

2 The Middle East and the politics of differential integration

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Introduction

Globalization as a topic invites general speculation, but requires specification: broad-brush statements about modernity, markets and the post-Cold War age can get analysis only so far. What is needed in equal measure is precision, above all about two issues: definition – *what* is meant by the term? – and analytic focus. The purpose of this chapter is to contribute to the discussion of globalization by analysing the form of the Middle East's integration into global processes and particularly one response to this integration: political discourses in the region about globalization.¹

Globalization is a process that involves markets and foreign direct investment (FDI), states and rights. But it also involves political discourses and values. The argument *for* globalization stresses a growing convergence of values and also of economic and political systems; that *against* it emphasizes the fragmentation of the world into different cultural, as well as economic and political, blocs. An examination of discourse is only one part of the study of globalization. However, it may serve to illuminate broader aspects of the globalization process and of the formation of the contemporary Middle East. It may also diminish the conflict between the two conventional approaches to globalization: homogenization or fragmentation. Hence, as regards values, the polarity between generalization in

¹ The debate on ideology and discourse in the Middle East falls along an analytic spectrum. At one end of this is the cultural, textual approach, which stresses the endurance of distinct religious and regional values; at the other end is the contextual, modernist approach, which sees the language and themes of discourse in contemporary terms. My own approach, much influenced by the work of Sami Zubaida, Ervand Abarahamian, Aziz al-Azmeh and others, is at the modernist end of the spectrum. See in particular my *Nation and Religion in the Middle East* (London: Saqi, 2000). The germ of the general argument on modernity and the world historical context of underdevelopment lies in the classic critique of development theory, 'The Development of Underdevelopment' by André Gunder Frank in *Monthly Review* (September 1966). While disagreeing with Frank's prescription for how to develop, namely to 'delink' from the world market and pursue an autarkic path, I share his emphasis on the international, and historical, forces that constitute contemporary interstate inequalities.

terms of globalization and that in terms of cultural clash or civilizational difference may not be as fixed as it is often presented. The point is not that the Middle East is like the rest of the world, particularly the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), nor that it is somehow outside the globalization process. Rather, it is precisely because it is, and has for a long time been, part of the broader international system that it is now so distinct in its major characteristics. It is not exclusion but inclusion, on unequal and conflictual terms, that has produced the Middle East of today. It is this historically located and contradictory perspective that is termed here 'differential integration'.

Study of the Middle East in terms of 'globalization' presents an immediate paradox. This is evident in the contrast between different general views of its place in the contemporary world – 'globalization' on one side, 'clash of civilizations' on the other. Each posits a general trend, but the former assumes integration and homogenization and the latter assumes historical separation and confrontation. In the first perspective, the Middle East appears in some ways to be relatively outside the set of processes that accelerated in the 1990s and that characterize globalization in its three main aspects: economic, political and socio-cultural.² In economic terms, it continues to display a high degree of state control of domestic economies, low levels of interregional trade, meagre exports of manufactured goods to OECD states and, above all, low indices of FDI. In many significant respects the Middle East, except Israel and, to some extent, Turkey and Tunisia, is outside the globalization process. There is, for example, little inclusion of this region in surveys by the *Economist* or the *Financial Times* of economic globalization and the changes associated with it. In comparative analyses of what is one of the most important dimensions of globalization, foreign investment in manufacturing, the region is almost wholly absent: neither the political security of good governance nor the quality of the labour force is present.

In political terms, in which globalization is associated with democratization at home and a broader pattern of regional cooperation, the region is also exceptional. A decade after the end of Soviet communism and democratization in much of Latin America, Middle Eastern political systems remain very much under authoritarian control, some stage-managed

² For discussion of the Middle East and globalization see Hassan Hakimian and Ziba Moshaver (eds), *The State and Global Change: The Political Economy of Transition in the Middle East and North Africa* (London: Curzon, 2001); Clement Henry and Robert Springborg, *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). My own general approach to globalization is in Fred Halliday, *The World at 2000* (London: Palgrave, 2000), Chapter 5: 'Globalization and its Discontents'.

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diversity in elections and civil society apart. Respect for human rights, by states and opposition movements alike, is deficient. Much use is made in this region, as in others, of the word 'transition' – the implication is that these states are moving towards democratic governance. But it may be that they are in transition to nothing and that what now exists, semi-authoritarian regimes at best, is what will remain. As for relations among states, the situation is no better: there is no growth of what is seen elsewhere, a 'Zone of Peace' in the region, be it in the Arab-Israeli context, the Gulf or relations between Turks and Arabs. In social and cultural terms, a similarly static picture seems to prevail. Authoritarian forms of social control continue to be strong, through family, community and religion, while in public discourse the region seems to have gone backwards: press and political statements, as well as much of the debate on social and cultural issues, are framed more in religious terms than they were two or three decades ago.

