

# Islam and Globalization: Secularism, Religion, and Radicalism

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What is Islam's place within globalization? Many prominent scholars characterize the religion as incapable of adapting to a globalized society because Islam instinctively opposes globalization and the secular values it entails. However, this explorative endeavor favors a multidimensional rather than polemic approach, one that views the recent Islamic revival, radical Islamic militants, and the broader return of religion around the globe as critical aspects of globalization. This investigation does not so much advance a centralized argument as it acts as a web of possibilities, linking concepts and realities together under a global framework in the hope of positing a broader appreciation of Islam and its evolution vis-à-vis globalization and the normative context within which it lies situated.

At the end of the Cold War, partly in response to the ideological lacuna left by the collapse of international bipolarity and partly in reaction to the realization that globalization was inexorable, numerous scholars proposed new paradigmatic theories of international relations that expressed a new dynamic of global conflict. These architects, whom Sadowski memorably labels »global chaos theorists«, described globalization as a fragmenting process, eroding the sovereignty of states and fomenting the rebirth of new social, cultural, and religious loyalties.<sup>1</sup> They forecasted a world divided along religious-civilizational lines that »seemed to be slipping over a precipice into an epoch of ethnic and cultural violence«.<sup>2</sup> As such, the revival of religion – particularly Islam – heralded a mutiny against modernity, globalization, and even secularism.<sup>3</sup> Globalization, defined as »[T]he inexorable integration of markets, nation-states, and

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1. Yahya Sadowski, *The Myth of Global Chaos* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 1998), 4.

2. Ibid.

3. As used by Sadowski but originally developed by Durkheim, anomie describes a state of normative confusion in which irrational violence increases as social restraints decay. See Steven Lukes, *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Works* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 210–11, and Sadowski, 27–34.

technologies to a degree never witnessed before, enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper«,<sup>4</sup> was merely an euphemism for »the revenge of history«.<sup>5</sup> Connolly vividly adumbrates this spiritual rupture: »The end of the Cold War and accelerated economic globalization, population migration, tourism, and cross-national cultural communication combine to increase the sense of insecurity among numerous constituencies. People encounter ideas, faiths, identities, foods, skin tones, music, sexual practices, and languages that disrupt presumptions to universality ... And ›the nation‹, so recently the site of calls to overcome corruption, division, and fragmentation, now seems too small to overwhelm these insecurities.«<sup>6</sup>

Quintessentially, these global chaos theorists computed a calculus that equated globalization to fragmentation because the variable of religion, most of all Islam, signified profound differences in the political visions between civilizations; due to globalization and the insecurities it bred, Muslims would predictably contest and clash with the non-Islamic world. According to this argument, Islam operates as a collective agent whose tendencies to violence and traditionalism transpose the religion as an intransigent enemy to global pluralism, representing its greatest threat and most defiant opponent.<sup>7</sup> Certainly, this argument has gained new theoretical currency after the iconic events of September 11, particularly as the broad war on terrorism has implicated a number of Muslim states into its front and cast new light on burgeoning networks of Islamic fundamentalism.<sup>8</sup> In fact, current formulations of Islam both inside the popular imagination as well as within the academic perimeters of global chaos theory allude to the stereotypical pictures of John Buchan's 1916 novel »The Greenmantle«: »Islam is a fighting creed, and the mullah still stands

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4. Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), 7–8.

5. Sadowski, 5–7.

6. William Connolly, »The New Cult of Civilizational Superiority,« *Theory and Event* Vol. 2: No. 4 (1999), 2–3.

7. By religion, I use Clifford Geertz's definition, »A system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence«. Geertz, »Religion as a Culture System«, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London, 1975), 87–125.

8. See Dion Dennis, »The World Trade Center and the Rise of the Security State«, *CTheory.net*, October 2002, [www.ctheory.net/text\\_file.asp?pick=299](http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=299) (4 April 2002).

in the pulpit with the Korean in one hand and a drawn sword in the other. Supposing there is some Ark of the Covenant which will madden the remotest Muslim peasant with dreams of Paradise? Then there will be hell let loose.«<sup>9</sup> Islam rests beyond the interpretative limits of reason, the nation-state, and the pluralist zeitgeist of globalization.<sup>10</sup>

This characterization of Islam, however, is fallacious. Almost sixty states exist today whose majority populations adhere to Islam; nearly 1.2 billion people across the globe call themselves Muslims.<sup>11</sup> To assume that they will all contest globalization and engage in some epic »clash of civilizations«<sup>12</sup> or participate in a »coming anarchy«<sup>13</sup> erases much of the discursive and ideological map of possibilities that fervently awaits the Muslim world. Moreover, the revival of Islamic identities and the emergence of new Muslim movements, including radical fundamentalist networks, compose only one element of a broader magnanimous trend: the resurgence of religion as a salient dynamic that has been reshaping identities, behavior, and orientations at the late stages of globalization.

The following investigation comes in three parts. The first examines global chaos theories of Islam, which attempt to argue that Islam and globalization are intractably opposed, and problematizes them with theoretical and empirical observations on radical Islam's modes of political praxis. The second section directs attention to the rise of secularism as a dominant discourse, one that has shaped the relationship between globalization and religion. The third part inspects the relationship between the Islamic revival and globalization, explicitly weighing questions about the religion's salience within globalizing processes. It concludes that Islam changes and adapts to exogenous influences and pressures, constantly flowing and ebbing in its ideological, structural, and legitimating effects, and that it is this remarkable capacity that allows the religion to not only flourish but also contribute to globalization.

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9. John Buchan, *The Greenmantle* (Hertfordshire, England: Wordsworth Classics, 1994), 5–6.

10. As pronounced in Ibn Warraq, *Why I Am Not A Muslim* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1995).

11. See Organization of Islamic Conference Website, <http://www.oic-oci.org/> (2 May 2002).

12. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1997).

