# Global Islamism and World Society

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## Abstract

This article develops a comprehensive understanding of global Islamism as the communitarian mirror image of cosmopolitan world society. World society and global Islamism are presented as varieties of globalization, discussed in terms of structure and agency, and analyzed in terms of principles and values. The objective is to understand global Islamism as a political project and to assess its chances of successfully competing with world society. This is accomplished by a comparative assessment of the degree to which global Islamism and world society can achieve social integration. World society thrives on established forms of political and legal integration, and is buttressed by integration via functional subsystems. Global Islamism relies on the expectation of strong communal engagement and the unapologetic exclusion of dissidents and outsiders. Despite its bolder discriminatory practices, global Islamism is not stronger than world society with regard to sociability. Insofar as the integration of Muslims into a universal community of believers cannot be successful, global Islamism is bound to be frustrated as a political project. Until that happens, conflict between global Islamism and world society can be better managed when both are recognized as rival globalization projects, and when their mutual incompatibilities are acknowledged.

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Cosmopolitan world society is a successful and widely shared political project.[1] It is shared by decision makers pursuing liberal agendas of democratization and prosperity while prosecuting criminal and terrorist deviance. It is also shared by leading social thinkers such as Ulrich Beck, Manuel Castells, Francis Fukuyama, David Held, and Niklas Luhmann. Even the proverbial man on the street shares the vision of cosmopolitan world society when (s)he refuses to interpret deviance against "universal" values in any terms other than greed or insanity.

Overall, the liberal vision of cosmopolitan world society runs somewhat like this. Globalization and global governance lead from a world of nation-states to world society. Any human association, from local communities to national societies, from international bureaucracies to transnational activist networks, is increasingly embedded in this emergent "society of societies". This is not to deny that there is scope for criticism to subvert, as well as delinquency to undermine, the liberal cosmopolitan values represented by world society. But these are only internal contradictions that are propelling world society forward. There is no external challenge to cosmopolitan world society, as by definition there is nothing outside it.

But what if the underlying liberal triumphalism is misplaced? What if cosmopolitan world society is a political project competing with other political projects? What if the liberal-cosmopolitan values enshrined in world society are challenged by the globalization of rival communitarian values? What if transnational Islam represents precisely such a moral-political challenge? Or, in a nutshell: what if the Islamist vision of a global community (*umma*) represents the communitarian mirror image of cosmopolitan world society?

The present article explores this hypothesis. Empirically, global Islamism today appears to be the most virulent communitarian challenge to cosmopolitan world society. This is not to deny that there are further communitarian mirror images of world society, such as Hindu fundamentalism, but they do not come with the same globalist aspirations. Other communitarian projects, such as Evangelicalism or Pentecostalism, are more compatible with world society. After all, liberal cosmopolitanism is to a significant extent Christianity secularized.

By global Islamism I do not primarily mean jihadist terrorism but the broader movement that aims at the establishment and consolidation of a global community of Muslim believers in a politically and sociologically virulent sense. This includes non-violent elements of transnational political Islam such as the various branches of the Muslim Brotherhood as well as religious entrepreneurs spreading the vision of the global *umma* through the mass media.

My concern is with political Islam rather than with Islam in general. But since political Islam is derived from Islam in general and relies on its principles and values, any strict separation would be artificial. Also, due to the absence of reliable data on global Islamists I am forced to rely on a number of *a-fortiori* arguments, for example with regard to their authoritarian

tendencies and the modernization deficit. In these cases, I assume that general traits of contemporary Islam are also present in political Islam (presumably to an even higher degree).

By this I hope to debunk the inappropriateness of "inter-civilizational dialogue" on the one hand, and "clash of civilizations" on the other. Despite their appeal, the problem with either of these notions is that they comfortably assume a symmetrical constellation of equivalent entities (willing dialogue partners; irreconcilable civilizations). In reality, however, cosmopolitan world society and global Islamism are deeply asymmetrical. The former is not a civilization in the conventional sense, and the latter is hardly amenable to dialogue. Without a proper understanding of these asymmetries we cannot even begin to understand the challenge posed by global Islamism to cosmopolitan world society, and vice versa.

Currently most Western citizens, academics, and decision makers either trivialize global Islamists as partners in a multicultural dialogue or demonize them by lumping them together with transnational terrorists and their sympathizers. Either of these reactions is cognitively and emotionally understandable, but neither renders justice to the phenomenon as such. What is lacking, and what this article seeks to facilitate, is a conceptual apparatus and interpretive key that would allow us to appropriately diagnose the challenges posed by global Islamism and to come up with adequate responses. To lead us beyond the current civic and intellectual impasse, I thus hope to offer an actionable piece of social diagnostic.

In the first section, I present cosmopolitan world society and global Islamism as varieties of globalization. In the next section, I discuss the constitution of agency and the related paradoxes in either case. I then analyze world society and global Islamism in terms of principles and values, with particular regard to political culture. Subsequently, I discuss the ways by which world society and global Islamism achieve, or fail to achieve, social integration. It turns out that world society thrives on established forms of political and legal integration, and is buttressed by integration via functional subsystems. Global Islamism relies on the expectation of strong communal engagement and the unapologetic exclusion of dissidents and outsiders. Despite its bolder discriminatory practices, global Islamism is not stronger than world society with regard to sociability. Insofar as the integration of Muslims into a universal community of believers cannot be successful, global Islamism is bound to be frustrated as a political project. Until that happens, conflict between global Islamism and world society can perhaps be better managed when both are recognized as rival globalization projects, and when their mutual incompatibilities are acknowledged.

## Varieties of Globalization

While globalization is commonly associated with the advent of cosmopolitan world society, another globalization project is unfolding simultaneously: the globalization of the *umma*, the imagined community of Muslim believers. Each of these projects is part-myth, part-reality. Both world society and global Islamism are to a significant extent the result of social construction, but they also create their own reality as large-scale political projects.[2]

Thus, the reality of world society and global Islamism is a product of their conscious or unconscious pursuit as political projects. It is therefore appropriate to develop the globalization of cosmopolitan world society on the one hand, and the globalization of the Islamic *umma* on the other, from historical narratives. These are based on idealizations, but they

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[2] For some related scholarship, see Badie (1983, 82-96; 1986); Adamson (2005); Dionigi (2012).

are not arbitrary insofar as they represent the unfolding of real social transformations. In the development of my account, I rely on the classical sociological distinction between community and society, or *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* (Tönnies 1957 [originally 1887]).[3]

## World Society

From a "Western" perspective, modern history can be understood as a troubled move from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft*. Before the early modern period, most people in Europe were embedded in tightly knit communities, from kinship groups to craft guilds and from parishes to feudal entourages (Gierke 1987 [1881]). Only a thin stratum of aristocratic elites was engaged in more mechanical and impersonal relationships (Elias 2000 [1939]). Then capitalism uprooted the common people from their organic communities and forced them to become members of an incipient civil society. But while this uprooting was taking place, people were also being re-embedded in nation-states as imagined communities (Anderson 1991). By the late 19th Century, the globalization of capitalism started to undermine these imagined communities, leading to both utopian dreams of world society and to barbaric backlashes (Adorno and Horkheimer 1972). After seventy-five years of serious turmoil, from 1914 to 1989, world society has come out triumphant. Globalization is superseding nation-states without abolishing them, and enmeshes them in a framework of global governance.

