Being Muslim, Being Cosmopolitan: Transgressing the Liberal Global

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Abstract

The practices and concepts of Muslim cosmopolitanism are rooted in Islamic ideas, providing the foundations for informal "comings together" that foster new kinds of ethical communities. Muslim cosmopolitanism transgresses global normative aspirations of the liberal West that attempt to impose a singular way of being a global citizen. The informal, ethical communities that are inherent to a Muslim cosmopolitan vision also reject the absolutist visions of Islamists, such as those promoted by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, which, like Western liberal aspirations, attempt to impose a singular vision of the global. The article traces Muslim cosmopolitan ethics in the transgressive, informal, fluid, and temporary coming together on Tahrir Square in Cairo in the January 25 Revolution.

The rights and duties bestowed upon citizens are dynamic, diverse, and often contested but are ultimately defined by a relationship with a state. Under the regime of the modern state, the concept and practice of citizenship is universalized as both a right and an imposition that naturalizes the penetration of the state into the everyday in order to actively produce and regulate citizen-subjects. States claim the right to declare who is and who is not a citizen, transforming some human beings into "illegals." Even where legal citizenship status is bestowed, many states fail to provide and protect basic human needs, resulting in the need for a cadre of professional activists to assist, donate, and lobby to advance the human and civil rights of those whose states fail them. Global citizens express concern for the rights of others, being advocates and agents for responsible social change.

A global citizen is often one who is seen as acting beyond the narrow interests of a particular nation-state, showing concern for citizens of other countries, participating in and creating transnational institutions to protect and advance the interests and welfare of those marginalized by "failed," illiberal states, and moving across national borders not only in a show of solidarity but to assist those who are oppressed by a national regime. The concept of a global citizen is, however, at its core, contradictory, as there is no state from which to claim rights in the global sphere; meanwhile, perceived as inherent to being a global citizen are acts that transcend the borders of the liberal nation-state while simultaneously reaffirming those borders through a rhetoric of the need for liberal polities, citizen rights, and national development.

These tensions and inherent contradictions in the idea of global citizenship expose the limitations of the concept as a meaningful category of analysis and social action. At a deeper level, what is exposed by an examination of the global citizen is the inherent biases of the term and the practices espoused by its users as integral to global citizenship. The concept is embedded within a modern, Western liberal framework, tacitly universalizing a particular vision of modernity and the global, realized through the liberal nation-state idea, while simultaneously constructing a hierarchy between good citizens and bad citizens (or even non-citizens) as well as between good states (*i.e.*, those that foster liberal globalization) and bad states (or those that resist or outright reject liberal aggrandizements). In so doing, the concept of global citizenship maps a liberal activist saving others from their illiberal states. By proclaiming that particular peoples are in need of saving, of liberalizing, of being recipients of a global citizen's largess, the notion of the liberal activist as savior creates a hierarchy, structuring difference between the global citizen as savior and the disenfranchised poor and oppressed as the fortunate recipients of the global citizens' attention, reproducing the inherent contradictions and hypocrisy of the "white-savior industrial complex."[1]

Beyond these inherent contradictions, the idea of global citizenship is singularly liberal and thus absolutist in its missionary zeal to spread liberal values. Global citizenship falls short of being truly global; it is Western, with an assumptive claim to being universal and thus global. By focusing on two case studies from the Muslim world, this essay exposes the limitations of liberal global citizenship and rather reaffirms the idea of cosmopolitanism as a much more inclusive set of values. Cosmopolitanism takes on a variety of cultural forms that though they might be liberal, include possibilities for diverse cultural formations, one of these being a Muslim cosmopolitanism that offers a critique of global citizenship as well as liberal notions of cosmopolitanism. The apocalyptic violence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL or the Islamic State, IS, or, in Arabic, *Daesh*) and the coming together on Tahrir Square on January 25, 2011 provide critical perspectives on the concept of global citizenship and, ultimately, its limitations. The article

reflects on the fluidity of cosmopolitanism, how it is culturally expressed (as opposed to the singular liberalness of global citizenship), and how its values are more inclusive and diverse than those associated with global citizenship.

ISIS exemplifies the limitations of liberal global citizenship by its radical assertion of a global vision that draws, ultimately, upon the same common grounds as liberal global citizenship. On one hand, ISIS rejects outright Western liberal imperialism and thus its global citizenship project; on the other hand, ISIS asserts a global vision that parallels the liberal vision, asserting an absolutist claim over the global ecumene. The coming together of Tahrir Square offers a reformulation of being global that is based on an everyday ethical formation rather than an ideological orientation or a relationship with a state, giving emphasis to cosmopolitanism over global citizenship, and thus offering a critique of both liberal global citizenship and the nihilism of ISIS. In Muslim cosmopolitanism, we observe the possibility of a communal ethics that is quite distinct from the liberal individual focused on and celebrated by theorists of global citizenship.

Tracing Global Citizenship in Liberalism

The idea of living in accordance with transcendent values that connect individuals and communities beyond the local is often presented within the standard fiction of Western origins, tracing the concept back to Greek philosophers, starting with the Cynics and elaborated on by the Stoics, who wrote about "citizens of the cosmos" (Appiah, 2006, p. xiv). The idea asserted by the early Cynics is that human beings are connected to all of humanity and that there is an ethics for mediating encounters across our immediate locales and communities. These transcendent human values did not arise in a historical vacuum, however, as theorists tend to depict. The ancient Greeks and Romans contemplated universal values for managing relations with others as they were simultaneously building global empires and encountering and conquering strangers. As the Greeks under Alexander of Macedonia advanced eastward, encountering new lands and new cultures, and as the Romans imposed extractive mechanisms over newly conquered lands and people in Africa and northern Europe to feed the burgeoning Roman urban population, there was an inherent need to foster degrees of mutual respect across social and cultural differences. The ethics of global citizenship emerged in concert with empire as a mechanism for peace-keeping and ultimately making palpable to conquered peoples their life under foreign occupation.

