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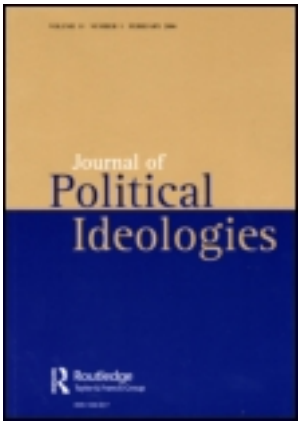

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Modernism and nationalism

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Modernism and nationalism

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ABSTRACT *Various scholars have addressed nationalism as a distinctive political ideology. The majority of them recognize it as a product of modernity and as inseparable from it. This article begins by accepting this view, identifying the spread of nationalism as part of a broader process of Westernization. However, the all-encompassing ideological dimension and common thread hovering above nationalism is identified here as modernism—that is, the sum of ideological discourses, artistic expressions and political practices gravitating around the 'need to be modern'. Modernist notions like 'progress', 'growth', 'advancement' and 'development' have been largely conceived within national frameworks and applied within a world of 'nation-states'. Moreover, given the selective ways in which ruling elites used the vocabulary of modernity, the very 'perlocutionary' effect of labelling opponents as 'anti-modern' often became a sufficient condition for their exclusion. The article discusses whether modernism can be identified as an ideology on its own and whether its triumph was indissociable from nationalism. It concludes that nationalism belonged to a broader modernist discourse that thoroughly accompanied the expansion of modernity.*

Introduction

While ideology remains a broadly 'contested' concept[1] this destiny is only partly shared by the second partner of the couple herein described, nationalism. Its main pillar, the term 'nation', is probably too slippery and self-referential to allow an 'objective' definition.[2] However, there is some agreement that nationalism is an ideological movement speaking in the name of a self-defined nation and aiming at controlling political institutions (most often the modern state) within a specific territory.[3] If nationalism is defined as an ideological movement, ideology must play a central role in its rise and shaping—independently of whether nationalism itself can be described as a fully fledged ideology.

Furthermore, ideology and nationalism are coeval terms since their origins equally lie in the French Revolution. Whereas the genesis of the term 'nationalism' is an issue of relative contention,[4] the term 'ideology' is usually located in Destutt de Tracy's (1754–1836) definition of it as the 'science of ideas'

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and Napoleon's disparaging use of it to describe his adversaries ('the ideologues').[5] It was the Napoleonic usage that really defined the term. While the meaning of nationalism remained broadly unchanged, the concept of ideology shifted meanings several times after its inception.

The Italian poet, writer and film director Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–1975) argued that ideology stems directly from passion: 'Passion, analytical in itself, gives way to ideology, synthetic in its nature.'[6] By this, Pasolini meant that ideology could convey and synthesize much broader political passions. This goes well beyond Max Weber's classic statement about value neutrality in his 1918 address at Munich University.[7] Most often, ideology is enriched by passion and dedication and this emotive component is particularly visible in nationalism.

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Nationalism and modernity

Most theories of nationalism are centred on the assumption that nationalism is a product of, and inseparable from, modernity. Thus, Ernest Gellner famously argued that nationalism is the direct, or indirect, consequence of industrialization with its new division of labour.[8] Accordingly, nationalism is the offspring of the marriage between the state and culture, and the latter was celebrated on the altar of modernity.[9] Tom Nairn also describes modernity as inseparable from nationalism.[10] Eric Hobsbawm, David Laitin, John Breuilly, Elie Kedourie, Walker Connor and Michael Hechter, to name a few, all see nationalism as confined to the rise of the modern state.[11] This view also provides the basic setting for this article's key argument.

Most significant to the article's scope, Liah Greenfeld goes to the extreme of arguing that modernity itself was unconceivable without nationalism. However, in doing so, she shifts the concept of modernity back to the time before the French Revolution during the English civil war (1642–1651).[12] I shall reverse Greenfeld's causal linkage and, by contrast, turn nationalism into a crucial component of a broader ideological matrix, which I shall identify as modernism.

In fairness, the mainstream view needs to be contrasted with the ethno-symbolic 'school', which postulates a continuity from pre-modern 'ethnies' to modern nations. Incidentally, Anthony D. Smith has adopted a restrictive use of the term 'modernism' to describe ethno-symbolism's 'rivals'.[13] He thus identifies as 'modernists' all those scholars who consider nations, not just nationalism, as expressions of the modern age. For Smith, most scholars overlook the pre-modern and ethnic roots of nations, denying the undeniable, that is, the persistence of ethnic communities from antiquity to the modern era. However, even though Smith successfully demonstrates that there is a degree of continuity from ethnicity to nationhood, and from several pre-modern communities to contemporary self-defined 'nations', he concedes as well that nationalism as an ideology exploded in the modern age, although most 'nations' predated it.[14]

As we shall see, nationalism first developed in the West, fast spreading eastward and southward after the French revolutionary wars (1792–1802), and particularly in

