Globalization, Islam and

the Indigenization of Knowledge

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The rise of theories of globalization has brought increased interest in the idea of indigenous knowledge. As notions of the world as "a single place" have become more influential, there has been greater interest in movements which are said to be expressive of the new global condition. Among these, the current which seeks "Islamization" of knowledge has attracted particular attention. For its leading ideologues, Islamic approaches alone are adequate to understand the contemporary world and to advance a new universal morality. This essay looks at their claims, especially at the idea that Muslim intellectuals are uniquely equipped to contest dominant Western discourses. It argues that rather than contesting such ideas Islamization has complemented them.

Islamic traditions have long developed within a complex of intercultural flows and exchanges. This essay therefore also looks at some of the diverse influences that have shaped modern Islamic movements. It argues that by minimizing or even ignoring such experiences, theories of globalization and of Islamization greatly distort the processes at work within contemporary society.

Islamization

For its proponents the movement for Islamization of knowledge aims at salvation of the world community of Muslims – the *umma* – and by extension the whole of humanity. Al ʿAlwani, a leading figure within the movement, views Islamization as "the most important issue before the Ummah" (1994: x). It is, he comments, "the Ummah's future, its

destiny, its objective, the means of its emergence from its crisis, and the way to building a new civilisation and a new renaissance" (Al-Alwani 1994: x).

The movement's energies are directed overwhelmingly into intellectual activity that aims to provide a suitable framework for Muslims to examine the contemporary world in terms of Islamic belief and practice. This is to be achieved by the identification of foundational religious principles in all areas of life: to assert what Turner calls "a claim about the authenticity of tradition over inherited, imported or alien knowledge" (Turner 1994: 7). The development of a comprehensive Islamic perspective, it is argued, will allow Muslims to challenge dominant models which have emerged within Western academia and which are viewed by the Islamizers as false.

Sardar, who is a leading contributor to the Islamization literature, comments that much of the Western academic tradition requires radical revision. The social sciences are a matter of special concern, he argues, being "cultural constructions of Western civilization [which] have virtually no meaning or relevance for Muslim societies" (Sardar 1997: 47). Muslim intellectuals are therefore required to engage in a new academic practice:

[t]o generate disciplines that are a natural product of the world view and civilization of Islam; [to] use Islamic categories and notions to describe goals and aspirations, thought and behaviour and problems and solutions of Muslim societies.

(Sardar 1997: 7)

To this end, a considerable literature has been produced by Muslim scholars, especially those associated with a series of specialist institutes and study centres established since the early 1980s. They have succeeded in generating debates which challenge Muslim academics to reconsider orthodox attitudes towards scientific thought. Stenberg (1996b: 273) suggests they have had a significant impact, not least because of the implications for the whole Islamic tradition. In effect, the Islamizers have nominated themselves as interpreters of the religious tradition, making claims which define a "true" Islam.

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Religion and Globalism

For the Islamization movement the notion of a "global" order is of special significance. On the one hand, it is seen as highly problematic: thus Sardar (1997: 41) identifies the difficulties presented by globalizing processes associated with Western capitalism and what he calls "disciplinary imperialism". On the other hand, the global context is seen to offer opportunities. El-Affendi (1991: 3) comments: "It is time we Muslims realize that we live in a global community, and that our ideas and beliefs are under scrutiny from the whole of humanity". Such scrutiny, he argues, allows Muslims to display fully the qualities of Islam. Abul-Fadl (1992: 10) argues similarly that Islamization "entails reshaping the future of the global order". What is required, she maintains, is nothing less than development of "a new global consciousness which is inclusive" (Abul-Fadl 1992: 9), one in which Islamization will play a key role in "renegotiating the terms of the global encounter" (Abul-Fadl 1992: 11). In promoting Islamic goals, committed Muslims will be "appropriating global interdependence" – in effect, Muslims will seize the opportunities presented by the global condition (Abul-Fadl 1992: 34).

Such references to globalism and to its significance for Islam in the modern world are striking features of the Islamization literature. They might be seen as consistent with the views of non-Muslim theorists of globalization, who suggest that contemporary religious movements in general express a "global calling". In this view, such movements are intimately involved in the generation of a singular world, what Robertson (1992: 6) calls a "global unicity". This development, it is argued, is a function of socio-cultural changes associated with world integration. But what is the "global" condition and what processes can be identified as "globalizing" influences?

Theories of globalization have developed a pervasive influence. According to Waters (1995: 1), "globalization may be *the* concept of the 1990s, a key idea by which we understand the transition of human society into the millennium". Although notions of the global are often diffuse and sometimes elusive, they hold in common the idea of a unifying or integrating world. Among organisation theorists such as Ohmae (1990), who have dominated discussions about the global, the world is best understood as a series of interlocking networks. Here

globalism meets conservative economic theory in the shape of neo-liberalism. The global entity is the market, a structure within which entrepreneurial activities sweep over old boundaries such as national frontiers to make a "borderless world". Tensions arise only to the extent that outdated state structures attempt to intervene in rational decision-making processes among transnational corporations and a vast mass of individual consumers. Such notions have had an impact across the spectrum within Western social science, so that writers such as Desai and Harris, once fierce critics of global market models, can also identify the transforming power of capital. For Harris (1995: 228), for example, transnational economic changes are now so profound that they serve "world interest and a universal morality".

Social and cultural theories of the global elaborate a similar theme. Writers such as Giddens (1990; 1991), Harvey (1989) and Hall (1992) emphasize the interconnectedness of the contemporary order, especially the "compression" of time and space which results from technological innovation associated with transnational economic changes. More and more, it is argued, notions of physical distance are challenged by the possibilities of electronic communication. The global system therefore unifies but is also one in which all are affected by the proximity of "elsewhere", producing a new consciousness of Self and Other.

Some currents within this discourse have attempted to use a global framework to criticize dominant models of world culture and especially of historical change, with positive outcomes. Focusing on the long record of interaction between socio-cultural and political formations, they have challenged modern nation-centred perspectives and the associated cultural determinisms which celebrate European "civilizational" values.[1] The mainstream of globalization theory which examines social and cultural matters has, however, suggested a "stronger" theory which has proved more problematic.

Globalization is said to bring rapid change, social and cultural flux, ambivalence and uncertainty – conditions often associated with the "postmodern condition" of fragmentation and diversity. Here, globalization is not merely marketization or mass consumerism but is in Featherstone's words, a "generative frame of unity within which diversity can take place" (Featherstone 1990: 2). The result may be an engagement of large numbers of people in efforts to discover secure

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locations in a fluid and sometimes disturbing world. Globalization is said to speak both of integration and of dislocation: it is the context within which the attempt to discover authentic socio-cultural locations is pursued. As part of this quest, Robertson argues, a "search for fundamentals" – for certainties or foundational values – is increasingly significant (Robertson 1992: 170).

For Robertson, perhaps the most influential theorist of the socio-cultural dimensions of globalization, world integration is best understood as a series of processes which have brought into being a "globality" or "unicity". This is a systemic condition: all effective social units are shaped by global integration and at the same time play a part in shaping it. In this context the search for fundamentals is highly significant. Robertson (1992: 166) observes: "Defining globalization in its basic sense as involving the compression of the world, one must insist that it is the globality of the 'search for fundamentals' which is its most interesting feature."

The "search" is part of a general quest for particularisms which are simultaneously universal claims. Borrowing from Wallerstein's world systems theory, Robertson argues that by the late 20th century a twofold process was under way, "involving the *interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism*" (Beyer 1994: 28; original emphasis). The effect is to constrain "civilisations and societies" to be increasingly explicit about their "global callings (their unique geocultural or geo-moral contributions to world history)" (Robertson 1992: 130).