As it did under the early Greeks and Romans, global citizenship today advances the particular interests of an expanding global empire. The idea of global citizenship is directly intertwined with the modern liberal state and is a means to advance the current global system, with its neoliberal bent towards the rights of corporations over individuals and the uneven power relations of self-styled Western liberal democracies over other states, generally viewed as failed or illiberal.[2] Ideologically, global citizenship today advances liberal values of individual rights and is situated as universalizing the modern liberal democratic state as the ideal and, ultimately, only acceptable model of statehood. While there might be different paths to articulating one's global citizenship, there is ultimately only a singular underlying ideology, namely, that of liberalism.

Discursively, the concept of global citizenship emerges with the domination of neoliberal globalization, taking root in the 1980s and 1990s, enacted through policies of the World Bank, IMF, and U.S. Agency for International Development. Given the deep impacts of neoliberal restructuring in the past three decades, global citizenship seems to be conveniently advanced to

counter the negative effects of neoliberal corporate global practices and liberal state-making, providing a human face to the destructive nature of Western imperialism (e.g. Falk 2002). However, Liberalism is itself a contested philosophical idea comprising a range of ideological orientations from the rational individualism of John Rawls' "veil of ignorance" to the communitarianism of Michael Walzer to the consensual legitimation of Jeremy Waldron. As well, there are multiple and contested ways in which these values are implemented within particular political orders. Liberalism is not reducible to its usage in the United States, where liberal is on the left side of the narrow political spectrum of American politics. Both conservatives and liberals in the United States are part of the Western liberal tradition, rooted in Enlightenment thought. The rejection of socialist and welfare planning by many in the United States, for example, is counter to the values of state obligations to those most vulnerable held within countries such as Sweden and Norway. Yet the U.S., Sweden, and Norway share liberal values, one giving primacy to individual rights, the others emphasizing the value of social equality. These different orientations of liberalism all claim an uncontested universality, affirm the naturalness of the nation-state as the locus of political order and the citizen as having particular rights and duties within that order, orient the state and the individual towards a future that one progresses towards through planning and development strategies, and bestow rights on the individual, who is a rational actor (unless limited and oppressed by cultural or religious traditionalism).

Without overly essentializing, it is significant to recognize that liberal values are Western and integral to being Western; they are the "metacategory of Western political discourse" (Bell, 2014, p. 2). Liberalism's philosophical roots are the Enlightenment, emerging from particular historical processes in countering autocracy and religious and cultural fanaticism in Europe. But liberalism is not just an abstract philosophical system or one of several ideological possibilities for the West; rather, it is naturalized as the singular way of being in the world; it is absolutist, where "most inhabitants of the West are now *conscripts of liberalism*: the scope of the tradition has expanded to encompass the vast majority of political positions regarded as legitimate" (Bell, 2014, p. 8).

Significantly, in a critical evaluation of the idea of global citizenship, liberalism ultimately maps what it deems as religious and cultural as irrational, counter to the modern liberal values of tolerance and individualism. According to liberal theory's "individualist view of persons" rooted in the "liberal conception of practical rationality according to which the individual *reasons as an individual*" (Nicolacopoulos, 2008), religion and culture are communal, imposing values and practices on individuals and fostering xenophobic intolerance towards others and thus should be privatized and not part of the public sphere. As proselytizers and agents of liberalism, global citizens advance these values and assumptions about the world, working to correct "crimes against humanity," which are perceived as being committed by illiberal religious and cultural fanatics, or by tyrants run amok, without the "proper" civil checks and balances on state power.

There are two broad trends of contemporary scholarship on global citizenship, one that focuses on a set of individual ethics and the other that suggests those ethics are best realized through global institutional arrangements. As a result, global citizenship is often conflated with cosmopolitanism, such as in the work of Derek Heater (2002, as noted by Cabrera, 2010, p. 13). Luis Cabrera argues that rather than synonymous, the concepts of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism are complementary and that global citizenship "can be understood as the fully realized form of individual cosmopolitanism" (2010, p. 5). Cabrera's own conceptualization of

cosmopolitanism, however, is selective, naturalizing a liberal cosmopolitanism rather than a truly global and pluralistic one. This narrow construction of cosmopolitanism is also celebrated by philosopher and cultural theorist Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006) and thus makes the distinction between cosmopolitanism and global citizenship a conceptual challenge.

As part of the global order, both global citizenship and cosmopolitanism (in its liberal manifestation) are intimately interlinked with statist and imperialist projects, a linkage that is regularly overlooked in intellectual histories. Derek Heater's study on *World Citizenship and Governance* (1996) traces the history of the idea of world citizenship, but not the idea of governance and state. Similarly, Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism* (2006) focuses on individual values, ignoring the social and historical contexts in which those values are produced, circulated, and asserted. The stranger looms large in Appiah's personal reflections, drawing our attention, not insignificantly, to seeing in the stranger not a universal sameness but rather a "particularistic commonness" (2006, p. 57). Who are the others that are mapped outside our borders, making them strangers? Who drew those borders to begin with? These questions Appiah ignores, glossing over very real ways political ideologies, nation-state making projects, postcolonial histories, and state institutions map and manage strangers within and without.

