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THE SACRALIZATION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES: A CRITIQUE OF AN EMERGING THEME IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Syed Farid Alatas

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INTRODUCTION

This paper critically evaluates the idea of “Islamic social science” in terms of its expression in Islamic economics and, more recently, in the Islamization of knowledge project. Islamic economics was conceived of in the 1930s while the beginnings of the Islamization of knowledge project can be traced to the 1970s. Islamic social science seeks to bring back religious experience and spirituality into knowledge by means of the sacralization of academic discourse. The process of secularization in the West is seen to have rendered Muslim scholars incapable of comprehending the causes of the problems that beset Muslim society (1).

The 1970s also witnessed the call to the indigenization of the social sciences in the Third World as a result of dissatisfaction with what was perceived as irrelevant social scientific theories and methods and faulty paradigms of development. What “Islamic social science” and the call to indigenization have in common is the critique of modernist discourses of man and society, and the rejection of the universality of social scientific concepts that originated in the West.

In what follows, I discuss the question of the Islamization of the social sciences in the context of the call to the indigenization of the social sciences among Third World scholars. This is followed by an attempt to assess the “Islamic social sciences” by looking at the cases of Islamic economics and the Islamization of knowledge project. Here the argument is that Islamic economics has not succeeded in extricating itself from a modernist discourse of development, although it is countermodernist in tone. Furthermore, I argue that the Islamization of knowledge project is still vaguely conceived as far as the social sciences are concerned and that it remains open to charges of nativism. In later sections I turn to the relationship between values and the social sciences in Islam, and to the consideration of Ibn Khaldun as an exemplar for the social sciences in contemporary Islam.
The call to indigenization

The institutional and theoretical dependence of scholars in developing societies on Western social science has resulted in what has been referred to as the captive mind (2). The phenomenon of the captive mind refers to a way of thinking that is dominated by Western thought in an imitative and uncritical manner. Among the characteristics of the captive mind are the inability to be creative and raise original problems, the inability to devise original analytical methods, and alienation from the main issues of indigenous society (3). This is manifested in the areas of problem selection, choice of research methods, as well as the suggestion of solutions and policies. There is no intention here to convey the impression that Western knowledge is of no use to the Third World. What is regarded as a problem is the uncritical imitation of the social sciences in the Third World.

The problem of mental captivity became all the more alarming once there was the recognition that development theory is in a state of crisis, having reached an impasse (4). This state of affairs has brought forth various reactions from scholars in the Third World, including the call to the indigenization of the social sciences (5).

The call to indigenization refers to the idea that social scientific theories, concepts and methodologies can be derived from the histories, cultures, and experiences of the various non-Western civilizations (6). Such social sciences are meant to be a contribution to a universal social science.

The call to indigenization is a call to go beyond simply tackling local problems with sporadic attempts to modify Western concepts and theories. The call to indigenization suggests that it is possible to create bodies of knowledge based on the indigenous cultures in the same way that Western social science is based on Western historical experiences and cultural practices. For example, the organic image of society that forms the basis of functional evolutionism, and underlies a wide variety of theories of development, has its roots in Plato. The organicist metaphor is deeply entrenched in Western social science. What are the possibilities for social science traditions rooted in various non-Western philosophies, epistemologies, histories, and cultural practices?

An interesting attempt to indigenize social science comes from the work of Batra. In discussing the history of Iranian civilization Batra applies an indigenous theory of social cycle. According to this theory society is divided into four types of people, the categories of which correspond to the four groupings of the caste system. They are the Shudras, Khatris, Vipras and Vashyas. The social action in each group is based on characteristics peculiar to the group. Society evolves in terms of four distinct era, each dominated by one of these four groups (7). While this theory of social change originates in Hindu thought, it is not confined to the study of Hindu society. A theory may have specific cultural origins but its range of application is not restricted to the society or civilization of its roots (8).
Indigenous social science is distinct from another phenomenon that has come to be known as nativism, orientalism in reverse, or indigenism (9). When Western and even local scholars 'go native' they more than elevate the native's point of view to the status of the criterion by which descriptions and analyses are to be judged. There is an almost wholesale rejection of Western social science. Indigenization is not the rejection of Western social science but involves a cautious approach that selectively adapts Western knowledge to indigenous needs. The Western origins of social science alone is insufficient grounds to reject such knowledge. Rather, Western theories and concepts, taking into account their epistemological and historical presuppositions, must be encountered, modified, and combined with indigenous ones.