13. Robert Kaplan, »The Coming Anarchy«, *The Atlantic Monthly* (February 1994), 44–76.

This much is clear: Islam distinguishes itself from other major world religions. It is a communal faith that presents a sweeping, internally cohesive set of legal and moral rules for the organization of collective and individual life. It addresses both spiritual and material concerns, in the theological and political spheres; the religion is not merely a set of functional beliefs, but a permeating layer of reality that shapes the duties of the Muslim in relation to God, fellow Muslims, and non-Muslims. It emphasizes the role of community and explicitly outlines various individual

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obligations and prescriptions vis-à-vis that community; thus, it transfers the social dimensions of its traditions into the private realm. And, unlike its sister Abrahamic religions, it also began as a political tradition centered on the surrender of complete sovereignty to God (Allah) and the juridical distinctions between the purviews of the divine and the humane. In turn, this tradition has filtered throughout the centuries through social institutions, political governance, legal structures, and normative values which craft the interpretative lens by which Muslims perceive the non-Muslim world.

Notably, the key assumption informing this analysis is that increasing economic, cultural, and political interaction between nation-states, cultures, and populations will continue. Such a forecast rests firmly upon the presumption that globalization moves with its own self-propelled, contingent logic within the anarchical system of extant nation-states as the teleological end of micro-level interactions, regardless of whether they are motivated by realist concerns (such as the search for stability and security) or by liberal-institutional desires (such as interdependence between states that aims to bring collective benefits to all players of the game). As such, this inquiry assumes that globalization is inevitable; it questions not if it will continue, but only how – on what terms, on whose grounds, and in what relation to Islam’s various faces.

## Globalization, Chaos, and Islam

### The Global Chaos Theorists

Global chaos theories describe Islam as incapable of peacefully coexisting with other civilizational and religious entities in an age of globalization, where the destinies of cultures and peoples inexorably intertwine. They interpret the »new wars« of the post-Cold War era as evidence that when identities are based primarily upon religion, such as Islam, conflicts will undoubtedly erupt.<sup>14</sup>

In the flushing afterglow of the Cold War victory, Fukuyama's »end of history« thesis articulated that because the history of mankind has been molded by the dialectical clash of ideas, the collapse of the Soviet Union and international communism signified the triumph of Western ideas and the end of history and the exhaustion of other ideologies.<sup>15</sup> Ideational competitors, such as socialism, had attempted to organize society according to a specific blueprint, but ultimately fell to the manifest good of Western liberal democracy. Taken to its logical end, the argument implies that if the engines of globalization, such as the nodes of technology, communications, and economic capital, rest within the West, and no competing ideas threaten its ideological dominance, then the course of globalization will occur according to Western values, beliefs, and norms.<sup>16</sup>

In response, however, prominent thinkers claimed that not only had the end of history never occurred, but new ideological forces would create constant sources of violent conflict that would disrupt the smooth flow of globalization. For instance, Hadar coined Islam as the »Green Peril«, green being the symbolic color of the religion, and described the dominant perception of Islam as »a cancer spreading around the globe, undermining the legitimacy of Western values«, as represented by the »Muslim fundamentalist, a Khomeini-like creature armed with a radical

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14. See Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford: Stanford Press, 1999).

15. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

16. James Cronin, »Convergence by Conviction: Politics and Economics in the Emergence of the ›Anglo-American Model‹«, *Journal of Social History* Vol. 33: No. 4 (2000), 781–804.

ideology and nuclear weapons, intent on launching a jihad«.17 Barber more bleakly illustrated this discord as a »Jihad vs. McWorld« struggle, in which globalization confronted the »retribalization of large swaths of humankind by war and bloodshed«, in which Islam functioned as a stubborn source of parochial, anti-globalist identity.18

However, the most scathing broadsides have been launched by Bernard Lewis, Robert Kaplan, and Samuel Huntington. A Middle East historian, Lewis contended that Islam had historically experienced periods of inspired hatred and violence, and that »it is our misfortune that part, though by no means all or even most, of the Muslim world is now going

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through such a period, and that much, though again not all, of that hatred is directed against us«.19 The contemporary »political language« of Islam – from the body politic to expressions of authority over communities of faith – revolved around great disappointment with the »talismans« of constitutional governance and post-colonial independence.20 A wave of angst rampaged through the Muslim world due to its traumatic domination by the West, and many Muslims were thus immanently opposed to Western civilization and its creations – capitalism, democracy, even liberalism. He observed that »It should by now be clear that we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies ... This is no less than a clash of civilizations – the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.«21 Significantly, in this and other passages, Lewis calls secularism and its

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17. Leon Hadar, »What Green Peril?«, *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1993), 27.

18. *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism are Reshaping the World*, ed. Benjamin Barber and Andrea Schulz (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), 15.

19. Bernard Lewis, »The Roots of Muslim Rage«, *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 266: No. 3 (September 1990), 47–60.

20. Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 215; 22–42. See also Lewis, »A Historical Overview«, *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 7: No. 2 (1996), 52–63.

21. Lewis 1990.

»worldwide expansion« (that is, globalization) as flashpoints on which the Muslim world would wage a struggle or resistance.<sup>22</sup>

More so than Lewis, Huntington presented his »clash of civilizations« thesis as a thinly veiled polemic against Fukuyama's sanguine prediction. He argued that if large parts of humanity still refuse to see the obvious superiority of Western ideas, it is because of deeply rooted incompatibilities in the collective makeup and value systems of their civilizations. Some ideas remained so incompatible that any sort of rapprochement would lead to conflict. For instance, the Islamic notion of a global »umma« (community of believers) that links Muslims across borders and states by faith alone threatened the normative basis of the Western concept of state sovereignty.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the Islamic civilization will clash with the West, especially given the strength of the Islamic revival, which he correctly defines as »a broad intellectual, cultural, social, and political movement« within the last forty years that aimed to revive »Islamic ideas, practices, and rhetoric and the rededication to Islam by Muslim populations«.<sup>24</sup> This endangers globalization, which he calls the result of »broad processes of modernization that have been going on since the eighteenth century«.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Huntington contended that the »Muslim propensity toward violent conflict«, as proven by various contemporary conflicts involving Muslim states, indicated the growing violence that would characterize Islam's relations with other religions and civilizations.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, Kaplan observed that while Western values originated from secular humanism, other cultures derived much of their values from religion, such as Islam.<sup>27</sup> Differences between alien cultures erupt in irrational violence, impervious to rational restraints and epitomized in the intrastate wars wracking much of Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Balkans. Furthermore, historical rifts between cultures and religions still held influence over present-day events; the ancient rivalry between Islam and Christendom, for instance, guided the horrific ethnic pogroms in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>28</sup> The »House of Islam« will clash with other civiliza-

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22. For more on the secularism-religious conflict within Islamic history, see Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

23. *Ibid.*, 177. See also 178–179.