the wake of the Napoleonic campaigns (1805–1814). Its global diffusion needs therefore to be conceptualized as part of a broader process of Westernization. Not casually, a few non-Western scholars identified nationalism with some precision as a Western 'import' during the time of its expansion outside Europe. Most notably, Sir Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) argued that 'neither the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism, nor the fierce self-idolatry of nation-worship, is the goal of human history'.[15] Tagore forms part of a wider group sharing marginalized 'counter-narratives of modernity', which includes Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1836–1886) and Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948). They considered with scepticism the claims of indigenousness advanced by Asian proto-nationalist elites and saw these instead as basically fraudulent replicas of a pattern that was being imposed by the joint forces of imperial colonialism and inter-state competition.[16] Modernism, nationalism and Westernization became often inseparable, tending to assume incrementally dogmatic and 'eliminationist' forms among both Western and non-Western elites who faced domination by Europe and its American extension.[17] Thus, 'ethnic Westernization' took place broadly at the same time as Europe's descent into the maelstrom of war and fascism.[18] For instance, the highly Westernized and anti-traditionalist Young Turks played the leading role in the Armenian genocide, mirroring German and French obsession with national purity and the destruction of ethnic minorities which culminated later on with totalitarianism.[19] Finally, nationalism largely depends on a broader modernist framework and discourse, which has also produced fascism,[20] the Holocaust,[21] various genocides[22] and two world wars.[23] There is broad consensus that the period lasting from about 1915 to 1945, that is, the apogee of modernist discourse, was characterized by both cultural homogenization and genocide. This is broadly the period dating from secular Turkey's genocidal pogroms (1915),[24] to the long night of ethnic cleansing in the aftermath of World War II. Various dramatic definitions apply to this era: 'Age of extremes' or the 'short twentieth century',[25] the 'century of total war',[26] 'the most bellicose [century] in human history',[27] the 'age of genocide,[28] the 'century of genocide',[29] the 'century of the megadeath',[30] and, after Europe's 'suicide' in World War I, 'the American century'.[31] In central, eastern and parts of southern Europe, the peak of homogenization policies was also reached between the two world wars, when cultural variation was seen as threatening 'national security'. Charles Tilly estimated about 275 wars and 115 million deaths in battle, and at least as many civilian deaths, during this period.[32] That still excludes hundreds of millions killed by the state, through 'democide',[33] 'politicide',[34] 'classicide',[35] population transfers, environmental and economic manipulation, and induced famine.

Nationalism as an ideology

Most scholars of nationalism agree that ideology is paramount to the creation and reproduction of nationalism, although they accord different degrees to its centrality. As an illustrious exception, Ernest Gellner disagreed with the importance of ideology,[36] arguing instead that nationalism needs neither

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intellectuals nor an ideology since nationalism is a semi-spontaneous response generated *ex-machina* by a fragmented social system disrupted by the uneven impact of industrialization—although he also acknowledged that nationalism first developed in the West.[37] However, most scholars refrain from such an anti-ideological line: in a more classical approach, Elie Kedourie regarded nationalism as a fully fledged ideology spreading via emulation from Central Europe to the rest of the world.[38] Unfortunately, Kedourie had more trouble in identifying nationalism's origins: largely omitting its Jacobin roots, Kedourie focuses mostly on German nationalism. Moreover, his paradoxical description of a kind of Romantic conspiracy emanating from Germany goes as far as identifying Kant's cosmopolitan idea of individual self-determination as lying at the root of nationalism and its related evils.

Ideology is a component of Anthony D. Smith's definition of nationalism as well.[39] The latter is 'an *ideological* movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential "nation"'.[40] Its core doctrine or belief system is composed of at least six crucial interconnected ideas or 'basic propositions', namely that: (1) the world is divided into nations, each with its own character, history and destiny; (2) the nation is the sole source of political power; (3) loyalty to the nation overrides all other loyalties; (4) to be free, every individual must belong to a nation; (5) every nation requires full self-expression and autonomy; (6) global peace and justice require a world of autonomous nations.[41] Elsewhere, Smith reiterates that ideology is a key element in the success of nationalism as 'it serves to unify and focus the many grievances and aspirations of different social groups within a particular community or state, and to explain to and activate "the people"'.[42] Kedourie, Gellner and Smith are representative of various 'schools' of thought concerned with the origins of nations and the nature of nationalism. To resume, Kedourie's explanation is entirely centred on ideology, Gellner radically excludes its importance, whereas Smith adopts a more nuanced position seeing the role of nationalist ideology as shaped by pre-existing myths and symbols.

Postulating a distinction between fully fledged and 'thin' ideologies, Michael Freeden argues that nationalism 'severs itself' from a broader ideological agenda, while being incorporated into various 'host' ideologies.[43] Unlike other ideologies, nationalism was rarely formulated through a coherent system of thought and via a clearly identifiable programme. It lacked recognized foundational thinkers and its protean nature meant that it often remained parasitic on other ideologies, by simply adapting to them, while, of course, shaping them. Viewed from this angle, nationalism can be described as a dependent or 'weak' ideology. Like green thought and feminism, nationalism deliberately replaces and removes central concepts, thus being structurally unable 'to offer complex ranges of argument, because many chains of ideas one would normally expect to find… are simply absent'.[44] As its operational incapacity leads to a shrinking of the political dimension, nationalism is defined as a 'thin-centered ideology.'[45]

Independently from the description of nationalism as a 'thin' or 'thick' ideology, is it plausible to see it not merely as a successful ideology, but as *the*

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dominant ideology of the modern age? Indeed there are good reasons for arguing so. If nationalism is a fully fledged ideology, it may be correct to describe it as 'the dominant operative ideology of modernity' since 'nearly all contemporary socio-political orders . . . tend to legitimize their existence in nationalist terms'.[46] Moreover, nationalism is central to the political legitimacy of modern societies, as argued with particular clarity by Walker Connor.[47] Anthony D. Smith also agrees that in every continent 'nationalism has become the main legitimating belief system'.[48] Finally, Michael Billig describes nationalism as 'the most successful ideology in human history', although this does not exclude the parallel dominance of other ideologies addressing internal policy issues.[49] It is a convincing argument, since nationalism is the ideology underpinning the contemporary nation-states system. This article reformulates that argument by incorporating the wider ideological framework within which nationalism first emerged and then thrived: modernism provided the all-pervasive context of expanding modernity, including the ideology of technocratic materialism and corporatism that accompanied it.