The vast majority of works that speak in defence of indigenization take the view that the call to indigenization is simultaneously a call to the internationalization of the social sciences. The idea is to contribute to an international social science by drawing upon home-grown, locally derived explanatory models that can contribute to a universal discourse (10). This stance does not entail a wholesale rejection of Western social science but it does invite an attitude of vigilance with regard to positivist social science under the guise of claims to universalism. The indigenization of the social sciences constitutes a critique of universalistic science in the positivist tradition, that is, a tradition which treats human beings as objects devoid of consciousness and agency (11). The objection is to the relative irrelevance and culture-boundedness of the social sciences as it is imbibed and taught in Third World societies. The call is for a social science that is "self-reliant, self-sufficient and self-directing, in other words, autonomous and independent, with respect to all aspects of the vital functions of the community, including its ability to relate to other communities on an equal, reciprocal basis" (12). Claims of universalism may be made as long as theories are rigorously appraised and tested, whether these theories are indigenous or originate from the West (13).

Practitioners of social science in the positivist and empiricist traditions including those in the Third World are deluded into thinking that their categories are universal (14). They ignore the differences in inter-subjective meanings between Western and non-Western settings and persist in using Western categories, even in cases where they may not be relevant. The call to indigenization is, therefore, a call to truly internationalize the social sciences. Indigenization entails the process of the decolonization of knowledge and the unmasking of ethnocentrism and bias that seeped into post-colonial thought. Indigenization is globalist in orientation because it seeks to break the current monopoly over social scientific discourse. What makes a social science indigenous is not its subject-matter but rather the sources from which its concepts and theories are drawn. But the whole enterprise would be self-defeating if those who are developing such indigenous concepts and theories do not take into account concepts and theories already present in Western discourse which may in fact be sufficiently universal to be applied to indigenous society. Relevant to this discussion is Atal's distinction between indigenization and endogenous development.

Taken literally, endogenous development signifies development generated from within and orthogenetically, which would, thus, have no place for any exogenous influence... Indigenization, by contrast, at least honestly alludes to outside
contact by emphasizing the need for indigenizing the exogenous elements to suit local requirements; whether this is done by the 'indigenous' or by 'outsiders' is a mere detail (15).

It is clear that both indigenization and endogenous development are required in the effort to develop relevant social science for Muslim society and that the selective assimilation of exogenous elements should be considered as a part of endogenous activity (16).

Can Islamic economics and the Islamization of knowledge project be considered as expressions of the notion of indigenization of social sciences, are they simply old wines in new bottles, or have their practitioners fallen prey to the ideology of nativism? In the following two sections these questions are on centre stage.

Islamic economics and the modernist trap

Both modernization and Marxist-inspired approaches to the study of development are modernist discourses in that they are informed by the principles of nineteenth-century liberal philosophy and restrict their understanding of development to Westernization, democratization, and economic growth (17). The identification of various problems associated with modernist discourse led to demands for alternative discourses to both modernization and Marxist theories (18).

The alternative that is being articulated in the Muslim world is that of Islamic economics (19).

Islamic economics is founded on a critique of various ethnocentric misconceptions of Islam to be found in Western thought such as the alleged fatalism and the lack of the achievement motive in Islam (23). Muslim scholars have reiterated that while the preconditions of development are to be found in Islam, this would be based on the constellation of values that are found in the Qur’an and the Sunna (the traditions of the Prophet of Islam) (24). Western development theory and policy are conditioned by the peculiar traits, problems, and value constellations that are found in Western society. For example, Islamic economists often point to the “severance of social justice from the economic question of efficiency” to be found in Occidental doctrines of economics (25). Islam, on the other hand, differs in its outlook on life, and implies a unique set of policy options for the solution of the problems of development.
The theological underpinnings of development as understood by Islamic economists are derived from four concepts (26). Tawhid or the principle of the unity of God establishes the nature of the relationship between God and man as well as that between men. Rububiyya refers to the belief that it is God who determines the sustenance and nourishment of man and God will guide believers to success. It follows that successful development is a result of man’s work as well as God’s divine arrangements. Khilafa is the concept of man as God’s vicegerent on earth. This defines man as a trustee of God’s resources on earth. Tazkiyya refers to the growth and purification of man in terms of his relationship with God, his fellow men, and with the natural environment. The putting into practice of these principles results in faalah, that is, prosperity in this world as well as the hereafter (27).

The Islamic concept of development is, therefore, tazkiyya or purification plus growth (28). This concept encompasses the spiritual, moral, and material aspects of development and the ultimate aim is to maximise welfare both in this life and in the hereafter. Arising from this concept of development are a number of policy goals: (29)

(i) Human resource development should be concentrated on the inculcation of the right attitudes, aspirations, character, and personality and would call for the Islamization of education (30).

(ii) Production would be restricted to those goods and services which are deemed as useful for man in light of the value constellations of Islam.

(iii) Efforts to improve the quality of life include employment creation, the institutionalization of zaka’ (poor tax), and the equitable distribution of income and wealth through tax policies.

(iv) Development should be along the lines of regional and sectoral equality.

(v) Technology must be indigenized to suite the conditions of Muslim society.

(vi) Economic dependency on the non-Muslim world must be reduced and integration within the Muslim world must be brought about.