This is a thumbnail sketch of incredibly complex and convoluted historical processes. But, nuances aside, leading social thinkers agree that the direction of history is from local *gemeinschaft* to global *gesellschaft*. Centuries ago, Immanuel Kant wrote about the *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* (2010 [1784]).[4] About four decades ago, Niklas Luhmann saw the dawn of world society as encompassing any other social system (1971; cf. 1997). Since the end of the Cold War, the idea of world society has increasingly been accepted by seminal thinkers such as Castells (2000), Beck (2002), and Held (2010).

The list of big names could be continued, but for the purposes of this article the most useful conceptualization of world society is sociological institutionalism (Thomas et al. 1987; Finnemore 1996; Meyer et al. 1997). Here, the core idea is that world society represents the aspiration of organizing human relationships on the basis of purposive rational agency rather than organic solidarity. This aspiration is rarely if ever fulfilled, but it represents the regulative ideal under which late-modern global capitalist society operates (Meyer 2010).

## Global Islamism

While sociological institutionalism does not know of any radical alternative to world society, global Islamism may be precisely that. In 2007, a Muslim interlocutor from Indonesia said: "Don't forget, the Prophet imagined Islam as global long before anyone was talking about globalisation".[5] In fact, one of Mohammed's core missions was to overcome the tribal fragmentation of Arabia. He conceived of the community of the faithful as united by rectitude and impermeable to schismatic divisions (Quran 3: 104-105). What is more, he placed on his

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[3] Interestingly, the notion of global *gemeinschaft* is briefly considered in Robertson (1992, 75-83).
[4] For a particularly rich and diverse collection of writings on cosmopolitanism, see Vertovec and Cohen (2002).
[5] Quoted in Jones and Mas (2011, 2).

followers an injunction to propagate Islam all over the world. Thus, in the eschatological vision of its founder, the Islamic *umma* has always held global aspirations.[6]

These aspirations were disappointed when, despite considerable initial success, the military and missionary expansion of Islam all over the known world proved impossible. Although the vision of an indivisible *umma* continued to be upheld by religious scholars, there are three fundamental reasons why, for all practical purposes, the unity of the Islamic *umma* did not outlast the Prophet for more than a few generations.[7]

First, soon after Mohammed's death the laws of social gravity led to fragmentation along extended kinship lines. After all, both those propagating Islam and the vanquished were mostly organized by tightly knit communal bonds such as families, clans, and tribes.[8]

Second, rulers in the Muslim world made sure that the official interpretation of Islam was in line with *raison d'état*. Except for notorious conquerors, rulers had a vested interest in territorial segmentation. An expansive understanding of the *umma* as the political community of all Muslim believers was not in their best interest, precisely because it could have been exploited by the aspirant conquerors of the day. Moreover, Muslim rulers naturally preferred to control Islamic scholars (*ulama*) rather than to be controlled by them. Accordingly, they aimed to co-opt these scholars rather than vice versa (Ayoob 2008, 11-12).

The third reason for the failure of the classical *umma* was identified by Gellner (1994, 15-29) in his virtuoso account for the uneasy cohabitation between High and Low Islam.[9] High Islam is based on the scriptural and puritanical vision of faith promoted by classical scholars. While Muslim rulers and urban elites were somewhat receptive, High Islam did not meet the social needs of rural crowds and urban poor. The answer to their requirement for solace was provided by Low Islam, i.e. various forms of folk religiosity including saint cults and ecstatic religious excitement. Over the centuries, the uneasy cohabitation between High and Low Islam engendered a cyclical pattern of frustrated reformation, with puritanical revivals periodically trying to elevate the masses from their ignorance; but because such revivals did not alter the miserable conditions of the masses, they were regularly overwhelmed by the same social needs for solace that had frustrated High Islam from its inception.

Gellner argues that the balance between High and Low Islam has shifted with the advent of modernity. Political centralization and the introduction of a unified economic system have destroyed the autonomy of rural communities and uprooted a growing urban underclass. While the traditional constituency of Low Islam was eroding, High Islam for the first time had a real chance to reach Muslim society at large. The vision of the *umma* offered an imagined community in which it was hoped that modernization would take place at a comfortable distance from the colonial masters and/or the postcolonial state. Concomitantly, the vision of *dar al-Islam* (abode of Islam) as a global community promises to propel the *umma* from fragmentation and subordination to unity and, ultimately, supremacy.

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[6] Jesus Christ had broadly comparable aspirations. But there are at least two reasons for leaving this aside here. First, the comparison in this article is not between world religions but between global Islamism and world society. Second, Christian fundamentalism does not pose any serious challenge to cosmopolitan globalization (on the contrary, evangelicals actively supported George W. Bush's radical democratization agenda).

[7] But see Brown (2000, 52-59) on the historical importance of the notion of unity and community in Islam.

[8] The medieval polymath Ibn Khaldun famously developed the Arab notion of consanguinity (*asabiyya*) into a theory on the rise and fall of competing solidarity groups based on extended lineage (Grutzpalk 2007).

[9] See Gellner (1981, 1-85); note the deconstruction by Zubaida (2011, 31-76); but see also Gellner (1992, 5-22).

This leaves us with remarkable similarities and contrasts. Both world society and global Islamism are varieties of modernity and globalization; but while the former project aims to globalize impersonal *gesellschaft* relations, the latter represents the aspiration of globalizing organic *gemeinschaft* bonds.[10] Both claim universal validity; but while the former advances cosmopolitan principles, the latter embodies group-specific religious and cultural values.[11]

## Agentic Illusions

Thus far, cosmopolitan world society and its Islamic mirror image have been understood as social structures. Obviously, social structures are produced and reproduced by human agency (Giddens 1984). Let us therefore discuss how agency is constituted within the structures under discussion. As we will see, in either case there is an "agentic illusion" at play.

In principle, *gesellschaft* maximizes agency in a minimal structure of procedural principles while *gemeinschaft* maximizes the integrative force of normative structures within which a highly embedded form of agency is to take place. While this is true about theoretical ideal types, the reality of cosmopolitan world society and its Islamic mirror image is different. World society requires remarkably *gemeinschaftlich* types of collective solidarity while global Islamism relies on surprisingly *gesellschaftlich* kinds of purposive rational agency. Thus, they are paradoxically compelled to emulate each other's ostensible modus operandi.