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Modernism as an ideology

The concept of ideology is sometimes stretched to cover new ground and expanded to illuminate the shifting meaning of discursive practices. Thus, Hannah Arendt stated that the 'Third World' is 'not a reality but an ideology'.[50] Although capitalism is usually seen just as a socio-political system founded on the adoption of market economy principles, the very belief in capitalism as the 'ideal', perfect, unmatchable socio-political system and the panacea for all social problems rests on firm ideological grounds. In fact, Susan Sontag observed that 'the ideology of capitalism makes us all into connoisseurs of liberty—of the indefinite expansion of possibility.'[51] More recently, Barbara Ehrenreich has provocatively argued that even a self-help tool like 'positive thinking' has been transformed through 'mandatory optimism' into a full-blown 'ideology' crafted to justify downsizing and redundancies in the corporate world.[52] A definition of ideology can be flexible enough to include the very notion of 'civil society', whose rhetorical ubiquity has penetrated the vocabulary of both right- and left-wing discourse, becoming politically transversal.[53] Therefore, protean notions like modernity, progress, growth, development and the latest arrival, globalization, are imbued with ideology, yet not all scholars and social commentators promptly recognize this status. Although the way these terms are used implies adherence to ideological constructs, presentism prevents us from identifying them as ideologies.

All modern ideologies were formulated within, and as responses to, the crises brought about in different stages and periods by the end of an era, variously labelled as agricultural society, the *Ancien Régime*, the Dark Ages, pre-modernity, or in other ways: by opposition to what preceded it, the term 'modernism' can be used to encompass all those world visions that fully embraced modernity and its consequences, trying to conceive new scenarios of 'togetherness' based on the unconditional acceptance and endorsement of the coming changes. 'Modernism' has been articulated through a set of often incompatible ideas, whose socio-political

programme was predicated on a Western-centred vision of modernity as the supreme good. This implied the rejection of elements that could be perceived as 'anti-modern'. The cult of modernity, progress and development became the *idée fixe* of the industrial and post-industrial age. Modernism has permeated not only all other ideologies, including nationalism, liberalism, fascism and communism, but also every major aspect of modern social life. In a nutshell, modernists predicate that all that is modern is positive, while all that is 'anti-modern' needs to be rejected.[54] Given that both Nazism and Stalinism viewed themselves as modernizing regimes, we can work out what might be the consequences, at an extreme, of finding oneself on the wrong side of the 'modern/anti-modern' divide. Until recently, Mubarak's and other dictatorial regimes in the Arab world, routinely described all forms of opposition as 'anti-modern' (as well as 'anti-national').[55] And given the selective ways in which ruling elites used the associated vocabulary of modernity, the very speech act and 'perlocutionary effect' of labelling opponents as 'anti-modern' could become a sufficient condition for their exclusion, persecution and eventual elimination.[56]

The modernist vision is often encapsulated in the popular myth of the 'mad scientist', who, blinded by an absolute faith in progress, crafts Frankenstein-like monsters in his secluded laboratory. The 'mad scientist' paradigm operates within a set of beliefs that are often a radical and gross interpretation of prevailing visions of modernity. The 'mad scientist's' stance is often erroneously interpreted as a personal ambition verging on pathology and emanating from individual attitudes. However, similar attitudes did not emerge casually as aspects of a post-religious, particularly post-Christian, world. They were part and parcel of the prevailing *Zeitgeist* unleashed by the advent of Western-style modernity and the 'Westernization of the world'.[57] In the process, non-Western ideologies and approaches were discarded and destroyed after being labelled as 'anti-modern'. 'Development' itself became an ideology or, even more, a 'global faith' imposed by the West on an often-recalcitrant world.[58] For Christopher Lasch, with its belief in a linear, steady, indefinite rise in living standards as the inevitable destiny of mankind, the 'faith in progress' assumes the eschatological trappings of established religions.[59]

Here I intend to point out that there is a deeper triadic link between the notions of modernity, progress and nationalism. In fact, modernism as the ideology of progress is deeply related to nationalism. For Liah Greenfeld it is impossible to conceive modernity outside nationalism, since the latter provided the ideological forge and mould to shape the former.[60] Accordingly, modernity is simply unthinkable outside a non-nationalist world, so that nationalism 'represents the cultural foundation of modern social structure, economics, politics, international relations, education, art, science, family relation, and so on and so forth.'[61] However, the opposite can also be said by describing modernism as the structural foundation of all of the above. The totalizing nature of nationalism thus overlaps with the totalizing nature of modernity and interpenetrates it. For this reason, one can legitimately suspect that Greenfeld is speaking about the ideology of modernity, rather than the ideology of nationalism—even though she seems to

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reject a clear-cut distinction between the two. As nations are firmly rooted in the past, they belong to a horizon whereby progress is inscribed as part of periodic waves of decline and recovery. Whereas hardcore modernists belong to a linear, cumulative conception of time, nationalists share a more cyclical vision, while incorporating the idea of national progress as endless and unlimited. The notion of progress is therefore associated with both nationalism and modernism.

What do we mean by modernism? One of the problems in nationalism studies is the peculiar use of the term 'modernism' to refer to a group of scholars stressing the modern origins of nations and nationalism—a usage largely derived from Anthony D. Smith's classification proposal.[62] The problem with both the classification and the debate is that most studies tend to treat 'modernity' as a 'fact' and rarely as an idea—although an idea is also a fact, as it exists and can have consequences. The term 'modernism' has different meanings in other fields, notably among art historians, where it is used to describe the homonymous artistic movement which emerged in late 19th- and early 20th-century Europe. In this article, 'modernism' refers to a wider ideological category, which establishes modernity as the founding parameter of a new era implicitly defined by the belief in unlimited progress. This has remained the dominant ideological paradigm at least till the beginning of the 21st century and it probably still is the most popular and widespread 'ideology' across the world.