Ulrich Beck situates liberal cosmopolitanism within contemporary global history, associating the practice of cosmopolitanism as coterminous with the rise of neoliberal globalization in the late twentieth century, foundational to what he labels "the second age of modernity" (Beck, 2000; Beck & Sznaider, 2006). Beck's use of cosmopolitanism is closely associated with Cabrera's global citizenship (2010), both concepts being concerned with a modernist expression of universal values institutionalized in the global arena. Cosmopolitanism, for Beck, is associated with the "indifference to national boundaries, space-time compression, and an increasing network-like interconnectedness between national societies" (2000, p. 80). Beck wrote against competing claims to redefining the global order following the ideological vacuum brought by the end of the Cold War, when the simplistic binary democratic capitalism versus totalitarian socialism faded away and Western theorists scrambled to assert new visions of the global.

The question for theorists was how best to overcome the cultural and political divides that had been glossed over in the myopic Cold War binary vision. For Beck and Appiah, the answer was liberal cosmopolitanism, which for them was to assert and act liberally, fostering tolerance and struggling for shared human values. In sharp contrast to this particular cosmopolitan vision, Samuel Huntington focused on civilizational "clashes" (1997) as defining the global arena. Huntington imagined the non-Western world as full of illiberal religious and cultural fanatics who rejected the West's enlightened liberal model. Rather than overcoming those clashes through cosmopolitan ethics, Huntington (2005) focused on the need to protect oneself through heightened boundary policing and militaristic activism. Huntington's "clash of civilization" is rooted in what Beck (2000) defines as the "first age of modernity," where nation-states and absolutist cultural ideas prevailed, mapping fixed borders between us and them. Similarly, Barber's "jihad versus McWorld" (1995), and most banally Ferguson's "the West and the rest," (2011), reproduce the binaries of liberal enlightenment, mapping fixed borders between us and them, self and other, legals and illegals, civilized and uncivilized, and ultimately, good and evil. Such singular and absolutist models of the global assume as natural and historically real imagined ideas of discrete civilizations, bounded nation-states, and fixed cultural identities, thus rejecting the full potentiality of cosmopolitanism as a celebration of cultural diversities, multiplicities, fluidities, and hybridities.

Cosmopolitanism offers, Beck argues, something new and significant that informs not only an epistemology of knowing the other but a methodological approach for the social sciences to imbibe (Beck & Sznaider, 2006). Cosmopolitanism is an ontological project, not reducible to reproducing the ideals of the liberal state onto the global arena, as is the idea of global citizenship. Beck's cosmopolitanism provides a humane face to the destructive forces of neoliberal globalization, which are predicated on advancing the place and rights of conglomerate corporations. Beck places emphasis not on narrowly defined national interests or corporate profiteering but on human values as defining global politics. In mapping his new world order, however, Beck conveniently ignores centuries of European and American employment of universal values as they disregarded international sovereignty, expanding colonial empires and global military reach in the name of liberal "Western civilization," "democracy," and ultimately to "save" brown, black, and yellow people from their own cultural and religious barbarism.

The notion of global values is not a new addition to the global arena, nor is placing those values above the sovereignty of countries and nation-states, that is, non-Western nation-states. The colonial project, rooted in the idea of the white man's burden, was a value-based global system. Additionally, the violent and exclusionary backlash against immigrants in Western Europe and the United States today reflects the incapacity to engage a plurality of values within one's own nation-state, where sovereignty and cultural absolutism, policies associated with Beck's "first age of modernity," are tightly held, asserted, and policed. In short, there is a double standard in seeking out illiberal states to reform, one that ignores the West's own propensity for illiberalism.

For Beck, the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 during the Kosovo war is emblematic of a radical shift in modernity, when the established legal norms encoding nation-state sovereignty were rejected by western European and American powers in preference for global action based on human values (2000, pp, 81-82). This value-based foreign policy maps Appiah's (2006) assertion of a cosmopolitan ethic for the individual onto the nation-state. Thus, for Beck, nation-states, like individuals, are endowed with the capacity of being cosmopolitan; they can act—or not act—in the global arena with humaneness; states can be liberal or illiberal. This simplistic binary translates into foreign policy of "good," liberal states sanctioning, invading, or otherwise coercing "bad," illiberal states, providing a public pretext for destructive, inhumane policies—all in the name of humanity and "saving" others, as witnessed with the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003 and the U.S.'s earlier invasion and occupation of Afghanistan (Brown, 2006, p. 6; Abu-Lughod, 2002, 2013).

While cosmopolitanism implies an ethic of human interconnectivity, global citizenship is predicated on asserting and policing "good governance," which protects individual rights, maintains international peace and security, and manages our environmental resources (Imber, 2002, p. 114; see also Heater, 2002). In this orientation, the cosmopolitan ethic can only be complete when there is a "fully realized institutional approach" (Cabrera, 2010, p. 14), realizable only, Cabrera argues, through the creation of "democratic symmetry" in global institutions such as the World Trade Organization (pp. 221-230). Thus, for most liberal modern thinkers, the humanitarian ethics implied in cosmopolitanism can only exist when there are global institutions that encourage and allow such ethics to be practiced, affirming and naturalizing a singularly liberal, and thus ideologically absolutist, liberal global order.

While Appiah identifies one of the practices of cosmopolitans as lobbying their state for humane policies, there is a lack of appreciation of how the modern state itself structures friends and foes, wealthy and poor, satiated and wanting, violence and peace, familiar and strange.

Appiah does not address the destruction of the local through colonial conquests nor the lived effects of the violence through which the current nation-state system came into being and perpetuates itself through extensive displacement, marginalization, and cultural genocide of those deemed unworthy of belonging to the nation. A cosmopolitan ethic must address the root causes of human suffering, which is often the modern, liberal, capitalist state itself. Appiah naturalizes the current state (dis)order by focusing solely on our common humanity. Our attention is focused on being human—which includes, according to Appiah, elitist activities like going to the opera—as much as investing in overcoming global hunger (2006, p. 166).

