ISLAM, GLOBALISM AND GLOBALISATION

Thought Paper No. 12, 2021
The Journal of Islamic Governance

AUTHOR

Muhammad Adil Iqbal

Islam, Globalism and Globalisation

Muhammad Adil Iqbal¹

Abstract

This thought paper provides a general overview of globalisation, its interaction with Islamic civilisation and contemporary issues like Fourth Industrial Revolution, Extraterrestrial Imperative, COVID-19 Pandemic and more. The paper intends to identify and analyse the impact of globalisation on Islamic civilisation in various spheres of life including social, cultural, political, educational, religious, and economic. This is particularly crucial in the contemporary period of tension between Islam and the West due to numerous reasons. This paper will contribute to understanding and evaluation of the prevailing situation including the impact of Fourth Industrial Revolution. This paper will also assist in understanding the unique and dynamic challenges of globalisation and their consequences for Islamic civilisation, so, an idea about the way forward which is best for solving or effectively addressing these challenges, can be achieved. Contemporary globalisation and Fourth Industrial Revolution offer ground-breaking opportunities for collective good and for improvement of human condition. Now, it is up to Muslims, to effectively use benefits of globalisation and Fourth Industrial Revolution for civilizational revival and to produce second Islamic Golden Age.

Keywords: Islamic Civilisation, Muslim Culture, Fourth Industrial Revolution, Globalisation, Globalism

¹ The author is a PhD Candidate at Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Centre for Islamic Studies (SOASCIS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), Brunei Darussalam. 18h0636@ubd.edu.bn

We are living in times of complex global developments and space exploration, all happening simultaneously during ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. A new thought phenomenon, a modern cultural and technological experience appears emerging from globalisation and Fourth Industrial Revolution. The recent events and changes taking place at the global and extraterrestrial scale have not only engulfed us and captured our imaginations but have presented us with numerous intellectual curiosities and apprehensions in variety of disciplines including religion. Seemingly, the cause of those intellectual curiosities and apprehensions predominantly is the process of contemporary globalisation and its consequences. However, it can never be ignored that globalisation combined with modern communication technologies has brought many economic and social benefits for mankind. With that, globalisation has also contributed to a period of upheaval, bolstering the argument that economics and financial markets are superior to other human activities. Today, The International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization, developed Western countries, multinational businesses, prominent global corporate elite including rich billionaires and increasingly China appears to be leading and managing contemporary globalisation. No one, including Muslims, is immune to the positive and negative impacts of globalisation, whether directly or indirectly. Globalisation is also perceived as Western hegemony or imperialism¹ particularly in Muslim lands.

Globalisation, Globalism and Islamic Civilisation

Globalisation is a process, and its ideology is globalism.² Globalisation refers to the greater interconnection and huge interaction in various sectors of life at the global level among world civilisations, especially Islamic civilisation. The expansion and interchange of people, goods, and ideas across the globe is also referred to as globalisation.³ It is closely linked to change, or transformation, modernisation, and a growing interdependence between different parts of the world including Muslim countries. Globalisation is commonly connected with classical liberal economic theory, and since the mid-1970s, with neo-liberalism, which has its roots in classical economic theory.⁴ Capitalism like neoliberalism is also the foundational ideology of globalisation. Globalisation is viewed as a manifestation of the idea of comparative advantage, which encourages an open economic system and free commerce in order to

¹ Amartya Sen, "Does Globalisation Equal Westernization?", *The Globalists*, March 25, 2002. <https://www.theglobalist.com/does-globalisation-equal-westernization/>

² Gideon Rachman, "Why globalism is good for you," *Financial Times*, October 29, 2018.

