

# Global Islamism and World Society

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## Abstract

In this paper I harness sociological institutionalism to develop a comprehensive understanding of global Islamism as the communitarian mirror image of cosmopolitan world society. Cosmopolitan world society and global Islamism are seen as varieties of globalization, discussed in terms of structure and agency, and analyzed in terms of principles and values. Apart from understanding global Islamism as a political project, my second objective is to assess its chances of successfully competing with world society. I do this by comparatively assessing the degree to 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. Despite its bolder discriminatory practices, 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 is impossible, global Islamism is ultimately bound to be frustrated. 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.

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Cosmopolitan world society is a successful and widely shared political project. It is shared by decision makers pursuing liberal agendas of democratization and prosperity while prosecuting terrorist and criminal 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.

In a nutshell, 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 and 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 of, as well as delinquency against, the liberal cosmopolitan values represented by world society. But these are only internal contradictions that propel cosmopolitan world society forward. There is no external challenge to 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 there are challengers? What if the liberal-cosmopolitan values enshrined in world society are challenged by the globalization of communitarian values? What if transnational Islam represents precisely such a moral-political challenge? In short: 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. It develops a comprehensive understanding of global Islamism as the communitarian mirror image of cosmopolitan world society. This is not to deny that there are other 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, tend to be more compatible with world society because, to a significant extent, the latter can be seen as a secularized version of Christianity. Global Islamism has been selected because, empirically, it appears to be the most virulent communitarian challenge to world society at the global level.

By global Islamism I do not primarily mean jihadist terrorism but the broader social 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 more in general. But since political Islam is derived from Islam more in general and relies on its principles and values, any strict separation would be artificial. Also, due to the absence of reliable data on Islamists I am forced to rely on a number of *a-fortiori* arguments, e.g. with regard to 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).

My aim is to debunk the inappropriateness of “inter-civilizational dialogue” on the one hand, and “clash of civilizations” on the other. Despite their appeal, the fundamental 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 hardly symmetrical. The former is not a civilization in the conventional sense, and the latter is hardly amenable to dialogue.

Currently, most Western academics, citizens and decision makers either trivialize global Islamists as partners in a multicultural dialogue or demonize them by placing all in one basket 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 second section, I discuss the constitution of agency and the related paradoxes in either case. In the third section, I analyze world society and global Islamism in terms of principles and values, with particular regard to political culture. In the fourth section, I discuss the ways by 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. Despite its bolder discriminatory practices, 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 is impossible, global Islamism is ultimately bound to be frustrated. Until that happens, conflict between global Islamism and world society can perhaps be 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 taking place at the same time: the globalization of the *umma*, i.e. the imagined community of Muslim believers.<sup>2</sup> Both of these projects are mythical in some ways, and real in some others. Neither world society nor global Islamism is simply “out there”, but either of them creates its own reality as a large-scale political project.

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 polity on the one hand, and the globalization of the Islamic *umma* on the other, from historical narratives. These are based on idealizations, but they are not arbitrary insofar as they represent the unfolding of real social transformations. In the development of my narratives, I rely on the classical sociological distinction between community and society, or *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* (Tönnies 1957 [1887]).<sup>3</sup>

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

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<sup>2</sup> For some related earlier IR scholarship see Adamson (2005); Barber (1995); Badie (1986; 1983, 82-96).

<sup>3</sup> In general terms, the notion of global *gemeinschaft* is briefly considered in Robertson (1992, 75-83).

embedded in tightly knit organic 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 common people from their organic communities and forced them to become members of an incipient civil society. At the same time as being uprooted, however, people were 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 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 territorial states without abolishing them, and enmeshes them in a framework of global governance.

This is a thumbnail picture of an incredibly complex and convoluted historical process. Despite all nuance, 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]).<sup>4</sup> Forty years ago, Niklas Luhmann saw the dawn of world society as encompassing any other social system (1971; cf. 1997). After the end of the Cold War, the idea of world society is increasingly accepted by influential thinkers such as Castells (2000), Beck (2002) and Held (2010).

The list could be continued almost ad infinitum, 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).