Sociological institutionalists persuasively argue that modernity and rationalization come with "agentic illusions": individuals, associations, and states see themselves, and are seen by observers, as the prime movers of social change when in fact they are socially embedded to such an extent that only a certain range of actions is available to them. In theory, rational agency in a society is self-interested rather than socially embedded. But in practice this would be dangerous because, maybe except for competitive markets narrowly conceived, truly self-interested agency undermines wider social goals. What is therefore required by modern society is, paradoxically, action that is either disinterested or, at the limit, self-interested in a highly self-transcending way (Thomas et al. 1987; Meyer 2010).[12]

A wide range of institutions is in the business of inducing agents to behave in ways that further wider social goals. For example, citizens are expected to cast the ballot, organizations to be accountable, and states to protect human rights even though there is no tangible reward. The education sector tries to socialize individuals, NGOs try to socialize businesses, and international organizations try to socialize nation-states. The representatives of such institutions are the "high priests" of self-effacing moral agency (Meyer 2010, 10), and their purpose is to promote the equivalent of communal solidarity in cosmopolitan world society.

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[10] The communitarian bent of global Islamism is also apparent from the tendency of Muslims to struggle for group recognition ("respect") while liberal societies require the recognition of personal freedom ("tolerance"); this is confirmed by events like the 2005 Danish cartoon controversy or the violent outrage surrounding the infamous 2012 clips entitled "The Innocence of Islam"; see also Pew Research Center (2006, 21).

[11] While using a different vocabulary, Tibi (2012) reaches a similar diagnosis. For the opposite view, emphasizing the cosmopolitan aspects of Islam, see Küng (2007) and Soguk (2011). In fact there are a few Muslim intellectuals, often considered heretics, highlighting the cosmopolitan elements in Islam (Kersten 2011). My view is that, while there are indeed such elements, they are largely marginal and represent a small minority.

[12] Action transcending narrow self-interest is sometimes advertised as enlightened self-interest, or what Alexis de Tocqueville (1994 [1835/40], Vol. II, Book II, Ch. 8-9) calls "interest rightly understood".

Global Islamism obviously does not need to recur to this kind of moral charade, as the call for rectitude and conformity with shared values is a typical hallmark of religious fundamentalism. According to the idealized vision of global Islamism, agency is understood as embedded in, and subordinate to, the organic interests of the global community of believers.

Precisely due to this idealization, global Islamism is beleaguered by its own kind of agentic illusion. While the global *umma* aims to be the all-encompassing *gemeinschaft* of Muslim believers, it also depends on its members behaving in a very *gesellschaftlich* kind of way. The reason is that, sociologically speaking, the global *umma* is an imagined community (Smith 2005). It is less authentic than a family, tribe, or clan. It is also less authentic than the public sphere in a Muslim-majority area or country, where Muslim identity can be taken for granted. To operate as an Islamist in the transnational realm requires a conscious effort.

The global *umma* is a highly elusive community established on a voluntary basis rather than by virtue of pristine social bonds. It relies on individual acts of conversion and self-(re)construction rather than organic solidarity. Transnational Muslims tend to bypass traditional authorities such as accredited religious scholars (*ulama*) or the traditional mores of the parent generation. In other words: "Reconstruction of what it means to be a good Muslim in a non-Muslim society essentially rests on the individual. (…) A Muslim is somebody who says he or she is a Muslim, and not somebody who is a Muslim by origin" (Roy 2004, 175-176). Thus, transnational Islamists are forced to behave in reflexive and self-centered ways associated with modern *gesellschaft* rather than traditional *gemeinschaft*.

As one author notes, "[t]he strength and source of unity of the transnational *umma* today (…) lies in a critical belief that Muslims must take their religion and its texts in their hands and no longer rely on traditional scripturalist interpretations that have little bearing on their contemporary lives" (Echchaibi 2011, 40). Thus, Muslim televangelist Amr Khaled "asked his viewers to write down personal goals and develop a plan to fulfil them" (ibid, p. 38).

Where does all of this take us? Must we conclude that cosmopolitan world society and its Islamic mirror image are aspirations only, and therefore unreal? On the one hand, it is true that either of them is contested and rests on a distinct agentic illusion. It is ironic that both world society and global Islamism entangle their exponents in a sort of mutual camouflage, with the former demanding collectively oriented behavior from alleged rational monads and the latter requiring self-reflexive repertoires of purposive agency from true believers.

On the other hand, world society and global Islamism are very real as political projects. The fact that agents do not always act in conformity with the regulative ideals advertised by the social structures under which they operate does not obliterate the validity of those ideals. On the contrary, world society could hardly exist without the commitment to autonomous individual agency; and global Islamism depends on individual people genuinely believing that their agency is subordinate to the imagined community of the global *umma*.

Such contradictions are part and parcel of any large-scale political project. Take nationalism as an example. Just like the global *umma*, nations are invented rather than primordial communities. Historically, nationalists have always been beleaguered by serious contradictions, with the 19th-Century European nation-state being the epitome of civil society rather than organic community as claimed by thinkers like Herder. Despite this performative contradiction, nationalism has been an important social and political force for at least two centuries. By the same token, it is fair to say that world society and global Islamism are both haunted by performative contradictions and yet constitute significant social and political projects.

In sum, it would be inappropriate to deny the virulence of world society on the grounds that there are performative contradictions (Boli and Thomas 1999). It would be equally inappropriate to conclude from the performative contradictions of Islamists that global Islamism is ultimately a benign appendage to postmodern pluralism (as in Mandaville 2001, 2011). Despite all contradictions, *gesellschaft* tries to maximize agency within a minimal structure of procedural principles while *gemeinschaft* tries to maximize the integrative force of normative structures within which a highly embedded form of agency is to take place.

## Principles and Values

This leads us to the differences between world society and global Islamism in terms of principles and values. While world society and global Islamism raise competing claims to universal validity, they are normatively constituted in different ways. World society relies on procedural principles, as well as secularist values such as human rights. The latter are fairly thin compared to Islamism, which is rooted in substantive religious and communitarian values.

From a sociological institutionalist viewpoint, world society is rooted in modern capitalism and a secularized version of Western Christendom. Rationality is viewed as both necessary and natural. It is understood as the purposive structuring of action in terms of means and ends. The ends fundamental to world society are progress materially understood as the accumulation of wealth, and justice in terms of formal equality. The rational means employed to achieve such ends are bureaucracy and capitalist markets (Finnemore 1996, 331). This is complemented by a number of relatively thin substantive values such as human rights.

Global Islamism is also rooted in modernity and can be understood as a variety of globalization. However, its professed ultimate end is the actualization of thick substantive values. More specifically, it "inverts" modernity and globalization to propagate a specific brand of religious values. On the one hand, global Islamism is compelled to rely on purposive rationality as part of the modern condition. On the other hand, this rationality is (de)rationalized as subordinate to God's will as revealed in Islam's Holy Scriptures. Thereby, Islam and its value content are essentialized as immutable and universally applicable and valid.

One of the results is an authoritarian political culture, regardless of whether Islamic values are ceremonially enacted or counteracted by the forces of secularism. It may not be politically correct to state this, but Islamism has clear authoritarian tendencies when compared to the liberal constitutionalism propagated by world society. These authoritarian tendencies are largely a function of the more general authoritarian tendencies in contemporary Islam, as has been demonstrated by the sophisticated statistical analysis of empirical data. It would go beyond the scope of the present article to recapitulate this analysis in any detail, but the key finding is robust: the authoritarian tendencies of contemporary Islam are considerable and statistically significant regardless of any confounding factors such as economic underdevelopment. In fact, scholars like Fish (2011, 229-249) and Potrafke (2012) have controlled for various additional variables such as oil dependence and per capita income.