³ Ben Lutkevich, "Globalisation," *TechTarget*, July 2021. <https://searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/globalisation>

⁴ David M. Kotz, "Globalisation and Neoliberalism," *Rethinking Marxism*, Volume 12, Number 2 (Summer 2002), pp 64 - 79.

gain and maintain competitive advantage. Globalisation is a phenomenon that has gained a lot of traction and is of high importance in today's world, where the rapid growth and development of mass communication devices and informational-communicative technologies have reduced distances and broken time and place borders, and we can see its influences on all aspects of life, from the highest ideals and human values to the smallest matters of life. The impact of contemporary globalisation on Islamic civilisation is still being debated in the intellectual and academic communities, particularly in the Muslim world. With about a quarter of the world's population professing Islam as their religion, it is clearly a topic of significant scholarly interest.

Globalisation's Definitional and Conceptual Dilemma

What is globalisation, and what is the most acceptable description we can give it? Definitions available demonstrate the lack of complete agreement among social and political science academics on the nature of globalisation. Globalisation can be defined as the spread of economic, political, and social linkages.¹ It is a diverse and strong phenomenon that is taking place in global society's cultural, economic, military, political, and sporting arenas. However, we may say that the term 'globalisation' refers to a collection of complex processes through which national states are becoming increasingly intertwined and dependent on one another. In fact, Globalisation is the voluntary or unavoidable cooperation of nations and cultures in order to live as a single global society. Furthermore, globalisation continues to have both positive and negative economic implications² leading to various other consequences. This adds conceptual complexity to the idea of globalisation. Prof. Arnt Fløysand terms process of globalisation, 'double edged' which is impossible to forecast, and it can only be best exposed through empirical studies.³ Although, globalisation may have prepared the economic arena and development of countries, it has unfortunately resulted in few countries being treated unequally, and the gulf between developed and developing countries has grown from an economic standpoint.

¹ Dinarjad Achmad and Umaity Hamzani, "Globalisation the Perspective of Islam and Economic Experts," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 219 (2016): pp 41 - 46.

² "Globalisation: Definition, Benefits, Effects, Examples – What is Globalisation?" October 6, 2020. <https://youmatter.world/en/definition/definitions-globalisation-definition-benefits-effects-examples/>

³ Arnt Fløysand, "A theoretical framework on how to approach Globalization and social practice," *University of Bergen. Department of Geography*, 1999. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/52068765.pdf>

The Extraterrestrial Imperative, Space Globalisation and Islam

Economic geography and spaces for globalisation appears expanding which are adding to the complexity of the nature and scope of globalisation. Space exploration is also a part of globalisation process.¹ Through space based commercial activities, globalisation and technology equally contribute to the process of space exploration in creating a possible extraterrestrial future for humanity. This has also expanded human ecology.² Today, globalisation is not only the integration of countries and continents, but the globalisation process is now reaching to Moon and Mars. The recent expansionary vision and space rhetoric propagated by super-rich like Richard Branson, Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk and more has started to bring more focus on visions of lunar industrialization (Exoindustrialisation) and settlement, vision commonly known as 'Extraterrestrial Imperative.' Krafft Ehrlicke's philosophy of Extraterrestrial Imperative attempts to justify mankind's expansion to stars. Krafft A. Ehrlicke writes, "Mankind's move into space is not simply compatible with biological and cultural evolution but has and will confer many economic benefits."³ The rise in global warming, depletion of fossil fuels, increasing scarcity of drinking water and a resulting chaos from economic growth and geopolitics has effectively put life on earth in crisis. A better and long-term human future requires expansion of world's environmental base by taking process of industrialization into lunar and extraterrestrial sphere through technological advancements.⁴

Activism for space exploration has appeared recently in few parts of Muslim world particularly in Arab world. UAE launched its first interplanetary mission, 'Hope Probe' to Mars from Japan's Tanegashima Space Centre on 20 July 2020.⁵ The probe successfully entered the Martian orbit on February 9, 2021. The launch of Hope Probe is beginning of UAE's plan of setting up a city on Mars by 2117.⁶ In 2007, Malaysia's space agency, 'Angkasa,' convened a conference which was attended by 150 Islamic scientists and scholars. A document titled, *A Guideline of Performing Ibadah (worship) at the International Space Station (ISS)* was produced to tackle the issues of Ibadah and determining the *qibla* for

¹ Marilyn Dudley-Flores and Thomas Gangale, "The Globalization of Space – The Astrosociological Approach," the *American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics*, September 2007

² Ibid.