While sociological institutionalism does not know of any radical alternative to world society, global Islamism may be precisely this. In 2007, a Muslim interlocutor from Indonesia said: "Don't forget, the Prophet imagined Islam as global long before anyone was talking about globalisation".<sup>5</sup> In fact, one of Mohammed's key 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 followers an injunction to propagate Islam all over the world. Thus, in the eschatological vision of its founder, the Islamic notion of the *umma* has always had global aspirations.<sup>6</sup>

These aspirations were disappointed when, despite considerable initial success, the military and missionary expansion of Islam all over the known world proved impossible in the middle ages. 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.<sup>7</sup> First, soon after Mohammed's death the laws of social gravity led to the fragmentation of the Empire along

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<sup>4</sup> For a rich and diverse collection of writings on cosmopolitanism, see Vertovec and Cohen (2002).

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Jones and Mas (2011, 2).

<sup>6</sup> Jesus Christ had broadly comparable aspirations. There are at least two reasons however why this can be left aside. First, Christian fundamentalism does not pose any serious challenge to cosmopolitan globalization (in recent years, evangelicals have even supported George W. Bush's radical democratization agenda). Second, the comparison in this article is not between world religions but between global Islamism and world society.

<sup>7</sup> But see Brown (2000, 52-59) on the historical importance of the notion of unity and community in Islam.

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.<sup>8</sup>

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 being controlled by them. Accordingly, they tended to co-opt these scholars rather than the other way round (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.<sup>9</sup> 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. At the same time, the vision of *dar al-Islam* (abode of Islam) as a global community is promising to propel the *umma* from fragmentation and subordination to unity and, ultimately, supremacy.

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

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<sup>8</sup> The medieval polymath Ibn Khaldun 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; cf. Cox 1992).

<sup>9</sup> See Gellner (1981, 1-85); note the deconstruction by Zubaida (2011, 31-76); see also Gellner (1992, 5-22).

<sup>10</sup> The communitarian bent of global Islamism is also apparent from the fact that, as events like the 2005 Danish cartoon controversy confirm, Muslims tend to struggle for group recognition (“respect”) while liberal societies require the recognition of personal freedom (“tolerance”); see Pew Research Center (2006, 21).

<sup>11</sup> While using a different analytical vocabulary, Tibi (2010) reaches a similar diagnosis. For the opposite view, emphasizing the cosmopolitan aspects of political Islam, see Soguk (2011). My own view is that there are indeed cosmopolitan elements in political Islam, but they are largely marginal and represent only a minority.

## 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 shall 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 going to take place. While this is true about the theoretical ideal types, the reality of cosmopolitan world society and its Islamic mirror image is different. As we shall see, cosmopolitan world society is compelled to require remarkably *gemeinschaftlich* types of collective solidarity while global Islamism relies on surprisingly *gesellschaftlich* kinds of purposive rational agency. Thus, world society and global Islamism are paradoxically compelled to emulate each other’s *modus operandi*.

The sociological institutionalists of the Stanford school 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. In theory, rational agency in a society is self-interested rather than socially embedded. In practice, however, this would be dangerous because, maybe except for markets narrowly conceived, truly self-interested agency undermines wider social goals. What is therefore required by world 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).<sup>12</sup>

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

Global Islamism obviously does not need to recur to such camouflage, as the call for moral rectitude and conformity with shared values is a typical hallmark of religion. 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.

In reality, however, even global Islamism is beleaguered by agentic illusions. Although the global *umma* aims to be the all-encompassing *gemeinschaft* of Muslim believers, it needs to rely 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 country or territory, where Muslim identity can simply 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 links. It relies on individual acts of conversion or self-(re)construction rather than “organic” group solidarity. Transnational Muslims tend to by-

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<sup>12</sup> 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”.

pass 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-centred 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? Shall 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 charade, with the former demanding collectively oriented behaviour from alleged rational monads and the latter requiring self-reflexive repertoires of purposive agency from true believers. On the other hand, however, 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 individuals 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 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. The same applies to world society and global Islamism, which are both haunted by performative contradictions and yet constitute significant social and political projects.