24. Huntington 1997, 109–110.

25. *Ibid.*, 68.

26. *Ibid.*, 259.

27. Kaplan 1994, 44–76.

28. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

tions and cultures in episodes of violence that could »ripple across continents and intersect in no discernible pattern«. <sup>29</sup> Hence, Islam operates as one of the more destabilizing factors in the globalized world because globalization unmask and unleashes previously hidden, obscured tensions. Whereas Huntington and Lewis maintained that the West would receive the brunt of Islamic reactions, Kaplan extended the range to include the entire non-Muslim world, essentially broadening the scope and intensity of the conflicts that would erupt via globalization.

### The Critique: Against the Monolith

While each of these authors wrote from different perspectives, they all assume that something about the Muslim world, and the operation of Islam as a cogent religious, ideological, political, and cultural exposition of beliefs, rituals, and signs, opposes globalization, the West, or a combination of the two. According to them, powerful segments of the Muslim world will unify under the aegis of Islam and direct their anger and violence against globalization and contest its pluralist dreams with their own parochial visions of Islam's superiority. Second, the arguments all presume that religious lines will become manifest more sharply than any other marker of identity; particularly for the Orient, religion functions as the most irreducible, impermeable difference between Islam and the rest of the world. Third, they all characterize Islam as a religion that will have little role in global civil society, world state, or any form of global governance, because its history, traditions, and reaction against alien values determines its future as the hostile Other, the Green Peril, an obstacle to globalization.

This portrayal of Islam, however, lacks theoretical and historical validation. Moreover, it lends itself to essentializing visions of Islam as static or monolithic. This process of self-reification, one that assigns fixed meaning to Islam by freezing its symbols and discourses in a single frame, operates as »the referent for a modern social science discourse that has tended to create conceptions of an unalterable incompatibility between ›Western‹ and ›Islamic‹ civilization«, which oversimplifies the trajectories and complexities of Muslim communities, states, and organizations.<sup>30</sup> In remedying this, a wider understanding of Islam must be ex-

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29. Kaplan 1994, 56.

30. Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 1997), 4, 41.



plicated, one that accounts for the presence of multiple interpretations of its beliefs.

There already exist powerful criticisms against the global chaos view of Islam that need only brief mention here: that the Islamic world is certainly not a unified bloc, as vicious contestation still erupts in political circles over the concept of an authentic Islam;<sup>31</sup> that Muslims actually engage in more conflicts against one another rather than against non-Muslims, proving that religion, even Islam, does not compel individuals into cooperation on all issues;<sup>32</sup> that most of Islam cannot be mistaken for its fundamentalist versions, whose cries for violence fall in the extreme minority of global Muslim voices, and constitute an explicitly modernist, rather than traditionalist, project;<sup>33</sup> and finally, that religion, even as a primordial, ascribed affiliation, cannot solely induce people into civilizational blocs (witness, for instance, the impossibility of Canada, Mexico, and the United States unifying for the reason of professing Christianity).<sup>34</sup> In summary, Islam does not prescribe violent war as its *modus vivendi*, much less desire bloody war against the forces of globalization that supposedly threaten its values.

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Islamism is a heavily contextual phenomenon whose major goal is to articulate and redress the various grievances held by disparate Muslim groups across the Islamic world. Its causes are found within the social and political contexts of different Muslim political actors, not in any textual trapdoor or scriptural loophole in Islam.

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While these arguments accurately pinpoint some of the errors of the global chaos view, contemporary scholarship has missed its greatest flaw: its implicit reliance upon a polarized model of Islamic international relations derived from cursory interpretations of the Qura'n, Sunna, the Ha-

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31. K. Mahbubani, »The Dangers of Decadence: What the Rest can Teach the West«, *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1993), 10.

32. Hunter 1998, 64–66.

33. Thomas Meyer argues that »fundamentalism, wherever it exists, is just one interpretation of culture among a huge array of options«, Meyer, »A Fundamental Fallacy«, *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 9 November 2001.

34. An associated argument maintains that an unprecedented era of religious mixing has actually begun. See Gershom Gorenberg, »Clash of Civilizations? No Thanks«, *The Jerusalem Report*, 22 October 2001, 33.

diths, and other texts. This view elucidates that Islam constructs the world into two realms: »Dar-ul-Islam« (abode of Islam), the domain of peace and faith where Muslim states and communities reside, and »Dar-ul-Harb« (abode of war), the domain of disbelief, corruption, and »Ja-hili« (barbaric, non-Islamic societies) constituting the enemy of Muslims. According to this characterization, Muslims in Dar-ul-Islam are required to wage »Jihad« (holy struggle) against those in Dar-ul-Harb until all are converted; »this proselytizing zeal and quest for the achievement of Islam's universalist vocation ... endows it with an intrinsic expansionism.«<sup>35</sup> Jihad manifests as »one of the basic commandments of faith, an obligation imposed on all Muslims by God«; both personal and political, it encases a moral obligation »without limit of time or space«, a duty on part of Muslims and Islamic polities to convert or subjugate non-believers »until the whole world has either accepted the Islamic faith or submitted to the power of the Islamic state«.<sup>36</sup> In the contemporary age, the cosmopolitan, capitalizing, globalizing parts of the world constitute Dar-ul-Harb, while Dar-ul-Islam represents an embattled Muslim city on a hill, encroached on all sides by the dark forces of globalization. In turn, this black-white image of Islam rests on two absolutist assumptions: first, that the main impetus behind Muslim states' behavior towards non-Muslims is the desire to spread the message of Islam or to become martyrs trying to do so; and second, that Muslims will not rest until Islam becomes the universal creed.

