Global Islam and the Secular Modern World: Transnational Muslim Social Movements and the Movement of Fethullah Gülen, A Comparative Approach

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Worldly systems change according to circumstances and so can be evaluated only according to their times

--M. Fethullah Gülen

Toward and Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance

In Islam, the *Umma* is more than a religious concept; it connotes social solidarity and cultural identification beyond ethnic and regional boundaries. In this way, the *Umma* (community of believers) serves as the most fundamental of what Serif Mardin (1989) refers to as “Islamic idioms,” that is, shared paradigmatic concepts that serve the ultimate function of reproducing social structures over time and space. Mardin develops the notion of the Islamic idiom as follows:

The Islamic ‘idiom’ is pervasive in the sense that covers all aspects of life and society and that it is shared equally by upper and lower classes...Daily life-strategies are framed by the use of the religious idiom, and the fund of Qur’anic symbols on which it is based has a widespread popular usage...it is because this idiom is shared that there appears something that we could name ‘social legitimation’ in Islamic societies, a legitimation that derives from the widespread use of this idiom (1989: 6-7).

In Islam’s formative period, the *Umma* linked a trans-regional system of Muslim trade and pilgrimage networks. In the contemporary era, these networks are linked to developments in information and communication technologies, which have subsequently provided the structural opportunity spaces for Muslim social movements (MSMs) to mobilize via a revival of the *Umma* as a universal Islamic precept.228

228 For a theoretical and empirical exposition on the “network metaphor” used to describe Muslim societies, see *Muslim Networks: From Hip Hop to Hajj* Cooke and Lawrence eds. (2005).
Outlining his "clash of civilizations" thesis, Samuel Huntington (1996) argues that the rise of MSMs is indicative of a deep culture cleavage between the West and Islam; "the underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power (216-18).

Legitimizing Huntington’s argument, the 20th century Pakistani ideologue Abul a’la-Mawdudi once said that as a result of Western intrusion, Muslims, “have turned away from God, towards man’s exploitation by man and towards moral degeneration and cultural pollution” (1984: 77-78). Although justified by reciprocal acts of brutality, these two perspectives illustrate little more than a discursive by-pass, with one mirroring the other in enmity and incomprehension. On either “side,” the clash argument is presented as both just and inevitable:

“This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom.” George W. Bush²²⁹

“This is a religious-economic war. The occupation of Iraq is a link in the Zionist-crusader chain of evil...to set the stage for controlling and dominating the whole world.” Osama Bin Laden²³⁰

In contrast to “the clash,” I argue that MSMs should be understood as collective struggles for individual and group recognition, economic opportunity, and political autonomy in a global capitalist world system. I contend that the reversion to Islamic idioms is less the result of reactive ethno-nationalism, and more the result of uneven economic development in the post-colonial Muslim World²³¹. Historically, such unevenness created a discursive vacuum, whereby the language of Umma revivalism provided an identity, a purpose, and a wide range of methods for social struggle in the modern Muslim world. The materialization of such struggles ranged from the development of community organizations and social welfare institutions, to the mobilization of violent insurrection groups and guerrilla warfare. What accounts for such variation in method? Drawing from the texts of three prominent 20th century Muslim intellectuals, I conduct an “ideal type analysis” of MSM ideology. Outlining three deviations from the ideal type: the classical modernist, the global jihadist, and the civil/cosmopolitan, I argue that variation

²³⁰ Published 1/6/2004 – The Guardian http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1116855,00.html
²³¹ By “Muslim world” I am referring to Muslim majority states in the Middle East (Persian Gulf), North Africa, and Southeast Asia. In the post-WWII era of economic, political, and cultural globalization, with Muslim migrants, guest workers, and converts currently living and/or connected (in real time) around the world, “the Muslim world” carries little weight as a geo-sociological category.
in method is the result of actors’ ability to successfully harmonize the sacred components of Islam with the profane language European modernity. What emerged from this dialectic between the sacred and the profane was a specifically articulated Islamic discourse on modernity. Islam became more than a sacred belief system, it became a set of criteria for modern social and political engagement. I conclude this essay with a presentation of the Turkish-based, globally networked education movement of Fethullah Gülen. Typifying the civil/cosmopolitan form, I argue that the Gülen Movement is exemplary of a mature expression of Islamic modernity, a potential black box for “the clash thesis,” and a progressive, personalized Muslim social movement rooted in Turkey’s unique history of societal secularization and folk Islamic tradition.

Two Discourses on Modernity

The main problem associated with much of the scholarship on MSMs is that authors assume modern world history to be characterized by Western modernization and a linear process of global modernization thereafter. In terms of modern MSMs, this view posits “Islam,” a unique culture and civilization, as naturally unable to integrate with the culture and civilization of the modern West (Huntington 1997, Lewis 1993, Pipes 2002). MSMs are viewed as designing and plotting a cultural and ideological counter offensive in retaliation to a century of perceived Western intrusion and domination232. Exemplified by the current Danish “cartoon crisis,” the magnetism of this view is hard to avoid. Europeans seem to view the influx of Muslim migrants as attacks on the moral fabric of Western society:

Many French people feel deeply uncomfortable about defiant, assertive Islam. France, after all, is home to Europe’s biggest Muslim population (outside Turkey): some 5m, next to 3m in Germany and 1.5m in Britain. The country has about 1,600 mosques or prayer halls. Many young French Muslims find no difficulty in balancing private faith with French secularism. But an increasingly vocal minority, many of whom speak no Arabic and freely mix Nike trainers with the hijab, finds such compromise unacceptable (The Economist 2/5/2004).