In sum, it would be inappropriate to deny the advance of world society on the grounds that there are performative contradictions (Boli and Thomas 1999). By the same token, it would be inappropriate to conclude from the contradictions of global Islamism that it is ultimately a benign appendage to postmodern pluralism (Mandaville 2001, 2011). Despite the inherent 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 can 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 an abstract sociological 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 particular 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, no matter if Islamic values are ceremonially enacted or if they are counter-acted 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 authoritarian tendencies in contemporary Islam more in general, as has been demonstrated by the sophisticated statistical analysis of empirical data. Thus, Steven Fish (2011, 229-249) and Niklas Potrafke (2012) have controlled for various additional variables such as oil dependence and per capita income. It would go beyond the scope of the present article to recapitulate their 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. As a representational and analytical shortcut, it is worthwhile to present a simple cross-tabulation of familiar democracy indicators (Table 1). My analysis is based on scores from the Polity Project and Freedom House. In the Polity Project, a scale from 0 to 10 indicates a country’s level of democracy or autocracy. The data provided by Freedom House offers a scale from 1 to 7, indicating the level of infringement on political rights and civil liberties.

	Polity Project: average scores		Freedom House: average scores	
	Democracy	Autocracy	Political rights	Civil liberties
All countries	5.6	1.8	3.4	3.2
Muslim-majority countries	2.6	3.8	5.3	4.9
Arab League members	1.5	5.1	6.0	5.3

Table 1: Islam and government<sup>13</sup>

Table 1 demonstrates that Muslim-majority polities tend to be considerably less democratic and more autocratic than the world average, and that they infringe far more than other countries on political rights and civil liberties. The data for the Arab League indicates a par-

<sup>13</sup> Calculations based on Muslim-majority countries in 2010 (Pew Research Center 2011, 155-157); Polity IV scores for 2009 (from Annual Time Series, 1800-2009); Freedom House scores for 2010 (Freedom House 2011, 12-17).

ticularly strong authoritarian propensity for countries where the share of devote Muslims in the general population is particularly high (see also 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). Thus, 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 countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen lead to anything even remotely resembling democracy as we know it? The world should certainly remain open for more positive surprises, but past experience from these very countries would suggest that a short period of majority rule may simply lead to some new form of tyranny. This should dampen unrealistic expectations.

Hard data on authoritarian tendencies in transnational Islamism, or the lack thereof, are not available – for obvious reasons.<sup>14</sup> More indirect forms of evidence, however, 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 reasonable to conclude *a fortiori* from the Muslim world’s general authoritarian tendencies that the same tendencies also apply to transnational Islamism in particular. There is no reason to assume that global Islamists are any less authoritarian than their nation-state brethren.

## Social Integration

There are two reasons why social integration is crucial to understand any political project and its chances of success. First, it 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 generalizations.

It is important, however, to note that social integration is absolutely not equivalent to uniformity. For example, much has been made of the fact that political Islam is not monolithic (e.g. Ayooob 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”. In fact, nei-

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<sup>14</sup> 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 on it would be seen as inflammatory by some.

ther cosmopolitanism nor any other significant social aggregate is monolithic. 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 cosmopolitanism, or capitalism, or France, or my family etc.). Experience tells us that groups are aggregate units, and can be treated as such to the extent that they achieve social integration.

Take for example nation-states: they have never been monolithic but divided by factions, and yet they operate as units and are treated as such by other nation-states and international relations scholars. Let us apply this to Islam. While it is certainly not monolithic, the presence of diversity does not logically 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 “real” world society and global Islamism actually are.

To the extent that the two stand in competition to each other as rival globalization projects, any superiority with regard to social integration is likely to translate into a competitive advantage. Let us use the taxonomy introduced in Figure 1 to ask systematic questions about such competitive advantages and disadvantages of world society and global Islamism.

