy would increasingly be more important in the modern states. All of these sociologists believed they could tell the future direction of social change because they thought they had used scientific analysis. Such was the importance of the ‘scientific’ way of thinking and science. Science promised domination over nature and hence freedom from scarcity and calamity. Enlightenment thinking may be seen as the foundation of modernity and its belief in progress and faith in science have been the characteristic of ‘modern thinking’, albeit, as it is well know, this belief weakened considerably in the 20th century, espe-

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9 Euben’s observation, “The opposition of science to religion - like the correlative binaries of reason and revelation, rationality and irrationality - is central to the way in which the West has organized its intellectual history” (2003: 50), represents a dominant view in social sciences.

10 In Weber’s view, there was an array of cultural phenomena distinctive to ‘Western civilization’ and they reached their zenith only in modern times. The thread linking them was the idea of rationalization. “Only in the West does science exist at a stage of development which we recognize to-day as valid.” Other forms of knowledge like Babylonian, Indian or Chinese might be highly developed but were merely empirical, not rational. On the institutions, Chinese and Islamic academies were “superficially similar to our universities” but “a rational, systematic and specialized pursuit of science with trained and specialized personnel, has only existed in the West in a sense at all approaching its present dominant place in our culture” (Weber 1930: 15-6).
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The origins of modern scientific knowledge may be traced back to the important new scientific endeavor and technological innovation in the Middle Ages, what is referred to by historians as the renaissance of the twelfth century. Although, in the fifteenth century, modern ideas and techniques emerged decisively, it is appropriate to say a full-fledged scientific revolution was in progress in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The enormous time span from the 12th to the 18th century had enabled the westernmost societies of Europe to digest the new knowledge and technology and absorb their social impacts gradually (in contrast to the late modernizing societies of the twentieth century). However, this does not mean that the growth of knowledge and the related technology, after a warm welcome as a useful and acceptable development, had not had to face some fierce opposition, especially from the church. The trial of Galileo by the Inquisition in 1632 because of his ‘heretical’ view that the sun did not rotate around the earth, is an example (Black 1966: 69-70).

Another relevant point about the origins of modern knowledge in the Western Europe of the twelfth century is the fact that, at that time, the writings of Greek and Arab scholars became available. The basis of this twelfth century renaissance was the recognition of the possibility of seeking a rational explanation of physical and natural phenomena. By the sixteenth century the growth in scientific knowledge and its application in the form of technology brought to West Europeans a great power and a previously unseen control over the nature. The scientific revolution generally led to a comprehensive re-evaluation of traditional ways of doing things. Almost all of humanity’s conceptions became subject to scrutiny and all forms of intellectual activity went through a rapid transformation. In a way, each generation’s idols were toppled down by the next one. Change was considered the normal state of all knowledge. The classical periodization by Europe’s historians of the evolution of human understanding as a Renaissance, a Reformation and Counter Reformation, an Age of Enlightenment and an Age of Materialism remains useful. What is important here is to note that this process, which lasted from the twelfth to the nineteenth century was mainly a product of Europe (Black 1966: 9-11). In other words, modernity emerged as a European success and other societies had to attain the ‘necessary’ sophistication according to this model. In this sense, as stated above, one spoke of modernization as ‘Europeanization’. However this evolution of the terms describing social change, from Anglicization or Gallicization to firstly Europeanization, and then with the emergence of Americanization to Westernization and finally to modernization, is not free from its critics. For example Wallerstein points out that to follow this line of evolution, without questioning, is tantamount to equate Westernization with modernization. In other words if there is a contradiction between modernization and
Westernization this was ‘solved’ by asserting that they are identical. If Asia or Africa ‘Westernizes’, it ‘modernizes’. This, according to Wallerstein, means arguing that Western culture is indeed universal. It also means a sophisticated form of arguing that only the Western civilizations among all other world civilizations was capable of transforming itself to modernity. Wallerstein rightly disapproves this line of arguing and writes that some versions of anthropological theory, more specifically some versions of modernization theory, reached the conclusion, “the West had emerged into modernity; the others had not”. And what follows inevitably is to accept that in order to be modern one has to be somehow culturally ‘Western’, by adopting Western religions, Western languages or at least Western technology which is “said to be based on the universal principles of science” (Wallerstein 1990: 45).