As a result of this unsophisticated vision of Islam's destiny, the idea that most Muslims endorse radical Islamic thought – the type of Islam upon which Osama bin Laden, for instance, issued the »fatwa« (religious decree) to »kill the Americans and Jews« – has become popular. Fortunately, some political leaders have taken great pains to separate mainstream Islam from its radical variety; for instance, President Bush spent several minutes in his first public speech after September 11 to discuss the differences between the fringe Muslim terrorists who had hijacked Islam and most other peaceful Muslims. Missing, however, is a sincere explanation of why radical Islam emerged in the first place; why its sociopolitical grievances wrack Muslim countries; and why, in the face of globalization, many thousands of the Islamists have turned to »excavating and reinter-

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35. Shireen Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilizations or Peaceful Coexistence?* (Westport: CSIS Press, 1998), 60.

36. Lewis 1988, 73.

preting« the scripturalist foundations of Islam in order to apply them to contemporary social and political reality. Without an explanation of radical Islam's history and objectives, arbitrarily drawing a line between the rational »we« (the West and those palatable elements of mainstream Islam) and the irrational »they« (radical Islam and all of its violent manifestations) can only denote the immediate strategic interests of the agent who marks that line – for instance, Bush's statement may simply indicate that the U.S. does not want to alienate its Muslim allies, rather than signifying a sincere respect for Islam. The critical observer thus cannot ignore deeply rooted differences in context and belief that separates radical Islamic from the rest of the world's one billion Muslims.

## Islamism

Radical Islam, or Islamism, is »a political agenda where the application of Shari'a is central« and manifests as a mobilized political movement willing to use violence in order to implement its goals.<sup>37</sup> Its various constituents and leaders wish to »shift the frame of reference in the public realm to one in which Islam, in its various interpretations, is a major shaping force«.<sup>38</sup> In practice, this means that they wish to follow the model of the Iranian Revolution and institute theocratic, purely Islamic law (Shari'a) and political structures that would transform their societies into the ideal versions of a Muslim polity, in the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad's utopian community in the early seventh century A.D. Its vibrancy and rapid growth from the subaltern has led some scholars to call the last thirty years as »the most exciting period in Islamic religious history since the twelfth century«.<sup>39</sup> Certainly, all governments of Muslim populations have had to confront the Islamist trend over the past several decades. Moreover, Islamist groups have committed public acts of violence predicated on exegetical justifications against the state in countries that share little commonality save religion, such as Morocco, Uzbekistan, Yemen, and the Philippines; various guerilla-terrorist groups, such as those that wage war under the name of Islam in Algeria, Afghanistan, and

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37. Jillian Schwedler, »Islamic Identity: Myth, Menace, or Mobilizer?«, *SAIS Review* Vol. 21: No. 2 (2001), 5.

38. Nijib Ghadbian, *Democratization and the Islamist Challenge in the Arab World* (Boulder: Westview, 1997), 59.

39. Sisk, 60.

Chechnya, also fall under this category. Despite the arguments of some scholars that believe that Islamism cannot last as a viable ideology due to its lack of comprehensive political action beyond mere violence, the movement has not only endured, but has grown and entrenched itself.<sup>40</sup>

It becomes imperative, however, to avoid the seductive allure of assuming that the growth of radical Islam means that the entire religion has somehow undergone a violent transformation, or that some hidden »truth« in the Qura'n or other holy texts has spawned and legitimized radical Islamist ideology. As Nair testifies, »In accepting that a singular definition of Islam is impossible, its variety of thought and practice must also be accepted. [...] However, the contexts in which Muslims find themselves are as likely to influence their behavior as the sense of the universality of their faith. The senses of community which derive from faith and practice are necessarily interpreted and shaped in distinct ways in different places, times, and societies.«<sup>41</sup> In this manner, Islamism is a heavily contextual phenomenon whose major goal is to articulate and redress the various grievances held by disparate Muslim groups across the Islamic world. Its causes are found within the social and political contexts of different Muslim political actors, not in any textual trapdoor or scriptural loophole in Islam. For instance, in many authoritarian countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan, Islamism's rise can be explained by the frustration of middle-class activists who constantly faced repression by the government, and therefore engaged in more militant behavior in order to overturn the political system.<sup>42</sup> In relatively democratic Turkey, radical Islamic identities are mobilized and politicized due to cultural and social pressures from below rather than political suppression from above.<sup>43</sup> Hence, radical Islam did not begin as a new, distinct branch of Islam from a uniformly trained cadre of clergymen and reformers, but rather as a reactionary mode of thought by mostly middle-class professionals and students who sought to explain and explicate their grievances in a powerful language.

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40. See, for instance, Gilles Kepel, *Jihad, expansion et déclin de l'islamisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), and Antoine Basbous, *L'Islamisme, une révolution avortée?* (Paris: Hachette, 2000).

41. Nair, 4.

42. Robin Wright, »Two Visions of Reformation«, *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 7: No. 2 (1996), 64–75.

43. *Ibid.*, 71–74.

Furthermore, almost every Muslim government today rejects Islamism, which both validates the distinction between mainstream Islam and its radical counterpart as well as further angers Islamists. Most Muslim states are largely secular in structure and institution, if not in language; »the secular state in the Muslim world, through oppression and accommodation, has by and large stayed its ground and in large measure contained Islamic revivalism«.44 As Sudan and Iran show, the seizure of power by openly radical Islamist groups does not »reshape the existing state system in any significant way«.45 Islamism is easily co-opted and manipulated by governments in their strategic interactions with their domestic oppositions and their geopolitical opponents. Often, as in the case of Algeria, authoritarian regimes' attempts to brutally repress Islamism lead to cases of mostly internal terrorism and violence but never broad-based, mass revolution;46 in other cases, as in Jordan, compromises between the most vocal of Islamists and the incumbent state produce novel (although not always successful) tactics of inclusive governance and containment strategies. In yet other instances, Islamism does not even manage to capture the popular imagination beyond a few civil society movements and plays little role in the course of the government – Turkey typifies this case.