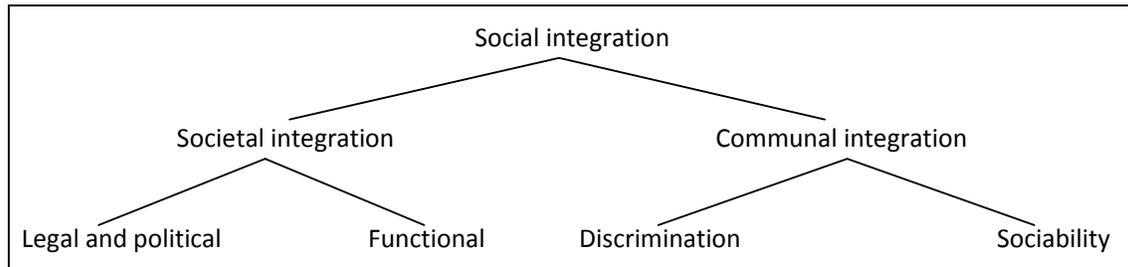


Figure: Forms of social integration

At least at first glance, it is intuitively appealing to expect that world society must have a competitive advantage with regard to *societal integration* such as legal and political as well as functional integration, while global Islamism must have a competitive edge with regard to *communal integration*, whether negatively by discrimination against outsiders and internal dissidents or more positively by virtue of the cohesion afforded by higher sociability.<sup>15</sup>

As we shall see in the remainder of this section, the first of these expectations is entirely fulfilled. The second expectation, however, appears to be fulfilled only to a limited extent.

### Political and Legal Integration

Despite talk about global governance, world society remains constituted to a large extent by nation-states and national legal systems. We still very much live in a world of nation-states promulgating codified positive law or authorizing international organizations to do so. This poses a considerable challenge to any globalization project. It is somewhat paradoxical for a globalist political project such as cosmopolitan world society to be stuck with forms of political and legal integration such as the nation-state and codified positive law that date back to the early modern period, long before the advent of full-blown globalization. Insofar as

<sup>15</sup> Shaw (1994, 9-13) discusses normative integration as a subcategory of integration in world society. For analytical reasons I have covered normative integration in the last section, on principles and values.

nation-states are imagined communities, there is a communitarian element to them which somewhat counteracts the otherwise predominant logic of societal integration.

At the same time, however, cosmopolitan world society is also able to rely on the very nation-states whose territorial boundaries it transcends (Thomas et al. 1987; Meyer et al. 1997). In fact, the nation-state and codified positive law are highly modern achievements. Even in the age of nationalism, the nation-state was at least as much a container of civil society à-la Locke as of primordial communities à-la Herder. This mitigates for cosmopolitan world society the apparent paradox of being forced to resort to old-style forms of political and legal integration such as the nation-state and national legal systems.

For global Islamism, the situation is more ambiguous. On one hand, Islamism and Sharia law are widely seen as antithetical to Westphalian statehood and secular constitutionalism. All countries in the Muslim world have seen themselves compelled, one way or another, to control and censure Islam. Until recently, a violent backlash has followed almost every time a Muslim country lifted the lid on Islam. This has included several military coups in Turkey, as well as an authoritarian crackdown on Islamists in Algeria in the 1990s.<sup>16</sup>

Where Islamists have succeeded, however, they are compelled to engage in Westphalian statehood. This applies to countries as diverse as Saudi Arabia and Khomeini's Iran. In doing so, Islamist leaders can hark back to an age-old school of thought according to which Islam not only tolerates but even endorses territorial pluralism (Piscatori 1986). By the same token, Islamists are also compelled to adopt Western templates of codified positive law. Even where Islamists have attempted to implement Sharia law, it has been transformed almost beyond recognition by its incorporation into codified positive law (Otto 2010).<sup>17</sup>

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, Islamist countries undeniably constitute a challenge to international order and stability (Kissinger 1968). Sharia law is clearly 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 counts only half of men's (Peters 2005, 6-68). The Sharia clause in the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* makes a mockery of international human rights obligations.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, apart from failed states such as Somalia or Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, even for radical Islamists the nation-state remains "the only concrete political reality" (Zubaida 2011, 183). This has a considerable socializing effect, pushing them away from their ideal of communal integration towards forms of societal integration. The same applies to the state tradition of codified positive law. Radical Islamists have occasionally tried to codify Sharia, but the very process of codification has considerably mitigated Sharia. As a consequence, the execution of Sharia criminal law remains a rare occurrence (Otto 2010).