How far can modernism be described as an ideology? Even though modernism may not have produced an eponymous political movement, its presence percolated through most, if not all, political ideologies emerging after 1789. Modernism or modernism-derived ideologies were also strongly oriented towards the formulation of public policies and these were overwhelmingly devoted to modernizing the 'nation' as conceived within the established boundaries of the nation-state system.

But did modernism enjoy broad popular support? For many, particularly the peasants, urbanized poor and various sorts of internal refugees, modernization had brought incommensurable misery, the loss of ancestral wisdom, traditions and material skills, inter-generational discontinuity, community breakdown and all the dislocation patterns famously described by classical sociologists like Émile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tönnies. Possibly, modernism would have been rejected outright if presented as a political ideology in its own naked form. Therefore modernism was more easily inserted into more broadly conceived political ideologies, chiefly nationalism. Modernism thoroughly accompanied the growth of nationalism and, in most cases, preceded it—although Greenfeld asserts that nationalism preceded modernity and indeed acted as its midwife. This brings us back to a more articulated consideration of the need to date the rise of both nationalism and modernism.

The French origins of modernism

For most scholars of nationalism and modernity, the 'incipit' of both remains the French Revolution, which is also when the term 'ideology' was first coined. The

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doctrine of nationalism was officially formulated in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, its public display of symbols touched off with the *Fête de la Fédération* in the summer of 1790 and its definitive test took place on the battlefield at Valmy (1792). Before the French Revolution, the propaganda apparatus of absolute monarchs was largely confined to the upper elites and exercised via the Courts as loci of aggregation and public display of Royal paraphernalia aiming to 'seduce' or co-opt provincial elites. Absolute sovereigns increasingly appropriated religious symbolism to prop up their legitimacy via appeals to their subjects, particularly under Louis XIV, the *Roi Soleil*. At those times, ideology still largely overlapped with religion. Although the primary movers and motives have never been fully identified, the St. Bartholomew's Eve massacres against Huguenots (Protestants) in Paris (1572) indicated an obsession by ruling elites with the political power of socio-religious ideas.[63] Arguably, the targets were not cultural or religious differences per se but 'ideological' opposition and dissent, as heterodox communities were considered a threat to the social order and hence to established authority. With modernity, secular ideology seized the state in 'absolute' terms. The targets were no longer framed in purely religious terms, but in terms of either entropy or anti-entropy,[64] that is, their cultural compatibility or incompatibility with an increasingly centralized, expanding and controlling state. To the most radical of Jacobins, cultural difference became anathema.

Under the French Revolution, the physical extermination of ideological–cultural opponents was pursued within a new 'national' framework, which slowly evolved into a broader drive to 'nationalize' the masses.[65] The Jacobin media played a key role: from July 1791 to July 1794, seven million copies of various journals were purchased for distribution in the army, even though most conscripts could not read or write.[66] We have scant documentation of local resistance to Parisian directives, although we do have sketchy records of the harsh condition of barrack life in post-revolutionary France.[67] During the ensuing years of ideological emphasis on the sacred nature of *La Patrie* (the Fatherland), many French citizens began slowly to identify with the soldier as the supreme expression of collective will, viewing war as the finest of national virtues.[68] Before the *levée en masse* (1793), volunteers were drafted in through an array of visual effects and media grandeur, often surrounded by a festival atmosphere punctuated by martial music.[69] With the *levee*, patriotism became the broader interclass ideological framework within which a largely peasant population could be mobilized—and controlled—by urban elites.

On the other hand, ideology alone was not enough. After France was invaded (1792), a deeper cycle of conflicts began, so that revolutionary violence became the main unitary catalyst among the Jacobins. According to the historian David A. Bell, the victory at Valmy (20 September 1792) was the first one in human history of an army inspired by nationalism as throngs of soldiers immolated themselves to shouts of '*Vive la Nation*!'.[70] Although victory was made possible by casual events such as bad weather, Valmy was fully seized by Jacobin propaganda as a foundational myth unleashing waves of enthusiasm and the belief that fighting in the name of freedom would grant soldiers a sort of immortality and even invincibility. Also for this reason, historian David Bell argues that the 'first

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total war' was conceived and put into practice by French revolutionary elites.[71] Valmy itself may not be conceived as 'total' in our contemporary understanding of the term, but for the first time the sheer number of men ready to be sacrificed on the battlefield became decisive at Valmy. Most important, the new enthusiasm for mass death was only made possible by the Parisian elites' coherent effort to channel popular emotions by appealing to nationhood and patriotism. Despite, and possibly because of, internecine–fratricidal struggles among revolutionary elites, populism and patriotism were shared across the political–ideological spectrum. Thus, the first total war was also the first ideological war and the first nationalist war. It provided a further foundational myth to the first modern nation-state with the triumph of a new ideology linked to (positivistic) ideas of modernity and progress—even though the awareness of this change was rather thin at the time.

The French revolutionaries were divided into multiple ideological currents. But nationalism provided the unifying glue and was constantly mobilized by all factions without exception. As competing leaders vied for mass following, they mobilized their own media by seizing, creating and disseminating propaganda through local venues, from public speeches at mass rallies to manifestos, slogans, patriotic songs, bulletins and newsletters. Competition among ideologues became fierce, peaking before the Reign of Terror. Maximilien Robespierre made it clear that this was a struggle for personal survival and those politicians who could not control the mob or posed a threat to Robespierre himself risked falling under the guillotine. Initially adverse to war,[72] Robespierre became in the end one of its main beneficiaries. By continuously mobilizing people in preparation for war, Parisian elites could achieve unified support in what had become one of the most fragmented, ideologically splintered and identity-fractured countries in Europe. The traditional gap between Paris and the provinces was to be overcome through coercion and consensus, and via the simultaneous use of terror, war and ideology. The systematic mass killing by government troops also led some historians to identify the *Vendée* massacres (1793–1796) as the first modern genocide.[73] Subsequently, the 'eliminationist' pattern was replicated, expanded and 'refined' throughout the 20th century.[74]

Most historians recognize the use of ideology and nationalism as drivers of mass engagement since the French Revolution. The destructive nature of European state-building was palpable to many citizens, yet patriotic–nationalist intoxication made opposition impossible. Thus, few intellectuals found the courage to oppose state-building, let alone denounce it.