Thus, rather than embodying the entire Muslim world in its praxis, Islamism does not enjoy uniform support by Muslims in most Islamic countries, and in fact almost every Muslim government has attempted to pacify or suppress Islamist voices. Such discordance is a far cry from the idea that the entire Islamic world is at once up in arms with globalization and the West. Thus, despite the views of Huntington, Kaplan, Lewis, and other global chaos theorists, little in Islam per se contests globalization, and the radical Islamists which they denigrate do not share much with the vast majority of Muslims.

However, another dynamic aspect of radical Islam's curious career is the broader rise of religion around the globe. Islamism can be contextualized as a component of two larger phenomena – the Islamic revival which has swept the Muslim world and the global religious reawakening

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44. Nasr, 261–263.

45. R. Stephen Humphreys, *Between Memory and Desire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 81.

46. Hilal Kashan, »The New World Order and the Tempo of Militant Islam«, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 24: No. 1 (May 1997), 15–24.

that counts Islam as only one interlocutor among many. The next two sections will discuss these trends and their relevance to Islam's relations with globalization.

## Secularism and Religion in an Era of Globalization

It has been commonly assumed that religion would retrench its role as globalization continued. For instance, Harvey Cox's 1965 book »The Secular City« announced the collapse of religion to the extent that most of humanity within decades would be atheist or agnostic, as societies slowly democratized, pluralized, and modernized.<sup>47</sup> However, this supposition has faced tremendous contestation in the form of a religious revival in all parts of the world within the last half-century. Indeed, the »global religious resurgence has challenged the expectations of modernization theory, the progressive secularization and Westernization of developing societies. Religion has become a major ideological, social and political force.«<sup>48</sup>

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The rise of the nation-state as the defining mode of existence – that is, the organization of peoples into »imagined communities« in both the mind as well as on the map – operationalized secularism through the separation of church and state throughout the Christian world, and then the rest of the world via colonization and conquest.

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The reassertion of Muslims as conscious, rhetorically skilled political actors across the Muslim world, and even in non-Muslim countries like Russia and now much of Western Europe, is one facet of a broader reality – namely, that the global religious resurgence signifies a deep desire by considerable portions of the world population to establish meaning and order in a rapidly changing, fluid environment. All such religious movements, including the Islamic types, »share in common a return to the foundations or cornerstones of faith. They reemphasize the primacy of divine sovereignty and the divine-human covenant, the centrality of faith,

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47. Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York: Macmillan, 1965).

48. John Esposito, »Religion and Global Affairs: Political Challenges«, *SAIS Review* Vol. 18: No. 2 (1998), 19.

human stewardship, and the equality of all within the community of believers.«<sup>49</sup> From the new impulses of the Orthodox Church to the powerful religious right in America, an apparent »desecularization«, or at least a »resacralization«, has occurred across the world. These new religious movements attempt to address the grievances of the temporal by appealing to the powers of the spiritual. »Religious revivalisms often represent the voices of those who, amidst the failures of their societies, claim both to ameliorate the problems and to offer a more authentic, religious-based society.«<sup>50</sup> Thus, religion functions as a vertical point of reference across the continuum of political order. All of these descriptions decode the Islamic experience as much as they do other religions. What remains to be observed, however, is how and why the religious revival within Islam, of which radical Islam is only one small part, arose. It requires an examination of secularism and its relation to religion, as well as the connection between globalization and secularism.

### Secularism as Dominant Discourse

The secular character of the state was a European invention that entered Western political imagination during the 17th century. Rooted »in the desirability of grounding knowledge and the governance of society on non-religious foundations of scientific rationality«, secularism closely relates to the founding of modern states, the division of humanity into discrete, organized territories that denied the primacy of transcendent religious loyalties.<sup>51</sup> This represents a genuine paradigm shift from the medieval era, because the secular state required the loyalty and obedience of citizens within finite, bounded spaces. While convoluted and complex, the secular trend revolves around some major events and developments: the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia marks the starting point of the international system of states, and therefore also the rise of the secular state; the Enlightenment, with its views on rationality and reason as derivative of the human mind, cemented secular philosophy as a dominant discourse that ordered, signified, and produced structures and domains of human knowledge; and finally, the rise of the nation-state as the defining mode

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49. Ibid., 21.

50. Ibid., 21.

51. Richard Falk, *Religion and Humane Global Governance* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), Manuscript, 50–51.

of existence – that is, the organization of peoples into »imagined communities« in both the mind as well as on the map<sup>52</sup> – operationalized secularism through the separation of church and state throughout the Christian world, and then the rest of the world via colonization and conquest. The experience of the Third World holds special significance. Non-Western countries deliberately emphasized their secularism during and after the decolonization, as such a tradition »is not indigenous to such countries and as an artificial implant is not nearly as deeply rooted in the cultural life of such societies«. <sup>53</sup> As Falk discovers in his studies of Turkey, Pahlavi Iran, and China, the rhetoric of secularism ironically acquired an almost religious overtone in terms of its language, functions, and symbols in governments' attempts to desperately disentangle any political institution from religion.

Secularism, thus, represents a »posture toward reality«, a perspective on human relations with epistemological and geopolitical components.<sup>54</sup> It played a profound role in the transition between the medieval and the modern; it contributed »an ethos of tolerance that greatly pacified the struggle within Christianity between Protestant and Catholic rulers ... that opened the way for the rapid growth of science and industry«. <sup>55</sup> It also colonized and authenticated itself within the structures of states, whose collective constitution of the international system further replicated secularism through colonialism. It excluded consideration of religious identity as a viable expression of statehood, and attempted to enclose religion within the private sphere. As a result, in so-called modern societies, religion »commonly is regulated by government, and forbidden from particular expression in certain areas of public life, such as schools and government. Religion simply is not as institutionally prominent in modern societies as in traditional ones.«<sup>56</sup>

However, secularism did not spontaneously arise, nor did it hierarchically trickle down from the political dictates of the state. As with any regime of power and knowledge, it works »not through the commands of a supreme sovereign but through the disciplinary practices that each in-

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52. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

53. Falk, 61.

54. *Ibid.*, 58.

55. *Ibid.*, 76.