In contrast to this picture of Middle Eastern exclusion, one can make a case for 'differential integration'. In many respects the Middle East is integrated into the globalization process, and an analysis of this integration will contribute much to an understanding of how globalization itself works. This integration is evident in all three aspects of globalization. Politically, the Middle East is not a region shaped by atavistic forces but a product of the modern world. It is the international system that has in modern times shaped the state system, the political character and many of the interstate conflicts of the region. Economically, the region has been extensively integrated into the world economy, through the export of the most important global commodity of all, oil, and the provision to Middle Eastern states of large amounts of capital in the form of oil revenues. The whole argument about FDI misses the point. Large amounts of investment money are flowing between this region and the developed world, *in the opposite direction*: total GCC private investments in the capital markets of the West alone are reckoned to be well over \$1,500 billion.³ The trade linkage is equally dramatic: the economies of the OECD countries would seize up in a few weeks if they did not receive energy supplies from the Gulf. In terms of culture and discourse, a similar level of integration prevails: it is not the Middle East's isolation from the modern world but its antagonism to it that informs its response to globalization.

The Middle East suggests a corrective to prevailing liberal views of globalization, in two respects. First, it suggests that analysis of globalization and its impact is crucially determined by the time-frame of the analysis. As the editors of this book point out in Chapter 1, a starting point

³ *Middle East Economic Digest*, 11 January 2002. This figure omits assets held by GCC governments.

in the early 1990s may miss precisely those factors that determine what has happened since. This is not to say that there was nothing new about globalization in the 1990s but rather that the 1990s were a chapter in a longer, already structured, process. Second, the Middle East demonstrates in dramatic form the fact that globalization, far from producing a more homogeneous world in which politics, economics and society in each country converge more and more, is itself an unequal process and one that generates increasing difference. This recognition of unequal globalization is widespread among analysts of the world economy and, in some measure, in analyses of politics. Culture, however, remains a redoubt of apparently essential, and enduring, differences. Yet here too there is as much integration, historical and differential, as in investment or state organization.

Historical context: formative and discursive

Discussions of globalization conventionally begin with the changes of the 1990s, and for good reason: the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet model on the one hand, the spread of neo-liberal policies in trade, investment, financial markets and macro-economic regulation on the other. Something important, and global, did occur in the 1990s, and it affected all societies, including those of the Middle East.⁴ The collapse of the USSR had important strategic and ideological consequences for the region: the bipolar system collapsed and its states came under increasing pressure to democratize and privatize. The Internet and satellite TV spread to much of the region.⁵

Yet in some respects, this is a misleading starting point for an analysis of globalization: the 1990s may be seen as one chapter in the process, but the broader context of global integration already existed. The shadow of that earlier history, prior to 1990, continues to hang over much of the region. Each of the three main components of globalization has a history long before 1990. The impact of a more powerful European state system on the Middle East began in the seventeenth century and gathered pace from the early nineteenth century. Throughout the period from 1774, the first major Russian defeat of Ottoman Turkey, Napoleon's occupation of Egypt and the successive wars involving the Ottomans and Persia that followed to the aftermath of the First World War and the collapse of the

⁴ Fred Halliday, 'The Third World and the End of the Cold War: An Interim Assessment', in William Hale and Eberhard Kienle (eds), *After the Cold War: Security and Democracy in Africa and Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), pp. 15–42.

⁵ See *Middle East Journal*, vol. 54, no. 3 (Summer 2000), Special Issue: The Information Revolution.

Ottoman and Qajar empires, the political, economic and social systems of the region were under pressure from outside. They sought, as did the Manchu in China, to resist, to imitate, to reform. The terms of the relationship with the European state system, integrated and unequal, were already established by that time.