Appiah, though privileging the liberal bias of the individual, at least engages our common humanity, criticizes the commodification of our social lives, sees much room for improvement of the state system, and acknowledges cultural variations in the values we hold. These acknowledgements come from his own privileged status, straddling multiple worlds: Ghana (the Asante Kingdom), the United Kingdom (Cambridge University), and the United States (Princeton University). His elite status and his ability to move across borders relatively effortlessly blend into his construction of cosmopolitanism, grounding it in practices that are beyond the access of the vast majority of human beings. This elitist construction of cosmopolitanism not only erases the state in constructing strangers, it is, ultimately, a status dependent on the state to allow certain individuals to be properly educated, to move across state borders with ease, and to foster the kinds of institutions for a cosmopolitan to invest in to make the world a better place.[3]

Many political leaders, corporations, and privatized international donor agencies today are peddling the idea of global citizenship, advancing a neoliberal global agenda. Using the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq in spring 2003 as an example, Hans Schattle documents how global citizenship discourse "thrives within domestic public space and is framed by national governments as compatible with domestic and international policy objectives" (2007, p. 137).

The state system, comprising individuated states, in the liberal *imaginaire*, bestows upon states the same rights and duties as those bestowed upon individuals as citizens of a modern nation-state. The argument for the United States itself to act as "a good global citizen" was employed by both proponents and opponents of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Writing an op-ed just prior to the U.S. invasion, peace scholar Joyce Neu argued that an invasion would be a rejection of the U.S.'s obligation to act as "a responsible and responsive global citizen" (qtd. in Schattle, 2007, p. 144). As the debate over the U.S. invasion of Iraq exposes, the employment of the notion of the state as a good citizen takes a variety of political forms, each underwritten by a commitment to advancing liberalism. It is not just individuals and states, however, that are capable of being good or bad global citizens; so too are corporations. With the rise of "corporate social responsibility" as part of a company's public image, ideas of global citizenship crept into corporate self-projections. As Schattle argues, "Global citizenship seems to be deployed in civil society mainly by groups that operate outside the political arena but find the term meaningful in expressing how their organizations help shape human mind, build human character, and strengthen local as well as transnational communal ties" (2007, p. 90).

Global citizenship and liberal cosmopolitanism incorporate a variety of state-centric discourses, highlighting the perceived need for protection of individual rights, institutionalized through the idea of democracy on the national as well as global levels. The concept of the global citizen is thus closely interwoven with Western political and economic interests, providing a means for managing and advancing empire, most clearly expressed in the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. In short, global citizenship is a contemporary means of advancing Western

imperialist interests, a more nuanced, though thinly veiled, version of the white man's burden. The concept is absolutist in its aspirations of creating a liberal world order. To be achievable, global citizenship is dependent on powerful liberal states to impose and enforce their vision of world order, based on liberal values of democracy, tolerance, and liberty. Despite its call for tolerance among social groups, however, in and of itself, the liberal global order has no capacity to accommodate differences. Tolerance, as Wendy Brown documents (2006), constructs difference in a hierarchical order and claims to universalize what it has learned to accept and be tolerant toward, such as homosexuality (though gay bashing and intolerance remain quite prevalent in self-defined liberal states). Additionally, tolerance discourse has no scope for behaviors or actions deemed outside the liberal order, be they veiling by some Muslim women or particular acts of violence perpetrated by non-liberals such as ISIS. As alien as this might be to the Western liberal mind, the aspirations of ISIS to reshape the global into a single world order based on their own vision of justice, non-liberal as it might be, are akin to those of the Western world to create a world order based on its singular liberal interpretation.

ISIS and the Rejection of the Liberal Order

Popular discourse represents ISIS in the singular, though more nuanced analyses (few as they are in the public media), recognize the complex configuration of groups and ideologies that ultimately comprise ISIS. ISIS developed through fighting for a political space within the violence of Iraq initiated by the U.S. invasion in 2003, subsequent occupation, and imposition of a highly corrupt and sectarian puppet regime. It is worth remembering, according to a leading Wall Street Journal correspondent in 2004, that "if under Saddam, Iraq was a potential threat, under the Americans, it has been transformed into an imminent and active threat, a foreign policy failure that is bound to haunt the Americans [and the world] for decades to come . . . . The genie of terrorism, chaos, and mayhem has been unleashed onto this country, and it can't be put back into a bottle" (qtd. in Chomsky 2004). Such is the reality today.

Much of the public sphere in the West is concerned with two dominant issues about ISIS: their barbaric violence and the nature of their interpretation of Islam. First, the discourse about their violence is in fact a reflection of violence undertaken in the name of liberalism; it is a refraction of the West's own illiberality. Second, as a ruse for justifying our violence, there must be some explanation of how their violence is different from liberal, rational, "just" (Falk, 2001) violence. In order for the refraction to work, their violence cannot be based on sociological factors such as poverty or as a response to Western aggressions. Rather, their violence can only be explained through their culture: they are inherently barbaric, illiberal, irrational, and Islamic. Third, as they are defined by their culture, and as their culture is dogmatic, any values they may hold are particular to them. They are thus incapable of being global citizens, as their ethical system is not universal.

The issue is not a question of constructing an 'other' that is repulsive, barbaric, uncivilized, and illiberal, and thus not the self. Rather, the violence of ISIS is in fact a reflection of liberal violence. The West sees the other in themselves and distorts that mirror image to create a chasm of difference. For example: "civilized" and "uncivilized" were deployed in the context of colonial conquest and oppression by Western liberal states; "modern" and "traditional" were deployed by economic imperialists that entrapped Third World countries in cycles of dependency and abject poverty; "strategic" and "barbaric" violence are employed today to wreak havoc upon others in a so-called War on Terrorism.