³ Krafft A.Ehrlicke, "The extraterrestrial imperative," *Futures*, Volume 13, Issue 2 (April 1981): pp 107 - 114.

⁴ "A Vision of Lunar Settlement," *Lunar Bases and Space Activities of The 21st Century*, Lunar and Planetary Institute, NASA Astrophysics Data System, (1985): Chapter 12, pp 825 – 855.

⁵ Nandini Sircar, "Hope Probe, one year on: Reliving the UAE's milestone Mars mission," *Khaleej Times*, July 19, 2021. <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/news/hope-probe-one-year-on-reliving-the-uaes-milestone-mars-mission>

⁶ Ibid.

Muslim astronauts in international space station.¹ Given such an astrosociological approach,² if a mankind succeeds in globalising, industrialising, and settling in accessible space spheres, how this would define civilization and role of religion in that future? How Islam and Muslim religious practices will fit into space or that unseen distant future? How Muslims will respond if they come across extraterrestrial life? Perhaps these and many like these questions require us to dig deep into Islamic theology. Shelina Janmohamed writes, 'Islamic theology is well-suited to support space travel, exploration and habitation.'³

Islam, Globalisation and Emerging Issues

The relationship between Islam and globalisation is one of the most important fields that is discussed extensively in relation to the issue of globalisation. This relationship has been the subject of much debate and interpretation. As viewed by few, Islam is somehow antagonistic to the globalisation process. M. Miasami writes in his feature titled, *Islam and Globalisation*, "Islam is not against the process of globalisation per se, but rather that the tension is due to the process of Westernisation."⁴ Islam does not resist the process of development and globalisation; yet, from an Islamic perspective, the characteristics of globalisation differ from the modern idiomatic qualities of it. However, since the terror attacks of 9/11, it has been felt that globalisation has led to severe reaction by few using the name of Islam for their political objectives. Such ideals have contributed to the strengthening of the philosophy of 'Clash of Civilizations' and prevalent Islamophobia in certain parts of the world. Samuel Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* predicted that future wars would be fought on cultural lines, in which religion will deeply embedded.⁵ The origins, basis, and traditions of Muslim culture, politics, and system of governance are seemingly being challenged by contemporary globalisation and Fourth Industrial Revolution.⁶

Muslim societies, like the rest of the globe, have been profoundly affected by globalisation. To some extent, Muslim culture, lifestyles, as well as their cognitive processes and sense of

¹ Patrick Di Justo, "A Muslim Astronaut's Dilemma: How to Face Mecca From Space," WIRED, 9 September 2007. <https://www.wired.com/2007/09/mecca-in-orbit/>

² Flores and Gangale, "The Globalization of Space – The Astrosociological Approach."

³ Shelina Janmohamed, "From mosques on Mars to meeting Martians: the dilemmas awaiting Muslims in space," The National. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/comment/from-mosques-on-mars-to-meeting-martians-the-dilemmas-awaiting-muslims-in-space-1.760585>

⁴ M. Miasami, "Islam and Globalisation," *Global Policy Forum*, August 2003. <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/162-general/27622.html>

⁵ Huntington, Samuel P, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011.