Muslim scholars have attempted to articulate an alternative possibility for the concept of development, refusing to evaluate the backwardness and progress of Muslim societies in terms of Western theoretical perspectives and values. In this way it is countermodernist in tone and can be added to the list of those other critiques of developmentalism such as liberation theology and feminist ecology (31). But it is countermodernist only in so far as it is an ethical theory of development.

Ethical theories express preference or distaste about reality in accordance with certain standards of evaluation. In addition to this, they specify the ideal goal toward which changes should be made. Empirical theories, on the other hand, are generalizations about observable reality and require the process of abstraction and conceptualization.

While Islamic economics presents an ideal of development that is based on an Islamic philosophy of life (32), it suffers from a number of problems which lead one to conclude that it cannot be an alternative to modernist discourse as far as empirical theory is concerned.
The foci and method that have been selected by Muslim economists for economic analysis is essentially that of Keynesian and neo-classical economics. The foci are the traditional questions that come under the purview of theories of price, production, distribution, trade cycle, growth, employment, investment, consumer behaviour, and welfare economics with Islamic themes and topics involved such as *zaka*, interest-free banking, and profit-sharing. The problems associated with this are as follows:

First of all, the techniques of analysis that have been selected, that is, the building up of abstract models of the economic system, have not been translated by Islamic economists into empirical work. Neo-classical economics itself has been under attack for being relatively innocent of empirical testing. Whatever empirical work there is has generally taken the form of economic history, statistics or econometrics. Islamic economics has fared much worse on the empirical field.

For example, works on interest tend to construct models of how an interest-free economy would work. Macroeconomic models of an Islamic economy that employ a Keynesian IS-LM model are constructed to "prove" that an interest-free economic system is workable and superior to conventional systems (33). There is little empirical work on existing economic systems and the nature, functions, and effects of interest in these systems. One of the few exceptions to this is a critical work on interest-free banking in Tunisia (34).

Secondly, these attempts at "Islamic economics" have sought to ground the discourse in a theory of wealth and distribution in very much the manner that Western economic science does (35). What is presented as Islamic economics are in fact ethical theories of production, distribution, price, and so on. When "Islamic economics" discusses the traditional categories of economics such as income, consumption, government expenditure, investment, and savings it does so in terms of ethical statements and not in terms of analysis, that is, empirical theory. But when it is engaged in the sort of discourse that one could understand as constituting empirical theory, it is not doing so from a specifically Islamic scientific approach. The point here is that attempts to create a "faithful" or sacred economic science has been unable to solve the problems that it addresses because what it amounts to is neo-classical or Keynesian economics dressed and made up in Islamic terminology. It would, therefore, be difficult to refer to an Islamic science of economics, although we do have the scientific study of economies in Muslim countries, as well as the study of Muslim economic institutions and commercial techniques (36).

Islamic economics remains very much wed to neo-classical economics in terms of its near exclusive concern with technical factors such as growth, interest, tax, profits, etc. A host of issues relating to political economy such as uneven development, unequal exchange, bureaucratic capitalism, corruption, and so on are not dealt with at the theoretical and empirical levels by Islamic economists.

The main problem with this state of affairs is that under the guise of "Islamic economics" the policies generated in industrialised capitalist centers are implemented in the Muslim world and are legitimated, thereby undermining the very project that Islamic economics is committed to.
In attempting to ground itself on a theory of rational man and a hypothetical-deductive methodology it has merely substituted Islamic terms for neo-classical ones, retaining the latter’s assumptions, procedures and modes of analysis. As such, it has failed to engage in the analysis and critique of a highly unequal world economic order in which the gaps are ever widening. That this supposedly anti-Western economics was coopted and made to serve those very trends that it outwardly opposes must be considered.

Thirdly, not very different from neo-classical economics it extends a technical-economic rationality over a wide range of problems which presupposes viewing different ends as comparable outcomes, which in turn, entails the elimination of cultural hindrances to the comparability of outcomes. In this sense, neo-classical, Keynesian and Islamic economics are similar in that they are based on narrow assumptions about human action. A serious inadequacy that they share is the lack of concern about those spheres of human action usually cordoned off as values, culture, and ideology (37). Such a criticism of economics was made as early as the 1930s, when it had been recognised that increasing specialisation had resulted in economics neglecting the role of the state, social institutions, psychology, public opinion, and a host of other non-economic factors which shaped economic behaviour (38). This challenge to economic science has generally not been intellectually encountered by Islamic economics.

What is referred to here is the notion of cultural specificity that entails variations in or rejections of current theories that explain development as well as the creation of new theories that are nourished by the intellectual traditions, historical conditions, and cultural practices of developing societies. For this as well as other reasons stated above, Keynesian neo-classical economics and Islamic economics are similar as far as empirical theories go and we would, therefore, not venture to regard Islamic economics as an indigenized science of economics.