Such developments are said to have special significance for religion. Increased interconnectedness at the global level is viewed as heightening awareness of the diversity of human experience, challenging local belief systems and the worldviews they sustain. The retreat into isolation sometimes associated with particularism is less and less feasible. At the same time, global pressures become more demanding, requiring interpretation and explanation, and encouraging the reworking of worldviews – promoting the search for fundamentals. Localisms not only discover new elaborations of the universal but also have access to novel means of projecting them, both through innovative technologies and in terms of the heightened receptivity to universal perspectives which is an aspect of the global condition.

As world views, religions are said to have special significance within

the globalizing process: of all complexes of ideas they are best equipped to prosper within a "unicity". Waters (1995: 125) refers to the "globalizing sense of mission" of major world religions such as Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, which have now, he suggests, discovered a highly congenial environment. Turner (1994: 83) argues similarly, noting that the changes associated with modernity bring closer the possibility that such belief systems might "realize" themselves.

In this context the search for fundamentals can produce religious movements which, according to Robertson (1992: 170) are nothing less than "a product of globality". Modern religious movements, he argues, are both an expression of the global condition and a force for its consolidation. Beyer (1994: 3) elaborates: "religion can be a proactive force in the sense that it is instrumental in the elaboration and development of globalization: the central thrust is to make [believers] more determinative in the world system." Here even "antisystemic" religious movements – those formally committed to contesting dominant ideas and structures – complement globalizing processes. Religion becomes a positive force in the making of the global condition.

"Islamic Science"

Archer (1990: 1) argues that globalization is pervasive:

Globalization affects everyone since it presents them with a world context which influences them in some of their doings … we all become global agents because reactions to a single context produce powerful aggregate effects which act back on the world environment.

Within this context, some theorists of globalization also maintain that certain collectivities are more expressive of the global condition than others; most important, that those operating within a universalizing framework may seek more energetically to assert their mission in an integrating world. Here the Islamization movement can be viewed, in Beyer's terms, as one of the "proactive forces" for globalization. Its proponents maintain that Islamization challenges dominant values at a world level, in particular that it contests what AbuSulayman (1993b: xvi) calls the "excess and desecration" characteristic of Western society and which is said to have become a pervasive influence worldwide.

Islamization, he maintains, "must not stop at any physical borders, but must be extended to every corner of the earth and contemporary civilization" (AbuSulayman 1993b: xvi).

For the Islamizers, mainstream Islamic discourse is judged inadequate to this task. Manzoor (1989: 59) argues that contemporary Islamic thought is largely irrelevant to the Muslim reality, being nostalgic, rhetorical, abstract and ineffective in contesting the West. These gross shortcomings require to be confronted:

Obviously … for Muslim thought, the problem of relevance is a problem of history; indeed it is a problem of the West's power and ascendancy. It is a problem that forces the Muslim thinker to relate his Islamic self to the outside world, which is a creation of Western man, in a spirit of accommodation and compromise, if not downright capitulation. Little wonder, then, that nearly all Islamic discourse is a pathetic exercise in apology: it has arisen after all, as a response to the Western attack … if Islamic thought is to end its courtship with irrelevance, it must end its debilitating fascination with the West and make a genuine rediscovery of its authentic self.

(Manzoor 1989: 60)

This profound crisis can only be solved by directing new energies towards a strategic goal: "The ultimate focus of Islamic discourse," Manzoor argues, "is the problem of world order" (Manzoor 1989: 60). It is by confronting this global challenge that Muslims will reassert the universal mission at the heart of Islamic belief.

The initiative for Islamization as a project – a collective effort directed to specific goals – came in the mid-1960s. Among the movement's first formal statements was that of Al-Attas, who set out an agenda for "the liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition, then from secular control over his reason and language" (Sardar 1989: 30). The project was to be intimately linked with "de-Westernization of knowledge", in particular with contestation of the dualism identified in a separation of value and knowledge in modern European thought. Among co-thinkers, Idris argued that this was integral to the invigoration of Islam, nothing less than "an organized and gradual effort which will culminate in the realisation of an (Islamic) society" (Sardar 1989: 30).

In the mid-1970s a formal initiative was launched. This was the

result of an appeal by Idris to Muslim social scientists to elaborate systematically a range of philosophical positions and working perspectives based upon "an ideology of Islam" (Sardar 1989: 30). He maintained that Muslim scholars' belief was to differentiate their work from that of other academics by providing a frame of reference for construction of "Islamic social sciences". These might make use of Western science but would correct its "faulty" ideology (Sardar 1989: 30). Idris argued:

It is true that there are discoverable laws of nature and society and it is true that the behaviour of large scale material things is influenced by the behaviour of their constituent elements, but it is not true that these constituent elements are all there is; and it is not true that the so-called laws of nature are laid down by nature for nature.

(Sardar 1989: 30)

An Islamic science based in the notion of *tawhid* – oneness or unity of God – would identify systemic faults in the Western approach; Muslims might then reveal a knowledge free of the distortions introduced by the West.

The project began to attract a number of prominent Muslim academics, especially in North America. By the late 1970s one influential group had taken a decision to formalize the movement and at an international conference in Switzerland agreed to develop an institutional structure, setting up the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in Washington D.C. in 1981. The IIIT has since established a network of offices in South and South-East Asia, North America, Europe and the Middle East, and related groups have developed centres such as the Centre for Studies on Science at Aligarh, India. From the early 1980s, the movement also began to attract academics based in Europe, who have since contributed extensively to the Islamization literature. These have included Sardar, Maurice Bucaille and Roger Garaudy. A number of Muslim political leaders have also endorsed the movement, notably Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed.

Following a further international conference held in Pakistan in 1982, the IIIT published its *General Principles and Workplan*, inviting Muslim scholars in all disciplinary fields "to develop Islamic thought and methodology, the contents of the Islamic vision, and the goals,

values and basic principles of Islamization" (IIIT 1984: 1). Within the *Workplan* was an essay by Ismael Raji al-Faruqi which has become particularly influential within the Islamization current. Faruqi attacked Western social science, which he saw as a means of obscuring the realities of the modern world. Its disciplines, he argued, had been developed instrumentally within Western cultures bent upon world domination. He was especially hostile towards their political agendas:

The Western social sciences – history, geography, economics, political science, sociology and anthropology – were all developed under the impetus provided by romanticism. All of them, each in its own way, are based upon the ethnocentric view that nation, or ethnic identity … is the ultimate unit of analysis and value. When they speak of 'society' or 'social order', they mean their own national entity or order … . Sociology boldly affirms the ethnocentric thesis because it deals directly with society and social order. Political science follows. Western geography and history can conceive of the world only as a satellite of the West, the world revolving around England, America, France, Germany or Italy as its heart and core.

(IIIT 1982: 37-38)

Western economics has been "impertinent enough to claim for itself the status of a universal science", while anthropology is "the boldest of all": in its view, "'humanity' means ethnicity and is logically equivalent to and convertible with it" (IIIT 1982: 38).

Faruqi concluded that full awareness of the conflict between these distorting perspectives and the truths held by Islam had become evident only under contemporary conditions: "it is our present generation that first discovered the conflict as we lived it in our own intellectual lives" (Sardar 1989: 31). This discovery, comments Abul-Fadl (1992: 53), amounted to new consciousness of a need to prioritize the "cultural imperative" within Islamic practice, dictating a common Muslim effort to contest the whole framework of the social sciences. She observes (with a strangely inappropriate allusion to the words of Karl Marx) that Faruqi and his co-thinkers "may have lamented the situation of the Muslim ummah; its intention however was not to bemoan its fate but to act to change it" (Abul-Fadl 1992: 106).

