

CONCEPTUAL AND PRACTICAL DIMENSIONS OF ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE: A CASE STUDY OF THE ECONOMICS PROGRAM AT THE IIUM

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Introduction

In the 1980s, the understanding and practice of Islam in Malaysia entered a new phase. The global Islamic resurgence coupled with local Malaysian factors saw numerous important events taking place. First, in 1981 Dr. Mahathir Mohamed became Malaysia's fourth prime minister. Second, in 1982 the opposition Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) was taken over by new leadership that claimed total commitment to setting up an Islamic state and rejecting nationalism and ethnic politics. Also, in the same year, Anwar Ibrahim, then the president of the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM), joined Dr. Mohamed's government, winning the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) youth movement's presidency and joining the UMNO-led cabinet as a junior minister.

The Mohamed administration, unlike its predecessors, openly supported Islamic reform at all levels of society. Islam's role became more than ceremonial; it became a source of values for development, facilitated through the Inculcation of Islamic Values Policy (in 1981) and the establishment of numerous Islamic institutions such as the Islamic Bank of

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Malaysia and the International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM) in 1983. Although many see these developments as being merely politically motivated to counter the influence of PAS, it is without doubt that Dr. Mohamed was quite consistent with his earlier views which he expressed in *The Malay Dilemma*. In his book he described Islam as the "greatest single influence on Malay value concepts and ethical codes," thus being a positive factor to develop the Malays.¹

In the educational sphere, numerous local organizations called for an Islamic university. The IIUM was to be a bold experiment by the Malaysian government—a Malaysian manifestation of the deliberations of the First Conference on Islamic Education held in Makkah in 1977.² The aim of the IIUM model was to disseminate Islamic knowledge based on the epistemological foundations of revelation and reason, the latter being understood within the scope of the former. Since 1990, one of its main activities has been implementation of the Islamization of Knowledge agenda. In 1983 the university opened with 180 students and two faculties, law and economics. The university now has more than 8,000 students studying almost all branches of knowledge leading to undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate degrees. It was the expressed desire of those who established the IIUM that its graduates function as agents of Islamization, both locally and internationally. Thus, the IIUM was presented as an alternative to the secular higher education institutions which were seen as promoting westernization or secular modernization.

In 1987, the government, through the IIUM, set up the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) with the objectives of promoting and undertaking serious research in Islamic philosophy, *kalām* (theology), science, and civilizational issues. In 1992, the government set up the Institute for Islamic Understanding (IKIM) under the auspices of the prime minister's department, with the objective of providing a proper understanding of Islam to all Malaysians, especially the non-Muslims.

This paper focuses on the IIUM and, specifically, the economics program which has undergone numerous developments since 1983. Its aim is to analyze the program's successes and shortcomings vis-à-vis the Islamization of Knowledge agenda. First, the paper discusses briefly the the IIUM's historical background. Second, the paper gives a general overview of the bachelor of economics program during the years 1983 to 1994. Third, the paper analyzes the developments that occurred over two distinct phases of the program. And last, the paper explains the experience of the IIUM economics program and relates it to the Islamization agenda and debate.

The International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM)

During an official visit to the United Arab Emirates in January 1982, the prime minister, Mahathir Mohamed announced the setting up of the IIUM. In February 1982, a short concept paper (based on the Makkah Conference in 1977 and on the numerous writings and deliberations of Muslim scholars) was prepared which led to the preparation of a detailed project proposal for the IIUM. In August 1982, the proposal was approved by the Malaysian cabinet and in February 1983, the legal status of the university was given royal assent. In April 1983 a draft constitution of the university, in the form of a "memorandum of association" and "articles of association," was finalized, and in May 1983 the university was officially registered.

Although having an international board of governors (consisting of the governments of the Republic of Maldives, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Turkey, the People's Bureau of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and the Organization of Islamic Conferences), for all administrative, academic, and financial purposes, the IIUM was essentially a Malaysian university. This point is significant because as a Malaysian university, the IIUM would have to respond primarily to Malaysia's needs as well as to the aims and objectives of Islamic education in general. On July 16, 1983, the first batch of 180 students began registering in the fields of economics and law. In October 1987, 126 of them graduated.