The cult of national development

Modernism can be conceived either by reference to a series of 'rights' to which all citizens are entitled or as a coherent and interlinked set of obligations, which state leaders are thus able to impose upon often-reluctant populations. A linear concept of time made of cumulative gains and losses imposed itself as the 'nation-state' began to regulate industrial development and economic expansion. In its extreme forms, modernism can be specifically redefined as 'developmentalism', that is, the

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ideology of development for development's sake at whatever the costs. Far from being an irrelevant ideology, the latter has vectored both ultra-nationalism and socialism throughout the 20th century, moving at centre stage under totalitarianism's obsession with mass industrialization.

For instance, Gottfried Feder's (1883–1941) approach to technocracy as the 'perfect' political system ruled by engineers was matched by Fritz Todt's (1891–1942) vision of road-building and communication networks as blood vessels of the German nation at a time when Taylorism and Fordism triumphed in the West. While totalitarian regimes justified destruction in the name of 'progress' and economic development, parallel trends pervaded more 'liberal' societies, like Robert Moses's (1888–1981) hugely lucrative redevelopment of Manhattan, or the post-war urban renewal of central Ottawa.[75] When ideological forms of developmentalism were brought to their extreme consequences, they turned into an obsession with 'catching up' with the core countries of the wealthy West irrespective of human costs. But a fanatic stress on Westernizing modernity and development was no guarantee of success: the 'desperately modernizing' drive of the Russian government and military in the early 20th century, particularly after the defeat by Japan's imperial army (1905), could not halt a series of uprisings, rebellions and revolts which culminated in the Bolshevik Revolution during World War I.[76] And the frenzied Westernizing campaign emerging within the Ottoman Empire during those years could not arrest its rapid collapse—a course carried years later to its ultimate consequences by Kemal Atatürk, ensuing Turkey's 'secession' from its own empire.[77] More recently, the ideology of development allied with 'security' concerns and the desire to eliminate human 'obstacles' to development has been at the core of contemporary genocides, as in Rwanda.[78]

Although Taylorism is often described as a 'scientific' method of maximizing industrial efficiency and serializing mass production, it became part of an ideological discourse and practice, with elements of a secular faith and unquestioned adherence to quasi-religious dogmas. But Taylorism and Fordism were hosts of a broader ideological framework centred on the notion of progress and these belonged to what I identify as modernism. Throughout the modern era, the 'natural' unit of reference for the ideology of progress remained the nation, indeed the nation-state. Even in the Soviet Union, Wilsonian–Leninist principles of self-determination became the norm.[79] The cult for discipline and work were also part of a wider militarization of society reaching a peak as totalitarianism reinforced its global reach. Radical Taylorists envisaged 'the mechanization of virtually every aspect of life . . . , from methods of production to the thinking patterns of the common man.'[80] In Soviet times, the New Economic Policy (NEP) was part of a broader effort in achieving rapid industrial development, while Lenin 'encouraged the cult of Taylor' and 'even remote villagers knew the name of Henry Ford.'[81]

Taylorism and Fordism were also key ingredients of Fascist and Nazi ideology, enjoying most appeal among critiques of representative government.[82] Despite 'the negative reception of Taylorism in Imperial and Weimar Germany', Fordism seized its place under the Third Reich.[83] By 1938, a German *Autobahn* network of

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over 2000 km began to surpass in extension the United States highway system. The ideology of a highly interconnected space served to 'strengthen' the nation envisioned as a unified living organism. The German idea of a *Volkswagen* (car of/for the people), launched in 1933, was obviously derived from Ford's 'model T'. By 1939, Ferdinand Porsche (1875–1951) had already developed the homonymous car and, by 1942, he 'suggested to Hitler that prisoners be used to build a foundry, and obtained the Führer's support.'[84]

But all these trends were prominently displayed already by the eve of World War I, at a time when many Germans boasted their new identity as a hyper-progressive people. For instance, the 'Zeppelin craze' with its new 'aeronautical *Sonderweg*' turned Germany into a 'nation of aviators.'[85] From a cultural history viewpoint, Modris Eksteins reminds us that Germany, the country that most radically embraced modernism, adopted a militarist mission that contemplated the merging of soldiers with non-combatants. How did this become possible? German elites experienced modern alienation to unparalleled levels because the process of industrialization and urbanization was swifter and more rapid in Germany than elsewhere.[86] Nazism transformed the 'traumatic modernism' resulting from the abrupt irruption of modernity and the decline of traditional lifestyles into a redemptive mission informed by an eschatological longing and technocratic idolatry. This goes beyond what has been narrowly defined as 'the paradox of reactionary modernist reconciliation'.[87] In Italy, the avant-garde ideology of Futurism (1909–1945), with its idolatry for the machine, its cult of mass violence and its contempt for ordinary lives, produced the first artistic synthesis of all these trends.[88]

Historians have occasionally used the concepts of 'developmentalism' and 'developmental dictatorship' to explain cases like Franco's Spain after 1959 and Italy under Mussolini.[89] In particular, George Mosse's milestone work has dismantled the post-war cliché of fascism as an atavist, anti-modern throwback to, or longing for, some ancestral past.[90] However, most historians of Nazi Germany still resist describing Nazism as a form of modernism, lest such a description would lend some sort of credibility to Nazism itself. A national–developmentalist ideology underpins nearly all totalitarian systems, whose regimes attempted to shape a 'new man' as the ideal citizen of a new industrialist utopia. Soviet and Maoist propaganda posters depicted the advent of mass industrialization as the gateway to a new millennium. Nazi–Fascist and Socialist–Communist regimes shared variants of a Western-centred ideology of development, while paying lip service to 'tradition' and honouring the 'fathers' of the nation. Totalitarian systems married nationalism and ideologies of unlimited progress in quasi-religious, mythopoietic terms.[91] The main common denominator among all these regimes was extreme modernism, surpassing by a long way the already commanding prominence of nationalism and patriotism—although there was continuity and congruence between the ideas of progress and that of the nation.