For almost two decades the Islamizers have produced works in the fields of history, philosophy, scientific method, law, economics,

philology, sociology, politics, international relations, anthropology and psychology. Their objective, in Abul-Fadl's words, has been that of "reformulating and representing modern social thought from an Islamic perspective" (Abul-Fadl 1992: 99). The impact has been considerable. Stenberg comments that the challenge to mainstream theories of knowledge has affected many Muslim intellectuals, generating debates in which "[A]t stake is the right to define the relation between the Islamic tradition and science and, in the end, the function of the Islamic tradition in general … to display the 'true' and 'authentic' form of 'Islam'" (Stenberg 1996a: 273).

Indigenization and Globalism

Ghamari-Tabrizi (1996: 317) comments that in approaching the question of "Islamic science" we should be guided by the particular socio-historical conditions within which it has emerged: "What counts as Islamic is not some transhistorical notion of moral values, but rather a socio-historical position that is the direct consequence of the colonial encounter and its subsequent local oppositional political and intellectual movements."

For over 200 years European states have dominated most Islamic regions. Orientalism has provided rationales for the subordination of their populations by arguing that Muslims ("the Muslim mind") is perverse, unreceptive to rationalist approaches, to "science" and to modernity in general. On this view, Muslims are incapable of positive thought and action: they remain inert, subordinate to those whose rational actions demonstrate the advanced character of European culture. For decades such views were pervasive within Western academia. As Said and others have pointed out (Said 1978; Hussain/Olson/ Qureshi 1984), they have been the basis for establishment of specialist disciplines and institutions concerned primarily with imagined differences between Europe and "other" traditions, principally Islam. It is against this background that the Islamizers set out to describe an Islamic perspective as the basis for assertion of Muslim identity. What is striking about their claims, however, is the *embrace* of contemporary circumstances: the assertion that a world marked by the expansion from Europe of industrial capitalism, and by the latter's social, political and

cultural expressions, is an especially appropriate condition for the elaboration of an Islamic worldview.

Recent changes in the world order are said to be particularly significant. Ibrahim (1989: 17) observes:

It is a truism to say that world is changing and shrinking. What is not so well appreciated, however, is that the world is changing and shrinking at a faster and faster pace. Today the rate of change is itself changing and accelerating. Moreover, there have been other fundamental alterations in the nature of change. Contemporary changes are characterized by their global nature, swift interpenetration, increased feedback, irreversibility, complexity and interdependence of one group of changes upon another.

Although the West has long distorted understandings of the world, he argues, it is this *new* order which has compelled a specific Muslim reaction: "the nature of contemporary change forces us to institutionalize an holistic, integrative, collective interactive and continuous process of [Islamic] planning" (Ibrahim 1989: 22). The *umma* is appropriately placed to meet this challenge, Ibrahim argues, because although it is diverse culturally and ethnically it is integrated globally on the basis of commitment to foundational values. Such values embrace all human experience: "There are no new values out there waiting to be discovered. There is complete consensus of the ummah on this issue …" (Ibrahim 1989: 19). As one in shared belief, Muslims are in fact uniquely situated to respond to the modern world.

AbuSulayman, one of the architects of the Islamization project, concurs. The modern world, he argues, offers no place of retreat: "In today's global village and market, isolationism is no longer a viable choice. Rather, there must be a common degree of principles, values and considerations that allow world society to function and maintain human existence" (AbuSulayman 1993b: xvi). It is in this context that Islamization must extend "to every corner of the earth" (ibid.: xvi).

The notion of globalization appears repeatedly in strategic documents of the Islamization movement, where it is associated with a growing sense that the new state of affairs offers possibilities of realization or fulfillment of foundational Islamic values. Abul-Fadl, for example, writes of a global context in which "a century's technological

accomplishments have dissipated the physical distances between communities and cultures" (Abul-Fadl 1992: 106). She comments that: "Isolation and withdrawal are no longer a feasible alternative in a global village where interdependence is the order of the times" (ibid.: 81-82). It is now, she maintains, that the historic unity of Islam can claim its full relevance, providing an answer to the key question: "how to evolve a global architectonics of a community that [is] both free and moral?" (ibid.: 106).

Anees echoes this conclusion, emphasizing that contemporary circumstances have a special significance for Muslims, for "history has come full circle" (Anees 1993: 61). Today's *umma* – "the global Muslim community" – inhabits a world which offers possibilities to recall the early Islamic era of territorial expansion when "the creative Muslim impulse spread its liberating influence far and wide" (ibid.: 61). Now Muslims are challenged by the possibility of renaissance: "Will the Muslim intellect rise to the challenge?" (ibid.: 61).

Such self-conscious identification of the global setting and of its implications for a universal mission might be seen to reinforce the notion that "globality" *is* playing a determinative role in the emergence of Islamization. This is the conclusion reached by Stenberg (1996b: 336), who comments that, "the [Islamization] discourse can be seen as a form of localization of Islam, a construction of locality based on the possibilities of modernity and globalization". Such a view echoes Robertson's observation that indigenization programs in general are "entrapped in, are indeed largely a product of modernity and, particularly, of globality" (Robertson 1992: 168). Such conclusions are misleading, however. Islamization is less an expression of an integrated world than a perspective which wishes to invoke such a world. Like globalization theory, Islamization sets aside the asymmetries and contradictions which characterize the world system. Both currents impose an imagined unicity upon a volatile and disordered world: neither is appropriate as a means of understanding contemporary conditions, including the condition of the mass of Muslims.

Globalism in Question

Theories of globalization have a pervasive influence. In the early 1980s they began to affect the social sciences; within a decade they had taken

hold in other disciples and in much of the Western media. Only recently has a counter-current emerged. This focuses on core areas of globalization theory, notably in the fields of economics and political economy. Hirst and Thompson (1996), Harman (1996), Kiely (1996), and Hoogvelt (1997) have examined recent patterns of transnational economic activity. None suggest that these are unchanged or that changes are insignificant; each argues, however, that the notion of world economic integration is far from new, that such patterns have been misread and that the notion of a "borderless world" disregards the impacts of national and regional structures to the point of perversity. I have also argued elsewhere that much of globalization theory is inappropriate for the study of social movements, especially religious movements relating to the Third World (Marfleet 1998a).

These critiques suggest that globalist theories *impose* unicity upon structures which show extreme unevenness and contradiction rather than coherence. In particular, they obscure the disjuncture and conflict characteristic of the modern world. In this sense globalism is consistent with the functionalist traditions of most modern social and political theory: indeed, the notion that "the global circumstance" operates to accommodate anti-systemic movements reinforces the sense that "unicity" is premised upon organicism and a Durkheimian pursuit of social order.

By ignoring structures of the most extreme inequality globalist theory marginalizes most of the non-Western world. Assuming the distributive powers of the market, such perspectives make unproblematic the flows of capital generated by and focused upon traditional centres of accumulation, and the power relations associated with them. World economic activity is still concentrated overwhelmingly with the "Triad" of economic networks in North America, Western Europe and Japan. Most of Africa, Asia and Latin America – home to over 80 percent of humanity – have experienced increased exclusion, to the extent that some regions have recently been identified as zones of crisis all but detached from the world economy – what the United Nations calls the "wastelands" (*The Independent*, 29 December 1996).

In some regions of the Third World economic structures are disintegrating and social and political volatility has increased greatly. Here, comments Cox (1995: 41), even the main global development institutions have abandoned attempts at change "in favour of what can be

called global poor relief and riot control". At a world level, inequality has increased dramatically, producing what Cheru (Cox 1995: 41) calls "global apartheid", a vision so much at odds with ideas of a harmonizing world entity as to raise basic questions about the whole globalist paradigm.

Despite the assertion by globalization theory that divisions between "First" and "Third" worlds or "North" and "South" have been rendered meaningless, global theory itself is replete with references to "the West" and to a non-West, sometimes identified as the Third World. The dichotomy is invariably accompanied by homogenization of the two elements and by a focus on exoticized non-European phenomena, especially on anti-systemic movements, with religious movements and especially Islamic currents attracting particular attention. In a recent wide-ranging review of global theory, Waters, for example, is quite consistent with his co-thinkers in identifying "Islamic fundamentalism" as a first example of the cultural impacts of globalism (Waters 1995: 2).