56. Danny Jorgensen, »Religion and Modernization: Secularization or Sacralization«, in *Religion and the Political Order*, ed. Jacob Neusner (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 22.



dividual imposes on his or her own behavior on the basis of the dictates of reason«.57

From its discursive birth, secularism fused itself with a technocratic, scientific rationality, which denounced religion as irrational, traditional, and therefore anti-modern. It became embodied and personified in the constitutional arrangements, institutions, and structures of the state. Whereas God formed the center of the Christian worldview, secularism held as its deity the notion of reason, the idea that statements could be verified by reference to ordinary human experience or by reasoning from objective, empirical premises. Secularism became known as a humanizing and liberating tradition due to its conscious dislocation from the tyrannical, non-reasonable dictates of religious faith. The secular ethos, a worldview that championed reason and science, prevailed. Much Western political theory has since labored under a secularist bias.<sup>58</sup> As a result of the secular bias and its encoding into the fabric of reason and thought, the »religious dimension of human experience has been generally excluded from the serious study and practice of governance«.59

## Relations of Religion to Globalization

Globalization problematizes and destabilizes secularism through the realization that »the boundaries of the state are no longer very relevant.«<sup>60</sup> Secularism attempts to privatize religion, but as religious identities have strengthened, so too have their believers in perpetuating and sharing their narrative visions of the past, present, and future. »Thus, in a globalizing world the relevance of secularism seems limited ... There are special concerns about the way in which a religious state handles a range of worldly matters, but whether the secular logic of strict separation is a use-

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57. Partha Chatterjee, »Our Modernity«, Lecture Delivered at SEPHIS and CODESRIA 1996 Forum, [www.iisg.nl/~sephis/](http://www.iisg.nl/~sephis/) (4 May 2002), 18–19.

58. See, for instance, Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, ed. G. H. Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); Edmund Byrne, *Mission in Modern Life: A Public Role for Religious Beliefs*, Padeia WCP Project, [www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Poli/PoliByrn.html](http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Poli/PoliByrn.html) (5 May 2002); and Frederick Gedicks, »The Religious, the Secular, and the Antithetical«, *Capital University Law Review* Vol. 20: No. 1 (1991).

59. Falk 17.

60. *Ibid.*, 70.

ful approach seems very much in doubt.«<sup>61</sup> The return of religion, therefore, implicates the dimensions of autonomy, identity, and belief; it represents a new metric of identity. It indicates »undeniable evidence of a deep malaise in society that can no longer be interpreted in terms of our traditional categories of thought«,<sup>62</sup> a comment especially true in the case of Islam.

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Globalization problematizes and destabilizes secularism.

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Moreover, that the religious resurgence has occurred precisely during the decades when globalization has intensified wields two strong implications. First, the religious revival reacts against the appeal of cultural and political cosmopolitanism. Much as post-colonial peoples have asserted traditional practices and institutions from the belief that such traditions were different and therefore held more value than modern, artificial constructions (regardless of their actual efficacy and utility), various portions of the global population, from the Catholic liberation theologies of Latin America to the Muslim »jamats« (brotherhoods) of the Middle East, have realigned religion as their source of identity that lies necessarily separated from the rest of the planet. This claim rests upon »a right to locality« and »the primary rights of place, culture, and community« that must be asserted amidst the twin vessels of what they perceive as the global juggernaut, »ideological hegemony of neo-liberalism and the legal dismantlement of national sovereignty«. <sup>63</sup> It indicates a vital quest for identity, authenticity, and community within and against swiftly changing conditions that globalization has wrought. <sup>64</sup> In totality, regardless of whether the threats it interprets are constructed or real, religion embodies, in Foucault's words, »a plurality of resistances«, <sup>65</sup> a strategic assertion of identity that also connects to a performative view of the world and a plan

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61. Ibid., 73.

62. Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the Modern World* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State Press, 1994), 24.

63. Amory Starr, Beyond Panic: Religious Nationalism, Political Economy, and the Blockage Against Globalization, Paper Presented at Colorado State University at Lamar, <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~america/panic.html> (28 April 2002).

64. Paul Marshall, »Disregarding Religion«, *SAIS Review* Vol. 18: No. 2 (1998), 13–18.

65. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 96.

to improve it in this life or the next. Second, the religious revival actually owes its strength to worldwide pathways of information exchange that only globalization has instituted. It harnesses modern technologies and communications to spread its sociopolitical message; stark proof comes in the form of the videotapes featuring Osama bin Laden which surfaced in Afghanistan in late October 2001, copies of which had been distributed via Internet and global air mail to thousands of seminaries and schools across Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, even Europe. Ironically, then, however much it attempts to contest it, religious resurgence needs globalization for its strength.

## **The Dialectics of Globalization and the Islamic Revival**

If secularism has so thoroughly dominated as a discourse that governed politics, laws, and norms and that replicates itself in both the minds of men and the structural apparatus of states, then why has religion, particularly Islam, experienced a revival? Chatterjee provides the answer: »[N]o matter how adroitly the fabric of reason might cloak the reality of power, the desire of autonomy continues to range itself against power; power is resisted ... Hence one cannot be for or against modernity; one can only devise strategies for coping with it.«<sup>66</sup> Echoing Foucault, where there is power, there is also resistance. Yet this does not simply mean that religion views itself as the antithesis to globalization; it signifies that across the world, various individuals have consciously chosen to evince religious identities in their personal, micro-political struggles in order to make sense of what has occurred in and around their lives. This perspective helps explain the meaning of the Islamic revival and the place of radical Islam within it.