How is the focus in the West on ISIS's violent coercion, lack of freedom, and intolerance toward difference in its controlled territories a projection of the lack of freedom in Western liberal countries? One wonders, is there ultimately a difference between ISIS's call for jihad and Richard Falk's call for a "just war" (2001) to legitimatize the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, Donald Rumsfeld's indiscriminately violent policy of "shock and awe" in the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, or the anonymity and invisibility of drone attacks in Pakistan and Yemen? Each act of horrific violence and destruction is justified in the name of liberty by the perpetrators. Liberalism is equally violent and, given the military reach and arsenal of the United States today, violent to a greater degree than any other ideological orientation. One also wonders, is the coercion and violence within the ISIS Caliphate not reflective of the disenfranchisement of entire communities in the liberal West? Is the violence in the United States against blacks and the lack of an equal, non-racist justice system any different from …? Liberalism reflects its own violence, lack of equality, coercive power, and bigoted intolerance onto ISIS. That is not to say the violence of ISIS is not real; it is very much a lived horror for many. But its projection and depiction as "apocalyptic" (Wood, 2015) and the dominance of concern ISIS plays in the Western public sphere today conveniently deflects the West's own structures of violence, intolerance, and inequality onto an other.

In this psychological deflection, ISIS can only be explained by liberals through its ideology and cultural relationship to Islam. ISIS must be an expression of a culture, a religion, even if "hijacked" (El-Fadl, 2005) or "bad" (Mamdani, 2004) for liberalism to achieve the deflection. The times when our own violence is excessive, as it was in Abu Ghraib, for example, are considered exceptions. The most calculated violence and barbaric violence against blacks, such as that which occurred in June 2015 in Charleston, South Carolina,[4] can only be due to the "mental problems" of the perpetrator, so the Western liberal media tells us, not a culture of violent racism inherent in Americanism (despite a long pattern of such violence). Similarly, in the liberal mind, drones are "strategic," as they kill key operatives of terrorist organizations, and our invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were "defensive" and "just," part of a rational response to the barbarism of others despite the sheer violence of those invasions and occupations. Comparatively, ISIS's attack on the western Syrian town of Dabiq is irrational, having no apparent strategic value. It can only be explained due to ISIS's millenarianism, rooted deeply within Islam: "Now that it has taken Dabiq, the Islamic State awaits the arrival of an enemy army there, whose defeat will initiate the countdown to the apocalypse" (Wood, 2015). This religious irrationality is integral to liberal political discourse by encoding difference of self and other as secular versus religious and thus rational versus irrational. More strategically, it defines a particular form of governmentality, allowing the liberal state to accept degrees of illiberality to secure itself against the irrational other. The presence of the religious other makes palatable the security state and such deployments as the very uncivil Patriot Act.

Such culturalist discourse, or what Mahmood Mamdani (2004) refers to as "culture talk," depoliticalizes the social and geopolitical context of the other. The root cause of their violence is defined singularly by their culture, not their social conditions; their grievances against imperial powers can be ignored as mere propaganda; the differences among them can be overlooked. Within such discourse, "depoliticalization sometimes personalizes, sometimes culturalizes, and sometimes naturalizes conflict … [by] removing a political phenomenon from comprehension of its *historical* emergence and from a recognition of the *powers* that produce and contour it" (Brown, 2006, p. 15, italics in original). In the context of ISIS, their inherent religiosity is often linked with the "natural" state of violence in Islam between Sunnis and Shi'ites, combined with

the violent nature of their tribal societies. The culturalist discourse constructs the other as particularistic. Their culture, their religion—even if somewhat progressive, though generally seen as perverse—is thus incapable of holding universal values, and their ethical system is only applicable to them and to no other cultural communities. They are incapable of being global citizens.

But are not global citizens those who move across the globe, transcending national interests to struggle against injustices? Just because those injustices are in fact being perpetrated by the liberal global order, does that make those struggles illegitimate? In short, does ISIS represent a possibility for global citizenship? Are the young men and women who feel compelled to advance the cause of the Caliphate global citizens? What differentiates the liberal global order from the global order ISIS aspires to achieve in regards to creating possibilities for global citizenship? Many may feel a knee-jerk repulsion at the mere idea, drawing upon the horrific violence ISIS makes so readily visible, questioning the "ethic [of] beheadings."[5] One can equally ask, however, what is the ethic of "shock and awe" carpet-bombing of cities, killing thousands of civilians or of terrorizing young children through mysterious drone strikes that kill without warning? What is the ethic of impoverishing countries through economic "advancements" that only deepen the catastrophic divide between the wealthy and the poor? What is the ethic of displacing hundreds of thousands of people through economic restructuring that forces them to migrate, risking their lives, disrupting their families? What is the ethic of perpetuating a judicial system that is decidedly racist? The answer lies in how we situate their violence and our violence. By reducing their violence to religion, culture, and their natural character, a justifiable difference between us and them emerges. The writer and journalist Anand Gopal relates a story of an elderly Afghan man who, when questioned about why the U.S. invaded his country, had no idea about 9/11 or Osama bin Laden. For him it was clear: Americans do not like his way of life. This was the very discourse heard in the U.S. following 9/11: the perpetrators did not like our way of life. For the invaded and occupied cultures, this interpretation emerges as a clear means of understanding the violence, marking distinctions between us and them.