⁶ Muhammad Adil Iqbal and Shaikh Abdul Mabud, "The Challenge of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in an Islamic System of Governance," *The Journal of Islamic Governance*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2021): pp 42 - 60

creative expression, have been altered.¹ Some have welcomed the changes, while others are concerned about the nature of the shifts and the capacity for change. One of the most pressing issues confronting Muslims today is that Muslim culture appears to be incompatible with modern Western culture and the features associated with it, such as technological progress, consumerism, and new forms of electronic communication, all of which have the potential to homogenise any culture. A multifaceted cultural concern has been one of the underlying causes of prevailing Muslim anxiety: how to protect a unique heritage in the face of global pressure; how to uphold religious traditions; how to preserve linguistic purity; how to defend social institutions; and, finally, how to maintain a viable identity in the face of a rapidly changing global environment. The gradual emergence of awareness and consciousness among Muslim countries through modern means of communication and media about long-standing cultural diversity within Islamic civilisation has sparked a debate about "hybridity" and "authenticity," as well as their theological, sociological, and cultural implications for Muslim societies.²

As referred earlier, the process of 'globalisation' has been described as a global revolution that transcends borders and accelerates people's ability to interact and trade across continents.³ What role does Islam play in such a globalisation process? Because, as argued by few that Islam instinctively opposes globalisation and the secular principles it represents, many famous scholars consider the faith as incapable of adjusting to a globalised society. Examining the content of religious scriptures and religious culture exposes the unavoidable truth that Islam is a global religion that has strived to become one throughout its history. Globalisation, with its development in communication, information, and cyber technologies, is changing the way Muslims think about life's realities, as well as their views toward law, state, politics, business, religion, justice, knowledge, mutual interaction, and minorities. Contemporary globalisation, largely spearheaded by the West, particularly the United States, is generating a shift in Muslim education, supporting Western ways of thinking and prompting Muslims to face challenges or perplexity in their political, cultural, and religious lives. Secularisation is another notion that is advocated by contemporary globalisation process. On a global scale, the last 30 years have seen swift and profound economic, political, social, and technical changes.⁴ Today, in view of many scholars, Muslim culture

¹ Ibid.

² Riaz Hassan, 'Globalisation's Challenge to Islam', Yale Global Online, April 17, 2003.

³ Achmad and Hamzani, "Globalisation and Islam."

⁴ "Globalisation and Muslim Societies," *The Library of Congress*, November 29, 2001. <https://www.loc.gov/locvideo/mslm/globalmuslim.html>

faces significant challenges to its way of life, mostly because of current hyper-globalisation and the political, economic, educational, cultural, and religious shifts it is creating across the Muslim world.¹

Future of Globalisation

Globalisation is the most important historical process and a recent consequential economic damage resulting from cargo ship stranded in the Suez Canal in Egypt on March 23, 2021 is a reminder of inevitability of globalisation, global trade, supply chains, transportation and trade routes. There appears no escape from globalisation as it's a very resilient, adaptative and evolving process. COVID – 19 Pandemic may not be able to unwind globalisation² but for now, it has significantly disrupted international trade and interconnectivity³ which is quite evident from the decline of global economy by 3.3% in 2020.⁴ Attitudes towards globalisation are fluctuating⁵ as manifested by surging protectionism and major problems with process of globalisation and global governance have been effectively exposed. However, international cooperation, global trade and progress of science and technology is most likely to sustain and thrive. The emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, coined by Klaus Schwab, the World Economic Forum's founder and executive chairman, in 2016, is truly fascinating and, to some extent, mystifying to the point where it can no longer be dismissed and, at the same time, cannot be adopted without thought.⁶ The Fourth Industrial Revolution's technological advancements are a testament to human success and progress for individuals all around the world.⁷ Artificial intelligence, mobile internet, internet of things, cloud computing, next-generation wireless networking technologies, virtual reality, augmented reality, blockchain, edge computing, machine learning, and robotic processes are all examples of advancements in artificial intelligence.⁸ These technological advancements have the potential to change manufacturing processes and raise living standards, especially in Muslim developing countries. However, according to several

¹ Muhammad Adil Iqbal, "The Challenges of Globalisation to the Islamic Civilisation," Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Centre for Islamic Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. <https://soascis.ubd.edu.bn/activities/the-challenges-of-globalisation-to-the-islamic-civilisation/>