Concepts like progress, modernization and development are associated with power, thus concealing the traits of political ideology. Due to its direct 'material' impact and pervasive consequences, and without fear of falling into a circular argument, modernism can be described as the dominant ideology of modern times,

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while, as progress and related concepts became intrinsic attributes of the nation, they were fully appropriated by nationalism. But how far can modernism be defined as a self-standing ideology? The rulers who unanimously embraced modernism did so via the help of more outreaching ideologies, most notably nationalism. Ordinary citizens became generally more convinced to shed their blood to defend the motherland, rather than to promote the spread of modernity. The easiest way of capturing the masses while diluting opposition and demanding unconditional loyalty was through nationalism. Yet elites invariably shifted their political discourses from defending the nation to announcing its empowerment and adopting the trappings of modernism. The Napoleonic invasions and Europe's colonial scramble for entire continents fomented a Darwinian race in which national 'survival' became inseparable from notions of industrial and military superiority (which in themselves invoked highly modernist rationales). Modernism as an ideological discourse transcended other ideologies and hovered over them as the dominant, all-encompassing set of ideas, even though it did not directly share many of the attributes of other ideologies, particularly a mass-based political movement oriented towards the formulation of a set of public policies.

So pervasive is the modernist framework with its associated cult of growth that the recent appearance of the concept of 'de-growth' has hardly been taken into consideration by political theorists, let alone by political practitioners: Serge Latouche has described the impact of this new political movement as the appearance of a 'UFO in the microcosm of politicking.'[92] While 'post-development' studies is taking shape as a new field,[93] the dialectics between modernism and its alternatives has rarely been addressed in political theory. Even less studied has been the role of ideology in legitimating the nation-state as the arena and framework for 'growth.'

The link between modernity and nationalism through ideology is so pervasive that it permeates the unconscious, informing in unique ways many daily practices.

Banal nationalism, hidden ideology?

Because a purely mentalist definition of ideology is no longer commonly accepted, ideology can be seen as encompassing a variety of current pre-reflexive manifestations, including behaviour, attitudes and patterns of consumption. For Michael Billig even the pettiest manifestations of nationhood are based on nationalist ideology: we are deeply steeped in a nationalized world vision, thus becoming unconscious carriers and replicators of nationalist ideology, whether we accept or reject nationalism in principle. Typical examples are those who 'restrict the term "nationalism" to the ideology of "others"'.[94] By a sin of omission, the very fact of 'nationalizing' (i.e. attributing blame of nationalism to) and ethnicizing others, particularly stateless nations, is to various degrees a nationalist 'speech act'. As with other ideologies, the blamers can easily detect the blamed's shadow elsewhere, but not in them. 'Subconscious' nationalism is also common in mainstream academia: when scholars quote approvingly Ernest Renan's (1823–1892) famous defence of the '*nation de volonté*' (nation of will) smuggling it into their argument as an

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example of 'civic', or even 'civilized', nationalism, they are not simply espousing an ideological stand, but also tacitly endorsing a nationalist-inspired vision which is ultimately more exclusive than inclusive.[95]

With his stress on routines, 'flagging' and 'creating the unconscious', Billig considers the daily impact of nationalism as an ideology.[96] In some respects, this recalls Louis Althusser's and Etienne Balibar's comments on the 'untold' or 'lacunar discourse' of ideology: things are merely suggested rather than openly enunciated.[97] Indeed, ideology-supporting discourse works often by changing the meanings of terms: the revolutionary triad *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* served to underpin its opposite: servility, inequality and conflict. The most nationalist of the triad, *fraternité*, was the last one to be added, with its emotional and communitarian stress on kin-related moral obligations.[98] Nationalism seems to advocate strong egalitarian values proclaiming the equality of all citizens or, rather, all the members of the nation. However, this 'equality' is largely fictitious and, once seized by the state, the concept is usually usurped to promote more demanding and surreptitious forms of inequality.[99] In times of war and under mass military conscription, 'equality' is to be paid by ordinary citizens with their own lives: war demands that the ultimate sacrifice is made on the basis of citizens' equality, although informed citizens may know that the richest usually buy or arrange their way out of the front line.