Of the numerous shortcomings of global theory, however, none is more significant than its ahistorical framework. With a few partial exceptions global analyses exclude histories and the making of histories.[2] Together with an overwhelmingly structuralist emphasis this serves to negate the record of human self-activity. The various and changing circumstances under which social agents have attempted to modify their circumstances do not feature in global accounts. The political conflicts and contestations, and the struggles over construction and modification of social and cultural forms, are largely absent. So too with the long experience of interaction between socio-cultural traditions: the record of exchange and diffusion hardly appears within the globalist thesis. Where such ideas are introduced it is to suggest that such exchanges are novel, with the implication that discrete cultural blocs had earlier remained mutually isolated.

At its worst globalism can produce theories of an integrated world which serve as rationales for the aggressive assertion of difference by dominant powers. The most influential of these, Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis, combines every weakness of the various globalization currents (Huntington 1993). It offers a picture of homogenized, discrete cultural blocs ("the West", "Islam", "Confucianism") among which past conflicts serve only to warn of traumatic events

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to come. Predictably, "the West" must prepare to face an aggressive and already blood-stained Orient. It is hardly surprising that more restrained globalist analyses are sensitive to criticisms that such approaches may be viewed as ideological in character. Turner, who is sympathetic to some of the global account, notes the suggestion that the latter can be seen as "evolutionary and teleological … in fact a new version of Westernisation" (Turner 1994: 108).

Islam and Change

Globalist theory should be approached with great caution; so too with theories of Islamization of knowledge which reproduce much of the globalist account. This is especially important in the areas of history and of cultural exchange.

Abaza and Stauth (1990: 211) comment of those who wish to "indigenize" Islam that they appear unaware of the long history of inter-action between Islamic and other traditions and of the implications of their own celebrations of difference:

Those … who claim authenticity by 'indigenization' might not yet be aware of the fact that the local knowledge, upon which they want to construct an alternative, has long since been part of global structures; or of the fact that they play a part in a global cultural game which itself calls for the 'essentialization' of local truth. The new apologetics for Islamist trends are a derivation of the new Western "essentialism" in inter-cultural studies.

Here it is implicit that those who perceive a "Western knowledge" also view it as constructed "locally". Like all such ideas about discrete "knowledge" of the world, this denies or minimizes the importance of borrowings or appropriations from "other" cultural formations. It is in this sense that the Islamizers' project of de-Westernization focuses upon an imagined coherence which is rooted in European essentialism.

I want to look at one example of the processes of fluidity and change which go to make "knowledge", that of the ideas and move-ments associated with Islamic activism, often described as "radical" or "political" Islam, or as "Islamism". These movements have been of profound significance but have been largely ignored by the Islamiza-tion current. Their histories confirm the idea that socio-political trends

within modern Islamic societies have developed within what Abaza and Stauth call "global" structures: that they are elements within complex networks of inter-cultural relations through which ideas have been contested, modified and recast. By looking briefly at a century of Islamist activity I want to demonstrate how inappropriate are the ahistorical approaches shared with globalization theory and with which the Islamizers support a claim to define religious tradition.

Islamism, State and Nation

Islamism has been the most vigorous strategy through which Muslims have been invoked to intervene in the modern world. As a strategy of active engagement it can be contrasted with various quietist currents, with much of "popular Islam" including Sufism, and with orthodoxies usually associated with local power structures and traditional centres of learning.

The central problematic of Islamism has been that of how to direct Muslim energies in relation to ideas and structures associated with Europe and modernism. Since the late 19th century Islamist ideologues and movements have formulated and reformulated a series of perspectives. Sometimes these have remained at the level of abstraction; in other cases they have been directed towards mass activism. They have borrowed from dominant Western models, modified and reshaped them, and adapted them to specific local circumstances. Although these processes have been focused within the Middle East, they have been intimately related to developments in the West and to changes in other regions, notably in South Asia. They have been part of a complex process of cultural exchange in which ideas viewed as distinctively Islamic have been deeply affected by Muslims' interactions with a vast range of "other" traditions.

I want to take one important strand within these processes – that of the strategy to be adopted vis-à-vis the nation state itself, often regarded as the key issue in contention between Islam and perceived hostile Others. Indeed, for the proponents of Islamization this is, Faruqi argues, a crucial issue on which Muslims are obliged to take a stand (IIIT 1983: 37).

Both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars have observed that until the 19th century Islamic tradition did not embrace a formal theory of the

state. For over a millennium there was no requirement for ʿ*ulama* (scholars and jurists) to develop such notions. Rulers of the empires which dominated much of the Islamic world, together with local rulers, received endorsement from religious leaders on the basis of a perceived commitment to application of the *shari'a* (the law) rather than to their position vis-à-vis an abstract political structure. The ʿ*ulama* adopted attitudes towards specific polities which they based upon interpretations of the Quran and Sunna (practice of the Prophet), focusing on application of *shari'a* and the extent to which it could be effective. Debates among ʿ*ulama* about the caliphate (*khilafa* – rule of the successors to the Prophet) and the imamate were conducted similarly around questions of legitimacy with respect to the effectiveness of the *shari'a*.

Azmeh (1993: 90) observes that notions of "state" as an organized, continuous structure which can be isolated from a specific exercise of power appears only "as an abstract locus of order and disorder".[3] The "state" is a particular pattern of everyday power relations between ruler and ruled; in Roy's words, "the sovereign reigns in the empirical, the contingent" (Roy 1994: 14).

In the 18th century many predominantly Islamic regions experienced increased social and political instability. One outcome was the emergence of what European scholars have called "pre-modern" reform movements, which undertook new assessments of the Prophetic tradition and initiated discussions about appropriate exercise of power.[4] These developments were greatly accelerated by the colonial encounter with Europe, which prompted a sharp change in approach among Middle Eastern rulers and associated ʿ*ulama*. European penetration of the region was rapid, violent and effective. Within 50 years of the French occupation of Egypt in 1798, almost the whole of North Africa and the Arab East had come under European control or strong European influence. At the political level, the first response of local rulers was that of defensive or "imitative" nationalism, an attempt to develop the same integration of economic, political, social and military structures that had facilitated advance of the European state.

Desire for symmetry with Europe lay behind the attempts of rulers such as Muhammed Ali in Egypt to acquire European states' technique and principles of political and military organisation. Rapporteurs such as Rifa'a al-Tahtawi and Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi returned

from missions to Europe to argue for wholesale borrowing by Egyptian and Ottoman rulers. For Tahtawi, who became a prominent figure among the Egyptian ʿulama, it was vital that European approaches in science, industry and even the arts should be adopted, as "their perfection in the European countries is a known and an established fact, and it is right that the right be followed" (Al-Husry 1980: 14). He attempted a synthesis of Islamic political traditions and Enlightenment philosophy which focused on imitation of principles and structures that he believed sustained European advance, above all those associated with the modern state.[5] Khayr al-Din argued similarly, recommending Ottoman rulers to adopt the fundamentals of "political systems" – al-tanzimat al-siyasiyya – that he identified in the European states (Al-Husry 1980: 40).

Imitation merely accelerated colonial advance. By the 1860s sustained military, economic and political offensives from Europe had produced anxiety among some sections of the ʿulama that Islamic culture and Muslim identity were under threat. Groups of "proto-Islamists" began efforts to formulate an independent response to the West. By the 1870s they had coalesced around the Iranian scholar and propagandist Jamal al-din al-Afghani, whose pan-Islam, comments Enayat (1982: 56), sought "to release the Muslim mind from the fetters of 'imitation'".