At the current stage of world society, there is no way around the Westphalian nation-state and codified positive law (Badie 2000). Not only are these "Western" institutions highly insidious for radical Islamists; they also have had a considerable socializing effect on them.

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<sup>16</sup> Recently, there is debate on whether "Muslimhood" (White 2005) or "Muslimism" (Cevik and Thomas 2011) may become a game changer, reconciling secular constitutionalism with freedom of religious expression.

<sup>17</sup> For a range of comparative studies of Sharia law, see Peters (2005, 142-185) [largely analytical]; Marshall (2005) [largely polemical]; Abiad (2008) [largely apologetic]; Hefner (2011) [largely anti-alarmist].

<sup>18</sup> 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".

This is one of the reasons why it has been so difficult for radical Islamists to put their aspirations into political practice. At the pre-revolutionary stage, Islamists must struggle against states and legal systems that tend to 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 ideological aspirations.

Thus, Islamists are paradoxically forced to replicate forms of societal integration that rest on world society. On one hand, this strengthens them on the operational level and allows them to maintain the illusion that they are on the rise. On the other hand, however, their credibility is undermined at the strategic level 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 path-breaking article of 1971, Niklas Luhmann noted that functional subsystems such as the economy, science and technology were in the process of transcending territorial boundaries, and thus eclipsing the importance of political and legal integration in the emergent world society (Luhmann 1971). In 1997, Luhmann was able to state this more precisely: globalization amounts to the supersession of national societies that are territorially constituted by politics and law, by an all-encompassing world society constituted by functional subsystems such as the economy, science and technology (Luhmann 1997, Vol. II, Ch. 10).

As we have seen above, the importance of political and legal integration has far from disappeared. At the same time, however, functional subsystems such as the economy, science and technology are increasingly important for the propagation and societal integration of world society. In fact, one may argue that this is what globalization is all about.

How well could global Islamists, if politically successful, integrate themselves into this environment of ongoing functional integration of the economy, science, and technology? Once again, there are no data available to answer this speculative question. It is possible, however, to examine the degree to which Muslim countries and their inhabitants are functionally integrated. The hypothetical functional integration of global Islamists is unlikely to be higher than the actual integration of Muslim countries, many of which are modernist.<sup>19</sup>

It is undeniable that individual Muslims, as well as Muslim countries, 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 commodities; and Muslims are notoriously avid users of mobile telecommunication devices. But does that mean that they are integrated into the vanguard of world society in any meaningful sense?

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<sup>19</sup> 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).

	High-tech exports in % of manufactured exports	High-tech exports per inhabitant in US\$	ICT goods exports in % of total goods exports	Academic articles per Million inhabitants
Muslim-majority countries	6%	53	2%	16.4
World-wide	20%	274	13%	111.9
High income countries	19%	1000	12%	548.4
Low/middle income countries	20%	95	16%	25.8
Latin America and Caribbean	13%	88	12%	40.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	6%	4	1%	5.9
Low income countries	3%	..	1%	2.0

Table 2: Science and technology<sup>20</sup>

Table 2 suggests that Muslim-majority countries are a far cry from the cutting edge of modern technological society.<sup>21</sup> 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 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. Similarly, not all Muslim-majority countries 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? How can this *not* have anything to do with the fact that they are Muslim? There are two interesting outliers from the pattern depicted above, and both of these exceptions appear to confirm the rule. Turkey is the leading Muslim country in the field of science, and it also has the longest secular tradition of suppressing Islam (since 1919).<sup>22</sup> Malaysia is the most advanced exporter of high-tech and computer technology, and its population is about 30% Chinese and Indian.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> As a remedy, they called for the reconciliation of Islam with Western enlightenment and the scientific revolution. In the wake of Abduh and Rida, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt includes many scientists and encourages its members to study scientific subjects such as medicine (Masood 2006, 23). The same applies to more radical Islamist organizations, including terrorist ones, which idealize the unity between “the medic, the militant, and the fighter” (Bellion-Jourdan 2003, 69-84). In the 1980s, Muslim ideologues announced the advent of an imagined “Islamic science” as an alternative to

<sup>20</sup> Calculations based on Pew Research Center (2011, 155-157); World Bank (2011, 36-38, 310-313, 314-317).