232 What I am calling “civilizational literature,” Olivier Roy (2004) calls “the culturist approach” to Muslim politics. Despite the difference of our terms, Roy and I are critiquing the same trend observable in much of the literature. I prefer “civilization” to “culture” because the former connotes an “end state” in human social development. According to classical “evolutionary theorists” (e.g., Spencer, Tylor, and Morgan), “civilization” (after savagery and barbarism) is the last stage of cultural development. The “clash of civilizations” is argued to be an immanent reality because of the current “end-state” (in the evolutionary schematic) characteristic of world cultures. Huntington’s thesis rests on the notion that his “seven or eight civilizations” are no longer subject to processes of cultural evolution, hence the inevitability of a “clash.”
The explanatory shortcoming of the "clash thesis" stems from its proponents' inability to conceptualize and analyze the mutual construction of world populations within the context of a single temporal event, modernity\textsuperscript{233}. The Middle Eastern historian Reinhardt Schulze (2002) helps illuminate as follows:

The major primary force of the Islamic world in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century is not Islamic culture (or even 'Islam' itself), but the temporal context of modernism, which has deeply involved the political public in supranational world affairs...If this leads to a plausible and meaningful result, which corresponds to events, we may succeed in grasping the multilingual aspect of modernism and also providing the Islamic world with a place of its own in modern history. At the same time, we may realize that the European dialect of modernism is merely one of many cultural dialects of modernism (6-7).

For Schulze, the European discourse on modernity expresses humanist philosophy, strict secularism, republican nationalism, industrial development, military institutionalism, modernized (Europeanized) education, and religious suppression in the public sphere. Alongside the European discourse, argues Schulze, was the development of its Islamic counterpart. Rather than staging an attack on modernity, however, formulators of the Islamic discourse sought to oppose the oppressive and exploitative version of modernity promulgated by European colonial regimes. Just as a Spanish speaker would likely refuse to learn mathematics if he were taught in Turkish, Muslims often refused to learn the European discourse on modernity as it was promulgated by self-designated “modern” elites. In this way, Muslim intellectuals struggled to cultivate a movement that could “transform” Muslim society by reframing traditional Islamic categories into a modern sociological existence. The writings and speeches of late 19\textsuperscript{th} century and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century Muslim intellectuals inspired the development of an entire lexicon of Islamic idioms to meet the challenges of economic, political, and social subordination in the Western dominated world system. In this way, "Islam [became] a channel through which persons who had failed to become integrated into the secular system [of Ottoman modernization policies] were engaged in their own project of boundary expansion, and search for freedom" (Mardin 1989: 83-4). How was such a lexicon developed? How did 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} century Muslim intellectuals manage to develop a

\textsuperscript{233} I term this as a \emph{temporally effective approach} to comparative historical sociology. Similar to William Sewell’s (1996) notion of “\emph{eventful temporality},” this is a historical perspective that strives to account for discursive and structural shifts in human history as determined by human spontaneity, fluctuation, and volatility:

Social processes, it implies, are inherently contingent, discontinuous and open-ended. Big and ponderous social processes are never entirely immune from being transformed by small alterations in volatile and local social processes. “Structures” are constructed by human action, and “societies” or “social formations...” are continually shaped and reshaped by the creativity and stubbornness of their human creators (Sewell 1996: 272).
specifically Muslim theory of the modern world? Answer: By creating a Muslim expression of modern temporality.

Islamicization the Profane or the Profanation of Islam?

In his foundational study on *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 19th century French social theorist Emile Durkheim argued that all societies share a foundation for religious thought. All societies separate their known and unknown realities into one of two domains of existence, the *sacred* and the *profane*. The *sacred* domain is that which is exceptional, extraordinary, “supernatural,” divine. The *profane* is that which is simply not sacred: everyday practice versus prayer; regular days versus holidays; the natural versus the “supernatural;” the body versus the soul; etc. According to Durkheim, the sacred and the profane are necessary opposites, diametrically opposed social phenomena that must remain separate so as to sustain their meaning:

> The sacred and the profane have always and everywhere been conceived by the human mind as two distinct classes, as two worlds between which there is nothing in common...this is not equivalent [however] to that saying that a being can never pass from one of these worlds into the other: but the manner it does take place, puts into relief the essential duality of the two...In fact, it implies a veritable metamorphosis....The two classes cannot even approach each other and keep their own nature at the same time (Durkheim 1915: 54-55).

When the sacred and the profane merge, one necessarily subsumes the other. This creates either a wholly sacred, or a wholly profane social object. Durkheim uses the cross-cultural example of religious rites of passage during puberty, whereby the child, after having gone through the sacred rite of passage, ceases to be a profane youth and emerges as a sacred subject of his faith. What happens when lay Muslim scholars (*non-Ulama*) reframe sacred Islamic categories to merge with the profane institutions of European modernity? Is the result a profanation of Islam or an Islamicization of the profane?

Addressing this question, I am indebted to the work of Talal Asad (2003). As he aptly argues, in modern politics, *secularism*, the discursive and structural removal of the sacred from the profane in regard to civic and political organization, is somewhat of a pre-requisite. This is because modern political organization (i.e., bureaucratic regulated, territorially bound nation states) emerged out of the necessity to efficiently regulate accumulation in a capitalist world economy. Throughout modern history, incorporation into this system forced regions to rationalize their traditions so as to harmonize their societies with the dictates of modern regulation.
Asad argues that the European Enlightenment created a model for modern political organization by re-conceptualizing the sacred as transcendent, “mythic,” and personal. This gave rise to Deism as the philosophical model for modern belief. By positing God as a passive creator, the natural world (and subsequently the social and political world) emerged as non-sacred objects. As part of the profane world, nature could be questioned, analyzed, tested, and manipulated in the interests of human knowledge. In this way, argues Asad, “profanation” was a necessary prerequisite for political struggle and legal rationalization:

‘Profanation’ is a kind of forcible emancipation from error and despotism. Reason requires that false things be either proscribed and eliminated, or transcribed and re-sited as objects to be seen, heard, and touched by the properly educated senses. By successfully unmasking pretended power (profaning it) universal reason plays its own status as legitimate power...At the very moment of becoming secular, claims are transcendentalized, and they set in motion legal and moral disciplines to protect themselves (with violence where necessary) as universal. Although profanation appears to shift its gaze from the transcendental to the mundane, what is does it rearrange barriers between the illusory and the actual (Asad 2003: 35-6).

In Europe, when the sacred (Christianity) merged with the profane (the Enlightenment), the dialectical result was a profanation of European society. Deist philosophy largely removed spirituality from the public domain, thus relegating the Church’s authority to the private sphere.