The twentieth century took this process of differential integration much further: all of its major phases, colonialism, world war and Cold War, affected the Middle East and left legacies that shaped the later process of globalization. In political terms these legacies involved three major elements: the creation of a state system, carved out of earlier empires, with about 25 distinct components; the promotion of nationalism, an ideology that served two functions: legitimizing the state and resisting external domination; and the formation of interstate rivalries that made up the regional political system. The wars that have ravaged the Middle East were a product of this contemporary formation, not of ancestral or cultural conflict. Economically, the region's integration was less than that of many other parts of the Third World. But Egypt was integrated via the cotton industry, the Suez Canal and finance from the 1860s, and the development of the oil industry from the First World War provided a mechanism for funding states and associated local elites.⁶ Socially and culturally, Middle Eastern societies were profoundly affected by this integration. Economic change led to urbanization and mass migration, especially after the oil boom of the 1970s; new states were established in order to control their respective societies and to build alliances with external powers; and communications, the family and education were all affected. In sum, the Middle East of the late 1980s was a product of its incorporation into the external world and of the impact, integrative and differential, of that incorporation.⁷

This general perspective can be applied to each of the three main facets of globalization. The state system, and also the pattern of interstate relations, are the product not of an ancient legacy, such as that of 'Asiatic despotism', but of the impact of the modern world on the Middle East. The economic system is equally a product of that impact. In this chapter the

⁶ Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993); Roger Owen and Sevket Pamuk, *A History of Middle East Economies in the Twentieth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998).

⁷ This point is especially well made in Reinhard Schulze, *A Modern History of the Islamic World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), in which he examines how the Islamic world has been part of world history in economic, cultural and political terms. For general overviews of this relationship, see Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), Part Four: 'The Age of European Empires'; and Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), Part V: 'The Challenge of Modernity'.

focus is on ideology and discourse, an area notoriously traversed by rigid positions, as the argument about cultural differences stresses alternative value systems and perceptions in the contemporary world. More recently, there has been a call for the study of what are termed 'non-Western' voices on the assumption that ideologies opposed to the West are conceptually distinct. An alternative, historical but integrative, approach suggests that what appear as distinct, 'non-Western' voices outside the broader process of globalization are indeed both product and part of that process seen in its wider context. This is quite clear in areas outside the Middle East: the greatest opponents of Western domination in the twentieth century – Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh, Mahatma Gandhi and Gamal Abd al-Nasser, Kwame Nkrumah and Amilcar Cabral, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara – all invoked universal but originally Western concepts of independence, freedom and equality against their imperial opponents. The same applies to the Middle East: Islamist opponents of Western domination, be they Ruhallah Khomeini or Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi, have spoken in an Islamic idiom, but their denunciations of imperialism and their calls for independence are part of this modern discourse.⁸

Three more specific comments on the modernity of discourse in the Middle East are in order here. First, contemporary public discourse there has been shaped by one ideology above all – nationalism, and two central components of the nationalist world-view – the state and imperialism. Thus, forms of Islamist discourse, ostensibly alternatives to nationalism, are on closer study cognate with nationalism in theme and programme and replicate much of what nationalism has said already. The post-1990 Middle Eastern debate on globalization reproduces much of what was said in earlier times about Western imperialism. Second, for all the specificity of regional and religious idiom, the major themes embodied in the debate on globalization are not specifically regional at all: they embody broader ideas common to much of the Third World and, indeed, to Western critiques of globalization. Although Khomeini spoke a different language, his denunciations of Western domination, corrupt regional rulers and economic exploitation and his appeal to the virtuous mass of the oppressed to rise up would have been understood across the non-European world, from Beijing to Buenos Aires. Third, discourse and political ideas are not free-floating, autonomous entities: no discussion of discourse can ignore the role within it of interest, whether of states, which seek to mould public discourse to further their ends, or of opposition movements, which seek to

⁸ On Khomeini, see Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State* (London: Routledge, 1989); Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993); and Daniel Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

challenge states in their pursuit of power. All of this leads to something evident enough from within the region but rather obscure from without, namely the diversity of views on globalization. This diversity reflects not uncertainty about what is an 'authentic' response to global processes but differences of interpretation, and interest – in other words, differences that are themselves a product of the modern world.

The debate on globalization in the Middle East

The contemporary debate on globalization has found many echoes in the Islamic world in general and in the Middle East in particular. However the term is understood, the issues debated in the developed West or in other parts of the developing world, whether China or Latin America, are also debated in Islamic states. Through this debate a range of political and ideological approaches to politics and society becomes evident, as does the degree to which, whatever the specific Islamic idiom, these debates overlap with discussions elsewhere. Although language, political vocabulary and symbol may be specific, we are not looking at an insulated discursive and ideological world. Indeed the debate on globalization is reflected in the discussion that has taken place in Middle Eastern states about how to translate the word 'globalization'. In Arabic there were initially two options. One was *al-koukaba*, based on *koukab*, 'star' or 'cosmos'. This easily lent itself to the pejorative variant *al-koukala*, 'Coca-cola-ization'. The rival, and ultimately prevailing, candidate was *al-'awlama*, from '*alam*, the world, a rendering more of French 'mondialisation' than of English 'globalization'. In Persian there was a dispute between those who favoured the more neutral *jahani-shodan*, 'world-becoming', and those who advocated *jahani-giri*, 'world-taking'. For the moment at least, *jahani-shodan* appears to have won.