<sup>21</sup> Further 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).

<sup>22</sup> Turkey: 116 scientific articles per Million inhabitants.

<sup>23</sup> Malaysia: High-tech exports 47% of manufactured exports; 1875 US\$ of high-tech exports per inhabitant; ICT goods exports 38% of total goods exports

<sup>24</sup> See also Lewis (2002), focussing on failed modernization attempts in the Ottoman Empire.

“Western science”. Despite all the enthusiasm, however, it appears that this movement has neither led to innovative technologies nor to testable hypotheses (Hoodbhoy 1991).

It is therefore not for a lack of trying that the reconciliation of Islam and science has never taken place. Sometimes Muslim countries have significantly invested in the advancement of science and technology. This includes investment by Pakistan and Iran in defence 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 cathedrals in the desert 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 most important one is arguably the prohibition to question established authorities that is inherent in both contemporary Islam as a belief system and in the closed social structures supported by it. Religious non-conformism is highly frowned upon. For example the Pakistani Abdus Salam, who in 1979 had won the Nobel Prize in Physics, was forbidden to set foot on Pakistani university campuses because he belonged to the Ahmedi sect, considered heretic, despite the fact that he was one of only two Muslims to ever have won a scientific Nobel Prize (Hoodbhoy 2007, 52).<sup>25</sup> 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 behaviour” (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 so-called scientific method.

While world society is based on strong foundations in economic globalization and other forms of global interdependence such as science and technology, the Muslim world struggles to catch up with these trends. At best, they can piggyback on certain modes of societal integration such as social networking websites, thus exploiting the opportunity structure offered by world society. Despite the tactical advantages, on a strategic level this dependence on “Western” technology and science remains a considerable source of weakness not only for Muslim-majority countries but also for global Islamism as a political project.

## Discrimination

The utopian vision of both world society and global Islamism is a situation where all people broadly subscribe to the same moral code. No exclusion or discrimination would then be needed, as everybody would be a full member of the same social universe. It can be debated 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 by one way or another. By the same token, adherents to one moral code need to demarcate themselves from adherents to other moral codes. The 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

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<sup>25</sup> The other one was Ahmed Zewail from Egypt, who in 1999 won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

views among Muslims on who is a true believer and who is a heretic (*zindiq*). However this controversy is not on *whether* there are sheep and goats, but on *who* they are. There seems to be near-universal agreement among Muslims that Islam cannot be secularized. For Christians there may be a spectrum from radical to secular, but for Muslims there is only a spectrum from radical to moderate. For example 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 a “secular Muslim” would count as an apostate. Apostasy is seen by devote Muslims as the abomination par excellence. According to a recent 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).<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, there is a wide range of views among Islamists on the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the out-group. In theory, infidels are sometimes seen as one monolithic “religion of Satan”. In practice, however, 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 one hand, a Muslim must never become an apostate. In most Muslim-majority contexts, attempts to incite Muslims to apostasy are either forbidden by law or avenged by informal sanctions (US Department of State 2010). On the other hand, the propagation of Islam is seen in an entirely positive light and Muslims are eager to welcome new converts. On one hand, criticizing Islam is seen as blasphemy. On the other hand, criticizing infidels is seen as simply speaking the truth and thus pleasing in the eyes of God and his Prophet.<sup>27</sup>

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 their own liberal values. Take for example the arch-cosmopolitan Ulrich Beck. According to this author (2002, 18), 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 instinct of not antagonizing opposing moralities but rather meeting them with strategies of toleration, accommodation, or even appeasement.