In the modern era, a similar merging of the sacred and the profane occurred in Muslim societies, albeit, with diverging results. Responding to the challenges of European colonialism and the eventual development of secular nationalist Muslim majority states, MSMs mobilized in an effort to combat the “profaning” of their life-worlds. In their effort to compete (politically, socially, and economically) in the modern world, early MSMs needed to legitimate modern social and political organization using the sacred language of Islam, thereby creating socially and politically applicable Islamic idioms: an Islamic discourse on modernity. Modern Muslim social movements are the observable synthesis from the dialectical tension between European and Islamic modernities.

As with all social phenomena, however, variation is a definitive feature of Muslim socio-political mobilization. Such variation is explained by 1) the ability of MSM theorists’ to successfully articulate the necessities of European modernity with the language of Islam in order to meet the demands of the secular modern world, and 2) the structural/systemic conditions existing in a given social/political sphere that allow for the expression of an Islamically defined social and political agenda.
The Ideal-Type Muslim Social Movement

In an effort to distinguish varying forms of MSMs from one another, what follows is an “ideal-type analysis” of MSM ideology. Ideal types serve as variables by which one can measure the thought and action of real groups and real actors by way of variation from the ideal. I develop the ideal type ideology of 20th century MSMs by interrogating the texts of three prominent 20th century Muslim intellectuals, Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), Sayyid Abul A’la Mawdudi (1903-1979), and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960). I develop the ideal type asking five questions of MSM ideology:

1. **Epistemology** - What are the sources of legitimate knowledge?
2. **Ontology** – What is the nature of reality? What is the movement’s worldview? How is reality conceptualized?
3. **Anthropology** – What is the nature and function of identity?
4. **Teleology** – What is the purpose of the movement?
5. **Methodology** – What is the agreed upon method used to achieve the stated purpose?

**Epistemology.** For all pious Muslims, the source for legitimate knowledge is the collected canon of the *Qu’ran*, the *Hadith*, and the *Sunna*. There are four Sunni legal schools; that is, there are four classical interpretations of the Sunni *Sharia* (Islamic Law), the *Maliki*, the *Hanafi*, the *Shafi’i*, and the *Hanbali*235. In the 10th century, “the gates of *ijtihad*” (interpretive reasoning) were closed, and Muslims around the world restricted their incorporation of *Sharia* to one of the four traditions. Epistemologically, what distinguishes Sunni Islamists from classical Islam is the re-inauguration of *ijtihad*.

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234 According to the sociological theorist Max Weber (1947) *ideal types* “[have] the merit of clear understanding and lack of ambiguity. By comparison with this it is possible to understand the ways in which actual action is influenced by irrational factors of all sorts...in that they account for the deviation from the line of conduct which would be expected on the hypothesis that the action were purely rational” (92).

235 85% of the world’s Muslims are Sunni. Shi’as Muslims, the dominant Muslim tradition in Iran, Lebanon, and southern Iraq do not follow the same legal tradition as the Sunni. Shi’as have their own legal school, the *Jafari*. The Islamist movement of which I refer in this essay is a Sunni phenomenon. Although similar in its secular incorporation of Islamic language, the 1979 revolution in Iran under the Ayatollah Khomeni is not representative of what I am calling “the Islamist phenomenon.”
Ijtihad, argues John Voll (1983), is founded upon tajdid (renewal) and islah (reform). Throughout history the tradition of tajdid-islah was the foundation for claiming collective solidarity among the scores of ethnically, linguistically, and nationally diverse groups of Muslims:

Tajdid-islah can be distinguished from other great forms of Islamic expression by the degree of willingness to accept or engage in great cultural synthesis in a conscious way. In great interactions of cultures and civilizations that have occurred throughout the history of Islam, tajdid-islah efforts have opposed synthesis that risked undermining the special Quranic foundation of Islamic society (Voll 1983: 41).

All MSMs are engaged in a modern process of Islamic tajdid-islah. In the modern era, however, calls for Islamic revival and reform emerged predominantly under the auspices of lay intellectuals, who transgressed the traditional primacy of the Ulama (Islamic scholars). Coffeehouses supplanted mosques as primary venues for intellectual discussion, new organizations emerged that focused on issues of unemployment, welfare, healthcare, recreation, and political emancipation. Such processes illustrate that MSM did not emerge as a rejection of European modernity, or even European culture. What 19th and 20th century Muslim intellectuals rejected was the medium of deliverance (i.e., European colonialism) and the perceived attack on Muslim epistemology.

In their effort to construct a rival modern ideology, Muslim intellectuals claimed religious/moral authority in the name of Islamic Law (Sharia). Despite their political (i.e., secular) motives, the new Muslim intellectual drew upon sacred Islamic idioms in an effort to make “profane” European political regulation a “sacred” rite of Islam. Esposito and Voll (2001) explain the significance of this historical development as follows:

The new style of Muslim intellectual...was committed to effective transformation of society but within the framework of ideologies and programs that could be identified as authentically Islamic. In spirit, these new Muslim intellectuals were a continuation of the radical tajdid (renewal) tradition in Islam (20) 236.

236 Esposito’s (1983) Voices of Resurgent Islam and Esposito and Voll’s (2001) Makers of Contemporary Islam represent two of many works that focus their attention on the role of the Muslim intellectual in the production of Muslim political discourse. Together, these authors argue that the role of the intellectual is crucial to the Islamist movement, “they are both the primary formulators and its most articulate opponents” (Esposito and Voll 2001: 3). Muslim intellectuals and activists who helped define variations in the late-20th century development of Muslim politics included, among others, Rashid Rida (d. 1935), Hasan Al-Banna (d.1949), Sayid Qutb (d.1966) and Hasan Hanafi in Egypt, Mawlawa Mawdudi (d.1979) in Pakistan, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (d. 1960) in Turkey, Ali Shariati in Iran (d.
Observable across MSM discourse is an effort to translate Islamic categories into modern social experience.