### **The Re-assertion of Islamic Identity**

Radical Islam constitutes one small part of a wider religio-political project on the part of millions of Muslims over the last several decades. This project is the Islamic revival, the renaissance of Islam and its ethos in all sectors of Muslim societies, from culture and political life to private beliefs and civic networks of faith. The movement emerged most conspic-

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66. Chatterjee, 19.

uously with the 1979 Iranian Revolution, but the revival had actually begun decades earlier. A general »heightening of Islamic consciousness among the masses« had occurred since the post-World War II period.<sup>67</sup> It became manifest in more frequent and conspicuous displays of Islamic identity, such as dress and prayer; an increasing appreciation of Islam's impact in the political, social, and economic arenas; an intellectual flowering of scholarship centering upon all aspects of Islam, such as its holy texts, its mystical content, and the life of the Prophet; a greater willingness of all Muslims to invoke either Islam or God into their daily discussions; and finally, of highest visibility, the formation and spread of radical networks of Muslim fundamentalists that have often resorted to violence in order to implement their narrow vision of Islam's destiny.<sup>68</sup> What ties these individuals and groups together is the derivation of their ideas from the original texts and scriptures of Islam, and the belief that their faith and investment in certain Islamic ideas creates a vital, reforming energy that can eventually better human society. What does not tie them together is the resort to violence that only a handful of militant Muslims have shown, who in fact represent only the smallest minority of the religious revival. To demarcate further, conceptual divisions transpire on two levels: first, between the general religious resurgence and one of its elements, the Islamic revival; and second, between the Islamic revival and one of its own components, radical Islam.

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Secularism has essentially colonized and directed the ideational structure of globalization.

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Muslim societies faced a profound crisis, one that touched cultural, political, social, economic, psychological, and spiritual dimensions; when by the late 1960s secular ideologies and models of development failed to produce prosperous societies that could match the sheer strength of the West, Islamic revivalist movements surged into the public sphere, promising a return to Islamic greatness and dispelling the »hopelessness

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67. R. Hrair Dekmejian, »Islamic Revival: Catalysts, Categories, and Consequences«, in *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism*, ed. Shireen Hunter (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 4.

68. Abdulaziz Sachedina, »Islamic Religion and Political Order«, *SATS Review* Vol. 18: No. 2 (1998), 59–64.

and pessimism« that pervaded Muslim societies. The *raison d'être* of Muslim revivalists can be succinctly articulated as the fact that »the very integrity of the Islamic culture and way of life is threatened by non-Islamic forces of secularism and modernity, encouraged by Muslim governments«. <sup>69</sup> Significantly, their struggles not only focus upon external actors, such as the West or globalization, but also upon their own governments, which have failed to solve the problems inherent in their societies.

In this context, globalization is viewed as an aggrandizing influence that heralds patently non-Islamic ideas and practices, such as secularism, liberal democracy, consumerism, et cetera – essentially, the products of the West.

### Against the Secularist Bias: the Quest for Global Participation

Globalization has transformed not only the structural environment of the world, but also the social relations that envelop different religious followings: »By global, we mean not just transformed conceptions of time and space but the new social meaning that this has involved ... we understand this as the development of *a common consciousness of human society on a world scale*.«<sup>70</sup> This description provides the contextual backdrop against which Islam may be judged. Indeed, the »position of Islamic societies must be viewed within a global framework of experiences if its special resources and liabilities are to be understood«. <sup>71</sup> For instance, as Esposito and Voll observe, »even the world of radical extremists committed to distinctive and parochial causes is cosmopolitan in its connections and interactions«, a fact verified tragically on 9/11, when terrorist events were the end result of a well-funded, worldwide network of operatives and specialists whose brutal efficiency depended upon the openness and interactions that globalization heralded.<sup>72</sup> Thus, Islam does not exist in a vacuum: it evolves, reinforces, and replicates itself through globalization.

Globalization is a narrative that posits an awareness of the totality of human social relations. However, because religious experiences are ex-

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69. Dekmejian, 10.

70. Martin Shaw, *Theory of the Global State: Globality as Unfinished Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 26, his emphasis.

71. John Esposito and John Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 16.

72. *Ibid.*, 12.

cluded from consideration as either viable modes of relations or legitimate products from the world of knowledge, secularism has essentially colonized and directed the ideational structure of globalization using non-religious terms. Thus, the argument that Islam will contest globalization is based on the deeply rooted secular-religious dichotomy. Any religious system sets forth three basic components: »a worldview, a way of life, and an account of the character of the social entity that realizes the way of life and explains that way of life through the specified worldview.«<sup>73</sup> The silence of these elements within the global framework signifies the dominance of secularism, which does not so much attempt to refute these aspects of religion as it hides them by denying their ontological and epistemological subsistence. Islamic revivalists, however, refuse to be silenced. »The transformation of human experience on a global scale is accompanied by greater demands for participation and for recognition of special identities.«<sup>74</sup>

Thus, despite its political catalysts and social causes, the Islamic revival must not be seen as an unsophisticated, revolution-minded force that seeks to violently institute a new sociopolitical order in simple opposition to globalization, for it rests within a much broader historical and comparative frame. Secularization manifests itself as the reification of particular conceptions of reason and rationality, but even the radical, violent Islamic movements are not predicated purely upon a destruction of the secular and upon the universal sovereignty of God. Rather, the fundamentalist Islam they espouse forms a referential system that requires the existence of secularism in order to establish its difference and distance from it, just as much as secularism needs the existence of a religious Other to legitimate its practices. In this paradoxical consanguinity, »tradition must not only deny or suppress the historical and philosophical grounds of its foundational interdependence with the other, but must also constantly recreate the ›difference‹ between itself and the other by defining the other's mere existence as a threat to the universality of the practices, traditions, order of the self.«<sup>75</sup> In this dichotomy, secularism represents

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73. Jacob Neusner, »Why and How Religion Speaks Through Politics: the Case of Classical Judaism«, in *Religion and the Political Order*, ed. Jacob Neusner (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 61.

74. Esposito and Voll, 12.

75. Elizabeth Hurd, »Toward a Comparative Analysis of Two Theopolitical Orders: Secularism and Political Islam in Historical Context«, Paper Presented at APSA Annual Meeting (30 Aug. – 2 Sept. 2001), 21.

reason and modernity, and religion the irrational and anti-modern. Secularism, represented by globalization, and religion – represented by Islam – are given fixed meanings that do not change over time and space. This binary view, however, is false; it is precisely the fiction that girds global chaos theories of Islam and its impending battle with globalization. Each representation is not a uniformly stable set of meanings, divided from the Other by insurmountable differences, but rather a kind of »moral enclavism« that defines its traditions and goals in terms of what the other is not. Hence, each mode of thought constitutes the other; they transform one another in a mutually dependent relationship.