Turkish intellectual, Cemil Meriç also attacks the emergence of the term modernization, presented as a larger and more appropriate term than the terms of Europeanization, Americanization and Westernization, as a form of covering blatant imperialism. The real matter, according to Meriç, for the economically more developed world, was to exploit and ‘domesticate’ the less developed parts. So “the imperialist” chose to use more polished and colorless words not to irritate the exploited people (1983: 234).

3.3 A Current View of the Relationship Between Modernity and the West

Clearly, modernity started as a European project. Until the USA became a major actor in the world, modernity was in the monopoly of Western and central Europe. Then modernity had become a western project. Is it still so? Today, the relative weight of the West in conceptualization of the modernity is extremely important. It should be clear from the previous analysis in this article that ‘the West’ is a histori-

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11 Bryant who rejects the revisionist view that the West’s “surge to global supremacy was a late and contingent historical outcome,” makes a very good summary of the purported “constraints” or “barriers” to an indigenous capitalist modernization within the major Eastern powers, which “receive prominent mention” in the literature which he is sympathetic to. This deserves quoting at length: "(i) the persistence of centralized forms of imperial autocracy… (ii) a state-directed economy keyed to the stable extraction of a sustainable surplus, drawn chiefly from the peasant masses through taxation and corvée; (iii) a corresponding control over mercantile and craft sectors, in the form of official markets, price regulations, trade restrictions, licensed brokerages, and state monopolies both in production and in the procurement of strategic resources… (iv) a functional symbiosis within elite ranks between state service (administrative or military) and landholding opportunities, with officials and gentry alike dependent for salaries and incomes upon the taxes and rents yielded up by peasant cultivators; (v) a general situation wherein proprietary rights remained insecure, chronically vulnerable to both official graft and arbitrary seizures… (vi) urban centers under the administrative sway of imperial governors and officials, and whose ruled inhabitants lacked legal juridical status as citizens; (vi) a tendency to concentrate handicrafts and manufacturing… within the domestic sphere of peasant production… (vii) excessive land parcelization; (ix) the persistence of collective status orders; and (x) a diverse set of institutionalized and cultural restrictions on modes of inquiry, as variously imposed by religious and political authorities, such as the “closing of the gate”… [cf] (ijtihad) (Bryant 2006: 408)."
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cation rather than geographical construct. By ‘western’ one means the type of society seen in the West, politically and economically developed, capitalist, urbanized in short modern. Modernization of these societies started in Europe after feudalism, so, modernity as a concept had been associated with a luggage of period and geography. I would argue that the West and its historical experience still enjoys a dominance in conceptualization of global modernity. The extent of this dominance is crucial but hard to measure. Nevertheless, it is clear that modernity and the West cannot be identified. As Hall points out, ‘the West’ as a term can function on different levels:

First, it allows us to characterize and classify societies into different categories…
Secondly, it is an image, or set of images. It condenses a number of different characteristics into one picture…for example, ‘western’ = urban = developed; or ‘non-western’ = non-industrial = rural = agricultural = under-developed.)
Thirdly, it provides a standard or model of comparison. It allows us to compare to what extent different societies resemble, or differ from, one another. Non-western societies can accordingly be said to be ‘close to’ or ‘far away from’ or ‘catching up with’ the West. It helps to explain difference.
Fourthly, it provides criteria of evaluation against which other societies are ranked and around which powerful positive and negative feelings cluster. (For example, ‘the West’ = developed = good = desirable; or the ‘non-West’ = under-developed = bad = undesirable.) It produces a certain kind of knowledge about a subject and certain attitudes towards it. In short, it functions as an ideology (Hall 1992b: 277)12.