Anyone surveying the debate on globalization in Middle Eastern states will find a combination of themes that are specific to the region and ones that are more general. Much of this debate, be it in the press or in academic writing, is secular in character, relating to the working issues encapsulated by globalization, such as trade, education or satellite TV. A good example of this is the work of the Iranian writer Farhang Rajaei, *Globalization on Trial*.⁹ Rajaei, a former member of the Iranian delegation to the UN and a professor at Tehran University, provides an astute and wide-ranging engagement with Western and Middle Eastern concerns. He sees in globalization

⁹ Farhang Rajaei, *Globalization on Trial: The Human Condition and Information Civilization* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2000).

both opportunities and dangers: his favoured stance, 'prudent vigilance' (p. 106), reflects a middle position shared with some Western writers. The most common Middle Eastern response, however, has been one of opposition, but this reflects not so much cultural differences as differences of structural position within the global distribution of economic, military and political power. In large measure this replicates the same critiques that are made elsewhere in the world and draws on many of the same, nationalist and left-wing, themes; indeed, the enduring influence of the Leninist theory of imperialism is evident. In a country such as Egypt or Kuwait, conferences denouncing globalization replicate anti-globalization themes echoed elsewhere.

In regard to culture, for example, two contrasting Islamic arguments can be heard. The first is that globalization threatens the Muslim world as a form of corruption of Muslim societies. The second, drawing on the universalist appeal of Islam and on specific cosmopolitan themes in the Koran itself, argues that Islam is itself a global, indeed *the* global, religion and should respond positively to the new context. Politically, there is concern with specific causes or conflicts in which Muslims are involved – Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, Kosovo – and, more broadly, with the threat, real or imagined, which the non-Muslim world poses to Muslim states. Here again there is no single discourse: Arabs in the Gulf, including many Iraqis, do not support Palestine; Iran has remained notably silent on 'Islamic' causes that might undermine its state interest: Xinjiang, Chechnya, Kashmir and, above all, Nagorno-Karabagh. In the run-up to the crisis of September 2001, Osama bin Laden denounced the West for waging a 'crusader war', *al-harb al-salibia*, against the Islamic world. This was presented, and widely interpreted, as a pan-Islamic theme, but it was only in the previous few years that the issue of the Crusades, a military conflict on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, had come to have popular resonance among Muslims elsewhere. Many of the issues being debated are secular, broad international ones that reflect the specific concerns of Muslim countries but are not in any sense Islamic: pressures for trade liberalization, signing intellectual copyright conventions, WTO membership, IMF conditions for liberalization of economies. The debate in the Muslim world about the Internet replicates that taking place elsewhere – concern at its effects on society countered by enthusiasm for what it can provide. Where there is resistance to the Internet from states, the reasons are similar to those encountered in other non-democratic societies, such as China, where the state wishes to control the flow of information.

An examination of how globalization is viewed serves several functions. First, it provides access to a range of opinions from states that are on the

receiving end of globalization and thus are part of the broader, non-hegemonic world that today confronts this process. If the central experience of globalization for many is growing inequality, it is particularly important to address what these countries are saying. Second, an examination of this debate in the Islamic world draws attention, as do other non-hegemonic voices, to critical questions within the analysis of globalization itself. One question clearly is that of the time-frame of analysis: those on the receiving end tend to see today's globalization as a continuation of earlier forms of domination, in particular imperialism. The question of when and how globalization has taken over from other forms of Western domination is of general relevance. Pertinent here is Immanuel Wallerstein's argument that the formation of a single world system, in effect globalization, began in 1500.¹⁰ Another issue to which this Islamic debate draws attention is that of culture – of cultural penetration or hegemony as part of globalization, but also of how an alternative form of cultural globalization, based on diversity and dialogue between different cultures, may be possible. Third, an examination of the way in which globalization is viewed within Islamic societies can contribute to our understanding of political ideology and discourse in those societies themselves. It will contribute to, if by no means resolve, the debate that has been taking place in recent years about the analysis of 'Islamist' discourse. As noted, this debate is broadly between those who have a cultural or essentialist view of Islamist ideas and see them as specific to the Muslim world and those who have a modernist view, which sees the variety and choice of discourses as reflecting contemporary, often secular, concerns. One can, for example, apply to the debate on globalization the kinds of argument applied to Islamist writings in general or to the work of Ayatollah Khomeini. Fourth, an analysis of the discussion of globalization in the Islamic world should serve to correct the impression, propagated in the Muslim world as well as in the West, of a single Islamic discourse.