**Islamization of knowledge: indigenization or nativism?**

The expression “Islamization of knowledge” first made its appearance at a conference held in 1977 in Mecca where Syed Muhammad al-Naqiib al-Attas discussed the concept of education in Islam (39). At the same conference, the late Ismail R. al-Faruqi presented a paper on the Islamization of the social sciences (40). Nevertheless, the idea of Islamic science and, in particular, Islamic methodology, had emerged earlier in the late 1950s in the works of Seyyed Hossein Nasr (41) who had spoken of the need for all knowledge originating from without the Muslim world to be integrated into the Islamic worldview and “Islamicized” (42). The notion, couched in the new terminology of “Islamization of knowledge” was subsequently proselytized by al-Faruqi and an institute that he established in the United States, the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (IIIT). The activities of the institute are not restricted to the dissemination of the notion of Islamization of knowledge, but also encompasses programmes aimed at the Islamization of the various disciplines in the social sciences (43). As far as the social sciences are concerned, what is meant by the Islamization of knowledge?
According to al-Attas, the sciences that originated in the West and which have been disseminated throughout the world do not necessarily represent true knowledge due to their being infused with Western elements and key concepts (44). Islamization of knowledge requires, first of all, the isolation of the elements and key concepts in the human sciences that constitute Western culture and civilization such as the dualistic vision of society, humanism, and the "emulation of the allegedly universal reality of drama and tragedy in the spiritual or transcendental, or inner life of man, making drama and tragedy real and dominant elements in human nature and existence..." (45). Once knowledge is free of these Western elements and key concepts it is then infused with Islamic elements and key concepts, thereby making it true knowledge, that is, in harmony with the essential nature (fitra) of man (46). The Islamization of knowledge is the liberation of knowledge from interpretations based on secular ideology (47).

The methodology of Islamized knowledge is to be based on the science of exegesis and commentary which employs the interpretive techniques of tafsir and ta'wil. The first refers to the interpretation of the firm (muhkama) verses of the Qur'an. Tafsir is based on the objective reading of the verses of the Qur'an and there is "no room for interpretation based on subjective readings, or understandings based merely upon the idea of historical relativism..." (48) Ta'wil, on the other hand, is an intensive form of iafsir and refers to the allegorical interpretation of the obscure and ambiguous (mutashabika) verses of the Qur'an (49).

In order to illustrate the differences between these two interpretive techniques, al-Attas gives an example of their application to the following verse: "He causeth the living to issue from the dead" (6, al-an'am : 95). When this is interpreted to mean, for example, that "He brings forth the bird from the egg", this is tafsir. But if the same passage is interpreted to mean that "He brings forth the believer from the unbeliever", for example, this is ta'wil and it refers to the ultimate meaning of the verse (50). According to al-Attas, the world of phenomena consist of signs and symbols that are to be subjected to the interpretive techniques of tafsir and ta'wil in the same manner as the verses of the Qur'an are:

What we have said above should make it clear to us that science according to Islam is ultimately a kind of ta'wil or allegorical interpretation of the empirical things that constitute the world of nature. As such science must base itself firmly upon the tafsir or interpretation of the apparent or obvious meanings of the things in nature (51).

Islamic science is to interpret the facts of the phenomenal world in correspondence with the Qur'anic methods of interpretation (52).

Al-Faruqi had called upon Muslim scholars to recast every discipline in modern knowledge "so as to embody the principles of Islam in its methodology, in its strategy, in what it regards as its data, its problems, its objectives, and its aspirations" (53). Each discipline has to be remolded to incorporate the relevance of Islam along a triple axis that constitutes the concept of tawhid (unity of God), that is, the unity of knowledge, the unity of life, and the unity of history (54).

Knowledge, therefore, has to be framed in accordance with the vision of Islam (55). The Islamization of knowledge refers to the redefinition and reordering of the data, the reevaluation of the conclusions, and the reprojection of the theoretical concept (ta'wil) as applied in each discipline. Islam thus is a religion that takes it for granted that there is no Ism (Islam) unless it is laden with tawhid (56).
of the goals of knowledge in such a way that it serves the cause of Islam (56). The process of the Islamization of knowledge requires the subjection of the theory, method, principles, and goals of knowledge to the unity of Allah (tawhid), the unity of creation, the unity of truth, the unity of knowledge, the unity of life, and the unity of humanity (57).

Seyyed Hossein Nasr’s notion of Islamized knowledge is best captured by the expression scientia sacra or sacred knowledge. This refers to knowledge that “lies at the heart of every revelation and is the center of that circle which encompasses and defines tradition” (58). The eclipse of sacred knowledge in the modern world, beginning with the desacralization of knowledge in the Occident among the ancient Greeks (59), indicates that there is a need for a science which can “relate the various levels of knowledge once again to the sacred” (60). The problem with modern science is that its rejection of the several facets of a particular reality and its reduction of symbols to facts is partly responsible for the desacralization of knowing and being so characteristic of the modern world (61).