Both the liberal global order and ISIS's aspiration for an Islamic global order are absolutist; both are incapable of accepting a different vision, and both employ a cosmopolitan vision to whitewash their destruction, discrimination, and violence. Cosmopolitanism in both the liberal order and for ISIS is deployed to both justify and minimize their intolerance and violence, providing a veneer of goodness, and in so doing, attempting to attract adherents. The concerns of both the liberal order and of ISIS are in fact to create global institutions to advance their respective singular and absolutist visions of the world. Their respective visions of cosmopolitanism are in fact a claim, and contestation, over global citizenship. Cosmopolitanism is thus a façade, part of a propaganda machine to attract adherents. Cosmopolitanism is, however, a more substantial ideal and must be severed from the concept of global citizenship. As cosmopolitanism is corrupted by its conflation with global citizenship and liberalism, one must look beyond the ideological theorists and see how cosmopolitanism is in fact a lived practice and ethic, an articulation of the everyday in a variety of cultural formations; it should not be reduced to an ideology to be imposed by absolutists, be they "liberal" or "Islamist."

Mapping a Muslim Cosmopolitanism

Often today what gets represented as Muslim cosmopolitanism is merely a masking of the liberal penetration into Islam. Many scholars and public intellectuals, as a means of arguing

against the "evils of Islam," delineate how liberal ideas of democracy, tolerance, justice, and equality are also inherent in Islam. Islam is liberalized to make it palatable to those who would like to see it as inherently evil (e.g., Kurzman, 1998; Binder, 1988).

Over the past decade, a number of scholars have mapped different manifestations of Muslim cosmopolitanism that directly challenge the Western liberal-centric constructions of the idea and its anti-religious biases. Zubaida (2002; see also Alavi, 2015) offers a historical perspective on Muslim cosmopolitanism, grounding it to imperial urban centers from across the Muslim world, where scholars, traders, wanderers, and others have historically come and gone, fostering a distinctive "expansive arc of cities that serve as nodes of cosmopolitan networks throughout the Islamicate world" that are as fluid today as they have always historically been (Lawrence, 2012, p. 23). The urban is a site for not only hybrid artistic expressions that transcend national borders (Dadi, 2006) but also fluid cultures of fashion that reflect a multitude of diverse personal experiences of migrants (Tarlo, 2007).

These expressions of Muslim cosmopolitanism emerge from the interweaving of geographical movement and being rooted (both inherent aspects of Islam), remembered in the first migration of Muslims from the city of Mecca to Yathrib, what was to become Medina, the radiant city, in 622 CE. Known as *hijra*; the idea is notable both as an expression of movement, not just rootedness, as integral to being Muslim, combined with the idea of community. Movement and rootedness are not contradictory ideas; combined, they inform a particular cosmopolitan value of encountering and living amidst diversity. In Medina, the Prophet Muhammad first created an inclusive, cosmopolitan community, an ummah, of believers and non-believers, Muslims and non-Muslims, based on movement and rootedness. In his Last Sermon, Muhammad lays out simply a code of cosmopolitan ethics, including the idea that "all mankind is from Adam and Eve and that an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; also, a white has no superiority over black, nor does a black have any superiority over white except by piety and good action."[6] The cosmopolitan community is not a bounded entity, building walls to keep others out, attempting to keep the self pure, nor is it a melting-pot of suppressing cultures and traditions for the sake of integration. No group lives in isolation but rather in interaction, in a community of diverse members who are moving in and out, and thus, ideally, in which no hierarchy is based solely on a particularistic group affiliation. Muslim cosmopolitanism rejects singularity and absolutism and is informed by networked communities of scholars and artists and through global movements for acts of piety (e.g., Hajj) and migration (Lawrence & Cooke, 2005).

Sami Zubaida traces a tension in Muslim history as being between "the philosophers, with wide cultural horizons, and the jurists, insisting on the authority of scriptures and traditions" (2002, p. 32). The tension between the two, according to Zubaida, defines Muslim history and the realm of possibilities for a cosmopolitan, outward-looking scholarly orientation, counter to a more inward looking legal tradition. Zubaida's binary between two horizons oversimplifies Muslim intellectual history, failing to engage many Muslim scholars who embodied both orientations, such as al Ghazali (d. 1111), who was at once a mystic, a philosopher who translated foreign ideas and engaged Hellenism, and a jurist with particular concerns about asserting the absolute authority of the word of God (Moosa, 2005). Akeel Bilgrami suggests a similar "clash within Islamic societies between moderate and fundamentalist Muslims" (2003, p. 92). Bilgrami takes this internal clash a step further though, not seeing it as a dynamic of Islamic intellectual history but rather as the making of the liberal West and the ontological conundrum liberalism poses for pious, non-absolutist Muslims by imposing simple binaries such as those

reproduced in global citizenship discourse, policies, and practices. Muslim cosmopolitanism is a reflection of this tension between the philosophers and jurists, between Islamic thought and liberalism, articulated in emergent intellectual traditions. A "third alternative" or way of thinking about Islam and its place in the global sphere "seeks to navigate between outright secularism, bland traditionalism, and uncompromisingly literalist reinterpretations of the Islamic teachings" (Kersten, 2009, p. 90).

Historically, 1492 CE marks the first violent disruption of the cosmopolitan possibilities of the Muslim ummah, when Catholic conquerors expelled the Jews and a few years later killed, exiled, and forced conversion of Muslims in Andalucía. This was the beginning of "when the world was called upon to adhere to the Euro-American vision of human salvation or risk ostracism, defeat, and even, in some cases, annihilation" (Majid, 2004, p. viii). The advent of colonialism, European domination, and the imposition of new political and intellectual orders further eroded the cosmopolitan spirit of the Muslim world. No longer permitting dynamic and shifting flows across the old world, ideas and the power behind them emanated from a single direction, imposed outward from Western Europe. This singularization of the flow of ideas undermined the multiplicity of networks and reference points Muslim cosmopolitans drew upon. If Ibn Battuta had lived in the early twentieth century, his travels would have taken him only to Paris and London, not across North Africa, the Arab Peninsula, West and South Asia, and on to eastern Asia as they did in the fourteenth century.