What emerges is that, for all the shared historical context and cultural references, there are multiple voices on globalization, as on all other contemporary issues, in Muslim states. It is also evident that many of these voices are in large measure or wholly secular in tone and reference: debates on, say, WTO membership or the environment or tariffs reflect differences of interest, not of culture. Recognition of this may serve not only to correct a simplistic view of discussion in the Muslim world but also to question how far it is religion, in the sense of faith or holy text, that determines ideology or practice in these societies. We are looking

¹⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1984).

essentially at states and societies which exist in the modern world, a world both globalizing and unequal, and whose reaction to this process may be shaped only partially by religion, if at all.

Contemporary Islamic responses: a general overview

Within political contexts and discourses that are specifically Islamic, one can identify at least three major positions on globalization: accommodation, denunciation and participation. These do not cover the whole range of options and opinions but they illustrate the diversity of views and provide a way into a broader understanding of the Middle East's response to globalization. Statist accommodation is the stance adopted by, for example, President Khatami of Iran. As will be discussed below, Khatami has argued most extensively in philosophical terms that the Islamic world has nothing to fear from the West and should learn from the writings of Western philosophers while itself promoting its particular view. His view of this is statist, however, and therefore resistant to the transnational character of globalization. He is proposing a policy for states, Iran in particular, and also wishes states to be in control of this process. His 'Dialogue of Civilizations', which the UN adopted as an official programme for 2001–2, does not give a legitimate place to individual, dissident or 'non-state' views. A contrasting view is that of the religious leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamene'i. He has denounced globalization, certainly in Islamic terms, but also in terms that would be understandable in any developing country or context of protest. An even more striking example is that of the Moroccan Islamist thinker Abdessalam Yassine, for whom globalization is a major threat to the Islamic world, its culture and its faith. By contrast, the diaspora intellectual Ali Mazrui calls for the Islamic world to make a contribution to globalization in the spirit of its own universalism and of cultural diversity.

Accommodation

One of the most evident forms of statist accommodation is found in the widespread debate in Iran on globalization and many other international issues. The quarterly *Siasat-i Khareji*, 'Foreign Policy', published by the Institute for Political and International Studies (attached to the Foreign Ministry), produced a special issue on globalization in summer 2000. In addition to numerous articles by Iranian writers on themes such as

advanced European and American countries are faced with a dual threat ... It is on the one hand, the direct influence of super powers, headed by America, and on the other, the wave of globalization. It is what you have seen recently in America where demonstrations have been staged against this wave by a section of the American people. What is globalization? It means that a group of world powers, a number of countries – mainly those who have influence over the UN and mainly those countries which have been colonialists in the past – want to expand their culture, economy and traditions throughout the world. They want to set up a share-holding company in which they should hold 95 per cent of its share while the rest of world countries should have 5 per cent. They want to have authority. They want to make decisions. That is what globalization means. You see that so much pressure has been exerted on the fact that Iran does not pay any attention to America. Americans use all pressure in order to crush this grim face that the Iranian nation has shown towards America – a grim face and no attention. The reason for this is they have made every effort in all corners of the world aimed at persuading world politicians to flatter, to show humility, to bow down and to surrender. There is only one country, one nation and one government in the world which has not submitted to this pressure. We have nothing to do with America. However, we are not prepared to surrender to bullying, to pressure and to imposition of policies. We are not prepared to surrender. That country is the Islamic Republic of Iran.¹⁵

The enemy, Khamene'i continued, aims to create chaos in Iran by infiltrating the young people.

The people should know what the enemy is doing in the country in the field of cultural issues. They should know what objectives the enemy is pursuing. The enemies' objectives are to take away the people's faith, and to create a chasm between this generation and their elders ... Separating the young generation from the previous generation and from its historic achievements, separating people from the officials, separating people from religious beliefs can only be pursued by the enemy.¹⁶

The general impression given by the Arab world suggests that this view of globalization is widespread there too, but articulated not so much by politicians in power, as in Iran, as by the intelligentsia, whether secular or Islamist. A survey of attitudes to globalization among Arab intellectuals by