**Ontology.** For all pious Muslims, Islam is believed to be the vehicle by which one can realize God’s ultimate unity (*Tawhid*). According to the prolific Kurdish ideologue Said Nursi, “all existents demonstrate, through their continual decay and renewal, that they are the manifestations of the Sacred Names of an All-Powerful Maker, and the reflections of the lights of those Names…and also they are mirrors reflecting the grace of his perfection” (1995: 42). Despite the ultimate unity of creation, at a lower level, human reality is divided between Muslim reality and reality defined by ignorance of God’s totality. According to the 20th century Egyptian hard-liner Sayyid Qutb, the state of ignorance typified by “the West” and its apologists is rationale for waging war (*ḥab*) against apostasy in the interests *Umma* purification. For Qutb, this state of ignorance is best understood as *jahiliyyah*, the *hadith* term for the state of human nature before God’s revelation to the Prophet. Qutb explains how *jahiliyyah* permeated the *Umma*, how Muslim societies were corrupted, demoralized, and brutalized by the ignorance and the arrogance of Western colonialism and domination:

We are surrounded by *Jahiliyyah* today, which is of the same nature as it was during the first period Islam, perhaps a little deeper. Our whole environment, people’s beliefs and ideas, habits, and art, rules and laws – is *Jahiliyyah*, even to the extent that what we consider to be Islamic culture, Islamic sources, Islamic philosophy and Islamic thought are also constructs of *Jahiliyyah* (Qutb 1981: 20).

Ontology and epistemology converge in the realm of Islamic morality, the ultimate governor of human action. According to A’la Mawdudi, founder of the Pakistani *Jama’at Islami* (1941), “human life is governed not by physical laws, but by moral laws” (1984: 94). Recognizing the authority of moral laws requires Muslims to submit to the graduated hierarchy of *iman* (faith), *Islam* (surrender), *Taqwa* (god-consciousness), and *Ihsan* (godliness). The contemporary Turkish religious scholar M. Fethullah Gülen echoes Mawdudi stating that “morals are a set of noble principles that originate in high spirituality and govern human conduct. For this reason, people who neglect their spirituality, and are therefore lacking in spiritual values, cannot sustain conduct in accordance with these principles” (*Pearls of Wisdom*: 20). Reality is fashioned by morals that descend from the one-ness of God to the human world; Islam is the conduit by which humans are connected to the reality of *Tawhid*.

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**Anthropology:** All MSM actors view Muslims as identified within the collective of the *Umma*. In the *Umma*, the individual is indistinguishable in the eyes of God: despite ethnicity or nation, the Muslim subject is first and foremost a Muslim. That said, MSM ideology views the modern nation state as an effective set of regulatory institutions in the modern world system. Regimes that are economically and politically subservient to the dictates of Western powers, however, or even worse, regimes that appear to emulate and/or promote Western values, are viewed as illegitimate and morally corrupt. The reversion to *jahiliyyah* and the prevalence of “materialism” (i.e., consumerism) is viewed as the cause for Muslims “turning away from God, towards man’s exploitation by man and towards moral degeneration and cultural pollution” (Mawdudi 77-8). In order for such moral corruption to be routed, the *Umma* must be revitalized, and the Muslim individual must reverse the effects of modern Western domination by reinvigorating the primacy of the *Umma* as a social identity.

**Teleology:** The primary goal of the MSM ideology is focused on a revolution of leadership and the subsequent inauguration of a just society organized in accordance with Islamic morality. According to Mawdudi, “leadership that has rebelled against God and His guidance and is responsible for the suffering of mankind has to be replaced by a leadership that is God-conscious, righteous, and committed to following Divine guidance (1984: 71). In doing so, leaders must illustrate both “basic human” and “Islamic” moralities. “Basic human morality” develops when subjects achieve their goals through determination and stamina. “Islamic morality” develops by recognizing *Tawhid*. Only when an Islamic leader exhibits a high degree of both moralities will the Muslim populace follow in his footsteps and thus rise above their domination by unbelievers. Nursi elaborates as follows:

> O people of the faith! If you do not desire to fall into slavery and humiliation, come to your senses and take refuge against oppressors who would exploit your differences, *in the citadel of the believers are naught else than brothers*. Otherwise, you will be able neither to preserve your lives nor defend your rights...If you have any commitment to a collective life of social harmony and solidarity, then make the exalted principle of *the believers are together like a well-founded building, one part of which supports the other* your guiding principle in life! Then you will be delivered from humiliation in this world and wretchedness in the other [author’s emphasis] (Nursi 1995: 69).

**Methodology:** The primary method for realizing a revolution in leadership and the construction of a moral society is the proper allocation of moral power through *jihad* (struggle). In order to overcome the restraints beset by *jahiliyyah*, the Muslim subject must struggle against that which attempts to strip him of his faith. This struggle is two-dimensional: 1) “greater” *jihad* within the self (*nafs*) toward the total and willful submission to the God, and 2) “lesser” *jihad* against the powers of *jahiliyyah*, against the
onslaught of amorality, injustice, and ignorance. It is at this level that divergence emerges in the idealtype. On one side of the continuum, Mawdudi and Qutb argue that jahiliyyah represents everything that is wrong with modern society, a scourge on the potential for human perfection. For this reason, jahiliyyah must be confronted and corrected, with violence if necessary. Emphasis is placed on lesser jihad.

The importance of securing power for the righteous is so fundamental that, neglecting this struggle, one has no means left to please God...[This] ultimate purpose of Islam...requires the good to possess collective organizational power; anyone who threatens to weaken that collectivity is guilty of a crime so serious that it cannot be expiated by the performance of Prayers not the profession of God’s unity (Mawdudi 1984: 79).

On the other side of the continuum, emphasis is placed on greater jihad. As argued by Nursi, “fanaticism, being violent and unreasoning devotion, is incompatible with Islam. However, deep it is, a Muslim’s devotion depends on knowledge and reasoning. For the deeper and firmer a Muslim’s belief in, and devotion to Islam...the further from fanaticism a Muslim is by virtue of Islam being the ‘middle way’ based on peace, balance, justice, and moderation” (Nursi 1995: 263). In this view, violence and intolerance are seen as alien to Islamic epistemology, and thus incompatible to the project of Islamic modernity. For all variations, however, the inability or unwillingness of the Muslim subject to wage jihad, however defined, is to negate his very being; it is to act in bad faith against the unity of the Umma under God.