As a representational and analytical shortcut, let me present a cross-tabulation of familiar democracy indicators (Table 1).[13] My analysis is based on scores from the Polity Project and Freedom House. The data reflects the situation in 2011, subsequent to the Arab Spring.[14]

| | Polity Project: average scores | | Freedom House: average scores | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Democracy | Autocracy | Political rights | Civil liberties |
| All countries | 5.8 | 1.7 | 3.4 | 3.3 |
| Muslim-majority countries | 3.2 | 3.4 | 5.1 | 4.9 |
| Arab League members | 1.8 | 4.6 | 5.7 | 5.4 |

Table 1: Islam and government

The table indicates that Muslim-majority polities tend to be considerably less democratic and more autocratic than the world average, and to infringe political rights and civil liberties far more than average. The data for the Arab League indicates a particularly strong authoritarian propensity for countries where the proportion of devote Muslims in the general population is particularly high (see also the reflections in Rowley and Smith 2009).

To be sure, in opinion surveys the inhabitants of Muslim-majority countries express strong support for democracy (Inglehart and Norris 2003; Rowley and Smith 2009, 290-295). Nevertheless it would be a fallacy to conclude that, given the opportunity, Muslim-majority nations would translate this unspecific desire for democracy into actual democratization (Maseland and Hoorn 2011). For example, the 1979 democratic revolution against the Shah of Persia did not lead to democracy but to the autocratic reign of Ayatollah Khomeini. In 1992, when Islamists had won a democratic election in Algeria, only an authoritarian takeover could prevent an even more autocratic Islamist regime. In 2003, US decision makers expressed their expectation that toppling Saddam Hussein would not only lead to a burgeoning democracy in Iraq but also to a tsunami of democratization in the region. Despite some very limited success in Iraq, it seems fair to say that these hopes have been scuttled.

The optimistic assumption that people in Muslim-majority countries are just waiting for their opportunity to establish liberal democracy is currently being tested once more in the Arab countries of North Africa and the Near East. Will political unrest in states like Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, and Syria lead to anything resembling liberal democracy as we know it? The world should certainly remain open to positive surprises, but past experience from these very countries seems to suggest that a short period of majority rule may simply lead to some new form of tyranny. This should dampen unrealistic expectations.

What does all of this tell us about authoritarian tendencies in transnational Islamism? Hard data are not available, for obvious reasons.[15] But more indirect forms of evidence are easy to come by. For example, experimentation in various Western countries with deliberative and consultative Muslim councils has hardly led to the intended empowerment of "moderate Islam" (Vidino 2010; Silvestri 2010; Haddad and Golson 2007). Overall, it seems reason-

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[13] My calculations; Polity IV scores for 2011 (annual time series 1800-2011); Freedom House scores for 2011 (Freedom House 2012, 14-17); Muslim-majority countries are operationally defined as all those countries that had a Muslim majority in 2010 (Pew Research Center 2011, 155-157).

[14] In the Polity Project, a scale from 0 to 10 indicates a country's level of democracy or autocracy. Freedom House offers a scale from 1 to 7, indicating the level of infringement on political rights and civil liberties.

[15] Global Islamism isn't firmly institutionalized, and hasn't really come to power anywhere. The topic is seriously clouded by political correctness, and even collecting data would be seen as inflammatory by some people.

able to conclude *a fortiori* from the Muslim world's general authoritarian tendencies that the same authoritarian tendencies apply *even more* in transnational and global Islamism.

# Social Integration

Social integration is crucial to understanding any political project and its chances of success, for two basic reasons. First, social integration enables political entrepreneurs to engage in collective action: the success or failure of any political project hinges on the degree to which the community or society in question is either socially integrated or fragmented. Second, a modicum of social integration is a prerequisite for the scholar to derive any generalizations.

It is important to note that social integration is not equivalent to uniformity. For example, much has been made of the fact that political Islam is not monolithic (e.g. Ayoob 2008). While this is certainly true, it does not defeat careful attempts at generalization. In the eloquent words of Steven Fish (2011, 9), "little is gained by simply assuming the nonexistence of commonalities among members of a faith group, asserting that all religions are endlessly complex and heterogeneous, reciting the bromide that this or that group is 'not monolithic', and abandoning any effort to discern general tendencies".

Neither cosmopolitanism nor global Islamism nor any other significant social aggregate is monolithic. But it does not follow that generalization is inadmissible. Even my family is not monolithic, and yet we are a family. Surely the fact of not being monolithic does not mean that there are no commonalities or regularities to Islam—or Islamism, or cosmopolitanism, or capitalism, or France, or my family for that matter. Experience tells us that groups are aggregate units, and can be treated as such to the extent that they achieve social integration.

Once again, take nation-states as an example: far from being monolithic they are divided by factions, and yet they operate as units and are treated as such by other states and international relations scholars. Let us apply this to Islam. While it is certainly not monolithic, the presence of diversity does not prevent Muslims from being integrated into an imagined, and thus potentially real, community. This raises the rather more empirical question of just how integrated, and thus real, world society and global Islamism actually are.

This is also important because, to the extent that the two stand in competition as rival globalization projects, any superiority with regard to social integration is likely to translate into a competitive advantage. Let us use a simple taxonomy to ask systematic questions about the relative degree of social integration, and thus the competitive advantages and disadvantages, of world society on the one hand and global Islamism on the other (Figure 1).
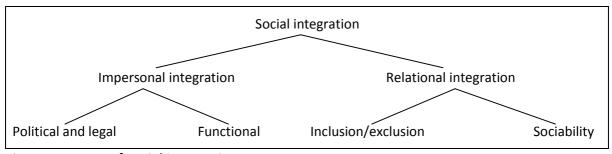


Figure 1: Forms of social integration

There is a more impersonal form of integration, either through political and legal systems or through functional systems such as markets and science. There is also a more relational form of integration, either through the management of group boundaries or through interpersonal cohesion and sociability. At first glance, it is intuitively appealing to associate impersonal with societal and relational with communal integration. This would lead us to expect that world society should have a competitive advantage with regard to impersonal integration through legal and political as well as functional systems, while global Islamism should have a competitive edge with regard to relational integration, whether by the management of group boundaries or by virtue of the cohesion afforded by higher sociability.[16]

As we will see in the remainder of this section, the first of these expectations is fulfilled. But the evidence on the second expectation is somewhat inconclusive, suggesting that global Islamism does ultimately not have a competitive edge over world society.

## Political and Legal Integration

Mass politics and law are highly impersonal forms of integration, and yet they pose a challenge to world society because they are tied to the national rather than the global level. Despite talk about global governance, world society remains constituted to a significant extent by nation-states promulgating codified positive law, either at the national or, sometimes, at the international level. Insofar as nation-states are imagined communities, there is a communitarian element to them and their legal systems. It is paradoxical for a globalist political project such as cosmopolitan world society to be stuck with forms of political and legal integration that date back to the early modern period, long before runaway globalization.