For Seyyed Hossein Nasr, there is an added emphasis on methodology. The definition of knowledge in Islam does not differ from the corresponding term in Latin, scientia. The Islamic sciences include the natural sciences (al-'ulum al-tabi'iyya), the mathematical sciences (al-'ulum al-riyadhiyya), and the occult sciences (al-'ulum al-khafiyya) (62). What distinguishes the Islamic sciences from modern knowledge, which are for the most part based on observation and experimentation, is the fact that the former employs various methods “in accordance with the nature of the subject in question and modes of understanding of that subject” (63). What defines Islamic science as Islamic is its “paradigm” which is based on the Islamic world view. The world or universe that was the object of study for the Muslim scientist was taken to be an Islamic cosmos. Furthermore, the mind and eyes of the scientists were Muslim minds and eyes transformed by the spirit and form of the Qur'an (64). The Islamic theory of knowledge is based on a hierarchy of the means of access to knowledge ranging from revelation and illumination to ratiocination as well as empirical and sensual knowledge (65). An important principle of Islamic science is that Islam defines a particular method or sets of methods for each discipline whether it is jurisprudence, physics or tasawwuf (mysticism). These methods are not seen to be contradictory but complimentary. The multiplicity of the various methods and sciences are integrated in Islam into a totality in accordance with the doctrine of Unity (tawhid) (66).

Having glanced at the definitions of Islamization of knowledge and Islamic science as understood by three Muslim scholars, the problem of application arises. How is the notion of the Islamization of knowledge to be applied to the various disciplines in the social sciences? What is meant by the reformulation of the sciences so that they fall into harmony with the concept of tawhid? How are the interpretive methods of tafsir and ta'wil to be applied to the study of social phenomena and are they any different from what is known as hermeneutics or interpretive sociology?

It is obvious that the notion of Islamized knowledge or Islamic science as applied to the social sciences remains couched in vague terms. To date, no Islamized social scientific works have appeared. To be sure, the call to the Islamization of knowledge goes beyond the assertion that science is value-laden. The proponents of the Islamization of the social sciences do not refer
merely to the value content of social scientific research activities but to the very principles, methods, theories, and concepts in the social sciences that are to be Islamized. What are the ways in which a discipline or a field of knowledge that we call social science is defined by Islam in such a way that this field takes on an Islamic or Islamized character?

Is it that the social sciences are to be defined by Islamic philosophy, that is, Islamic metaphysics and epistemology as they evolved among the Arabs, Persians, Turks, Berbers, Indians, and Malays since the second century A.H.? But this is insufficient grounds to warrant our referring to such social science as Islamic. Islamic philosophy affirms the existence of an external world and the possibility of knowledge thereof, and it is this affirmation which makes social science possible. But such an affirmation is common to many philosophical systems and their impression upon the social sciences is of a general nature, not leaving a peculiarly Indian, Greek or Islamic mark on the social sciences. To cite another example, if it is said that the social sciences are to be defined by Islamic philosophy such a basis can be found in various non-Islamic philosophical systems. There is nothing peculiar in an Islamic epistemological stance that would define social science as Islamic. Although it cannot be denied that there is a relationship between Islamic philosophy and the social sciences, the nature of the impact of philosophy is not such that it can be said that the social sciences have been Islamized.

If by the Islamization of the social sciences is meant the application of the methods of *tasawwuf*, that is, *tafsir* and *ta'wil*, this must be clarified. How can these methods be applied to the study of social phenomenon? How does *ta'wil* differ from hermeneutics or subjectivist interpretations which have formed the basis of various theoretical perspectives in the West? Furthermore, the application of the methods of Islamic mysticism to the social arena no more renders the social sciences Islamic than the use of, say, materialist methods renders Marx's work Epicurean.

Therefore, while the call to an Islamic or "faithful" social science is being made the provinces that it is comprised of is still *terra incognita*. As such, it would be problematic to view the Islamization of knowledge project as part of the call to the indigenization of the social sciences. This is especially so when it is considered that the Islamization of knowledge project falls under the threat of nativism. The trend of 'going native' among both Western and indigenous scholars constitutes the elevation of the native's point of view to the status of the criterion by which descriptions and analyses are to be judged to the extent that the social sciences from the West are held to be irrelevant. Among the traits of nativism are the following:

(i) the rejection of the social sciences of Western origin.

(ii) shallow and superficial critiques of theoretical traditions in the West.

(iii) the neglect of various problems that are to be found in the contemporary social sciences.

(iv) the lack of attention to the classical Islamic tradition as the source and inspiration for a social science that is relevant to the Muslim world.

The first trait is evident in the thinking of some scholars. Consider the following view.

The fact that concerns us here most is that all the social sciences of the West reflect social orders and have no relationship or relevance to Muslims, and even
less to Islam. If we learn and apply Western social sciences, then we are not serious about Islam (67).