According to MSM theory (summarized here via the writings of Qutb, Mawdudi, and Nursi), MSM ideology posits a moral and righteous subject of God, who, as a member of the larger Umma, is engaged in a jihad to usher in the institution of a moral society237. Since its official maturation in the form of the Egyptian Ikhwan Musulmin (Muslim Brotherhood), the relative success of a particular MSM has been dependent on its actors’ ability to successfully harmonize its deviation from the ideal type with the secular apparatus of the modern nation-state. The result has been extreme fluctuation and diversity in strategy resulting in three distinguishable variations from the ideal: 1) Classical Modernist, 2) Global Jihadist, 3) Civil/Cosmopolitan.

237 It should be clear that although not equivalent to European deism, the profanation of Islamic categories allows for jahiliyyah to become a concept relevant to the modern experience; it allows jihad to take a worldly form that has little or nothing to do with the spiritual struggle of the nafs.
According to the Turkish sociologist, Nilüfer Göle (1987), what happened throughout the post-colonial Muslim world was a successful campaign to commandeer the ideology of social development. Because Europe managed to successfully instill its dialect of modernism through the middle and upper classes and among the intellectual elites, populations throughout the Muslim world "lost their power as world history makers...This exclusion in turn results in the formation of societies with 'weak historicity,' that is with a weak capacity to generate modernity as a societal 'self-production' (Göle 1987: 12). What 20th century MSMs faced was a project to "re-Islamize" Muslim society, to "re-take" their capacity to make their own history. The teleology of the classical modernist, therefore, was to formulate an Islamic sensibility that embraced the temporal event of modernity while simultaneously rejecting European political and economic hegemony. The archetype classical modernist MSM was the Egyptian Ikhwan Muslimin, a civic/political organization formed in 1928 under the leadership of Hassan al-Banna.

According to Banna, Islam distinguished itself from other global religions due to its "concern with not only worship but also social systems...when a Muslim community is ruled by laws other than its own, a clash is bound to erupt between it and the ruling power..." (Moussauli 1998: 111-112). In its early manifestation (1928 – 1936) the Ikhwan managed to cultivate a hybrid anthropology, a new nationalism based at once on religion (Umma), ethnicity (Arab), and nation (Egypt). In this way, Banna and the Ikhwan represented an alternative modernity, a rival ontology that proved to be a lasting threat to the objectives of the European modernity, as institutionalized by Atatürk’s Turkey, Nasser’s Egypt, and Pahlavi Iran (Al-Azmeh 1993, Lia 1999, Mitchell 1969, Sayyid 1997). After its first engagement in regional politics (the Palestinian Revolt of 1936-1937), the Egyptian Ikhwan embarked on an international redefinition of the Umma. This set the stage for the emergence of Sayyid Qutb, and a more politically specific program for MSM mobilization.

Global Jihadism

Global jihadism constitutes the most violent, widely publicized expression of MSM ideology. Providing the other side of the “clash of civilizations” perspective, global jihadists argue that Western media, education, lifestyle are degrading the Islamic character of Muslim society, leading Muslims astray (by influence and by force) from the Islam’s moral fabric. Paying stricter attention to the ideal type, global jihadists understand Dar al-Hab (land of war) to be a global reality. As indicated by the term “global,” this variation stresses the significance of the global Umma over and above all possible subject
positions. Although international "pan-Islamic" movements are observable throughout modern history, global jihadism did not emerge in its mature form until the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979-1989). At that time, Muslims from around the world came together to fight alongside the Afghan mujahideen (s. mujahid: one who fights a jihad). The effective result of this experience was the development of a "global infrastructure of terror...that used Islamic symbols to tap into Islamic networks and communities" (Mamdami 2004: 130). Thus is the birth story of Osama Bin-Laden and Al-Qaeda (the base), "a network of organizations and cells from across the Muslim world that hijacked Islam, indiscriminately slaughtering Muslims and non-Muslims alike" (Esposito 2003: x).

The teleological and methodological perspective of global jihadism legitimizes violent insurrection against other Muslims under the authority of kafir (apostasy). Such absolutism views apostasy as blasphemy, and subsequently positions apostates outside the sphere of the Umma. Once theoretically perceived as non-Muslims, so-called apostates are viewed as enemies of Islam. In the era of globalization, mass migration, and high-speed communication, the whole world is viewed as simultaneously entrenched in both the land of war and the land of Islam – "apostates" and "true Muslims" are culturally and politically interwoven. The immediate goals of global jihadism are to oversee the removal of US military installations on the Arabian Peninsula, overthrow the Saudi royal

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238 Pan-Islam refers to the failed political project of 19th century Islamic modernism. Pan-Islamists attempted to seize Muslim identity and use it in conjunction with Islamic nationalism so as to instigate a globally unified movement of Muslim states against the oppressive onslaught of European colonialism. Islamic Modernism, in this sense, refers to the idea that modernity and Islam are not contradictory phenomena, but are mutually constructive. 19th century Islamic modernists argued that the Qur'an commands scientific inquiry so as to fulfill humanity's requirement to understand the glory of God, which is represented in his creation of Earth. According to Fazlur Rahman (1990) modernists argued "the West had cultivated scientific studies that it had borrowed largely from Muslims and hence had prospered, even colonizing the Muslim countries themselves. Muslims, in learning science afresh from the developed West, would be both recovering their past and re-fulfilling the neglected commandments of the Qur'ān" (50-51).

239 According to Mahmood Mamdani (2004), Afghanistan represents the "high point of the Cold War," in that American policy against Soviet occupation simultaneously exhausted the resources of Soviet power, and eventually brought to light "how the unintended consequences of misinformed, cynical, and opportunistic actions can boomerang on their perpetrators" (121). The CIA under the Reagan administration, in conjunction with the Pakistani Central Intelligence (ISI), embarked on a mission to develop an internationally organized group of "Islamic guerillas" called the mujahideen. Funded in large part by the Saudi monarchy, the United States, and Pakistan; trained primarily by the CIA and ISI; and ideologically supported by figures such the Palestinian Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, the Afghan mujahideen included Muslim fighters from the Middle East, North Africa, Southeast Asia, Europe, and the United States. In addition to its cultivation of transnational ideological solidarity, the Afghan jihad provided a means for military training, discipline, and the development of organizational and financial networks.
family, and take over governance of the Hijaz (the stretch of land that is home to the Holy cities of Mecca and Medina). In the long term, global jihadists seek to destroy the Western-dominated political economic system of transnational capitalism and to initiate a revival of Muslim globalization under the auspices of sharia (Islamic law).