Development of the West as a concept, which is closely related to development and definition of modernity as a concept, is related to growing inadequacy of the term Europe for the same task. According to one interpretation, modernity was all about the rise of Europe; ‘The European Miracle’, the idea of the miraculous nature of the European experience, and later the Western experience, cannot be disputed. How did Europeans manage to escape from ‘the agrarian trap’, from the dreadful rule of kings and priests? One answer is, because, they were ‘better’ than those who failed. Indeed, they were better in certain aspects; for example, in constructing an economic system conducive to development (Marx), or in finding more rational religious interpretation of the world (Weber). This was the belief in superiority of the ‘Western civilization’ and continued to influence most of the social scientists in the West, including theorists of modernization school. They, like evolutionary theorists of the nineteenth century, also ‘found’ many, basically ethnocentric, explanations of the fact that why modernization firstly took place in Europe. However, it is possible see the rise of Europe as a gigantic series of coincidences. Many factors, some old,

12 For an argument that it is striking to see it is possible in this discussion to substitute the category of modernity for the West, see, Soysid (1997: 99-102).
long term, others recent, emanating from the European, Near Eastern and even Central Asian civilizational areas came together in a particular time and place to create something unusual (Gellner 1988; Mann 1988; Abu-Lughod 1989; Goldstone 2002; see also Bryant, 2006).

It is also possible to see the rise of Europe and the West as a historical phase like rise and fall of many other civilizations in history. The point at which Europe ‘over-took’ Asia must have been around 1450 writes Mann (1988: 7). Prior to that Europe was inferior not superior to Asia in many aspects. Most innovations proved to have great positive implications in European development came from the East including gunpowder; the mariner’s compass and printing. Naturally, one may think that the Western civilization owes great deal to Eastern civilizations and religions including Islamic civilization, which were once superior to it. Therefore, many non-Westerners like to think that it is possible for others to regain the lead from the West.

Modernity can be seen as a historical phase and to attribute modernity to some ethnocentric factors that emerged in the West, - like individualism, Protestant ethic, or capitalism- is to state that modernity is inherently western or ‘western modernity’ is universal, and there is no way of escaping from it. Perhaps this attribution occurs because, ”Modernity, the creation of Europe, itself created Europe” (Heller and Feher 1991: 146) (and the Europeans created the USA, Australia, New Zealand etc.). Therefore, we should be careful about the fact that the discourses on modernity in the West may often be West-centric, because the term modern like the term western can function at different levels.

But, if one chooses a reductionist conceptualization of modernity like Lyotard, for whom modernity was characterized by “a desire to systemize and capture the world, to free human beings by using calculative thought to master and manipulate the conditions of life” (cited by Sayyid 1997: 106), then it is possible to disengage modernity from its socio-political connotations to a considerable extent. The importance of such disengagement is obvious. First, it provides a ‘breathing space’ for an anti-western but pro-modern ideological stance. However, even a conceptualization of modernity, like Lyotard’s, which effectively reduces modernity to the progressive mastery over the nature, is not free from problems. Because the change in economic activity to improve human mastery over the nature and hence to improve ‘conditions of life’ necessarily involves processes previously analyzed. It is safe to assume that these processes starting in economy would have social and political consequences like secularization that have wide range of effects on social and political life. It is very difficult to separate modernity from the Western experience as far as crucial modernizing processes concerned. For example, secularization as one of the most important processes associated with modernity is also a fundamental aspect of the
West. Therefore, it can be said that if a society is secularizing its socio-political system, at least in part, also resembling to that of the secular West.

It should be stressed that, apart from its secularizing influences, economic modernization understood in terms of using developing technology to improve the material conditions of life, is sought after by most societies if not all. Clearly, many secularizing influences of economic change (be it industrialization, economic differentiation which includes supply of religiously forbidden goods or services) are not welcome by religious individuals or societies and they think that these influences must be stopped or at least slowed down. However, even for the anti-secularist groups, it seems that majority of the economic modernization is predominantly value-neutral and it does not present a problem, even if it means becoming closer to the western economic model. In other words, in anti-western countries it would not bother the regime or the people to produce cars or computers like in ‘the West’. This might be so because of same biological or environmental limits of the human beings all over the world. For example, extreme exceptions aside, it can be assumed that all human beings want a shelter/house against the elements, adequate food, access to medical care (hospitals), mobility (car, planes), good education for the society (schools, teachers), communication (telephones etc), safety (adequate police force and adequate military), time (time saving machines like tractors, computers) and means of entertainment (e.g. music players, TVs, etc.). Economic modernization (and globalization) is exactly about production and consumption of these or similar products or services to meet similar human needs or wants. Although the global economic activity is very complex, it can be argued, to the extent that the West continues to be economically advanced and dominant\textsuperscript{13}, its importance in conceptualization of modernity will continue.