² Joseph Giglio, "What will Globalization look like in a post-COVID-19 world?" *Patriot Ledger*, July 17, 2021. <https://www.patriotledger.com/story/opinion/2021/07/17/Globalization-could-look-much-different-post-covid-19-world/7945343002/>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Wang Xiaonan, "In a world redefined by the pandemic, where is Globalization headed?" CGTN, August 2, 2021

⁵ "Globalization shapes our lives," *Daily Journal*, August 15, 2021. http://www.dailyjournal.net/2021/07/16/lee_hamilton_Globalization_shapes_our_lives/

⁶ Iqbal and Mabud, "The Challenge of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in an Islamic System of Governance."

⁷ Ibid, p 1.

⁸ Ibid.

scientists, writers, and international leaders, the Fourth Industrial Revolution's globalisation is destined to bring many problems, upheavals, and instabilities for society and governments around the world, including the United States.¹

Way Forward

The scenario as highlighted above necessitates meticulous planning while remaining true to Islamic principles. There is still a need for academic and intellectual focus on this issue in order to better educate Muslim masses about contemporary globalisation, emerging technological change and the Fourth Industrial Revolution in order to better prepare them for careful adaptation and participation in globalisation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.² In the current circumstances, it is critical to comprehend the challenges that globalisation offers to Islamic civilisation. Understanding, adaption, and widespread application of *Wasatīyyah* (Islam's middle path) in Muslim attitudes can also help the Muslim Ummah prepare to face the difficulties resulting from contemporary globalisation. In the current scenario, the Muslim Ummah must act.³ Exploring a moderate path remains within Islamic thinkers' theological reach, as the concept of moderation is not a new philosophy and has a base profoundly ingrained in Islam's concept of *Wasatīyyah*, or middle path.⁴ This term *Wasatīyyah* developed from the word *ummatan wasaṭan* (the moderate people), which is established in the Holy Qur'ān:⁵

﴿ We have made you into a balanced community so that you bear witness before humankind and the Messenger [ﷺ] bear witness before you ﴾⁶ and
﴿ You are the best community singled out for humankind; you order what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah ﴾^{7,8}

¹ Ibid

² Muhammad Adil Iqbal, Shaikh Abdul Mabud and Dr. Azmi Mohamad, "Technological Advancements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Concerns for Muslim Societies and Governments," *The 1st International Conference on Business, Management and Information Systems 2019, Conference Proceedings*, pp 198 – 214.

³ Iqbal, "Globalisation."

⁴ Muhammad Adil Iqbal and Shaikh Abdul Mabud, "Challenge of Globalisation to the Muslim Ummah: Religious Extremism and the Need for Middle Path (Wasat)," *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (2019): pp 73 – 88.

⁵ Ibid, p 87.

⁶ Sūrah al-Baqarah: 143

⁷ Sūrah Ali-ʿImrān: 110

⁸ Term *al-wasatīyyah* is also used in other verses as well, such as *al-wuṣṭa* (Sūrah al-Baqarah: 238), *ausaṭ* (Sūrah al-Mā'idah: 89), *ausatuhum* (Sūrah al-Qalam: 28), *fawasaṭna* (Sūrah al-ʿĀdiyāt: 5).

With adaptation of moderation, analytical comprehension of the current situation is of great value. The research on the impacts of globalisation on Islamic civilisation will aid in comprehending and assessing the current situation. It will be helpful for Muslims excel in education, technology and economy. It will also assist in comprehending the issues and their repercussions, allowing for the formation of an idea about the best approach for effectively tackling these challenges. It will also assist in determining how to conserve and strengthen the environment. Today, Globalisation increasingly appears as the base for prevailing world order and a leading paradigm in the promotion of neo-liberal capitalism. The hegemony, chaos, and instability germinating out of globalisation today, have generated a wide range of political, economic, and cultural responses in the World, particularly in the Muslim World. Understanding of such an emerging scenario is especially important, for a variety of reasons, in the current moment of political and religious conflict between Islam and the West, commonly known as the idea of '*Clash of Civilizations*' as propagated by Samuel P. Huntington. By focusing on the impact of Globalisation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution on Islamic civilisation, any comprehensive research can act as intellectual guide not only to fill a vacuum in the existing literature for future scholars who might be interested in performing advanced work on the same topic.