Civil/Cosmopolitan

What I call civil/cosmopolitan, others in the field call “liberal” or “moderate” expressions of MSM ideology (Baker 1997, 2003; Kurzman 2001; Moussauli 1998). This variant focuses on “neglected traditions” of Islamic history and theology that “oppose theocracy, support democracy, guarantee rights of women and non-Muslims in Islamic countries, [and] defend freedom of thought and the belief in the potential for human progress” (Kurzman 2001: 4). Civil refers to the fact these movements tend to focus their attention on civil society. They tend to organize under the dictates of existing political structures, and pose no explicit threat existing political and/or economic systems. They organize peacefully and in conjunction with existing laws. Cosmopolitan refers to the fact that these movements tend to advocate tolerance and dialogue with other social groups. Followers typically come from the middle class, they tend to promote liberal political values, they tend to possess high levels of education, and their goals tend to stress education, passivity, and a global outlook in regard to conflict resolution and human rights. In using the term civil/cosmopolitan, I wish to convey my interest less in the individual theories and/or arguments for “moderate” interpretations of MSM discourse, and more in the material realizations of this discourse in the form of political and social institutions.

In Egypt, Raymond William Baker (1997, 2003) argues that moderate tendencies are long standing trends in Muslim politics and are experiencing a contemporary revival. So-called “new Islamists,” “urge the Islamic world to look both to the heritage and especially the experience of others to develop democratic political systems suitable for the global age” (Baker 2003: 171). Their agenda focuses on persuading Egyptian Muslim organizations to adhere to and promote traditional Islamic concepts of *ijtihad* (interpretive reasoning), *shura* (consultation), *ijma* (consensus), and *Wassatteyya* (Centrist mainstream) so as to generate just and worthy Islamic leadership that can forge an intellectually informed moderate *fiqh* (understanding of Islamic law) to embed into Egyptian political culture. Because they have no means to actualize this discourse; that is, because they have little capacity to mobilize Egyptian society (through education, media, etc.), and because they cannot gain access to political power, the “new Islamists” have had little impact on Egyptian society. This is primarily the result of their operating in a centralized, autocratic state that has little to no structural means for their
free expression. Notwithstanding, the fact that the “new Islamists” exist at all is the result of recent Egyptian political reform, which has created the space for the potential actualization of their discourse.

By contrast, in the contemporary Turkish Republic, the experience of Ottoman modernization, staunch republicanism, and institutional secularization has given rise to variations of both classical modernist and civil/cosmopolitan forms of MSM organization. I conclude this essay with a presentation of the civil/cosmopolitan Fethullah Gülen Movement. Here I argue the following: 1) the mobilization and success of the Gülen Movement is the result of Turkish political and economic development in the 20th century, especially its liberal reforms in the 1980s and 1990s, and its drive toward ascension into the European Union. 2) The Gülen Movement is the world’s most successful example of a civil/cosmopolitan MSM, a success that is measured both by its international diffusion and by its national and international recognition as a movement for world peace and interfaith dialogue.

An example of classical modernist Islamism in Turkey is the Milli Görüş Movement (MG) under the leadership of Necmitten Erbakan. Under Erbakan’s leadership, the MG mounted what would inevitably be a 25 year project for classical modernist Islamist party politics in Turkey. In early 1998, a Constitutional Court banned the MG’s Refah Party (RP) from politics in a ruling that stated, “the party’s religious platform contradicted Turkey’s secular constitution” (Kamrava 1998: 275). Erbakan was banned from politics and the party was systematically dismantled. Until this event, the RP had been the most successful political party in two decades, growing from 7.2% electoral representation in 1987 to 21.5% in 1995, whereupon Welfare emerged as the largest political party in the country (Narli 1999). In 1998, the Virtue Party (FP) replaced the RP under the nominal leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In the same year, Erdoğan was called before a military tribunal that was assigned to investigate the politician’s religious fervor. In 1997, Erdoğan read an early 20th century Turkish poem that included the line, “The mosques are our barracks; the minarets are our spears.” The tribunal ruled that in reading the poem, Erdoğan “provoked religious hatred;” and was subsequently banned from politics for life. Abdullah Gül took over the leadership of the Virtue Party, with Erdoğan taking a behind-the-scenes position similar to that of Erbakan. Little did these leaders know at the time, but the Virtue Party was soon to join the Welfare Party as a remnant of Turkish history. In June 2001, Constitutional courts banned the Virtue Party from politics for its religious platform. After the demise of the Virtue Party, strife within the MG boiled over and the movement was split in two. Under nominal leadership of Recai Kutan (official leadership under Necemettin Erbakan), conservative-minded Islamists founded the Felicity (Saadet) Party. Similarly, under Abdullah Gül (official leadership under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan) civil/cosmopolitan-minded members of the MG founded the Justice and Development Party (AKP) (White 2002). In the November 2002 parliamentary elections, Erdoğan and the AKP won a landslide victory winning 34.2% of the popular vote and two-thirds of the seats (363 out of 550) in Parliament (Cagaptay 2003). Two months later Erdoğan was legally reinstated as head of the party and Prime Minster of the new AKP-led government. The civil/cosmopolitan turn of the AKP, its popular support, its rapid rise to power, and the international implications therein is the topic of another study.
The Civil/Cosmopolitanism of the Gülen Movement

According to political scientist Hakan Yavuz (2003a) "contemporary Islamic movements in Turkey seek to re-claim the Muslim self...Islamic movements produce, and are being produced by, new opportunity spaces for discussion where they can develop and experience novel lifestyles and identities" (7). Such new spaces managed to thrive despite the Kemalist national project (1923-) of institutionalized "modernization from above.” Incorporating strict interpretations of European modernity, the early Kemalist regime outlawed Muslim brotherhoods and religious groups, dissolved Sufi orders, and in 1924 terminated the thirteen century-old institution of the Sunni Caliphate. In 1926, Turkey replaced the Sharia (Islamic Law) with the Swiss civil code. In 1927, the Turkish written alphabet switched from Arabic to Roman characters, the fez and the turban became illegal, and in 1933 the state instituted female suffrage. The Kemalist goal was to disconnect Turkish society from its Ottoman past so as to construct a new connection between Turkish state and nation. Turkey’s cultural and religious history was re-imagined in accordance with a new secular, modern, and republican “Turkish self.” This socio-political environment gave rise to Said Nursi and his followers, the Nurculuk (literally “Nursi-ites:” i.e., followers of Nursi). In the early 1980s liberal reforms under the Özal regime created opportunities for a popular revival of Nursi’s teaching241. One such revival emerged in İzmir under the guidance of the religious educator M. Fethullah Gülen.