François Zabbal, editor of *Qantara*, the journal of the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, quotes from the plea by the Lebanese writer George Tarabishi for a more informed and open discussion of globalization in the Arab world without immediate labelling of those who participate.¹⁷ According to Tarabishi, globalization has become the mental demon of the Arab intelligentsia, hostile to change while its own societies are largely insulated from this process. The main themes involved are recycled Leninist and nationalist ones about global capitalism and imperialism. Yumna Tarif al-Kholi, an Egyptian writer, sees globalization as a linguistic plot 'which aims to destroy the Arabic language. This is because we are the only nation in the world which speaks a holy language.' The Gulf intellectual Mohammad Abed al-Jabiri sees globalization as a frontal attack on the three pillars of Arab existence: state, nation and fatherland. Muta al-Safadi, a Syrian nationalist, sees 'globalization' as a seductive term, designed to subordinate all countries to the power of big capital. The Palestinian writer Feisal Darraj sees globalization as a form of cultural subjugation: hamburgers, jeans, Marlboro and Pepsi-Cola are all instruments of homogenization designed to destroy cultural pluralism.

These are views of members of the secular, that is nationalist and Marxist, intelligentsia in Islamic societies, many of whom replicate conventional anti-globalization arguments from elsewhere. The Moroccan thinker and Islamist politician Abdessalam Yassine echoes similar themes in Islamist form in his book *Islamiser la Modernité*.¹⁸ These emphasize the relevance of Islam, and the Koran in particular, to modern life and the need for all people, in North and South, to return to their spiritual values. Yassine ranges far and wide, from discussions of Moses, Abraham, Nimrod and classical figures in Islam to reflections on the Internet, Bill Clinton, Samuel Huntington and much else. The starting point of the book is the refusal of the modern West, particularly Europe, to listen to the South. The Internet is both opportunity and danger. The great enemy is secularism, the secular crusade that threatens Europe and the Muslim world. Modern man is 'hyper-informed' but ignorant of himself, corrupted by consumerism and neo-Darwinian nihilism (p. 138). Modernity drowns indigenous peoples in 'its libertine and homogenising culture. Even in the Western world, nations jealous of their cultural identity and of their independence are crying out that they are being robbed' (p. 177). Yassine's inspiration (p. 88) comes

¹⁷ François Zabbal, 'Die arabische Intelligenz und das Gespenst der Globalisierung', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 24 January 2001.

¹⁸ All quotations in this and the next two paragraphs are from Abdessalam Yassine, *Islamiser la Modernité* (n.p.: Al Ofok Impressions, 1998). For general background see François Burgat, *L'Islamisme au Maghreb* (Paris: Karthala, 1988).

¹⁵ BBC SWB, ME/3822 MED/2, 24 April 2000.

¹⁶ BBC SWB, ME/3822 MED/6, 24 April 2000.

from the more rigorous trends within Islam, from Ibn Taimiya (1263–1328), a mediaeval opponent of liberal interpretations of the tradition; Sayyed Qutb, a leader of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood executed by Nasser in 1966; and the contemporary Algerian Islamist Malik ibn Bani. Repeated use is made of the Koran in justifying revolt against injustice as well as in denouncing Jews (pp. 122–5). The solution is a return to faith, the holy book and prayer, a call Yassine supports by reference to Western sociologists, such as Edgar Morin, who themselves call for a return to moral values within modern society.

Not surprisingly, a section of Yassine's book is concerned with 'globalization'. The first paragraph is clear enough: 'The menacing character of the new political order and of economic globalization proclaim the offensive launched in all directions by the great hegemonic power against the underdeveloped countries who suffer from it more than the rich countries. This politico-economic aggression forces us to mobilise all our forces to confront it' (p. 245). The negative impact of globalization is placed in the historical context of the struggle for independence and of the failure of the post-independence leadership, whose two components, atheistic socialists and the corrupt elite, he denounces as secular forces opposed to the values of Islam. 'The fate that is now knocking on our doors is globalization. Countries such as ours, underdeveloped and exposed to the wrangling and hesitations of politicians pre-occupied with fighting over power and the privileges of powers, always ready to change allegiance, will be indicated as the first victims' (p. 246). The new colonialism struggles not through direct occupation but through proclaiming such anti-Islamic goals as freedom of thought, democratic pluralism removed from any Islamic norms and the 'right to difference, understood as the right to proclaim oneself a Muslim without any conviction' (p. 289).