Afghani's vision saw radical reform of the degraded present by organisation of a politics oriented on the faith's unsullied past. Although Afghani was not opposed to European culture as such he formally rejected Western political structures; in particular, he was hostile to the colonizing activities associated with the nation state and the resulting fragmentation of the umma. Rather than import the national category, Afghani maintained, Muslims should reassert their own values. In a passage which was to become a guiding principle for Islamic activism over the next 100 years, Afghani asserted that: "Islamic society stands witness to the fact that Muslims do not recognize unity on the basis of tribe, colour or race. It is only the religious brotherhood that counts" (Azmeh 1993: 30). What was required, Afghani argued, was mobilisation around uncorrupted Islamic principle, to be determined by reference to the Prophet's umma. He castigated local rulers and ʿulama of the earlier "imitative" generation, calling for a new leadership of right-minded scholars and suitably

guided Muslim rulers capable of enforcing the *shari'a*. A first step should be revitalization of the Ottoman caliphate as an act of defence against Western depredation.

What differentiated Afghani from earlier ideologues of Islamic reform was the argument for political action which engaged with the modernist agenda. His pan-Islam emerged as a movement shaped *within* the context of European advance and in which nation states were being established everywhere as the fullest expression of political meaning. To this extent, Afghani's construction of the Islamic past and his vision for the future were both formed with reference to national categories: in responding to the penetration of the national state he reproduced many of its features in his revitalized *umma*, notably its all-embracing political and social character, which imitators such as Tahtawi had already recognized as a European invention.[6]

The vision for change became one of an Islamic polity that could stand against the national category – it was, in effect, an Islam symmetrical to the nation state. Such a direct engagement with the politics of modernism was to have profound consequences for succeeding generations of Islamists. As Roy (1994: 20) comments, "The modernity of Islamist thought is in this quest for the universal state". Yet Afghani's approach to the state did not simply *reproduce* the European model. It was an attempt to seize and manipulate the national category in a way which might make it adequate to the needs of those subordinated by the European colonial venture.

Mass Mobilization

The contradiction inherent in Afghani's approach hardly troubled his supporters. Many were in fact representatives of the modern state – military officers, lawyers and administrators who had emerged from the national structures established in Egypt in the 19th century by Muhammed Ali and his successors. Their hostility was directed less at the idea of the state than at the control exercised through it by the colonial powers. The problem was resolved, in one sense, by those of Afghani's followers who soon extracted the national element from his approach and turned it into the focus of their concerns. During a complex period of interactions between the colonial powers and the religious establishment, notably in Egypt, leading *'ulama* such as

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Muhammed Abduh set out to reinterpret key principles of Islamic legal practice. Hourani (1961: 144-5) comments that in the case of Abduh, founder of "Islamic modernism", the effect was to carry much further the developments seen in the ideas of Tahtawi and Afghani: "opening the door to the flooding of Islamic doctrines and law by all the innovations of the modern world".

Afghani's teachings were an important element in anti-colonial struggles, especially in Egypt and Iran in the 1880s and 1890s. In contrast, the modernists were hardly involved in such movements *as* Islamists: some, such as Abduh, were reconciled with the colonial state; others abandoned Islamism entirely in favour of secular nationalism, founding a series of parties including the Egyptian Wafd. Here, secular nationalism emerged from *within* the Islamist tradition: pan-Islam had in fact stimulated a political current which soon proved far more dynamic.

By the time of the mass anti-colonial struggles which swept the Middle East during and after the First World War, pan-Islam had become a marginal current.[7] The independence movements focused on the demand for *national* self-determination; the notion of Islamic union was hardly raised and that of a revivified, triumphant *umma* was seen as the preoccupation of a small minority of activists. What brought Islamism back onto the agenda was the perceived failure of secular nationalism. Parties such as the Egyptian Wafd had accepted a token role in colonial governments but were soon widely viewed as compromising and ineffectual. In Egypt this set the scene for emergence of the first mass Islamist movement, the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Brotherhood was distinguished from earlier popular movements in being a modern political party, with systematic organization and mass recruitment, and a political programme which Zubaida (1989: 155) describes as "imbued with the assumptions of the modern national political field". From the first it bore the marks of the secular nationalist experience. It was deeply affected by the rise of the mass anti-colonial movement and the (albeit short-lived) successes against colonial occupation. In this sense the Brotherhood was shaped as much within self-consciously secular traditions as within those of the earlier generation of Islamists. Its founder, Hassan al-Banna, saw the movement as standing in the tradition of Afghani, whom he described as "the caller" and "the spiritual father" (Mitchell 1969: 321). But un-

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like Afghani and his immediate successors, Banna wished to construct a mass organization capable of intervening in mainstream politics with the aim of seizing the national state *for* Islam. To this extent he had further extended the politics of Islamic "modernism", accepting most of the premises of the secularists. Although Banna still argued for pan-Islamic union as a strategic aim, he was focused precisely on the state at the local level, even arguing that, "Nationalism in our minds attains the status of sacredness" (Mitchell 1969: 264). The movement had reformulated Afghani's vision, developing it as a specifically Islamic orientation on the modern state.

Banna presented a vision of Islamic Egypt as a prototype of the unified *umma*. In effect, he fused the nation state with the aspiration to construct a community based in contemporary perceptions of the 7th-century model. An "Islamic" state was seen as realisable; indeed, Banna argued that Muslims had an absolute responsibility to exert themselves in pursuing the project and until it was realized all Muslims would be culpable – "guilty before God Almighty of having failed to install it" (Enayat 1982: 85). Enayat (1982: 85) notes Banna's assertion that such failure constituted a "betrayal, not only of Muslims, but of all humanity".

Formally, the Brotherhood pursued the model of a radically reformed state. Its involvement in national politics, however, was often dictated by pragmatic concerns – in practice it accommodated to the secular state. This led the movement into serious difficulties, especially when in the mid-1940s Egypt entered a series of deep social crises, the anti-colonial movement coming under the influence of radical nationalism and of various Communist currents.[8] One result was that Islamism took a further and innovative turn.

Challenging 'Jahiliyya'

In Egypt and much of the Islamic world the purpose of secular nationalism and of reformist currents such as the Muslim Brotherhood had been to seize and redirect state structures. The actual experience of post-colonial states seemed to place this prospect further from reach. In Egypt from 1952 a highly authoritarian secular regime monopolized power. The local state – the means of "liberation" on which Islamist leaders such as Banna had pinned hopes for reconstituting the *umma* –

seemed to have become an alien force. This experience shaped a new generation of Islamists. In the Arab world their leading ideologue was Sayyid Qutb, once strongly supportive of the independent Egyptian state but who had become hostile to what he saw as its unGodly agenda. Qutb's response was to redirect the Islamic movement away from Banna's reformist perspective into contestation of the whole secular order.

Qutb's project was based upon collective action to reassert the *umma* under conditions in which, he maintained, it had fallen into the deepest crisis. Drawing in particular upon the perspectives of the Indian Muslim activist Abu'l A'la Mawdudi, Qutb asserted that humanity had descended into *jahiliyya* – the "state of ignorance" equated in Islamic tradition with Arabian life before the Prophetic revelation. Under contemporary conditions, he argued, *jahiliyya* was expressed in "rebellion against the sovereignty of God on earth" (Qutb 1988: 49). Muslims must be prepared to liquidate *jahiliyya* and to introduce a Godly and harmonious order under the shar*i'a*, the means being that of uncompromising *jihad* vis-à-vis the secular state. This was to be conducted through "dynamic organisation and active movement" (Qutb 1988: 89). A "vanguard" of committed Muslims should begin the task by leading fellow believers against unGodly rulers.