Scholars with such views are undoubtedly of the opinion that Western and Islamic societies differ to such an extent that the concepts and theories that emerged in Western settings are of no relevance to Muslim or non-Western societies (68).

An example of the second trait comes from the works of Ali Shari'ati. In his discussions on dialectical materialism he assumed that materialism in the sense of a focus on material facts in the study of economy and society is identical to a philosophical materialism which rejects the belief in God. This betrays a shallow understanding of Marxism (69).

Regarding the third trait we have another example from the study of Marxism. Marx and Engels had made several references to Islam, Muslim societies, and religion as a whole. Opprobrious remarks on Islam and Asian societies in general had appeared in their works on religion and alienation, the Asiatic mode of production, and colonialism (70). However, those who had responded to these remarks and who also corrected their interpretations of Islam and Muslim society were mainly Western scholars.

With regard to the fourth trait a good example comes from the case of the neglect towards ibn Khaldun. In general, those social scientists who are engaged in the Islamization of knowledge project have not taken much notice of the classical tradition of social thought and theory in Islam. For example, among those who are discussing the prospects of a neokhaldunian sociology are French scholars (71).

The question of science and values

The proponents of Islamic social science or Islamized knowledge seem to wish to create a social science that is imbued with iman (faith). In doing so, however, they have neglected the question of the relationship between science and values. In this connection, the late Fazlur Rahman's response to the question of the Islamization of knowledge is important. For Professor Fazlur "ilim, in itself, is good. It is its misuse or abuse that makes it bad. But this decision of misuse does not depend on knowledge itself. It depends on moral priorities" (72). In other words, the relationship between Islam and the social sciences is one between values and knowledge. Therefore, it is quite wrong to suggest, as some have (73) that those who are not advocates of the Islamization of knowledge and who may even be opponents of the idea are secularly-oriented intellectuals. Scholars such as Syed Hussein Alatas and Fazlur Rahman who advocate indigenous intellectual creativity in the Third World, do not deny the relationship between Islam and the social sciences but conceive of this relationship in terms radically different from the proponents of Islamization of knowledge (74). Max Weber had referred to the importance of values in shaping scholars' interests. "To be sure, without the investigators' evaluative ideas, there would be no principle of selection of subject-matter and no meaningful knowledge of the concrete reality" (75). Most Muslim scholars, even if not proponents of the Islamization of knowledge, would agree that religious values play a vital role in the selection of subject-matter as
well as the use to which research results are put (76). This, however, does not make them adherents of the notion of Islamization of knowledge.

The relationship between Islam and values on the one hand, and knowledge on the other (77) is closely connected to what is known in the Islamic classical tradition as 'ilm al-‘amali (practical knowledge). Following the Greeks, the Muslims recognised the distinction between theoretical and practical philosophy (78).

Theoretical philosophy (falsafat al-nazari) refers to the realization of being as it is while practical philosophy (falsafat al-‘amali) is the realization of life as it should be. The understanding of what “should be” follows logically from the understanding of what is. The history of Islamic thought is replete with works of a practical type. The work of Alfarabi on politics comes under this category. But practical philosophy influences theoretical philosophy in that the former is comprised of valuations and morality. The greater alignment of Islam and the social sciences can be brought about through the privileging of discourse in the realm of practical wisdom. To the extent that such discourse has an impact on social scientific research and policy-making, the impression of the value system of Islam would have been made.

In the history of Muslim thought, the idea of the Islamization of knowledge is not found. When Muslim philosophers encountered Greek thought they did not conceive of their work as Islamizing Greek philosophy. In the classification of knowledge that the Muslims adopted in the classical period, there is no reference to Islamized knowledge. Following ibn Khaldun (79) (d. 808 AH/1406 AD), there are two general categories of knowledge.

The first category is that of the traditional sciences (al-ulum al-naqliyya). These refer to revealed knowledge rather than knowledge which is generated by man’s intellect. They include Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), Islamic law (‘ulum al-shar’iyya) which are derived from the Quran and the Sunna, jurisprudence and its principles (fiqh, ‘usul al-fiqh), the science of hadith (‘ulum al-hadith), and theology (‘ilm al-kalam) (80). These sciences are specific to Islam and its adherents.

The second category is that of the rational sciences (al-ulum al-aqliyya), that is, the sciences which arise from man’s capacity for reason, sense perception, and observation. These are, in fact, the philosophical sciences and they comprise the science of logic (‘ilm al-mantiq), physics (‘ilm al-tabii’i), metaphysics (al-‘ilm al-ilahiyya), and the sciences concerned with measurement (maqadir), that is, geometry (‘ilm al-handasa), arithmetic (‘ilm al-aritmatiqi), music (‘ilm al-musiqi), and astronomy (‘ilm al-hay’ati) (81). Also to be included under the second category is the science of civilization (‘ilm al-‘umran) (82).