But alas, it has obvious practical limits. Any society, including a cosmopolitan one, must defend itself against internal and external challenges. However, the cosmopolitan instinct is to include as many individuals and groups as possible, and to discriminate only 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 wider social environments supporting criminality and terrorism are exempted and become instead targets of intense accommodation efforts.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Egypt: 84%; Jordan: 86%; Pakistan: 76%; Nigeria: 51%.

<sup>27</sup> Short of submitting to Islam, the highest recognition a non-Muslim can achieve under classical doctrine is a sort of second-rate citizenship under Muslim protection (*dhimmitude*); see Ye’or (2002).

<sup>28</sup> An example is the military and counterinsurgency practice of “targeted killings” of terrorists, while trying to win the “hearts and minds” of ordinary Muslims.

Liberal cosmopolitan society has internalized that the only legitimate grounds for exclusion and discrimination is “what they do” but not “who they are”. This is different for communities, including the adherents to global Islamism, who unscrupulously base exclusion and discrimination not only on conduct but also on group membership, i.e. “who they are”. Thus, there are important differences in the ways by which global Islamism and world society discriminate. Global Islamism discriminates boldly, both against internal and external perceived foes, 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 the following synthetic statement: while 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 endeavours, however, global Islamism tries to radically advance its boundary and thus to extend its sphere of justice to the global level.<sup>29</sup> It seems reasonable to conclude that the result is a certain competitive strength for global Islamism on one hand, and a considerable source of vulnerability for world society on the other. However, one should not overlook the fact that the limited toleration among Islamists for internal dissent is also a source of considerable fragmentation and infighting (*fitna*).

## Sociability

In any case, discrimination against internal and external perceived enemies is not enough to achieve communal integration at the global level. While for global Islamist it is simply axiomatic that their long-term objective of constructing and consolidating the global *umma* is attainable, it looks like a tall order if we consider that a global *umma* in any politically and sociologically virulent sense would require a high degree of organizational vibrancy at the transnational level. A purely spiritual and otherworldly *umma* would obviously not meet the political aspirations of global Islamists. The challenge for Islamists is that a propensity of devote Muslims to get organized not only at the local but also at the national and at the transnational level is a prerequisite for the establishment of a real substantial global *umma*. This propensity would have to be more intense than the associational vibrancy of world society, to offset the stronger basis of world society in political, legal and functional integration.

Is this realistic, or is it a mirage? If it is a mirage, does that mean that global Islamism will soon be derailed? And even if global Islamism is doomed, does this apply to Islamism *tout court*? As we shall see, all three of these questions must be answered in the negative.

An empirical analysis of associational life in Muslim countries suggests that sociability among Muslims is not particularly high. Using data from the World Value 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, recrea-

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<sup>29</sup> Of all world religions, only Christianity has broadly comparable ambitions. See Footnote 4 on why this comparison is not strictly relevant in the present context.

tional organization, educational organization, labour 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 religious congregations.<sup>30</sup> Incidentally, there appears to be a negative relationship between the proportion of Muslims in a country and membership in a political party. If this generalization applies to Muslims overall, then it is fair to conclude *a fortiori* that the organizational prerequisites for a triumphant global Islamist movement could hardly be met.

This brings us to our second question. If global Islamists are structurally unable to outperform world society on any indicator of social integration except for discrimination, does this mean that they are due to disappear from the transnational political landscape? The 20th Century has shown that political projects are not usually relinquished by their followers only 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 more Millions of 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, then 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, *e.g.* due to an exogenous shock such as a global energy crunch conjuring up the demise of industrial society and reversing globalization (Friedrichs 2010)? Then it would 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 integration of world society falls apart. As global Islamism piggybacks on world society, the demise of cosmopolitan globalization would seriously debilitate its viability as a political project.

At the national level, however, Islamism may have a bright future as recent developments in North Africa seem to suggest.<sup>31</sup> Even more so at the local level, the cohesiveness 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). Like in the case of evangelical Christians, the considerable social cohesion of Islamists at the grassroots level makes them competitive in local power struggles in many corners of the world. Whatever jihadist firebrands may think, this would not spell the advent of the global caliphate.