Qutb acknowledged his debt to Mawdudi, especially in borrowing the notion of a modern *jahiliyya*. Less conscious was his adoption of Mawdudi's frame of reference for change – the nation state. As a young man, Mawdudi had been an active nationalist, supporting the Congress Party's struggle for India's independence from Britain. Like Qutb, he later became disillusioned with the nationalist movement and attacked the idea of the secular state as an imposition upon Muslims and an irruption into the *umma*. He nonetheless maintained that Muslims should struggle for power within the state in order to bring into being a genuinely Islamic polity. After the partition of India in 1947 his Jama'at-i Islami (Islamic Association) argued for radical change of political and legal structures in Pakistan to direct the state towards an Islamic order. Although power should be exercised "in keeping with the Book of God and Sunna of his Prophet" (Engineer 1994: 125) there was no obstacle to Muslim engagement with such structures. Indeed, Mawdudi provided a blueprint for the coming "Islamic state" – giving the first detailed account of a modernist polity legitimized by

reference to the Prophetic model, what Engineer (1994: 125) calls "the Islamic theocracy".[9]

Under the Nasserist regime Qutb had found himself in opposition to secular nationalism, communism and the Islamists of the Muslim Brotherhood. He condemned all as part of the *jahiliyya*, especially for their joint participation in the structures of the state, which he deemed the most poisonous invention of secularism. At the same time, he raised expectations of the emergence of a Godly order brought into being by seizing the state itself. This approach gained Qutb posthumous mass appeal when, in 1967, the Egyptian state appeared to collapse in the military conflict with Israel. The deep social crisis which followed brought Qutb's ideas a wider audience. This was drawn by the promise that order, justice and harmony could be retrieved from a corrupt society – not through reform but by bypassing the whole political system, uprooting secular structures and uncovering the Godly core within. For the post-Qutbian generation of Egyptian Islamists the project was, in Roy's words, "to redefine the social bond itself on a political basis, and not simply to apply the *sharia*" (Roy 1994: 38).

During the 1970s, Egypt was in turmoil. Economic crisis, mass migration and urban growth produced rapid social polarization and stimulated a radical mood among young people, among whom Qutb's followers soon discovered a mass audience. They went on to construct an even more assertive form of Islamic modernism. Like Qutb himself, who had earlier been impressed by the "vanguardist" strategies of the secular left, they were influenced by some aspects of the Marxist tradition, notably its focus upon the state as both an agency of repression and potentially one of liberation.[10] Mobilizing the works of the most "militant" jurists and uncompromising political figures of the Islamic tradition, activists such as Faraj shaped a specific interpretation of the past which could be a reference point for contemporary engagement. They spelt out both the necessity of intransigent struggle against the state and the possibility of assertion of an alternative Islamic polity, what Azmeh (1993: 99) calls "the precise and imminent interpretation of the pristine model". This made the *umma* realisable as against the actual presence of the *jahiliyya* – an interpretation, argues Azmeh (1993: 98), for which there was no precedent in Islamic history.

Khomeini's Alternative

The influence of such ideas has since been profound, helping to shape activist strategy throughout the Arab world and making Islamic "radicalism" the main competitor to the gradualist or reformist perspectives still pursued by Banna's successors in the Muslim Brotherhood.

In Iran a related but far more successful approach developed. During the 1960s a network of religious activists emerged among whom a number set out to "retrieve" the notion of political action from a Shi'ite tradition which had encouraged generations of quietism among senior ʿulama.[11] Some attempted a synthesis of mainstream Shi'i traditions and radical nationalism which they hoped would energize popular opposition to the Pahlavi regime. The most important of these was Ali Shari'ati, whose insistence that "the masses" must change society by making an "Islamic revolution" has been seen as a strategy rooted in the modernist paradigm (Zubaida 1989: 23).

Shari'ati's attempt at fusion of social-democratic and Islamist ideas – sometimes called an Islamic Marxism (Abrahamian 1989: chapter 4) – emphasized that "the people" could recuperate their society by re-shaping the nation state. It was echoed by a group of Shi'i ʿulama associated with Ayatollah Khomeini who had broken from the religious establishment. They maintained that political passivity had become an overriding problem in a country in which "imperialism" was ex-ploiting the masses and that the regime was one which Muslims were now obliged to confront (Khomeini 1981: 50-51).

When Iran moved into revolution in the late 1970s, Khomeini put an ever more urgent emphasis on political action, maintaining that all Muslims had a duty "to put an end to this system of oppression … to overthrow these oppressive governments and form an Islamic government" (Khomeini 1981: 51). Using a populist rhetoric that placed him alongside Shari'ati and the Left, Khomeini argued that such a government would fulfil "God's promise" to Muslims (Engineer 1994: 181). An "Islamic republic" – an Islamized nation state – was now the focus for discovery of the religious ideal. It was presented in the form of a modernist model complete with social justice and equal rights. This reflected the revolutionary movement's own agenda, for radical social and political change to address growing immiseration and social polarization.[12] Such a rhetoric of revolution was a vital element in

efforts by the religious leadership to draw the masses behind Khomeini.

The ayatollah's own specific interpretation of formal Shi'i tradition, of greater significance in his overall political design, received little exposure. Khomeini had already formulated a notion that in place of the "impious" Pahlavi state it was necessary to construct an order based upon rigorous application of the *shari'a* under the supervision of a supreme jurist, the *velayat-i faqih*. It was this approach, implemented by a highly authoritarian regime deeply suspicious of the mass movement, which subsequently shaped the Islamic Republic. Khomeini had in fact produced a dual strategy. On the one hand was a novel Islamic populism; on the other hand was a theory of state structures for which, as in Qutb's model, there was no formal Islamic precedent. The impact of the Iranian experience need hardly be emphasized.

Islamization and History

These observations on Islamism are not intended to narrate a specific history but to draw attention to key developments within religious activism. To the extent that "Europe" (itself a problematic category) absorbed all manner of ideas from "other" cultural complexes, notably from predominantly Islamic societies, self-consciously Islamic currents have absorbed and recast "European" traditions, notably the political structures associated with industrial capitalism, colonialism and the modern nation-state.

Over the course of more than 100 years Islamist currents have responded to the modernist challenge by means of political engagement. Such engagements have often been complex, even apparently contradictory. On the one hand Islamist ideologues have rejected nation, nationalism and the state; on the other hand they have often attempted reformulations of these ideas. They have drawn on ideas often described as "alien" to Islam, making extensive borrowings from liberal and radical nationalism, and from Marxism, in particular from the Stalinized Communism which was influential across the Third World from the 1930s. Even those most hostile to "Western" political traditions have entered discourses of the nation: Mawdudi, for example, who was outspoken in his criticism of the state, made use of the whole range of modernist categories as a means of defining his

Islamic polity. Nasr (1994: 105) comments that Mawdudi's practice of "appropriation of western concepts and ideas to construct an Islamic resistance to the West" amounted to *indiscriminate* borrowing from a tradition that believers were invoked to reject.

Far from developing as a polar opposite to secular currents, Islamism has been intimately associated with them and has indeed been an important stimulus for development of ideas usually viewed as standing outside Islamic tradition. Afghani's pan-Islam, for example, set out a framework for anti-colonial struggle which was an important influence on Arab nationalism, especially upon currents which developed in Egypt, producing the Wafd Party and the first nationalist government. It is in this sense that Islamism energized early forms of secular nationalism. When this current went into decline, Islamism responded by regenerating in the form of the Muslim Brotherhood, a powerful crypto-nationalist movement.