The disruption of a Muslim cosmopolitanism by Western colonization and liberal imperialism is being reversed today in a variety of locales, articulating a diversity of orientations, aspirations, and possibilities. While Hamid Dabashi (2012) argues that colonialism erased Muslim cosmopolitanism and is only now, with the spirit of the Arab Spring, returning in a post-Western world, I suggest that Muslim cosmopolitanism never disappeared. Cosmopolitanism has always flourished in the streets and alleys of Muslim cities as an integral component of everyday lives.

Tahrir Square: The Coming Together of Informal and Transgressive Communities

There is a rich diversity of *coming togethers* reflecting a Muslim cosmopolitanism that is fluid, processual, and communal. Most iconic in recent times is the coming together on Tahrir Square for eighteen days of protests starting on January 25, 2011. Millions of Egyptians gathered to transgress what had become the normative: violent state oppression of the Mubarak regime (maintained in power for thirty years by extensive military support from the liberal West). While an exceptional moment in history, the coming together on Tahrir Square and the expressed values thereof are not exceptional but rather everyday ethics embedded in the negotiation of being Muslim in the world today.

The coming together on Tahrir Square was not exclusively Muslim and certainly not inherently Islamic. The plurality of those who gathered, across class, religious, sectarian, and ethnic differences reflects the very idea of a Muslim cosmopolitanism, along with its fluidity and temporality. Muslim cosmopolitanism is distinct from Islamic cosmopolitanism in that is expressed through Islamic values and practices such as the coming together of Hajj or the Friday prayers. Expressions of Muslim cosmopolitanism are not absolutist by claiming to be Islamic nor singular in excluding non-Muslims. It is this very inclusive nature that challenges the limited cosmopolitanism of liberalism and Islamic absolutists.

To fully appreciate the cosmopolitan values inherent in the transgressions of the Tahrir Square protests, one has to first acknowledge the extent to which those values were denied under the dictatorial regime of Mubarak and the resulting erosion of personal and national dignity. Second, one must appreciate that the eruption of protest on January 25, 2011 did not happen in a vacuum, sparked solely by similar protests in Tunisia. There were years of protests beforehand, though small and rooted in certain segments of Egyptian society.

Though *Tahrir* means *liberation*, under Mubarak's police state, Tahrir Square, like the rest of Egypt, was anything but liberated. Extensive unemployment and underemployment brought on by the restructuring of Egypt's economy, forced by the IMF, World Bank, and U.S. Agency for International Development, fostered a culture of touts, thugs, and loiterers on the streets leading into Tahrir Square. It was a place of sharp contrasts, worlds colliding, where young students at the elite American University in Cairo (located on Tahrir Square until 2008) enjoyed their afternoon meals at McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken, while recent graduates with advanced degrees from Cairo University struggled selling belts and black market perfumes on street corners. It was a place of harassment where women, young and old, veiled and unveiled, local and foreign, scurried by attempting to ignore incessant catcalls and an increasing amount of physical abuse. Tahrir Square was a site of oppression, reproduced across the city and the country. As one protester acknowledged, "For every rich neighborhood in Cairo, there is a slum beside it, thanks to our regime!" (Hindawy, 2015, p. 76). Over 40 percent of Egypt's population lives below the poverty level today; inequality was the hallmark of the Mubarak regime. On January 25, 2011, however, those whose worlds had been in conflict with one another came together in a unique way, transcending their differences, though not erasing them.

The January 25 Revolution was not an unexpected event, though its nature, being predominately peaceful, certainly was. There were a growing number of protests throughout Egypt in the early 2000s. Workers went on strike and formed independent unions (counter to the interests of the liberal overseers of Egypt's economic reforms in the World Bank and IMF). Judges and lawyers increasingly protested against the manipulation of the judiciary by the ruling regime. On a number of occasions, women's groups gathered in central Cairo to demand police action against sexual harassment and the increasing violence against women on the streets. These protests against the absolutism of the state reflect the civil awakening of the Egyptian people. These earlier protests were driven by specific demands for a particular segment or group in society. All of these interests, concerns, and demands came together on January 25, 2011, creating a cosmopolitan protest.

No revolution can be successful without mass support. One of the truly unique aspects of the Tahrir Square protest was the formation of an emergent community. There was a spirit of belonging, sharing, and dialoguing that brought diverse people together and that transcended their particularistic interests and desires. This sense of community, which runs counter to the spirit of individualism and individual rights of liberal global citizenship, is an inherent cosmopolitan value of Islam, a reflection of ummah, inclusive of diverse Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Many of the remembrances of protesters who gathered during those eighteen days in 2011 include stories of community, of coming together, not just as a mass, but in the participation of small acts binding people to one another. One such story that I recounted elsewhere (Haines, 2014, p. 58) is about a group of young students from American University in Cairo (AUC), wealthy elites whose families had undoubtedly benefited in some manner from the cronyism of the Mubarak regime, who were sitting around the square passionately discussing the

meanings of the protests. One of them started to make tea, boiling water on a special camping stove they had brought. While waiting for the tea to boil, an older man pushing a cart approached selling tea. The young AUC student immediately turned off the stove and bought tea for her friends and herself. In remembering that act, she reflected on the meaning, pregnant in that moment of extended protest, of creating new possibilities, that people were bound to one another and that they should make the effort to support each other. The poor tea vendor was a part of society, dependent on others to survive and thus deserved the support of others. An everyday act of buying tea became an expression of revolution, of community, of cosmopolitan ethics.

During the attempt by the police early on to stop the protesters from reaching Tahrir Square, tear gas, the sound of gun fire, and the chants of protesters filled the air of downtown Cairo. "People started to open their houses for the wounded and demonstrators suffocating from the tear gas. People threw vinegar and onions from their balconies to us" to protect against the burning tear gas (Hany, 2015, p. 68). One protester, Maha Hindawy, remembers after a day of protest, walking and running, being exhausted, sitting on the curb with her friend when someone offered her a *foul* (baked fava bean) sandwich. She "took it gratefully but then gave it away to other people who were more hungry" (2015, p. 77).