The philosophy of the IIUM was expounded in the First World Conference on Islamic Education in Makkah in 1977 and included the following:³

- knowledge is a unified whole of which "revealed knowledge" is its most important component and center;
- the purpose of acquiring knowledge is to assist the seeker in playing his role as Allah's servant (*'abd*) and vicegerent (*khalīfah*) on earth; and
- the all-embracing scope of Islamic education nurtures the cognitive, spiritual, and behavioral aspects of the human personality in the light of Islamic *'aqīdah* (creed), shari'ah (law), and *akhlaq* (morality).

The university's ultimate aim was to produce morally and spiritually strong, mentally rational, physically fit, and professionally equipped individuals who would develop the Muslim ummah and achieve progress that is in harmony with Islamic ideals.⁴

Reestablishing the supremacy of Islam in all fields of knowledge (i.e., by unifying and infusing knowledge with Islamic values and principles in its broadest sense)⁵ was seen as necessary in order to address

socioeconomic problems. Thus, the IIUM was envisioned as “an Islamic university and not a university merely about Islam”⁶—truly different from the many existing universities in the Muslim world that tended to perpetuate the educational dichotomy between the religious and the modern. It was the expressed objective of the IIUM to create professionals who, while being educated in their traditional values, were able to function and change contemporary society according to the vision of Islam.

To achieve this goal, the IIUM curriculum combined courses in Islamic civilization and worldview, which would be compulsory for all students,⁷ with contemporary disciplines found at other universities. The integration process presupposes the availability of qualified teachers and a proper curriculum. As we will show later, these two ingredients were not sufficiently available to the IIUM. It must also be stated here that the “excessive division of academic disciplines” (i.e., of specialization) was not envisaged when the university was established.⁸

The process of integration in the IIUM was planned at two levels. The first was at the *kulliyah* (college) level where the academic staff were expected to present the Islamic perspective of the various disciplines (in this case, economics), requiring the processes of de-westernization and the infusion of Islamic values (discussed later). The second level involved what was called the Center for Fundamental Knowledge (CFK), which was envisioned as a central body that provided both formal university level courses (courses offered through lectures) as well as nonformal activities for students from all faculties.

It is necessary to establish a Centre which . . . coordinates not only with other disciplines but also with agencies which supervise the nonformal activities of the students towards the fulfillment of the concept of integrated education so that there will not emerge a contradiction between what is being taught and what is being practiced in the process of personality formation in a university based on Islamic principles.⁹

The formal courses offered by the CFK were considered core courses. The nonformal activities constituted the compulsory weekly *halaqah tarbiyah al-Islamiyah* (Islamic education meeting) and the ‘*ibadah*’ camps held every semester throughout the four years of studies.¹⁰ The core component at the IIUM was considered so important that failure in any of these courses would result in failure to obtain a degree.

Within the above mechanism, the CFK had a central objective—abolish the artificial barriers that divided religious sciences from conventional sciences and instill the conviction within the students that their role in society is to be “Islamic agents” who solve contemporary problems by example.

With the expansion of the university, the CFK was transformed into the Department of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage in the College (*Kulliyah*) of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (IRKHS), which also offered its own degree programs. Contrary to its original purpose, the Department of IRKH has played a relatively small role in changing the lives and education of students in other departments. Even so, this change has had a significant effect on the education process at the university.

The Economics Program at the IIUM (1983-1994)

The economics program offered by what is now the College of Economics and Management (then, the College of Economics) was one of the two inaugural programs of the IIUM (established in May 1983). Among the College's objectives for the program were the following:

- In general, to contribute to the cause of Islam as a complete way of life through the study of economics founded upon the shari'ah.
- Specifically, to produce graduates who will play an important role in society and who are not only technically efficient and competent but are also imbued with Islamic values.¹¹

Also mentioned was the objective of teaching and education in relation to the concepts of *ta'dib*, *ta'lim*, and *tarbiyah*.¹²

The above objectives translate into the creation of graduates of *adab*, i.e., graduates who manifest the understanding and implementation of Islamic education and act as "agents of change,"¹³ and

. . . graduates who are well equipped with required technical skills blended with Islamic spiritual values so that they can play a meaningful role in society after graduation.¹⁴