Finally, a whole set of unreflexive habits can be thought as expressions of ideology. As externally induced behaviour, consumerism may not be perceived as an ideology in itself, but as part of a collective inclination to equate personal satisfaction with the incessant pursuit of material possessions. Already in 1899, the US sociologist Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929) identified patterns of 'conspicuous consumption' through acts of spending for the sake of appearance and for attaining or maintaining social status—although the phenomenon was vastly more limited and possibly less pronounced at that time than it is today.[100]

With the consumerist race becoming global since at least the 1970s, the ideological aspects of the process seem to have passed unnoticed, although consumerism too had its 'founding fathers' and, with time, developed its own 'cathedrals of consumption.'[101] Leslie Sklair argues that there is a 'culture-ideology of consumerism.'[102] Yet, systematic attempts to oppose consumerism and other behavioural '-isms' are more likely to be perceived in terms of ideology. For instance, 'enoughism', a set of recently proposed practices and lifestyles based on ideas for a better world, is clearly dedicated to defeat consumerism in both ideology and practice.[103] With its critique of over-consumption and its preference for 'simple living', enoughism, not inevitably a branch of green thought, is a quintessential cosmopolitan ideology, where the concern for the nation is wholly subordinated to that for the whole ecumene. In this sense, it belongs to a large group of universalist ideologies that aim to provide an alternative to both nationalism and consumerism. In this journal, Dan Webb has identified Khomeinism and other forms of political Islam as 'a source of counter-hegemonic resistance to the spread of global consumer culture.'[104] Manfred B. Steger also considers political Islam as an alternative route to globalization: indeed, all of

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the three major forms of globalization, Western (or neo-liberal), Islamic and no-logo,[105] have strong ideological components.[106] However, as I argue in the next section, globalization should be seen as a deepening of modernization, hence Steger's idea of 'globalism' as a distinctive ideology can be better redefined as an avatar of long-lasting modernism.

Modernism, globalism and ethnic conflict

In the 1960s, the 'end of ideology' was prematurely announced anticipating a new age freed from the dogmas of socialism, liberalism and conservatism.[107] Over a quarter of a century on, some of these conjectures have seemingly materialized, finding a suitable symbolism in the fall of the Berlin Wall.[108] Some of the scholars who had anticipated the end of ideology found nothing to rejoice about the new era as they discovered that corruption, seen as the antithesis of ideology, had largely replaced ideology on a global scale.[109] But, whether or not an end of all ideologies really took place during the age of 'reflux', those vast socio-political changes are still firmly set within a greater ideological narrative: modernity. In the meantime, the appeal of nationalism has done nothing but expand.

The ostensibly 'paradoxical' relationship between globalization and nationalism has been restated countless times and various reasons have been given for this 'unexpected' outcome. One of them is the demise of cultural certainties and traditions following the process of global homogenization. It is highly debatable whether globalization has bolstered cultural exchanges and *métissage* or has rather limited inter-ethnic relations to superficial domains by filtering inter-cultural contacts through the lenses of Westernization—or indeed Americanization.

The copious and repetitive literature in globalization studies has so far failed to produce a groundbreaking text, even in the form of a journal article. The very term 'globalization' appears increasingly undefined, hard to grasp and shrouded in conceptual mystery, with some authors pushing its meaning back to Portugal's imperial expansion or even to Roman times, thus making it scholarly inoperative—as if 15th- to 16th-century Portuguese could think in terms of neo-liberal deregulation or as if the Romans could know about Australia, the Americas or most of Asia.[110] Historically, the concept's current usage emerged in the wake of neo-liberal corporate expansion at the global level.

There is an ongoing debate as to whether globalization is part of an ideology, an ideology in itself, or rather a mere economic/cultural fact. For William Greider, globalization is not ideology, but greed and money grabbing through naked power: 'The great, unreported story in globalization is about power, not ideology. It's about how finance and business regularly continuously insert their own self-interested deals and exceptions into rules and agreements that are then announced to the public as "free trade"'.[111] For many, globalization is a particularly harmful and penetrating phase of imperialism, while some see it as deeply related to war.[112] Finally, others question its hidden agenda as implying a total restructuring of power relations throughout the world with the potential of unleashing an unpredictable blowback effect.[113]

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However, in line with both Steger's argument and mine, globalization was accompanied by the all-pervasive ideology of 'globalism': in short, globalization, the actual practice, should be distinguished from 'globalism', its accompanying ideology—although both are confused in various disciplines, including 'globalization studies'. For Manfred Steger, 'globalism' is not only 'a new ideology, but also constitutes the dominant ideology of our time against which all of its challengers must define themselves.'[114] However, if globalization can be described as intensified modernity, it would be equally fair to describe globalism as deepening modernism. In other words, modernity, whose dominant ideological form is modernism, is now manifested in new powerful ways via globalization, whose dominant ideological form is globalism. If globalism can be seen as a new radical variant of modernism, we should not be surprised to see ethnic conflict accompanying its spread—given modernity's relationship with nationalism in the previous centuries.

Thus far, globalization has propelled the spread of ethnic conflict, nationalism, xenophobia and racism,[115] the expansion of the tentacles of organized crime[116] and the rise of 'religious' neo-fundamentalism.[117] Even in the US, neo-liberal and globalist ideology have permeated ethnic conflict through deep-seated racism. Their pervasive relationship has led Loïc Wacquant to hypothesize a direct continuity from the institution of slavery to the system of mass incarceration prevailing among Afro-Americans, as the United States adopted an extended prisons regime that he defines as 'hyper-ghetto'.[118] In a mirror game, the 'globalization of racism' is firmly built and predicated on 'the racism of globalization.'[119]

Conclusions

Scholars of nationalism disagree about whether nationalism can be described as a fully fledged ideology, even though ideology plays a key role in most of their accounts. If nationalism is free riding on other ideologies, which is then the core ideology around which it gravitates? The overwhelming majority of scholars associate nationalism with modernity. But, whereas most of them agree that nationalism developed in tandem with modernity, few have considered modernity as conveyed by its own specific ideology. Modernity itself has been accompanied by a broader discourse and ideological framework: the sum–totality of these ideologies and discourses is identified here as 'modernism' and described as the overarching ideological framework accompanying the expansion of modernity.[120]

But, while nationalism can be identified as an ideology, modernism is rarely identified as such, that is, as a set of ideas reflecting the interests and beliefs of a political group, era, society, individual and institutions, while orienting political action. Modernism subsumes most other ideologies, including liberalism, socialism, communism and nationalism. Nationalism therefore needs to be considered, not merely as an aspect of modernism, but its inseparable companion and constituent part.