With modest beginnings in the 1960s, the GM emerged as a social force during the Özal period, whereupon it began to invest in the construction learning institutions across Anatolia. In the 1990s, political and economic development in Turkey provided the GM network with global routes to be explored. The fall of the Soviet Union, the structural weakening of the Turkish state monopoly over information and capital flows, increased Turkish migration to Europe, and global developments in information and communication technologies all contributed to the transformation of the GM from a modest community of Nursi followers to an international civil/cosmopolitan Muslim social movement (Kuru 2005). Active in over 70 countries, the GM now manages an extensive education and media network that spans from Turkey to Central Asia, the Balkans, Southeast Asia, West Africa, Russia, Mongolia, China, Australia, Western Europe, and the United States.

241 The Özal regime emerged under the dictates of the 1982 constitution, which followed nearly three years of military rule in Turkey. The revival Nursi’s teachings, and other public expressions of religion, were a product of the constitution’s amended bill of rights, which covered social, economic, and political liberties of Turkish citizens. Among the more relevant were as follows: Article 5 – stipulates all individuals are equal before the law and possess “inherent fundamental rights and freedoms which are inviolable and inalienable.” Articles 28 and 67 stipulate that individuals have a right to privacy and to freedom of thought, and that the news media are free and not liable to censorship, without a court order, which can only be obtained “when national security or the ‘indivisible integrity of the state’ are threatened.” (Library of Congress)
Epistemologically, the GM reframes science and progress as Islamic principles. By conceptualizing the profane world (nature) as something sacred (proof of creation), the GM claims that advances in natural sciences prove nothing more than the reality of God’s totality. Indebted to the teachings of Said Nursi, Gülen argues, “religion, being a bountiful basin for science with its sources of knowledge, is an essential element, an important dynamic, a guide that has a clear method in matters that go beyond the horizons of knowledge” (2004: 142). In this understanding, “science” and “Islam” should be viewed as two versions of the same story; one does not (cannot) discredit or falsify the other. GM epistemology posits that profane knowledge, previously monopolized by European categories, belongs in the realm of the sacred.

Ontologically, Gülen asserts that the rise of the West ushered in an era whereby Muslims around the world forgot the divine inspiration behind human knowledge:

> Since ‘real’ life is possible only through knowledge, those who neglect learning and teaching are considered ‘dead’ even though they are still alive...Science and knowledge should seek to uncover the nature of men and women and the mysteries of creation (Gülen, Pearls of Wisdom: 42-43).

Incorporating the Turkish term cehalet (jahiliyyah: ignorance), Gülen adheres to the claim of the ideal type, arguing that humanity has strayed from the righteous path of Islamic morality by forgetting the primacy Qu’ranic revelation and Prophetic example:

> When ignorance and unfed hearts and souls increase, materialism and carnality gradually subvert the desire for truth and annul any nobility of purpose...Wholly addicted to triviality and self-indulgence, they will deny any achievement to our ancestors and remain willfully ignorant of what real culture and civilization can make possible: a balance between spirituality and sanity, between virtue and happiness” (Gülen 2000: 194).

Anthropologically, Gülen contends that in the modern era humanity lacks irşad (moral guidance) (Agai 2003). Exemplified by the perfection of the Prophet Muhammad, moral guidance necessitates toleration, dialogue, and understanding. Tolerance and dialogue are central to the GM’s conception of reality and its identity:

> Among the many things we have lost, perhaps the first and most important is tolerance. From this world we understand embracing people regardless of difference of opinion, worldview, ideology, ethnicity, or belief. It also means putting up with matters we do not like by finding
strength in a deep conscience, faith and a generous heart or by strength of our emotions (Gülen 2004: 46).

The union of tolerance, moderation, and dialogue is collectively referred to as hosgörüş (literally “nice-seeing;” compassion). Adhering to hosgörüş, and actively promoting its qualities in both thought and practice, drives every aspect of the GM’s international activities. For Gülen, the “ideal human,” “carries a prophet-like heart in their exchanges with people. They love and embrace everyone; they turn a blind-eye to the faults of others, while at the same time they are able to question the smallest faults of their own...they know how to live peacefully even with the most irritable of souls” (2004: 98).

Teleologically, the GM struggles to cultivate an “ethical foundation” from which enlightened, ideal humans can thrive in the secular modern world. Such individuals, argues Gülen, will serve as leaders in the era of the “global village.” Contradicting Samuel Huntington’s assertion that “Muslims have problems living at peace with their neighbors,” Gülen defines the movement’s project as follows:

In a world becoming more and more globalized, we are trying to get to know those who will be our future neighbor... one of the most important factors here is to eliminate factors that separate people...such as discrimination based on color, race, belief, and ethnicity...Education can uproot these evils...We are trying our best to do this (Gülen: In Ünal and Williams eds. 2000: 329-331).

Although operating in an explicitly secular modern world system, and seemingly engaged in a variety of secular projects, the GM’s mission is understood by its followers to be a spiritual quest. This is because, for Gülen, the sacred is not comparable to profane understandings of human life. Illustrating a unique confidence relative to other modern MSMs, Gülen explains his rationale as follows:

If we want to analyze religion, democracy, or any other system or philosophy accurately, we should focus on humanity and human life. From this perspective, religion in general, Islam in particular, cannot be compared on the same basis with democracy or any other political, social, or economic system. Religion focuses primarily on the immutable aspects of life and existence, whereas political, social, and economic systems or ideologies concern only certain social aspects of our worldly [i.e., secular] life (Gülen 2004: 219).