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<sup>30</sup> It is hardly surprising that, in the case of religious congregations, self-identification as a Muslim increases the likelihood that an individual will be a member once socioeconomic factors are controlled for.

<sup>31</sup> From a cosmopolitan viewpoint this is the most benign scenario because, in theory, a cosmopolitically constituted world order might be compatible with a variety of national Islamist movements. In practice, however, this would require considerable self-restraint on the part of the Islamists: respect for non-Muslim segments of the population, observation of international human rights standards even where they clash with Sharia, etc.

On the contrary, in Muslim-majority countries the most likely scenario would be more failed states – the likes of Somalia and Afghanistan, with Yemen and Libya possibly next in line. In the Muslim *diaspora*, the competition between agonizing host societies and vibrant Islamic communities would similarly play out at the local level: town by town, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, and village by village. It is deeply ironic that, while global Islamists per definition have planetary aspirations, what they are ultimately likely to catalyze is either a variety of national Islamist movements or political fragmentation along local cleavages.

## 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 at the global level the pluralism of civil society. The communitarian alternative to this cosmopolitan vision, as epitomized by global Islamism, is to scale up a particular community ideal, namely the vision of the Muslim *umma*, to the global level.<sup>32</sup>

As we have seen, there is a competitive edge to the different ways by 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 advanced markets, science and technology. To counter the competitive advantage of world society with regard to societal integration, global Islamism would need a counter-vailing competitive advantage with regard to communal 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 is impossible, it is therefore ultimately bound to be frustrated.<sup>33</sup>

Until then, world society aims for social integration by transcending pre-existent bonds of belonging and by incorporating residual communitarian segments such as nations. Global Islamism, by contrast, tries to project the communitarian vision of the *umma* to the planetary stage, thus perpetuating the distinction between believers and unbelievers at the 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*.

The author of this article is personally committed to cosmopolitan rather than Islamic values. Therefore, it may be appropriate to ponder what can be done to contain global Islamism. To begin with, I agree with Karl Popper (1945) that open society must know its enemies. This is hard to accept for most of my fellow cosmopolitans who endlessly (and rightfully) criticize our own blemishes such as neo-liberalism, nationalism, and hidden authoritarian tendencies within Western societies while turning a blind eye on the “external” enemies of Western societies such as Islamists. As we have seen, this is inherent in the constitutive logic of cosmopolitanism – namely trying to accommodate the “other” rather than antagonizing them.

Since proscribing illiberal practices may be seen as illiberal in itself, most liberal societies are largely defenceless against specific communities adopting illiberal goals and practices. In their pursuit of moral segregation, illiberal communities within liberal societies frequently

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<sup>32</sup> On this upward shift in the “scale of contention”, see Tarrow (2005, 120-128).

<sup>33</sup> While world society is more firmly rooted in political realities than global Islamism, both are going nowhere because universalism is unattainable. Nevertheless, competition between rival universalisms can last for centuries as the medieval rivalry between Empire (*imperium*) and Church (*sacerdotium*) shows (Friedrichs 2001).

exploit this by invoking precisely the liberal values they despise. This so-called multiculturalism can lead to highly paradoxical results as in the case of the United Kingdom, which 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 have seen this coming 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* has 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”.<sup>34</sup>

The French case suggests that, to confront Islamism, cosmopolitan society may be well advised to dialectically recover the community *modus operandi*. Critics object that this may 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 highly conscious and explicit about the normative “red lines”.<sup>35</sup>

The bottom-line is that a considerable vulnerability for any open society, including cosmopolitan world society, flows from a categorical and instinctive refusal to recognize its opponents for what they are, namely opponents. Cosmopolitans must understand that relentless conflict is not a necessary corollary of the identification of an opponent, 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 opponents and when it is more appropriate to take them on. Eventually, conflict between world society and global Islamism can be better managed when both are recognized as rival globalization projects, and when their mutual incompatibilities are acknowledged.

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<sup>34</sup> *Conseil d'État*, quoted in Koussens (2011); see also Koussens (2009).

<sup>35</sup> Another interesting case in this regard is the various accommodations done (and undone) under Kemalist Turkey's militant secularism.

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