As we have seen, this also implies that our daily lives are unconsciously permeated by ideological currents and under-currents, including many routine

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habits that we may perceive as 'facts'. As ideology cannot be conceived in purely mentalist terms, it needs to incorporate more general dispositions, particularly the dimension of *habitus* and unreflective behaviour.

The 'core' of the modernist ideological apparatus can be identified in the belief that there is a sharp contrast and ultimate incompatibility between modernity as an inescapable fate and what preceded it. Modernism's 'peripheral' or secondary concepts include disquisitions and contrasts about how to affirm or impose modernity, with nationalism asserting itself as the dominant form of 'applied modernism'. If nationalism is defined as an ideology, it can be easily described as the most powerful ideology of the modern age. However, modernity itself needs to be reconceived in ideological terms and for this scope the term 'modernism' has been used here. The root of all the above phenomena is placed in the French revolutionary wars.

Nationalism and modernism have been inseparably implicated, particularly in their most polarized forms: in particular, as we have seen, Nazi–Fascism is hardly conceivable outside its distilled fusion between modernism and nationalism. In the highly competitive international system forged by World War I, a form of nationalism deprived of its extreme modernist component was most unlikely.

In general, I have argued that the stress on mass emotions plus irrationality and the full embrace of modern technology were coeval and belonged to the same world vision. Implying the rejection of Enlightenment rationalism, the modernist–irrationalist fusion can be dated back at least to the Valmy's battle cries, as state-making patriotism was being forged on the battlefield, easily stirring cheering crowds just before the *levée en masse* (1793) compelled many more people to sing the same tune in the same rhythm.

Although most scholars argue that nationalism is indissociable from modernity, others argue that modernity provided only a catalyst for pre-existing groups to seize power or negotiate power-sharing arrangements through representative leaders. For some authors, nationalism was no mere chaperon of modernity, but a tool used by elites to consolidate their power, while imposing their modernizing views and spreading the ideology of progress among the masses. I have defended the general view that nationalism cannot be conceived outside modernity, but only to identify modernity itself as embedded in its own ideology, modernism.

On the one hand, the current crisis of modernity is propelling epochal challenges affecting the very rationale of ideological modernism. On the other hand, because nationalism is unlikely to lose its force, it remains susceptible of being exploited by unscrupulous elites unwilling to adopt changes and reforms that may prove unpopular. In particular, the global threat of climate change is radically altering modernism's most irrational appeal as a self-legitimizing discourse, while also pointing to the unsustainability of patriotism's and nationalism's conventional solipsism.[121] This gargantuan shift might challenge modernism, the West's shared ideological apparatus for many generations, in new unpredictable ways, while calling into question state nationalism as a viable and self-sufficient ideology.

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59. C. Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven. Progress and Its Critics*, 1st edn (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1991).
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61. Greenfeld, 'Modernity and nationalism', *op. cit*., Ref. 12, p. 162.
62. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism, op. cit.*, Ref 13.
63. See Carmichael, *Genocide Before the Holocaust, op. cit*., Ref. 18.
64. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism, op. cit.*, Ref. 9.

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67. See R. Cobb, *The People's Armies (The Armees Revolutionnaires: Instrument of the Terror in the Departments April 1793 to Floreal Year II)* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987); R. Cobb, *Paris and Its Provinces, 1792–1802* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); D. A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Modern Warfare* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008) pp. 121–123.
68. Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic, op. cit*., Ref. 67. p. 121.
69. M. Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
70. Bell, *The First Total War*, *op. cit*., Ref. 67, pp. 130—135.
71. *Ibid.*
72. R. Scurr, *Fatal Purity: Robespierre and the French Revolution* (London: Vintage, 2006).
73. R. Secher, *A French Genocide: The Vendée* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003). In his original French version, Secher used the term *génocide franco-français*: *Le Génocide Franco-Français: La Vendée-Vengé*, 1st edn (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986). See also A. Jones, 'Why gendercide? Why root-and-branch? A comparison of the Vendée uprising of 1793–94 and the Bosnian war of the 1990s', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(1) (2006), pp. 9–25; F. Lebrun, 'La guerre de Vendée: Massacre ou génocide?' *L'Histoire*, 78 (1985), pp. 93–99.
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81. *Ibid.*
82. C. S. Maier, 'Between Taylorism and technocracy: European ideologies and the vision of industrial productivity in the 1920s', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 5(2) (1970), pp. 27–61, 29. Although Griffin's key text on fascism and modernism mentions neither Taylorism nor Fordism, the book analyses well the idea of fascism as 'technocratic modernism' (Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*, *op. cit*., Ref. 20, pp. 224–227).
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84. R. Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 216. Moreover, 'Porsche was not shy in meetings with the SS and pushed to get his war. The Volkswagen Works under Porsche's direction established a concentration camp with the revealing name of "*Arbeitsdorf*", or Work Village' (*ibid*., p. 216).
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89. A. J. Gregor, *Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979); I. S. Campos, 'Fascism, fascistization and developmentalism in Franco's dictatorship', *Social History*, 29(3) (2004), pp. 342–357.

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120. Given its pervasive presence, modernism is obviously more than a frame, discourse or *mentalité*. However, this article's scope does not allow space to identify it as an autonomous political movement, or as a coherent set of ideas orienting the direction of other modern political movements. This would have possibly required defining its support basis, describing its specific political programme and identifying its orientation 'towards the formulation of public policy'.
121. Elsewhere, I have identified the slow emergence of *'survival cosmopolitanism'* as a possible framework for addressing the looming modernist crisis from the perspective of political ideology (D. Conversi. 'Climate change, state nationalism and the emergence of survival cosmopolitanism' (unpublished manuscript).

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