Because the “truth” is understood through Islam, “worldly life” poses no threat to the reality, identity, or purposes of the movement.

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242 Huntington 1996: 256
Methodologically, the GM strives to fulfill its sacred mission in variety of ways. In 1994, followers of Gülen started the Turkish Writers and Journalists Foundation, a non-profit organization that organizes national and international conferences on the attributes and benefits of interfaith dialogue. Followers of Gülen manage an expansive media network and are active in the construction of clinics, research institutes, and cultural foundations around the world. Much of these institutions’ success is due to the GM policy of working in accordance with its host country’s national laws regarding education, religion, and social organizing, which can be seen as a deliberate articulation to adapt to diverse local contexts.

The primary methodological focus of the GM lies in the construction and operation of its nearly 700 schools worldwide. In the schools, Gülen argues, the GM does its part as a frontline advocate for global tolerance, dialogue, and peace:

Our efforts and enterprises are for humanity's sake. In a world becoming more and more globalized, we are trying to get to know those who will be our future neighbor...As regards international relations and humanity, one of the most important factors here is to eliminate factors that separate people, such as egoism, self-interest, and discrimination based on color, race, belief, and ethnicity...Education can uproot these evils. Education is the most effective and common tongue for relations with others. We are trying our best to do this; we have no other intention (In Ünal and Williams 2000: 329-331).

GM teachers work to educate adolescents and teenagers in mathematics and in the natural and physical sciences. Özdalga (2003) elaborates on how the GM manages to Islamicize the profane at the micro-level of the individual. Because “science,” which by definition is a secular human endeavor, is viewed within the GM as a religious category, many teachers in the GM view their work in education as equivalent to prayer; “the teaching profession, thus conceptualized, is based on a combination of intellectual considerations (learning and teaching) and religious considerations (the ethics of giving)” (103). In this way, Gülen educators seem to be acting out a form of “piety through work,” similar to the Protestant ethic observed by Max Weber. Exemplifying the civil/cosmopolitan form, GM teachers act in accordance with Gülen’s teachings, treating faith as a matter of personal religiosity. Civic engagement

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243 Followers operate Zaman, the 3rd largest newspaper in Turkey. Zaman was the first Turkish newspaper to become available on the Internet, and has won several major international awards for its journalistic integrity, newspaper layout, and design (http://www.zaman.com). The GM also operates a Turkish TV station, Samanoglu TV, and manages several major publishing houses, which together publish a variety of journals that emphasize a range of topics, from science and technology, to the environment, to an international English language journal that focuses on Islam, peace, and interfaith dialogue (www.fountainmagazine.com).
is viewed as an external expression of that religiosity in the form of dedication, diligence, trustworthiness, and respect:

Who knows, maybe in the near future, thanks to these volunteers who devote themselves to letting others live...people will regret having fought each other over nothing, an atmosphere of peace that was not previously established in the marketplaces...nobody's blood will be shed and the weak will not cry... (Gülen 2004: 214).

The GM illustrates an almost effortless ability to articulate its ideology with modern science and rationality.

The GM is illustrative of the fact that, “a majority of Turks do not perceive a contradiction between Islam and their attachment to Kemalist symbols, viewing both as integral to national identity” (Zubaida 1996: 10). The sociological result of this dialectic is a “Turkish-Islamic synthesis,” a strong identity uniting Turkish-ness with Muslim-ness into one subject position, a merging of the Turkish (European) and the Islamic modernities. In this way, the GM represents a “vernacularization of modernity...[an] internal secularization of Islam in terms of rationalization, nationalization...[an] accommodation of faith to the overriding exigencies of reason and evidence” (Yafuz 2003a: 5). The mobilization and success of the GM supports the assertion that when existing economic structures inhibit social mobility, and when existing political structures inhibit the free expression of an MSM agenda, a reversion to intolerance, enmity, and violent insurrection is probable. When existing political systems allow for some degree of free expression, which is observable in Turkey’s continual efforts to democratically reform its political structure; and when existing economic structures work in favor of a developing middle class, which is observable in Turkey’s continual efforts to liberalize its economy - tolerance, passivity, and rationality will likely prevail.
Conclusion

The "Islamicization of the profane" begins with the manipulation of Islamic idioms to meet the demands of modern society. As a metaphor for Muslim identity beyond ethnicity or nation, the *Umma* is the primary Islamic idiom upon which the MSM construct their collective agenda. The reformation of Islamic idioms to meet the demands of European modernity allows Muslim subjects to imagine themselves as oppressed by modern *jahiliyyah*, that is, by the structural realities of authoritarian governance, unemployment, sectarian conflict, poverty, etc. This allows Muslim intellectuals the space to theorize about generations of colonial onslaught and to devise a methodological paradigm to draw upon in their struggle to overcome social domination.

Where MSMs illustrate the greatest degree of diversity is at the level of methodology. The methods used to achieve their stated purpose, be it the structural development of an alternative civil society (*classic modernist*), violent insurrection and/or terrorism (*global jihadism*), or the development of an "Islamically defined ethical self" (*civil/cosmopolitan*), is dependent upon the conditions present in a given society that allow (or discourage) the expression of Islamically defined social change.

In contemporary Turkey, a society rooted in over 250 years of structural modernization and secularization, Islam evolved along a unique path. Although suppressed by the early Kemalist regime and its processes of republican secularization, the folk traditions of Anatolian Sufism survived. Among the most significant of these survivals emerged in the form of Said Nursi and the *Nurculuk*. Over the course of the late 20th century, continual processes of political and economic liberalization created the spaces for these survivals to adapt. The Movement of Fethullah Gülen emerged as the most successful purveyor Turkey’s brand of Islamic modernity, a civil/cosmopolitan MSM that seeks to realize peace through education, tolerance, and interfaith dialogue. It is my contention that the potential significance of such a movement’s success should be of crucial interest to international policy analysts, social theorists, and religious scholars alike. In a world consumed with religious and political extremism, the potential global impact of the Gülen Movement is nothing short of fascinating.
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