It is crucial to note that in the classical tradition of Islam, the rational sciences, which include ibn Khaldun’s social science of civilization, are not found exclusively among the Muslims but are cultivated by all societies (83). In other words, they are universal sciences. Therefore, it is quite correct to suggest that “Muslims can aspire to Islamize not the sciences or the social sciences, but the philosophy of these disciplines” (84) if by philosophy is meant outlook, worldview or value system.
"ISLAMIC SOCIAL SCIENCES", A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Ibn Khaldun as exemplar for indigenous sociology

For a variety of reasons Islamic economics and Islamized social science are not the alternatives to modernist discourse that they claim to be. On the other hand, indigenizers of the social sciences claim to provide critiques and alternatives to modernist discourses. The call to indigenization is the call to a liberating discourse that seeks to break through the regimes of power and techniques of control and normalization (85). It involves conscious attempts to take into account world views, sociohistorical contexts, and cultural practices so that indigenous concepts and theories can be generated. An exemplar for indigenization of sociology, but not Islamic sociology, is the work of ibn Khaldun.

Ibn Khaldun believed that he had initiated a new field of inquiry consisting of the following areas: (i) civilization (‘umran) in general and its divisions (86), (ii) bedouin civilization (al-‘umran al-badawi), tribal societies (qaba’il), and primitive peoples (al-wahshiyya) (87), (iii) the state (al-dawla), royal (mulk) and caliphate (khilafa) authority (88), (iv) sedentary civilization (al-‘umran al-hadhara), cities (89), and (v) the crafts, ways of making a living, occupations (90). If we were to use the language of the modern social sciences, we would have human or social ecology, rural sociology, political sociology, urban sociology, and economic sociology. In what follows, I would like to make a number of remarks on Khaldunian studies by way of emphasizing the theme of indigenization.

The study of ibn Khaldun’s theory of state formation can be divided into three aspects. One is the discovery of ibn Khaldun as the founder of a number of disciplines in the social sciences. Secondly, there are works that seek to draw comparisons between ibn Khaldun and several Western thinkers. Thirdly, there are those who attempt to develop and apply ibn Khaldun’s theory to specific problems in the historical and social sciences.

Regarding the discovery of ibn Khaldun, ever since European and American scholars proclaimed ibn Khaldun as the true founder of sociology before Comte as well as the precursor of ideas in many other fields such as economics, political science and anthropology (91), there have been many descriptive treatments of his works in the light of his contribution to these various disciplines.

Apart from this, there have also been many works seeking to draw comparisons between ibn Khaldun and the giants in modern Western thought. Some have ignored or glossed over profound differences in the historical and philosophical contexts in which they wrote. The tendency has been to remain at the level of making comparisons to show that ibn Khaldun had anticipated the ideas of modern thinkers in the humanities and social sciences (92).

There have also been works, however, which go beyond the mere comparison of some ideas and concepts in ibn Khaldun with those of modern Western scholars toward the theoretical integration of his theory into a framework that employs some of the tools of modern social science, although the field of application has been confined to West Asian societies (93). It is this kind of work on Ibn Khaldun that must be supported and developed if there is to be more than an historical interest in him.
If by indigenization is meant that there must be conscious attempts to engage in social scientific activity with a view to taking into account the worldviews, socio-historical contexts, cultural practices, and scholarship of the indigenous societies so that indigenous concepts and theories can be generated, then ibn Khaldun is a logical candidate for an exemplar.

The point must be made that the call to indigenization is not simultaneously a call to nativism or reverse orientalism. This refers to the trend of 'going native' among both Western and local scholars and constitutes an almost total and wholesale rejection of Western social science. Indigenization is to be seen as a simultaneous call to internationalization as long as the latter is understood not as a one-sided process but rather as one emanating from developing societies while incorporating selectively the Western social sciences.

CONCLUSION

A critical assessment of Islamic economic and social science in the overall context of the current indigenization debate among Third World scholars reveals that they have not succeeded to reach the status of indigenized science. Islamic economics has been unable to extricate itself from the modernist trap of neo-classical economics while the Islamization of knowledge project falls under the threat of nativism and remains incoherent. This is perhaps due to the fact that the proponents of Islamic economic and social science, in their bid to create a faithful science of society, have neglected the question of the relationship between science and values, which is derived in the classical intellectual tradition of Islam from the relationship between 'ilm al-'amali (practical knowledge) and 'ilm al-nazari (theoretical knowledge).

For various reasons Islamic economics and Islamized social science are not the alternatives to modernist discourse that they claim to be. On the other hand, the works of prominent Muslim thinkers such as ibn Khaldun as exemplars for indigenous and not Islamic social science has not engrossed the thinking of the proponents of Islamization, reflecting a relative neglect of the classical tradition of Islamic thought (94).