At the same time, however, cosmopolitan world society is able to rely on the very nation-states whose territorial boundaries it transcends (Thomas et al. 1987; Meyer et al. 1997). It is important to note that the nation-state and codified positive law are modern liberal achievements. While sometimes touted as primordial communities à la Herder, modern nation-states have always rather been containers of civil society à la Locke. For cosmopolitan world society this mitigates the apparent paradox of being forced to rely on old forms of political and legal integration such as the nation-state and national legal systems.

For global Islamism, the situation is even more ambiguous. On the one hand, Islamism and Sharia law are seen as antithetical to Westphalian statehood and secular constitutionalism. This can be seen from the fact that all states in the Muslim world, simply in their capacity as states claiming to rule a territory, have seen themselves compelled, one way or another, to control and censure Islam. Until recently, a violent backlash has followed every time a Muslim state endeavored to lift the lid on religion. This includes several military coups in Turkey, as well as an authoritarian crackdown on Islamists in Algeria in the 1990s.[17]

On the other hand, where Islamists are in power they are usually compelled to engage in Westphalian statehood. This applies to countries as diverse as Saudi Arabia and Khomeini's Iran. In so doing, Islamist leaders hark back to an old school of thought according to which Islam not only tolerates but even endorses territorial pluralism (Piscatori 1986). But even so,

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[16] Shaw (1994, 9-13) discusses normative integration as a subcategory of integration in world society. For analytical reasons I have covered this in the section on principles and values.

[17] Recently, there is debate on whether "Muslimhood" (White 2005) or "Muslimism" (Çevik and Thomas 2012) may become a game changer, reconciling secular constitutionalism with freedom of religious expression. At the same time, there is evidence that even Turkish Islamists are using power to suppress secularism.

they are compelled to adopt Western templates of statehood and codified law. Even where they have attempted to implement the Sharia, the Sharia was transformed almost beyond recognition by its incorporation into codified positive law (Otto 2010).[18]

This is not to deny that Islamist states are an irritant to the international system. Like all other revolutionary states, from France in the 18th Century to the Soviet Union in the 20th Century, they undeniably constitute a challenge to international order and stability (Kissinger 1968). Nevertheless, apart from failed states such as Somalia, even for radical Islamists the nation-state remains "the only concrete political reality" (Zubaida 2011, 183). Paradoxically, this pushes global Islamists away from the utopian ideal of communal integration under a caliphate towards impersonal forms of integration.

To be sure, Sharia law is incompatible with a liberal understanding of universal human rights. Classical Sharia comes with inhumane practices such as flogging and stoning, as well as procedural discriminations against women whose evidence in court is given half the weight of that of men (Peters 2005, 6-68). The Sharia clause in the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* makes a mockery of international human rights obligations.[19] And yet, whenever Islamists come to power they are forced to rely on the state tradition of codified positive law. The very process of legal codification then considerably mitigates Sharia practices. As a consequence, the execution of Sharia criminal law remains a rare occurrence (Otto 2010).

At the current stage of world society, there is simply no way around the Westphalian nation-state and codified positive law (Badie 2000). But not only are these "Western" institutions insidious for radical Islamists, they have also had a considerable socializing effect on them. This is one of the reasons why it is so difficult for radical Islamists to put their aspirations into political practice. At the pre-revolutionary stage, they must struggle against states and legal systems that either crush or control them. After the revolution, all they can practically do is capture these states and legal systems. They then end up with powerful tools for political rule which however undermine and defeat their own ideological aspirations.

Thus, Islamists are paradoxically forced to replicate impersonal forms of integration that are more compatible with cosmopolitan world society. At the operational level, it strengthens them and allows them to maintain the illusion that they are on the rise. At the strategic level, however, their credibility is undermined by the compulsion to appropriate rather than transcend "un-Islamic" forms of societal integration such as the nation-state and codified law. This is a contradiction Islamists are somewhat able to navigate, but it is no strength.


## Functional Integration

In a ground-breaking article of 1971, Niklas Luhmann wrote about the emerging world society. He stated that political and legal integration at the national and international level was being eclipsed by the transnational integration of functional subsystems such as markets, science, and technology (Luhmann 1971). In 1997, he was able to state this more precisely: globalization amounts to the supersession of national societies that are territorially constituted through politics and law, by an all-encompassing world society constituted by functional subsystems such as markets, science, and technology (Luhmann 1997, Vol. II, Ch. 10).

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[18] For a range of comparative studies of Sharia law, see Peters (2005, 142-185) [largely analytical]; Marshall (2005) [largely polemical]; Abiad (2008) [largely apologetic]; and Hefner (2011) [largely anti-alarmist].

[19] *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam*, adopted by the Organization of Islamic Conference on 5 August 1990, Art. 24: "All the rights and freedoms stipulated in this declaration are subjected to the Islamic Shari'ah".

While the importance of political and legal integration has far from disappeared, functional subsystems such as markets, science, and technology are increasingly important for the propagation and integration of world society. In fact, this is what globalization is all about.

How well could global Islamists, if politically successful, insert themselves into this hyper-modern environment of functional integration of global markets, science, and technology? To answer this question, we can use another *a-forteriori* argument. We may first compare the degree to which Muslim countries and societies are able to keep pace with the level of functional integration elsewhere. If the degree of functional integration is lower for Muslim countries and societies, many of which are modernist, then global Islamists should be even less able to achieve functional integration with global markets, science, and technology.[20]

Individual Muslims, as well as Muslim countries, undeniably participate in the global economy and appropriate the products of modern science and technology. For example, Muslim countries are key exporters of oil and other important strategic commodities; and Muslims are avid users of social networking platforms and mobile telecommunication devices. But does that mean that they are integrated into the vanguard of modern technological society?

|  | Share of High-tech exports in % of manufactured exports | Share of ICT goods exports in % of total goods exports | Number of scientific articles per million inhabitants |
|---|---|---|---|
| Muslim-majority countries | 6% | 2% | 19 |
| World-wide | 18% | 11% | 114 |
| High income countries | 17% | 10% | 549 |
| Low/middle income countries | 18% | 14% | 29 |
| Latin America and Caribbean | 11% | 10% | 41 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 3% | 1% | 6 |
| Low income countries | 3% | .. | 2 |

Table 2: Science and technology

As Table 2 suggests, Muslim-majority countries are a far cry from the cutting edge of modern technological society.[21] They export fewer high-tech goods than any other relevant group of countries, except for Sub-Saharan Africa and the most destitute countries. The same applies to the exportation of information and computer technology (ICT). Muslim-majority countries also produce astonishingly few scientific and technical journal articles.

To a limited extent, this can be blamed on omitted variables such as poverty, structural underdevelopment, or the "oil curse". However, it is important to note that not all Muslim-majority countries are poor and structurally disadvantaged. Similarly, not all of them are net oil exporters. Regardless of this cross-country variation, underdevelopment is pervasive.