Conclusion

At some point in history, all religions have struggled to maintain their relevance in the world. In fact, based on historical precedent, religion has played a significant role in contributing to globalisation process, with Islam playing a particularly prominent role. Much of the literature on the current Islam and globalisation debate presents an incomplete and fragmented picture of religion's role in the Globalisation process. From the perspective of changing communicative technology and providing swift and coherent availability for people all over the world, Globalisation can be exploited as a possibility in the direction of the growth and development of humane good values. Globalisation, according to this perspective, is a good opportunity to develop the exalted Islamic instructions. The solution for the future of a globalised world, and not only for Islam, is to aid one another in ways that are good and pious, rather than in ways that are bad and malicious. Contemporary Globalisation and Fourth Industrial Revolution offers ground-breaking opportunities for collective good and for improvement of human condition. Now, it is up to Muslims, to effectively use benefits of Globalisation and Fourth Industrial Revolution for civilizational revival and to produce second Islamic Golden Age.

References

- Ahmad, Dr. Israr, *Rise and Decline Of Muslim Ummah*, New Delhi: Adam Publishers, 2007.
- Ahmed, Akbar S, *Journey into Islam, the Crisis of Globalisation*, Massachusetts: Brookings Institution Press, 2008.
- Altglas, Veronique Ed, *Religion and Globalisation*, Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2010.
- Chapra, M. Umer, *Muslim Civilisation: The Causes of Decline and the Need for Reform*, Leicestershire: The Islamic Foundation, 2010.
- Edge, Deckle, *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*, New York: Knopf, 2018.
- Friedman, Thomas, *Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016.
- Fukuyama, Francis, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York: Free Press; Reissue edition, 2006.
- Huntington, Samuel P, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011.
- Iqbal, Allama M, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, New Delhi: Kitab Bhawan, 2017.
- Iqbal, Muhammad Adil, "The Challenges of Globalisation to the Islamic Civilisation," Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Centre for Islamic Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.
<https://soascis.ubd.edu.bn/activities/the-challenges-of-globalisation-to-the-islamic-civilisation/>
- Iqbal, Muhammad Adil and Mabud, Shaikh Abdul, "Challenge of Globalisation to the Muslim Ummah: Religious Extremism and the Need for Middle Path (Wasat)," *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (2019): pp 73 – 88.
- Iqbal, Adil and Mabud, Shaikh Abdul, "The Challenge of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in an Islamic System of Governance," *The Journal of Islamic Governance*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2021): pp 42 – 60. <https://doi.org/10.53105/jig.6-3>
- Iqbal, Muhammad Adil, Mabud, Shaikh Abdul and Mohamad, Azmi, "Technological Advancements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Concerns for Muslim Societies and Governments," The 1st International Conference on Business, Management and Information Systems 2019, Conference Proceedings, pp 198 – 214.
- Khaldun, Ibn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, Wyoming: Purity Publications, 2015.

- Mohamad, Mahathir, *Globalisation and the New Realities*, Philadelphia: Coronet Books Inc, 2002.
- Mohamad, Mahathir, *Achieving True Globalisation*, Pelanduk Pubns Sdn Bhd, 2004.
- Mozaffari, Mehdi, *Globalisation and Civilisations*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2002.
- Sardar, Ziauddin, *The future of Muslim Civilisation*, Kent: Croom Helm, 1979
- Schwab, Klaus, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, New South Wales: Currency, 2017.
- Stiglitz, Joseph, *Globalisation and Its Discontents*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002
- Tepper, Jonathan, *The Myth of Capitalism: Monopolies and the Death of Competition*, New Jersey: Wiley, 2018.
- Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1930.