Syed Farid ALATAS
National University of Singapore.
NOTES

(1) AL-ATTAS (1978 : 16, 91).
(2) AL-ATTAS (1972b, 1974).
(6) FAHIM & HELMER (1980).
(8) For the different levels at which indigenous social science activities can be carried out see S.F. AL-ATTAS (1993a).
(14) For a discussion on the alleged universal character of Western social science see KLEVEN (1986).
(20) HASAN (1989), MASTER (1988), UDOVITCHE (1962, 1970a, 1970b). It is mainly in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia that Islamic economic research is being carried out, although there has also been a great deal of interest in this field in Egypt, India, Malaysia, and Sudan. It may be interesting to note that Islamic economics predates the rise of the modern Islamic states of Iran, Libya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan.
(22) AHMAD (1980 : 171).
(23) Ibid., p. 173.
(26) Ibid., pp. 178-179. See also Aidit GHAZALI (1990 : 22-23).
(28) Ibid.
(30) See AL-ATTAS (1980).
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(37) WALKER (1981 : 210).
(38) LOWE (1935).
(39) AL-ATTAS (1977). For the proceedings of this conference see AL-ATTAS (1979). See also AL-ATTAS (1978 : chap 5) and (1980).
(40) AL-FARUQI (1981).
(42) Personal correspondence with Professor Seyyed Hossein NASR, April 10, 1995.
(43) AL-FARUQI (1982).
(44) AL-ATTAS (1978 : 131).
(45) Ibid., pp. 131-132, 155.
(47) AL-ATTAS (1980 : 43).
(49) AL-ATTAS (1989 : 30).
(50) AL-ATTAS (1980 : 5).
(51) AL-ATTAS (1989 : 31).
(52) AL-ATTAS (1989 : 35).
(53) AL-FARUQI (1988 : 16-17).
(54) AL-FARUQI (1988 : 17).
(58) NASR (1981 : 130).
(59) NASR (1981 : 34).
(60) NASR (1993 : 175).
(61) NASR (1981 : 212).
(63) Ibid., p. 7.
(64) Ibid., p. 8.
(65) Ibid., pp. 8-9.
(67) SIDDIQUI (1976).
(68) For a discussion on such views see ABAZA & STAUGHT (1990 : 218-220), TURNER (1989).
(69) SHARI’ATI (1980 : 70).
(72) RAHMAN (1988 : 6).
(73) This has been the view of ABAZA (1993 : 311).
(74) Along similar lines of thinking is BAJUNID (1989).
(75) WEBER (1949 : 82).
(76) For a general discussion on the relationship between belief and economics see ROSSER (1993).

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(77) See also MAJUL (1985).
(78) MUTAHHARI (nd : 64).
(80) Ibid., pp. 435-437.
(81) Ibid., p. 478.
(82) Sulaiman (nd) believes that ibn Khaldun may have considered his science of civilization as belonging to a category of its own, but I doubt this in view of the fact that IBN KHALDUN (1981 : 4) is quite explicit in referring to his new science as being a branch of philosophy (falsafa, hikma).
(83) Ibid., p. 478.
(85) S.F. ALATAS (1993a).
(86) Ibid., p. 41.
(87) Ibid., p. 120.
(88) Ibid., p. 154.
(89) Ibid., p. 342.
(90) Ibid., p. 380.
(91) GUMPLOWICZ (1899), BARNES (1917), TOYNBEE (1935 : 321-328).
(94) An exception is BA-YUNUS (1985).

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**Abstract**

The aim of "Islamic social science" in the context of Third World social science is to explore the potential of Islamic social sciences to provide valid knowledge and insights within a modernist discourse to understand and address the challenges facing contemporary societies in the Islamic world. This approach seeks to bridge the gap between modern and traditional knowledge systems, fostering a dialogue between Western and Islamic intellectual traditions. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the development of more inclusive and equitable social policies and practices.

**Résumé**

L'objectif de l'auteur est de présenter une perspective sur le rôle de la "science sociale islamique" dans le contexte de la science sociale mondiale. L'auteur explore la capacité des sciences sociales islamiques à fournir des connaissances pertinentes et utiles dans un contexte moderne. Ce faisant, il s'efforce de créer un pont entre les perspectives occidentales et islamiques pour promouvoir une approche plus inclusive et équilibrée dans la prise de décision et la mise en œuvre de politiques sociales et économiques.

**Resumen**

El autor evalúa la "ciencia social musulmana" en el contexto de la "ciencia social en el Tercer Mundo". Busca entender la potencialidad de las ciencias sociales islamicas para aportar conocimiento válido y comprensión hacia las sociedades modernas en el mundo islámico. A través de esto, el autor busca cambiar el estereotipo o la visión problemática de los municipios islámicos y modernos, así como profundizar en el uso de la investigación y el análisis para aportar al desarrollo de políticas sociales y económicas más inclusivas y equitativas.