When it comes to globalization, however, Yassine does not advance a distinct or indigenous Islamic analysis. In order to substantiate his arguments he turns to *The Globalization Trap*, a critical work on globalization by two German writers, Hans-Peter Martin and Harald Schuman. 'I always prefer to let the sons of the West speak about their own modernity in the hope of not being accused of exaggeration. Our Islamic point of view will rest therefore on objective statements and direct observation.' Yassine also invokes the environmental critique of US hegemony, responsible in his view for global warming, the flooding of Bangladesh and El Niño. The Koran (Surat al Ra'ad, Verse 25 and, Yassine says, 50 other relevant verses) is invoked to support the view that God condemns those who violate the pact between man and nature. The two strands of critique, of the secular and destructive character of modernity and of globaliza 1 as a hegemonic

project, are thereby joined into one sustained appeal for the 'remoralization' of society along Islamic lines. An Islamic state should be established and wealth should be distributed through charity or *zakat*, leading to more effective cooperation and ultimately to unity among all Muslims (p. 301). Corrupt, imported democracy should be replaced by Islamic consultative processes, *shura*.

This is the voice not of those in power, as in the case of the Iranian figures discussed above, but of the leader of an important and influential Islamist opposition movement. This text, although phrased in general terms, reflects a challenge both to the monarchical state and to the secular parties who have dominated Moroccan life since the 1950s. It is, therefore, intended to present an alternative to these secular political forces and their ideologies. But even in this rejection of the international system, and in his characterization of it, Yassine, like Khomeini and his followers, reflects a modern context. This is shown, first, by the very context of his writing, one of reflection upon and contestation of the political history of Morocco since the time of French colonialism; and, second, in the interweaving of recognizable, and often very generic, Muslim themes with what are prevalent elements of the radical critique of globalization: North-South inequality, the destruction of national culture, MNCs, the environment. The very extent to which Yassine cites, indeed relies on, 'Northern' authors to make his points underlines this interrelationship.

Participation

Accommodation and denunciation may well cover most of what is argued for and against in the Muslim world about international relations and globalization. If they do, however, it is as much because they provide, in an Islamic idiom, a response to the inequalities of colonialism and globalization shared by other developing states as because of any specifically Islamic explanation they use. This contingency may also be evident in the third response to globalization, that of participation. The argument for participation is much more positive about globalization, and it too draws on appropriate elements in the Islamic tradition.

One forceful if atypical variant of this approach is that of Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi, the leader of Libya, when he speaks of the new regional context of states:

Libya ... is merely a drop in the ocean in the face of the nature of today's world. The mindless and ignorant must wake up and try to understand

the nature of today's world. It is regrettable that the era of nationalism and religious beliefs which bring people together as well as the era of languages and cultures have retreated. These are replaced by the new globalization, the era of territorial space. You can no longer say that a particular people belong to my religion, to my country, language or culture. I myself saw that those who belong to the same space are those with whom I share interests... The Comoros Island or Libya cannot survive alone but they cannot also rescue each other despite the fact they belong to the same nation and religion... Mediterranean basin countries form the Mediterranean territory. France and Libya are closer to each other than Libya to Syria or Libya to Kuwait.¹⁹

Qadhdhafi has in recent years come to stress the difficulties of Arab nationalism and to call for Libya's participation in a wider world context: this may be connected to the problems Libya has had with other Arab states, from which it is relatively isolated. This isolation has led him to emphasize the radical nature of contemporary international change.

From a very different perspective, the writer on international relations Ali Mazrui has offered a similar argument on the relation of Islam as a civilization to globalization.²⁰ Civilization, he argues, is born of creative synthesis – Islam was a synthesis of Judaism, Christianity and the message of the Prophet Mohammad, and between the ninth and fourteenth centuries Islamic thinkers such as Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sina fused classical Greek thinking with Islam. Heeding divine injunction, Islam emphasizes the importance of reading and learning from diverse traditions. The Islamic world, in its strongest era, learnt extensively from other civilizations, and in all four of the main dimensions of globalization: religion, technology, economy and empire. It can, and should, do so today, but by the same token it should also offer what it values to others. Here perhaps a conflict of discourse and of external context becomes visible. This is because the message of Islamic universalism and synthesis is arguably the one closest to the doctrinal traditions of the religion, one that knows no political or ethnic boundaries and that celebrates in Koranic text as in historical practice a diversity of languages, cultures and economic and political forms. Here Islamic reality administers a rebuttal to any claims of a single reading or implementation of Muslim culture and to any suggestion of an Islamic world shut off from the non-Islamic world. Yet it is these latter themes that have, to a considerable degree, prevailed as a result of the real

¹⁹ BBC, *SWB*, ME/3781 MED/18, 6 March 2000.

²⁰ Ali Mazrui 'Globalization and the Future of Islamic Civilisation', lecture, Westminster University, 3 September 2000; text on <http://Islam21.org>.

subordination of Islamic societies to hegemonic forces from the West. It is the issues raised by this latter experience rather than a textual interpretation that most confront Muslim states today.