Islamist movements have invariably had a strongly conservative ideological component. They have been elitist and authoritarian and have often accommodated easily to the power structures they set out to contend. At the same time, such movements have expressed aspirations for radical change, sometimes challenging structures of power. When marginalized, they have often retreated to a base within the urban middle class and the junior ʿ*ulama*, which appears to be a stable home. When they have re-emerged, it has often been in circumstances in which popular aspirations play a key role in shaping the agenda. The phenomenon has been one of contradiction, for which an explanation must be sought in the social character of the Islamist leadership. As professionals, functionaries and small capitalists – identified by Mitchell (1969: 329) as "the emergent Muslim middle class" – they have been closely associated with the state. Although they may express intense hostility to secular political currents which have monopolized state power, they are reluctant, in practice, to challenge these structures directly. As in the case of Banna's Brotherhood, Islamist expectations remain unfulfilled.[13]

Despite frequent reverses Islamism has not been static: far from the Orientalist account of a movement restrained by its focus on primordial concerns, Islamism has taken on a host of socio-political identities. Like other religious movements, it has been an idiom for the expression of all manner of ideals and expectations. Its history confirms that,

in Turner's words, "[Religious] Beliefs are adopted or rejected because they are relevant or not relevant to everyday needs and concerns" (Turner 1994: 10).

Such an account of Islamist thinking is dismissed by the Islamization current. Sardar (1989: 49) insists that conventional social analysis is *always* inappropriate vis-à-vis Islamic matters, commenting that "sociology was not developed to tackle the problems of Muslim civilization". Such problems can be interpreted only through the embrace of an "Islamic epistemology" – knowledge acquired solely on the basis of principles set out in the Quran and in the Sunna. Early Islamic history is sacred and normative, defining all human experience and making irrelevant efforts at self-assertion by Muslims deemed to violate such principles or to be otherwise imperfect. A century of Islamic activism can therefore be characterized by Sardar (1991: 70) as merely "a form of secularism".

Here the interaction between Islamic societies and cultural "others" can be dismissed, as if it had no implications for the Islamizers' own agenda. But as Abaza and Stauth (1990: 225) comment, Western observers' and Muslim scholars' concern for "authenticities" fails to recognize the latters' histories and formative influences:

the fact [is] that the main 'Islamic' or 'Oriental' appearances in most cases have already been produced in a sphere of inter-cultural exchange between the West and the East: they have largely been a product of global inter-cultural relations.

The Islamization project in fact absorbs an Orientalized practice. Its preoccupations echo those of European scholars who have sought to locate the essential or atavistic qualities of Islam and of Muslims. In developing rationales for relations of domination vis-à-vis "the East", Orientalism depicted an homogenized Islamic culture which induced fatalism and passivity, thereby negating the idea of positive activity among the mass of society. The Islamizers have adopted a strikingly similar perspective, in which generations of struggle for change – including the struggle for an independent Muslim identity – are declared invalid because they are judged to have been imperfectly Islamic. Contemporary Muslims are depicted as inert, awaiting animation by an elite group of rightly-guided scholars.

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Despite its commitment to an historic project of de-Westernization, Islamization has also integrated the socio-cultural and political categories associated with modernity. While formally rejecting Islamists' engagement with the state, for example, it has expended enormous energies defining (variously) model Islamic "nations" and "states" based in the Prophetic experience. Here the Islamizers face intense difficulties, with competing and sometimes conflicting interpretations of what is an appropriate contemporary form of the founding, pristine model.[14]

"Capitalist Thought"

Abaza and Stauth (1990: 219) comment that "the 'indigenisation perspective' falls into the very trap of cultural globalisation against which it wants to stand up". There is powerful evidence for this assertion, as when Sardar asserts a form of cultural relativism so extreme that it complements even the views of global determinists such as Huntington. For Sardar (1997: 46), the future offers a "multicivilisational world" of cultural blocs in which "the identity of each civilisation will be shaped by its unique epistemology, historiography and philosophy of life". He suggests (1997: 46) that, "The twenty-first century will thus be shaped by new racial [sic] and cultural forces."[15]

Does Islamization, therefore, merely reproduce the global condition? Are Islamizers, together with other indigenization movements, "entrapped" within globality, as globalization theory suggests? Such a conclusion is inadequate. By imputing determinative powers to an imagined globality, it directs attention away from the specific character of the Islamization movement and the social forces with which it is associated.

Turner (1994: chapter 1) points to the difficulty of considering intellectuals as a "universal category" which can be a source of cultural authority. This is especially important in the case of Islamization: its ideologues are not abstract "intellectuals" but have emerged from specific contexts, largely from universities or dedicated study centres in North America, Europe and South-East Asia. Leading figures who are active primarily in the West are described by Stenberg (1996: 273) as members of a "Muslim elite". He suggests that they have filled spaces opened within Western society, especially within Muslim

communities where there is a dearth of senior scholars. This is particularly important because of the character of such communities. Muslims of the West, especially in Europe, are almost invariably marginalized within the wider society, with the result that their communal interactions as believers take on great significance. In a study on migration and religiousness, Schiffauer (1988: 150) observes that here "the religious community often becomes a counterweight to the secular society as well as a place of retreat, a haven". Within such communities there is a special place for those familiar with the complexities of religious tradition and who are able to present worldviews which are relevant to local experience. Islamization, with its emphasis on de-Westernization and assertion of a universal Islamic understanding might seem particularly appropriate: indeed, it might be seen as one expression of what Ahmed and Donnan (1994: 2) call the truly global nature of Muslim society – the contemporary Muslim diaspora.

In fact the Islamizers are not closely associated with such communities but with a narrower layer of Muslim professionals and academics. In a celebratory account of the movement's early history, Abul-Fadl (1992: 53) notes that its "vanguard" included engineers, doctors, educationalists, philosophers and social scientists. Poston (1992: 121) suggests that in the United States the movement has since operated at the college and university level. Stenberg sees its ideologues as a privileged group, their status consisting in social standing and mobility. He observes that they travel widely within academic networks discussing the interpretation, function and future of Islamic tradition (Stenberg 1996: 274). Within such a milieu the pressures of everyday life exerted upon the mass of Muslims, and the latters' struggles to contend them, may seen unimportant as against abstract matters and academic discourses.

Elsewhere, leading Islamizers enjoy a special status through relationships with governments and state bodies which have provided financial support, sponsored study centres and conferences, and helped to establish publishing enterprises. Among the most important mentors of the IIIT, for example, is the Malaysian state. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed and former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim have vigorously and publicly backed the Institute's initiatives. In 1983, Mahathir drew upon the support of a number of

Islamic governments to establish the International Islamic University in Malaysia (IIUM) as a world centre for studies on Islamization. A founding member of the IIIT, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman (also its chairman and a former president), is Rector of the IIUM. Abu-Sulayman was formerly a senior academic in Saudi Arabia and was secretary of the Saudi Arabian State Planning Committee.[16]

The Islamizers have defined approaches to economic and political affairs which many Islamic governments find congenial. These have emerged mainly from the work of economists who have produced the most extensive literature among the Islamized disciples. Much of their theory, however, has merely put an Islamic gloss on neo-classical economic principles. Even Sardar (1989: 37) has complained that "Most of them [Islamic economists] were, and still are, straight mone-tarist economists". He argues that their approach to the Western discipline – "with all its assumptions and underlying values, of which they are so critical" – has resulted only in an attempt "to infuse Islamic notions and principles into it". Why, he asks, has there not been a more fundamental analysis – of technology, modes of production, or of land distribution or the elimination of poverty – "a prime disease of Muslim societies" (Sardar 1989: 38). In an unusual (though very super-ficial) critique from within the Islamization current, Sardar suggests that Islamic economics has served only to complement mainstream ("Western") theory. He concludes:

On the whole, Muslim economists took the Western discipline with all its assumptions and underlying values, of which they are so critical, and tried to infuse Islamic notions and principles into it. Consequently, the charge against Islamic economics that it is little more than capitalist economic thought with an Islamic facade ('capitalism minus interest') has some justification.