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Ironically, globalization, predicated and articulated through a secularist bias, strengthens Islam by furthering its range and extensive influence.

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Secularism has not been as rigidly pervasive in the West as commonly thought. »The reality is that for centuries the separation between Caesar and God in Christianity was less clear-cut as is often believed while the separation between the two in Islam has been more pronounced than is usually assumed.«<sup>76</sup> From the empire of Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire to the Pope and the kings of Great Britain, Western political history is rife with examples with heads of state who also claim sovereignty over the realm of faith, and vice-versa. Moreover, in his anthropological studies of religion, Asad observes that while »European societies are presumed to be built upon a profound separation of state and religious institutions«, this popularization of secularism actually ignores the variety of contemporary cases in Europe, Latin America, and North America in which religion deeply connects to conceptions of national identity while also giving de facto state power to informal institutions that have as much, if not more, persuasive capacities to move citizens into action than the formal, secular state.<sup>77</sup> In fact, the history of religion and the state in the West since Westphalia has been »fraught with ambiguity and cross-pollination; the line between sacred and secular authority has

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76. Hunter 1998, 34.

77. Talal Asad, »The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam«, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies Occasional Paper Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1996), 5.

remained equivocal, porous, and fluctuating«.78 Not until the monotheistic Protestant establishment emerged as an articulate political actor in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in America did secularism as a distinct worldview coalesce and enter into public discourse in Western countries.79 Even since then, the rumblings of religion are still manifest in various court cases, political parties, and social movements that attempt to merge state power with religious intent in almost all Western countries, not to mention the Third World. Secularism never fully completed its vision for a comprehensive ordering of political and social relations, and so the assumption that it a finished political project flies in the face of historical and sociological evidence.

### The »Modernization« of Islam

Globalization actually engages Islam rather than denying its relevance. Within the new public spaces created by globalization, religious identities interact with modern ideas and technologies. For instance, the advent of the printing press, which arrived in the Islamic world centuries after it impacted Europe, tremendously changed the structure of Islamic education, the ways by which holy texts were read, and the conceptualization of the Muslim world.80 As globalization continues, new technologies have continued to change relations of authority and knowledge, »reconfiguring notions of self and society« while lending a certain consciousness to previously marginalized, subaltern voices within the religion.81 For instance, the telecommunications revolution and the Internet have generated new intellectual possibilities for Muslim scholars wishing to both reflect upon as well as criticize Islamic notions of the right and the good; ironically, it has also allowed lay scholars and ordinary citizens in Muslim states, from Egypt to Indonesia, to contest the intellectual productions of Muslim scholars and teachers and offer new, radical interpretations of Islam to a mass audience, which consequently has helped form the basis of the new Islamic movements. In these cases, transformations within Is-

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78. Ibid., 13.

79. Gedicks, 115–122.

80. Francis Robinson, »Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print«, *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 27 (1993), 229–251.

81. Dale Eickelman, »Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies«, *American Ethnologist* Vol. 19: No. 4 (1992), 643–655.



lam have only occurred by the constant imposition of modern values and capacities, products of secular thought and alleged opponents of religion, into the discourses of religion. Meanwhile, that Islam has grown more rapidly than any other major religion rests upon the strength of globalization; it would be difficult, for example, for the faith to spread if the free movements of peoples and ideas that globalization encourages did not exist. Ironically then, globalization, predicated and articulated through a secularist bias, strengthens Islam by furthering its range and extensive influence. This paradox constitutes simply one example of how the secular-religious divide actually breaks down into interdependence rather than xenophobic distance, and how similarly the globalization-Islam opposition collapses upon itself on further scrutiny.

## **Conclusion: Islam as Part of the Globalizing World**

Expressions of Islam function as »means of disciplining ambiguity, creating boundaries and constituting, producing and maintaining political identities«,<sup>82</sup> This also applies to expressions against Islam, especially for global chaos theorists and the intellectual borders they have drawn around globalization that necessarily exclude Islam. However, as this investigation demonstrated, global chaos views on Islam were inaccurate for their reliance upon simplified concepts and ideas that were hastily extracted from Islamic texts. Their blurring of the boundaries between Islam and radical fundamentalism hides the real distinctions that separate

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Islam will certainly not recede from globalization's horizons. It is very much a part of its heritage and future, and therefore a crucial strand in the universe of possibilities that awaits the globalizing world.

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these two traditions. In turn, radical Islam finds itself as one small element of the Islamic revivalist trend, itself part of the global religious resurgence, which must be seen within the broader secular-religious divide. At every level of this conceptual chain, the relations with globalization constitute interdependence and mutual reinforcement rather than categorical denial and opposition.

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82. Hurd, 29.

Debates about Islam and its role within the world as it globalizes confront the question of secular modernity and how it interacts with religion and Islam in particular. Radical Islam, of course, conceptualizes itself in opposition to modernity. But most of the Islamic revivalists do not agree with them. The deeper critique here is that Islam, in all of its emergences and expressions, cannot merely be characterized as a »self-contained collective agent«,<sup>83</sup> one that seems to have a life of its own. It must be understood as a performative, discursive tradition, understood as an organized, socially significant historical narrative that interacts with globalization; it functions as one powerful voice among the choir of political and moral options. Islam does not operate as some nebulous, abstract variable; rather, actors that perform behaviors under its mantle reconstitute, redirect, and reify it through adherence to their own peculiar geographic, strategic, political, and economic needs, ultimately contributing to their syncretic identities. Ultimately, Islam does have a place in globalization, as much as globalization has a place within Islam. Islam will not mindlessly contest globalization; it derives meaning from it, which some Muslims – such as the radical Islamists – might interpret as threatening, while others derive more peaceful visions. Regardless of this diversity, Islam will certainly not recede from globalization's horizons. It is very much a part of its heritage and future, and therefore a crucial strand in the universe of possibilities that awaits the globalizing world.

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### **More on Islam, Society, and Politics**

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- ▶ El Sayed Said, Egypt: The Dialectics of State Security and Social Decay (1/2000)

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83. Hurd, 3.