Why are so few Muslim countries rising from underdevelopment, at a time when there are many non-Western emerging economies such as India and China? There are two interesting outliers from the pattern depicted above, and both of them confirm the rule. Turkey is the leading Muslim country in the field of science, and it also has the longest secularist tradition

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[20] A direct negative effect of Islamic fundamentalism on scientific productivity seems likely, but as of 2007 could not be demonstrated by "scientometric" methods (Pouris 2007).

[21] Calculations based on Pew Research Center (2011, 155-157); World Bank (2012, 42-44,328-330, 332-334). Older data can be gleaned from Hoodbhoy (2007); and the *Nature* special issue on *Islam and Science* (Vol. 444, Issue 7115, 2 November 2006); see also UNDP (2003); Anwar and Abu Bakar (1997); Hoodbhoy (1991).

of suppressing Islam (since 1919).[22] Malaysia is the most advanced exporter of high-tech and computer technology, and its population is about 30% Chinese and Indian.[23] Deeply religious Muslim-only countries such as Saudi Arabia consistently perform poorly.

Already in the 19th Century, modernist reformers such as Mohammed Abduh (1849-1905) and Rashid Rida (1865-1935) detected Islamic "backwardness" as a source of Western strength and Muslim weakness.[24] As a remedy, they called for the reconciliation of Islam with Western enlightenment and the scientific revolution. Following Abduh and Rida, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt includes many people trained in science and encourages its members to study subjects such as medicine (Masood 2006, 23). The same applies to more radical Islamist organizations, including terrorist groups, which often idealize the unity between "the medic, the militant, and the fighter" (Bellion-Jourdan 2003, 69-84). What is more, in the 1980s Islamist ideologues announced the advent of "Islamic science". Despite all the enthusiasm among Islamist intellectuals, it appears that this movement has neither led to innovative technologies nor to testable hypotheses (Hoodbhoy 1991).

It is thus not for lack of trying that the reconciliation of Islam and science has failed to take place. Sometimes Muslim countries have significantly invested in the advancement of science and technology. This includes investment by Pakistan and Iran in defense technology and mass universities, as well as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates building expensive elite universities and research institutes. However, all of this investment has led to little or no spill-over. Pakistani and Iranian weapons are more often "a triumph of reverse engineering rather than original research and development"; the universities of Muslim countries hardly appear in global rankings; and the prestigious educational institutions in the Emirates and Qatar mostly operate on manpower imported from the West (Hoodbhoy 2007, 51).

While there are many factors explaining the apparent backwardness of the Muslim world, the closed social structures supported by contemporary Islam are almost certainly an important factor. Religious and other forms of non-conformism are frowned upon. For example, the Pakistani Abdus Salam, who won the 1979 Nobel Prize in Physics, was forbidden to set foot on Pakistani university campuses, despite the fact that he was one of only two Muslims to ever have won a scientific Nobel Prize, simply because he belonged to the Ahmedi sect, considered heretical (Hoodbhoy 2007, 52).[25] After 90,000 Pakistanis were killed in a 2005 earthquake, "no major scientist in the country publicly challenged the belief, freely propagated through the mass media, that the quake was God's punishment for sinful behavior" (Hoodbhoy 2007, 53). None of this appears to be compatible with the Cartesian attitude of radical doubt and open enquiry which lies at the heart of the scientific method.

While world society is based on strong foundations in economic globalization and other forms of global interdependence including science and technology, the Muslim world is struggling to catch up. Muslim-majority countries and their societies can piggyback on off-the shelf technologies such as mobile phones and social networking websites, thus exploiting the opportunity structure offered by world society, but they cannot outperform their competitors with regard to functional integration. The same applies to global Islamists. The usage of modern technology affords them tactical advantages, but their dependence on "Western" technology and science remains a significant source of strategic weakness.

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[22] Turkey: 114 scientific articles per million inhabitants.
[23] Malaysia: High-tech exports 45% of manufactured exports; ICT goods exports 34% of total goods exports
[24] See also Lewis (2002), focussing on failed modernization attempts in the late Ottoman Empire.
[25] The other one is the Egyptian-American scientist Ahmed Zewail, who won the 1999 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

## Inclusion/Exclusion

World society and global Islamism share the utopian vision of a situation where all people subscribe to the same moral code. No exclusion or discrimination would then be needed, as everybody would be a member of the same social universe. It is seriously debatable whether such a utopian state of affairs can ever be reached. As long as moral orientations are contested, however, groups are forced to manage their boundaries one way or another. By the same token, adherents to one moral code need to demarcate themselves from adherents to other moral codes. The practical question is thus not if, but how, discrimination is going to take place. To be more specific, the question is how social groups delimit the categories of (1) in-group, (2) out-group, and (3) the relationships between them.

It is uncontroversial that Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, rests on the notion that either you are a believer or you are not. This is not to deny that there is an interesting variety of views among Muslims on who is a true believer and who is a heretic (*zindiq)*. There are similar debates on how far a heretic may stretch her views before counting as an unbeliever. The controversy is not on *whether* there are sheep and goats, but on *who* they are.

At the in-group level, there is near-universal consensus among Muslims that Islam cannot and must not be secularized. For Christians there may be a spectrum from radical to secular, but for Muslims there is only a spectrum from radical to nominal or moderate. There are secular "Christian inspired" NGOs, but a secular Muslim NGO would be a contradiction in terms (Benedetti 2006). By the same token there may be Muslims who are only nominal, but when you state as a Muslim that you are secular you will be counted as an apostate. Apostasy is seen by devote Muslims as the abomination par excellence. According to an important opinion survey, a majority of Muslims in Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, and Nigeria support the death penalty for people leaving Islam (Pew Research Center 2010, 14).[26]

Similarly, there is a wide range of views among Islamists on the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the out-group but there is hardly any debate as to whether the out-group is and should be separated from the in-group. In theory, infidels are sometimes seen as one monolithic "religion of Satan". In practice, there are various subcategories to discriminate not only against but also between non-members: *kafir, harbi, mushrik*; people of the book, idolaters, etc. (Friedman 2003, 54-86). Most of these terms are negative, with the partial exception of "people of the book" that sometimes distinguishes Christians and Jews from other infidels.