Sardar's observation has deeply subversive connotations for Islami-zation, which here is merely an accommodation of religious tradition to capitalist practice. But such criticisms have not dissuaded leading Islamizers from setting out approaches which celebrate "capitalist economic thought". AbuSulayman (1993b: xvi) asserts the principle that "Social moderation is Islam's objective in the sphere of economics, and the market economy is its means." Such views are well received within many notionally Islamic governments. In Malaysia, for example,

Mahathir Mohamed embraced fully the doctrines of the free market, seeking to thrust the local economy into the mainstream of international capitalist activity. According to Choudhury (1993: 163-166), the strategy has made Malaysia "a model for development", "a unique synthesis of Islam and modernization" and "a near ideal Muslim state" [sic]. Until Mahathir's turn to protectionist policies in the wake of the economic "meltdowns" of 1997 and 1998, this also brought approbation from most Western governments and transnational economic institutions.

The conservative values expressed in Islamic economics reappear in the field of international politics. AbuSulayman (1993b) elaborates an Islamized theory of international relations which directs Muslims to work through existing inter-governmental institutions, especially the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The OIC has been a particularly contentious organisation. Established in the early 1950s under the influence of the emerging Gulf states, it was intended to represent formally the interests of the *umma*. It has often been perceived, however, as an instrument of the most assertive Middle Eastern regimes and as an expression of petro-power. Abedin, for example, comments on its "controversial" representation of the *umma*: rather than defending Muslim rights worldwide, he observes, it has been "more interested in maintaining the status quo and representing the commercial interests of Muslim countries" (1994: 31). Moten, a leading political theorist within the Islamization movement, identifies the OIC as "a somewhat [sic] united political front", arguing that it is nonetheless one of the "constituents and continuation of Muslim *nahdah* [reassertion]" (Moten 1994: 132). AbuSulayman (1993b: 161) insists that Muslims should work through the OIC "to protect and serve Islam and Muslim interests and to strengthen Muslim unity".

Conclusion

Abul-Fadl (1992: 53) makes the observation that at any early stage pioneers of the Islamization project chose "the cultural imperative, rather than direct political action". Dismissing collective activity, they opted for the intellectual project. Exertion of an academic community, it was argued, would establish Islamic discourses with the capacity to resolve problems confronting the *umma*. Islamization would operate

on behalf of the mass of Muslims, defining an authentic Islam though which the mass of believers could be directed towards appropriate conduct. The task was to be accomplished by a scholarly elite – what the IIIT (n.d.: 1) calls "the Ummah's most enlightened intellects" – which would combat non-Islamic influences on behalf of a mass of Muslims incapable of self-redemption. Intellectual exertion alone could resolve problems of the *umma*: political engagement was largely meaningless, for Muslims were not yet equipped to define their tasks.

The strategy has been elaborated against a background of active political engagement among large numbers of Muslims – a continuation of over a century of struggles which have contested local power structures, including formally Islamic governments. In this context, Islamization is a message of political restraint. The Islamizers have all the appearances of being quietists, holding much in common with clerical establishments which have enjoyed close relations with those in power. Abrahamian (1989: 8) writes, for example, of the role of Shi'i *'ulama* who for generations elaborated a religious orthodoxy which "bolstered the status quo while claiming to keep out of politics." Like the historic quietists, the Islamizers' pronouncements have an ideological character. It may be significant that they received endorsement and material support from notionally Islamic governments at the moment of the latter's most intense anxiety over ideas that political action can be/should be an expression of religious commitment.

For Islamizers, the project of de-Westernization is made necessary and is rendered feasible by the global condition. Like theorists of globalization, they identify a world unified by abstract structures which are seen as expressive of world integration. Human agency and its histories are largely irrelevant: ordinary men and women (including those who declare an Islamic mission) are deemed helpless in the face of forces which have their own logics. Meanwhile, however, the attempts of billions of people to understand their circumstances *and to modify them* continue as before. The scale of inequality and asymmetry at a world level, and the level of disintegration of socio-economic and political structures, suggests that these struggles will intensify. They are certain to be expressed through all manner of worldviews, drawing upon a host of secular and religious traditions from which ideas are appropriated, reshaped, fused and discarded as new notions are pressed into service. Ideas of an abstract globalism and of discrete

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knowledges will be of assistance primarily to those who wish to negate such activities.

Notes

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1 See, for example, Mazlish/Buultjens (1997).
2 Robertson (1992) attempts briefly to demonstrate a historical dimension to globalization. This is not typical of the body of his work, however, nor of that of most theorists of globalization.
3 Azmeh (1993: 90) comments that the state (*dawla*), "Both lexically and in terms of actual usage until modern times denoted a particular kind of patrimony, the proprietorship of command and authority within a specific line. This abstract *dawla* is constituted of a body politic, in the original sense: a sovereign, his troops, his bureaucrats. What must be stressed is that this concrete body is distinct from a body social and from what later came to be known as civil society."
4 For an analysis of such developments in the Middle East and India, see Brown 1996, chapter 2.
5 In Europe Tahtawi observed a popular identification with the nation-state which he strongly recommended as a principle of political organization facilitating social harmony. Placing the notion of the modern state within Islamic tradition, he introduced the idea of "patriotism" (*wataniyya*), quoting words attributed to the Prophet: "Love of one's country (*watan*, from *watana* [to live/dwell]) is part of the Faith" (see Al-Husry 1980: 14).
6 Keddie (1972: 64) notes that Afghani sought "[a] transition from traditional Islamic ideas to a kind of nationalist appeal, including nationalist reminders of the original glorious age from which the community had declined".
7 Pan-Islamic currents had been confined to the margins of the "Islamic world", notably to Central Asia. For an account of the pan-Islamic Jadid movement in this region, see Carrere d'Encausse 1988.

8 Banna was widely accused of opportunistically developing relationships with the Egyptian government and the king, substituting lobbying, intrigue and compromise for the politics of contestation of the state (Zubaida 1989: chapter 2).

9 For an account of the development of Mawdudi's approach (which bears a striking similarity to the evolution of Qutb's strategy), see Nasr 1994.

10 Islamists of the "Qutbist" movement have used the vocabulary and certain political principles of radical nationalism and of the Communist movement. Roy (1994: 3) suggests that for such "militant" Islamists, the notion of revolution, of the party and its structures, and of the state itself, have been borrowed from the left "and injected with Quranic terminology".

11 Many analyses of Shi'ism have argued that its emphasis upon the imamate and the figure of the *mahdi* have produced a tradition replete with messianic, even "revolutionary" possibilities. Enayat (1982: 25) comments that that Shi'i historicism is indeed "a *potential* tool of radical activism", but adds: "throughout the greater part of Shi'i history, [such expectations] never went beyond the potential state, remaining in practice merely a sanctifying tenet for the submissive acceptance [by the mass of Muslims] of the status quo".

12 Khomeini called on the masses to struggle for an "Islamic republic", in which "there is no oppression and no injustice, there are no rich and poor all the layers of society, all religions, all races and communities will have equal rights" (Engineer 1994: 181).

13 The problem of unfulfilled expectations within the Islamist movements is taken up in Marfleet 1998b.

14 There has been a series of attempts by writers within the Islamization movement to elaborate socio-political models consistent with religious principles and adequate to contemporary conditions. Kurdi (1984), for example, sets out a complex structure which is based, he argues, upon Quranic precedent, with the form of "the early Islamic Nation" dictating principles for the modern state. Here, ideas about "nation", "state", "nationality" and "patriotism" are mobilized unproblematically. Similarly, Moten (1994) sets out principles for an Islamic Political Science, describing in detail the attributes of an Islamic state based upon the early model.

15 In a recent book, Sardar distances himself from Huntington's theories of globalized cultural conflict. Sardar 1998, chapter 2.

16 This information is provided in lengthy biographical notes in works by AbuSulayman published by the IIIT. See AbuSulayman 1993a and 1993b.

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