After several days, the corrupt police disappeared from the streets, leaving people to fend for themselves from potential looters and other criminal elements. Surprisingly, very little looting took place considering Cairo is a city with over 20 million people. On their own, neighborhood watches were organized by young men to guard various areas, and other individuals offered assistance to neighbors, familiar faces but strangers until then, to assist in shopping and obtaining daily necessities. One of the areas where there was looting and robbing was in the satellite cities south of Cairo. Under Mubarak, wealthy real-estate developers with connections to the regime were given land to develop. Malls, corporate centers, and gated communities were built, pulling wealthy Cairenes out of the inner city of mixed communities; even Cairo's American University was relocated to a newly developed area. Gated communities are inherently singular, with no social diversity except for the workers who serve the wealthy residents. Robberies took place in these gated communities because they were not real communities; no neighborhood watches were formed, and there was no looking out for one another. Their singularness made them vulnerable.

The community reflecting a cosmopolitan ethic is fluid, based on a connection, a shared value of humanness that is not about converting the other to one's point of view, culture, religion, or ideology. This concept of community transcends our normal sense of community that is predicated on a shared sameness. This community is not "imagined" (Anderson, 1991) or "invented" (Ranger & Hobsbawm, 1992), both of which are processes of constructing sameness.[7] The emergent community of Tahrir Square transgressed the liberal normative demand of singularness and the imposition of absolutist claims to sameness. It bound people together based on their shared humanity, in a particular moment. Although this cosmopolitan community is reflected in Islamic values and practices with a long history in Muslim societies, its practice is not solely Islamic; rather, the practice of cosmopolitanism is universal, as the reference points from which one comes to participate in such communities are multiple.

Conclusion

Cosmopolitanism, unlike global citizenship, allows for a diversity of ideological orientations, political alignments, and ultimately cultural reference points from which individuals

may draw their values and ethics for living in the world. Rather than simply reproducing liberal values (e.g., tolerance, individual rationality, democracy) or being boxed into the neat dualistic containers of good and evil, liberal and illiberal, secular and religious, cosmopolitan values reflect an appreciation of multiplicities, fluidities, hybridities, and ultimately, the ethics of living in community. In the streets and alleys of Muslim cities, absolutism, structures of power, everyday ethics, and a multitude of other social forces are lived, negotiated, articulated, debated, accommodated, and rejected—and herein lies the cosmopolitan possibility, an "engagement in the public square" (Lawrence, 2012, p. 37). As Bruce Lawrence maps out, the Muslim public square is very much alive, not just the Tahrir Square of January 2011 nor in Gezi Park in Istanbul, where Turks started to put a halt to the increasing absolutism of the Turkish state, but rather in the squares and roundabouts (Arabic: *midans*) that Muslims traverse daily. These urban spaces articulate a distinctive Muslim cosmopolitanism interconnecting expressions of daily life, suggesting reference points of common values, and sharing daily struggles.

Cosmopolitanism is not merely an intellectual production, as Zubaida (2002) seems to suggest, but a lived ethics, an expression of negotiating difference and sameness in one's daily routines. It is an expression of being Muslim. Yes, there are absolutist tendencies as well and multiple ways structures of power, particularly patriarchy, social class, and, today, hyper-consumerism, attempt to contain and box-in people's orientations, undermining cosmopolitan possibilities. Indeed, "one cannot eradicate the forces of counter-cosmopolitanism [or] those who advocate tribalism or terrorism or tyranny or a mixture of all three" (Lawrence, 2012, p. 36), but nowhere is absolutism absolute; there are always cracks in the façade and spaces of alternative ways of living in the world. Those that desire to create and police a fixed, singular, and absolutist sense of community, nation, and civilization are also present in the everyday, but it is the ability to engage, dialogue, debate, accept, and/or reject diverse ideas—not erase them—that makes up a cosmopolitan sensibility. The emergent communities experienced in the coming together of Tahrir Square transgress singular impositions and provide the foundations for fostering dynamic cosmopolitan ethics, of living in the world humanely.

Notes

[1] The term used as a reference for a particular genre of Hollywood movies, but employed by the Nigerian writer Teju Cole in his biting criticism of the "Kony2012" video produced by Invisible Children to garner support for their work in different African countries: "The White-Savior Industrial Complex," *The Atlantic* March 21, 2012; http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/the-white-savior-industrial-complex/254843/; also see Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa," *Granta* 92, 2006; http://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/.

[2] See Abu-Lughod (2002, 2013) for a deconstruction of the liberal discourse of Afghanistan, and Muslim women in general, as part of the rhetoric in expanding the US empire.

[3] As an example of the unequal structuring of movement in the world today, one nearly needs to compare the visa application requirements for an Indian citizen to visit France to those of an American citizen. While with my U.S. passport, I can book a ticket and arrive with barely an immigration check, my Indian sister in-law must provide three months of pay slips and bank statements, proof of possessing €120 per day of stay, and have a confirmation of stay by her hotel stamped by the local town hall.

[4] On June 17, 2015, Dylann Roof, a White supremacist aspiring to ignite a race war in the United States, murdered 9 black members of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church during a prayer session.

[5] Which was in fact the exact response of Louis Cabrera during a public presentation of his work at Arizona State University's Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict on January 21, 2015.

[6] Translations of the Last Sermon are readily available online; see: http://www.themodernreligion.com/prophet/prophet_lastsermon.htm.

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[7] This fixed sense of community is expressed most perversely in the works of Huntington (1997) and Ferguson (2011).

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