Finally, the relationship between in-group and out-group(s) is seen in non-symmetrical terms. On the one hand, a Muslim must never commit apostasy. In most Muslim-majority contexts, attempts to incite Muslims to apostasy are forbidden by law and/or avenged by strong informal sanctions (US Department of State 2012). On the other hand, the propagation of Islam is seen in an entirely positive light and Muslims are eager to welcome new converts. By the same token, criticizing Islam is seen as blasphemy whereas criticizing other religions is seen as speaking the truth and pleasing in the eyes of God and his Prophet.[27]

Now compare this to cosmopolitans, who at least in theory are pluralist to the point of trying to embrace communities that seal themselves off against liberal cosmopolitan values. Take for example the arch-cosmopolitan Ulrich Beck. According to this author (2002, 18),

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[26] Egypt: 84%; Jordan: 86%; Pakistan: 76%; Nigeria: 51%.
[27] Short of submitting to Islam, the highest social recognition a non-Muslim can achieve in classical doctrine is a sort of second-rate citizenship under Muslim protection (*dhimmitude*); see Ye'or (2002).

cosmopolitanism "includes the otherness of other civilizations and modernities". Small wonder, then, that Beck diagnoses an "exclusion crisis" and a lack of orientation (p. 20). However, he goes on to celebrate this predicament as a set of "creative contradictions" and calls for "dialogic imagination" (p. 35). He further demands a "higher amorality" that denies the belief in the superiority of one's own morality (p. 36). In a way, this is a fancy sociological expression of the cosmopolitan reflex of not antagonizing opposing moralities but rather meeting them with subdued forms of toleration, accommodation, or even appeasement.

But alas, this has obvious limits. Any society, including a cosmopolitan one, must defend itself against internal and external challenges. When faced with this necessity, the cosmopolitan reflex is to include as many individuals and groups as possible, and to discriminate against the remainder on the basis of conduct. Anomic conduct undermining social order is defined as criminality, while politically motivated attacks are defined as terrorism. At the same time, these challenges are framed as fringe phenomena. While criminals and terrorists, as well as their immediate supporters, are persecuted, the social milieus supporting criminality and terrorism are exempted and become targets of intense accommodation efforts.[28]

Liberal cosmopolitan society has internalized the view that the only legitimate ground for exclusion and discrimination is "what they do", not "who they are". This is different for communities, including adherents to global Islamism, who unscrupulously base exclusion and discrimination not only on conduct but also on identity characteristics, i.e. "who they are". Thus, there are important differences in how global Islamism and world society discriminate. Islamism discriminates boldly, both against internal and external perceived enemies, and tries to expand its own boundaries. Cosmopolitanism, by contrast, is a globalist mindset that tries to erase boundaries and reinforces them only with a bad conscience.

Taking all of this together, it is possible to derive a synthetic statement: while cosmopolitan world society tries to actualize its global aspirations by erasing social boundaries, global Islamism rests on a crisp boundary constituting a communitarian "sphere of justice" (Walzer 1983). Unlike other communitarian political projects, global Islamism tries to radically advance its boundary and thus to extend its sphere of justice to the global level.[29] It seems reasonable to conclude that the result is a certain competitive edge for global Islamism on the one hand, and a considerable source of vulnerability for world society on the other. That said, one should not overlook the fact that the limited toleration among Islamists for internal dissent is also a source of severe fragmentation and sectarian infighting (*fitna*).

## Sociability

Even if *fitna* were not an issue, the effective management of group boundaries would not be enough for Islamists to achieve communal integration at the global level. Establishing a global *umma* in any politically and sociologically virulent sense would also require a high degree of social and organizational vibrancy at the transnational level. A purely spiritual and otherworldly *umma* would clearly not meet the political aspirations of global Islamists.

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[28] An example from foreign affairs is the counterterrorist practice of targeted killings while trying to win the hearts and minds of ordinary Muslims. An example from domestic affairs is trying to win over moderate Islam through sweet talk and various material inducements while cracking down on Islamist extremism.

[29] Of all world religions, only Christianity has comparable ambitions; see the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29-37); but see Footnote 6 on why this comparison is not strictly relevant in the present context.

In other words, a high level of sociability is a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of a real substantial global *umma*. It would entail a propensity of devote Muslims to get organized not only at the local but also at the national and at the transnational level. This propensity would have to be more intense than the associational vibrancy of world society, to offset the stronger foundation of the latter in legal-political and functional integration.

Are these conditions met? And if they are not, does it follow that global Islamism is not a challenge to cosmopolitan world society? And even if global Islamism is ultimately unable to grow stronger than cosmopolitan world society, does this also apply to Islamism *tout court*? As we are about to see, all three of these questions must be answered in the negative.

The empirical analysis of associational life in Muslim countries suggests that sociability among Muslims is not particularly high. Using data from the World Values Survey, Fish (2011, 59-85) has applied advanced statistical methods to compare the sociability of Muslims with that of non-Muslims, including Christians and non-denominationalists. Overall, he finds no meaningful difference between Muslims and non-Muslims with regard to sociability. When introducing various controls such as education, socioeconomic development, and regime type, Muslims turn out to be slightly more sociable compared to non-denominationalists (but not to Christians). Overall, the effect is fairly weak and certainly not substantial.

On the whole, Fish finds that Muslims have lower rates of membership than non-Muslims in virtually any type of voluntary association: humanitarian or charitable organization, recreational organization, educational organization, labor union, professional organization, political party, etc. When introducing various controls, there is no significant effect – whether positive or negative – of being Muslim on being a member in any organization other than local religious congregations. Incidentally, there appears to be a negative relationship between the proportion of Muslims in a country and membership in a political party. If these findings apply to Muslims overall, then it is fair to conclude *a fortiori* that the organizational prerequisites for a triumphant global Islamist movement cannot possibly be met.

This brings us to the second question. If global Islamists are structurally unable to outperform world society on any indicator of social integration except for inclusion/exclusion, does this mean that they are due to disappear soon from the transnational political landscape? The 20th Century has shown that political projects are not usually relinquished by their followers because they are failing in the competition against rival political projects, but only when they are materially and socially exhausted. The dismal performance of Soviet communism was apparent already by the late 1960s, and yet it took another two decades for communists to abandon their dreams of world revolution. It was clear by 1943/44 that the military defeat of national-socialist Germany and fascist Japan was inevitable, and yet millions more Germans and Japanese had to die before the final surrender. By the same token, global Islamists shouldn't be expected to give up because their political project doesn't work.

Finally, the third question. If global Islamism is doomed as a political project, does the same apply to Islamism *in general*? Again, the answer is negative. This becomes clear if we imagine a severe crisis or terminal decline of cosmopolitan world society. So far we have presupposed that world society is ascendant and will continue to flourish. But what would happen if it became unviable for some reason? For example, it is conceivable that a combination of climate change and energy scarcity could lead to a demise of industrial civilization and thus reverse recent trends of globalization (Friedrichs 2013). It would then become apparent that global Islamism needs world society as a social substratum and cannot achieve communal integration at the planetary level, least of all when the political, legal, and functional inte-

gration of world society falls apart. As global Islamism piggybacks on world society, the demise of globalization would seriously debilitate its viability as a political project.[30]

At the national level, however, Islamism may have a bright future as recent developments in North Africa seem to suggest.[31] Even more so at the local level, where specific features of Muslim communities may turn into a comparative strength when cosmopolitan world society enters a terminal decline. Muslims tend to be significantly more socially conservative than non-Muslims (Fish 2011, 85-98), and Islamists embrace highly traditionalist family values. The reproduction rate of Muslims is high, and their share in world population is projected to rise from 20% in 1990 to 26.5% in 2030 (Pew Research Center 2011). As in the case of evangelical Christians, the considerable social cohesion of Islamists at the grassroots level makes them competitive in local power struggles against groups lacking the same solidarity.