As Huntington points out, the West has been dominating and using the international economic and political structures to enhance its own position and interests. The West dominates international political and security institutions itself and economic institutions with the help of Japan. Decisions of the U.N. Security Council or the International Monetary Fund that reflect the interests of the West are presented to the world as the desires of the world community (and the phrase ‘world community’ has become a euphemistic collective noun like ‘the Free World’). The West promotes its economic interests through international economic institutions. The West also promotes its values, often presenting them as universal values (Huntington 1993: 39-41).

Huntington points out that, non-western states have three alternatives to follow as their responses to the western power and values. The first is complete \textit{isolation}, like Burma or North Korea, to insulate their societies against ‘corruption’ by the West.
The second way, the equivalent of ‘bandwagoning’ in international relations theory, is to *join* the West by accepting its values and institutions as Turkey has been trying to do to a great extent. The third alternative is to try to *balance* the West by creating economic and military power and cooperating with other non-Western powers against the West, as most nationalist and religious movements in non-Western contexts want. In other words, modernizing while preserving indigenous values and institutions and thus not westernizing (Huntington 1993: 41). Huntington touches an important point. If the non-western societies want to be more influential in current conceptualizations of global modernity the only way it seems that they will have to work harder to be more and more important globally in economic and political terms. While it is hard to accept his view that “the standards of the dominant civilization always define modernity”; nevertheless, Lewis also touches and important by pointing out that, while the Asians are actively participating in “what is no longer a western but worldwide scientific enterprise” the Middle East’s contribution compares poorly (1997: 129). In other words, modernity is often shaped by practical success which may lead to domination.

Today the place of the West in conceptualization of modernity is subject to heated debate. The propositions to use the terms ‘Multiple’ (Eisenstadt, 2000, Witrock, 2000), ‘Later’ (Kaya, 2006) or ‘Satellite’ (Ma, 2001) modernities suggest that a single model of modernity largely based on the Western experience is not adequate in social sciences. As Göle observes there is no doubt that certain aspects of modernity are subject to modifications in non-Western contexts. It is thus, contrary to classical understandings of modernity, possible to talk about “a surplus or excess of modernity in some domains of social life in non-Western contexts” which is a very valuable analytical tool if we want to understand the global modernity better (Göle, 2002a: 184). On the other hand Ma (2001:445), although accepts the view that the globalized world has multiple modernities, argues that, it continues to retain “a power vector that is centripetal to the developed centers.” He proposes to use the concept of ‘satellite modernities’ in order to draw attention to the “magnetic sites between centers of high-modernity and developing modernities in the rest of the world”. In modernizing countries, western modernity is “consumed” through reproduction, hybridization and domestication of a simplified western modernity.

Clearly, modernity and the West cannot be identified as the studies in recent decades show. Efforts to reach new conceptualizations of modernity which allows to valuable contributions from the voices, legacies and new experiences in the non-

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13 For an analysis of the relative decline of the western power see, Huntington (1998).
14 On Turkish modernization and the dominance of ‘the West’ in discussions on it, see, for example, Köcabaşoğlu (ed) (2002).
Western contexts are important to reach a more accurate understanding of global modernity (Göle 2002b; Dirlik 2003; Blokker 2005; Kaya, 2006). Thus, I agree that a non-Eurocentric conceptualization of modernity is both possible and desirable (Mouzelis, 1999); and a reflection on modernity from its edge, from peripheral areas, and a contribution to the decentralizing of the West in the world is needed in order to reach a more balanced discussion in ever evolving conceptualizations of modernity (cf. Göle 2000: 91). However, it should not be forgotten that for quite a long period the modern world has been dominated by the West. I am inclined to share the views that the West continues to be dominant in many ways at least in certain regions of the world. From the perspective of discipline of international relations and from Turkey, it can be clearly seen that the Middle East is dominated by the USA which represents a certain version of western modernity. Turkey is also subject to strong influences from the USA and the European Union which also represents a certain kind of western modernity. Western industrial and technologic superiority perhaps plays a more crucial role than its cultural influences here. Turkey’s policy to become an “energy corridor” is also meaningful in terms of modernity studies. In other words, in one interpretation, it can be argued that Turkey tries to modernize get closer with more modern countries which are prosperous (thanks to their state in industrialization and technology in my view) and, among other things, tries to play an important role in the supply of the inanimate sources of energy.