Conclusion

The debate on globalization is itself global, in the elementary sense that it is a topic which is discussed in all societies and to which all states have to articulate a response. But it is also global in two other senses: many of the themes encompassed by this debate are shared between all societies, and many of the ideas, terms and lines of dispute are reproduced within each society and discursive context. The responses found in the Islamic world illustrate this, just as they illustrate the degree to which the differences that do exist, between states, societies and cultures, reflect differences of structural power, above all in economic and technological terms, rather than differences of value. The problems faced by Arab states or Iran with regard to the Internet, trade liberalization or narcotics are faced in broadly similar ways by other societies too. We can thus identify Islamic responses to globalization, but even in the realm of discourse we see that these are not monolithic or insulated.

The recognition of this discursive variety is not the end of the story, however. Equally important is the relating of the ideologies and positions in these debates to practice in the real world. Here the divide between textualists and modernists recurs, for although the former, including many Islamists, might argue that the behaviour of Muslim societies and individuals is explicable in Islamic religious or cultural terms, modernists treat this as an open question. An examination of structures of political power, of educational practice, of international security policy and, above all, of the economy might show very little specifically 'Muslim' content. This question is of considerable relevance for the debate on globalization because, rhetoric and symbol apart, it is contestable how far the 'Islamic' discussion of globalization affects the practices of Muslim states in the areas central to the globalization debate. Islamic oil-producers determine their output and pricing in terms of the opportunities of the world market. As already noted, the discussion of the absence of FDI *into* the region distracts attention from the massive flow of FDI *out of* the Middle East and into OECD capital and property markets. Statist elites with access to 'rent', i.e. unearned income, resist liberalization because their material interests will be threatened. States, and patriarchs, resist the Internet because they fear it will undermine their power. Gulf Cooperation Council

states and private investors have invested over \$2,000 billion in Western capital markets, and very little at home, because of the comparative advantages of security and return. Despite much talk of a specifically 'Islamic' approach to economics – to interest, banking or redistribution of wealth – the practices of Islamic states, companies and economies are determined by other considerations. Therefore, apart from the recognition of the diversity and transnational character of 'Islamic' discourses on international relations and on the inequalities involved in the global economy, it is questionable how far these discourses affect the practices of those concerned. In this context, discourse may obscure as much as it explains.

The Middle East may be different, but this difference is constituted and reproduced by the patterns of integration into the modern world. And this integration does not necessarily produce the consequences in politics, economics or culture that are seen in the region today. To assume that this is the case, that everything in the region is determined by external factors, is to deny the room for manoeuvre, the autonomy that Middle Eastern states and their opponents have in the international system. Here again a discursive legacy from pre-1990 times plays a negative role, for in the period of colonialism and Cold War, Middle Eastern states and other actors had a margin of manoeuvre, and used it. The Middle East was never so controlled, or manipulated, by external forces as it claimed. This applies even more in the period of globalization. Differential integration does not entail passivity or subordination. That it is interpreted in this way is a matter of choice. Like all ideology, it serves to obscure the very real choices and options that these states and their opponents confront.

3 The end of historical attachments: Britain's changing policy towards the Middle East

Rosemary Hollis

Globalization is transforming the shape of interstate relations, and the responses of the US and other governments to the events of 11 September do not signal a reversal in this trend so much as a reordering of priorities. Terrorism is now seen to have a global reach, with alienated fanatics angry about US power projection in the Middle East and venting their spleen on unsuspecting civilians in the US heartland. The reaction of the United States has been to declare a war on terrorism, starting in Afghanistan, and to re-examine its alliances and policies across the Middle East too.

For Britain the unfolding crisis has demonstrated just how much its influence has declined in the Middle East, a region where once it was a key player. In the wake of 11 September, British Prime Minister Tony Blair swept to the forefront of international diplomacy, positioning Britain 'shoulder to shoulder' with the United States and providing stirring rhetoric to elevate the war on terrorism to a more noble quest to eliminate poverty, prejudice and human rights abuses too. However, when Tony Blair ventured to the Middle East in autumn 2001 his personal style of diplomacy was hampered by his lack of first-hand connections with his counterparts in the region. Hitherto he had focused on building ties with the most prominent global power brokers, Presidents Clinton and Bush of the United States, as well as Russian President Putin and the leading statesmen of Europe. Blair's sense of priorities would seem to reflect the dictates of globalization, which require the British government to maximize Britain's leverage in the most important power arenas – namely, Washington, Brussels, the United Nations Security Council, the G-8, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) – at the expense of bilateral and regional relations *per se*.