Whatever jihadist firebrands may think, this would not spell the advent of the global caliphate. In the Muslim diaspora, the competition between agonizing host societies and vibrant Islamic communities would play out at the local level: town by town, neighborhood by neighborhood, village by village. In Muslim-majority countries, the most likely scenario would be a higher incidence of failed states—the likes of Somalia and Afghanistan, with Yemen, Libya, and Syria next in line. It is deeply ironic that, while global Islamists per definition have planetary aspirations, what they are ultimately likely to bring about is either a variety of national Islamist movements or local fragmentation along communal fault lines.

## Conclusion

As political projects, cosmopolitan world society and global Islamism pursue incompatible universalistic goals. The cosmopolitan vision of world society is to transcend communal bonds, thus recreating liberal civil society at the global level. The communitarian alternative to this cosmopolitan vision, as epitomized by global Islamism, is to scale up a particular community ideal, namely the vision of Muslim *umma*, to the global level.[32]

As we have seen, there is a competitive side to the different ways in which world society and global Islamism achieve social integration. World society thrives on established forms of political and legal integration, and is buttressed by integration via functional subsystems such as markets, science, and technology. To counter the competitive advantage of world society with regard to impersonal integration, global Islamism would need a countervailing competitive advantage with regard to relational integration. Despite its two-edged ability to deploy bolder discrimination (enabling a more aggressive stance against unbelievers, but also leading to *fitna* among Islamists), global Islamism is not stronger than world society with regard to sociability. Insofar as the social integration of Muslims into a universal community of believers cannot be successful, global Islamism is bound to be frustrated.

Until then, global Islamism strives to project the communitarian vision of the *umma* to the planetary stage, thus perpetuating the distinction between believers and unbelievers at the

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[30] Equally, it seems reasonable to assume that the demise of the West and the rise of non-Western powers like China, Russia, and India will deprive global Islamists of much of their political opportunity structure.

[31] From a liberal viewpoint this is a relatively benign scenario because, in principle, the presence of national Islamist movements does not rule out a pluralist international order. In practice, however, this would require considerable self-restraint on the part of the Islamists: respect for non-Muslims, observation of international law (including international human rights standards) even where it clashes with Sharia, etc.

[32] On this upward shift in the "scale of contention", see also Tarrow (2005, 120-128).

highest possible level of social aggregation. People and communities subscribing to this "integralist" vision are associated with *dar al-Islam*, while others are relegated to *dar al-Harb*. Cosmopolitan world society, by contrast, aims for social integration by transcending communitarian bonds of belonging and absorbing residual segments such as nations.

While we should certainly remain sensitive to the weaknesses of cosmopolitanism, it is perhaps appropriate to ponder what can be done to contain global Islamism. To begin with, it is important to remember Popper's adage that open society must know its enemies (Popper 1945). This is hard to accept for liberal cosmopolitans who have a tendency to endlessly, and rightfully, criticize neoliberalism, nationalism, and hidden authoritarian tendencies within Western societies while turning a blind eye to the internal or external enemies of their societies, such as Islamists. As we have seen, this is inherent in the constitutive logic of cosmopolitanism—namely trying to accommodate rather than antagonize the "other".

Since proscribing illiberal practices is in itself illiberal, liberal societies are largely defenseless against particularistic communities adopting illiberal goals and practices. In pursuit of moral segregation, such communities can easily exploit this paradox by invoking precisely the liberal values they despise. This is called multiculturalism, and it can lead to highly paradoxical results, as is happening in Europe (Lebl 2010). For example, the United Kingdom has made unique concessions to multicultural demands and yet has one of Europe's most disgruntled Muslim communities (Joppke 2009). Only few in the UK had the foresight to predict this because, in the Lockean tradition, British society pretends to be community-blind.

An interesting contrast is the French republican tradition, which enables the activation of a sort of communitarian mimicry. Under this stratagem, secularism (*laïcité*) is elevated to a community value of sorts—which means that French society acts as if it were a community when it feels challenged by illiberal communitarian goals and practices. Apart from *laïcité*, this also applies to other liberal values such as the emancipation of women, understood as non-domination by men. For example, in a 2008 sentence the French *Conseil d'État* explicitly invoked the notion of community to justify restrictions on the full body veil, ruling that the defendant had "adopted a radical practice of her religion, incompatible with the essential values of the French community, principally belief in the equality of sexes".[33]

The French case suggests that, to confront Islamism, cosmopolitan society may be well advised to dialectically recover the community modus operandi. Critics may object that this can have the unintended consequence of exacerbating exactly the kind of communal clashes that it is meant to contain. To the extent that these critics have a point, Canadian pragmatism may be preferable to French republicanism. According to the Canadian doctrine of reasonable accommodation, it is appropriate to generously accommodate minorities while at the same time remaining conscious and explicit about the normative "red lines".[34]

Any open society, including cosmopolitan world society, is deeply vulnerable when its instinctive and categorical response to adversaries is a refusal to recognize them for what they are, namely adversaries. Cosmopolitans must understand that relentless conflict is not a necessary corollary of the identification of an adversary, as there are many non-violent forms of political engagement. In fact, it seems that cosmopolitan world society would be strengthened by more reflexivity on when it is appropriate to accommodate its adversaries and when it is more appropriate to take them on. Eventually, conflict between world society

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[33] *Conseil d'État*, quoted in Koussens (2011); see also Koussens (2009).
[34] Another interesting case in point is the various temporary accommodations that were made with Islamists under Kemalist Turkey's militant secularism.

and global Islamism can be better managed when both are recognized as rival globalization projects, and when their mutual incompatibilities are acknowledged.[35]

## Postscript

The core of the matter is this. Communal integration and the capacity to sustain social diversity are two sides of the same coin. The more communally integrated a group or society, the more diversity it can sustain. For example, strong solidarity can keep a family together when husband and wife are very different, whereas a less cohesive family will fall apart. Unfortunately this combination of intense communal integration and strong diversity is rarely seen in large groups because it is highly enervating. Living with genuine otherness is possible, but requires relentless effort. One escape route is cosmopolitanism, paying lip service to the ideal of diversity while actually reducing communal integration. This may work in periods when impersonal systems such as markets and social welfare spending provide a substitute for communal ties. But in times of crisis and when challenged by irreducible otherness, the self-delusion of cosmopolitanism becomes manifest. It turns out that cosmopolitan society cannot deal with genuine otherness but only with the token diversity of fellow liberals sharing the cosmopolitan mind-set. Another escape route is communalism, be it of the nationalist or tribal or religious kind. Here, intense communal integration is exploited not to sustain diversity but to suppress it. While this has severe consequences for personal liberty, it also reduces the considerable effort required for living nearby real irreducible otherness.

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[35] After a presentation I was asked: "So should we not pass the other cheek?" This is indeed what a Christian ought to do. It means not to be part of this world, and it entails not to take part in political contestation. It is far from what cosmopolitan world society, or global Islamism for that matter, stand for. It is very hard to do, and few have ever done it.

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