Some of the useful concepts should not be discarded just because they were also suggested by modernization school or by neo-modernists. For example, Industrialization is still a central concept of modernization attempts in developing countries. A comparison between industrialized USA and industrializing China is a telling one. If China continues to develop five “pillar” industries, namely, automobile, telecommunications, petrochemicals, machinery manufacture and construction, the world would simply run out of resources. For example, if car ownership and oil use per person there reach the US levels, China “would need 80 million barrels of oil per day. In 1996, the world produced 64 million barrels per day” (Brown L. R. 1998:13). This shows that the industrialization model of the West is no longer a repeatable (or desirable) option for the whole world. Environmentalists who insist that the application of science and technology (and the industrial societies based on it), has reached its ecological limits may be right). Nevertheless, this should not lead to overlook the fact that , the Chinese development is by and large patterned after western economies and Japan (Brown R. H., 1998: 531).

15 In fact, some almost equate it with modernization: “If you want to modernize you must industrialize” (Kumar 1988: 3).
Conclusion

I agree that it is of fundamental importance not to fall to the pitfalls of West-centric discourses which argue, as Göle puts “those who are distant from the centre of Western modernity and located at the ‘periphery’ of the system are also those who ‘lag behind’, are ‘backward’, delayed in terms of time” (2003: 18). Nevertheless, I believe, it is possible to point out about the still ‘privileged’ position of the West vis-à-vis modernity while being alert about ethnocentric biases. I would also argue that there is a growing more recent respectable studies by Westerners which pay greater attention not to repeat these biases in explaining the rise of the West or current state of global modernity.

It is one thing to point out deficiencies of modernist approaches -because modernity clearly lacks uni-linearity and teleology (see, for example, Blokker 2005: 508)- and the western model cannot be the model for the rest, and it is another to point out that the actuality of the world, especially in Turkey’s region which witnesses a strong practical association between the west and modernity in my view.

It could be argued that economic modernization started with agricultural revolution and then industrialization and now with growing importance of service sector in a globalizing world, economy has become central to modernity. In other words, it is hard to imagine a modern society without a successful economy. I would argue that the same cannot be said with equal confidence with regard to current place of secularization and centralization of politics in modernity. Although secularization as a social trend and secularism as a political ideology are still important in understanding perhaps most parts of the world, there is enough evidence to argue that many societies and groups do envision ‘modern’ societies without secularism. As regard to centralization of politics, it is unmistakeable that in the current understanding of modernity, especially in the West, along with continuing importance of the central state structures there is also a growing trend for localization of decision making mechanisms especially with regard to certain issues (e.g. education, cultural expression).

The propositions to use the terms ‘Multiple’ ‘Later’ or ‘Satellite’ modernities are to be taken very seriously as a single model of modernity based on the Western model does not fit to reality. There is also no doubt that certain aspects of modernity are subject to modifications in non-Western contexts; and “a surplus or excess of modernity in some domains of social life in non-Western contexts” is observable.
On the other, I share the view that the West perhaps continues to have more than its fair share of 'centers' in global modernity.

It can also be concluded that modernity and the West cannot be identified and the efforts to reach new conceptualizations of modernity which allows to valuable contributions from the voices, legacies and new experiences from the non-Western contexts are important to reach a more accurate and balanced understanding of global modernity. A non-Eurocentric conceptualization of modernity is both possible and desirable. It is perhaps also true that now only a few characteristics of western modernity are considered as transcultural and we must strive for a dialogical relation, (rather than a hierarchical one) between different discourses on modernity.

The non-western forms of modernity clearly do not proceed just through only repetition, imitation or upgrading of western modernity but perhaps more through selective appropriation. And there is possibility of entirely original routes emerging there which we are not equipped to visualize fully. This kind of original contribution to modernity which may be a model for the West in the decades to come can be expected for example from Islamic or Eastern contexts (e.g. China). Yet I am not convinced by the arguments that, today, the Western modernity is just another modernity among many forms.
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