It should also be noted that the faculty of economics was conceived of as an integrated unit without departments or divisions so as to avoid unhealthy compartmentalization.¹⁵ Economics was seen as part of the whole framework of knowledge based on *tawhid*. The curriculum of the program depicted the early aspirations of those who were involved in setting up the university. To attain the stated objectives, the economics program was quite unique in its curriculum, syllabus, and pedagogy. The framework of the program, as stated in the 1986 Memorandum for Degree Recognition, was as follows:

1. Every course is presented from an Islamic perspective. Western economic theories will be presented and then critically analyzed from an Islamic viewpoint.
2. The program generally adopts a comparative approach.
3. The program hopes to "devalue" economic concepts from all alien values (and to infuse Islamic values where possible).

4. The program has certain core subjects in *'aqidah*, shari'ah and *akhlaq* (offered by the Centre for Fundamental Knowledge and the faculty itself).
5. The Arabic language is very central to the objectives of the program.
6. After a strong foundation in the Islamic perspective in economics, the fourth-year courses become more conventional economic courses.
7. To ensure correct understanding, a limited number of options are offered.

In the next section we show that the framework described above underwent modifications, especially in 1990. The modified framework created students who possibly lacked the ability to grasp the "integrated whole" of knowledge and education in Islam. Ironically, this development was due, in part, to misunderstanding the Islamization of Knowledge work plan put forward by Isma'il al-Faruqi. For the purposes of further analysis, this paper refers to the following documents:

- Graduation Requirements for the Bachelor of Economics, 1983/84 and 1993/94;
- course outlines for selected courses involving "Islamic content," 1986-1994;
- various reports of committees and subcommittees of the College, set up between 1986 and 1994;
- university and college documents on their objectives, philosophy, and rationale;
- reports of external assessors (Bruce Glassburner, Ziauddin Ahmad and Ghouse Ahmad Shareef);¹⁶ and
- examination questions, 1983-1994 (selected courses and years).

While the above documents can be analyzed from numerous angles, the paper aims to make an evaluation in light of the objectives set out by the faculty itself and in relation to the agenda of Islamization of knowledge; hence, the concentration on the "Islamic" content of the program and its effectiveness in promoting Islamization. The paper also concentrates on the "worldview and civilizational" aspects of Islam presented in the program.

General Observations and Analysis

After examining and analyzing the documents above, two broad phases in the program can be identified: Phase 1 (1983-1990) and Phase 2 (1990 to the present)—although the intermediate years (1988-1989) saw gradual changes taking place. For clarity of observation, the years 1983/84 and 1993/94 have been selected to represent Phases 1 and 2, respectively, in the analysis that follows.

Table 1: Graduation Requirements in 1983/84 and 1993/94

Requirement	Phase 1 (1983/84)		Phase 2 (1993/94)	
	Credit Hours		Credit Hours	
University Courses	38		22	
Fundamental Knowledge Courses	22		12	
Languages				
English and Bahasa Malaysia Courses	8		10	
Qur'anic Language Courses	8		0	
Required <i>Kulliyah</i> (College) and Department Courses	82		72	
<i>Kulliyah</i> (College) Required Common Courses			33	
Department Required Courses			39	
Elective Courses [To Select any one of the Packages: Concentration in Economics, Minor in Accounting, Minor in Business Administration or Minor in Shari'ah]**	15		33	
Total Requirements for Graduation	135		127	

Notes:

* Qur'anic language courses are not credited for 1993/94.

** In 1983/84, only a concentration in economics was offered, with specialization in either development or international areas.

Curriculum

Between Phases 1 and 2, graduation requirements were found to have been reduced from 135 to 127 credit hours (see Table 1). While the total number of hours was reduced, college courses or the *fard kifāyah* (elective courses in Table 1) increased from 97 to 105 credit hours. At the same time, the "core" Islamic or *fard 'ayn* courses offered by the CFK (fundamental knowledge courses in Table 1) were reduced from 22 credit hours to 12. This, however, does not provide the entire picture because the reduction also involved a change in the number of CFK courses from 11 courses to only 4 (see Table 2). The main reason for this change was to avoid the risk of creating unwanted imbalances in the academic program as suggested by the college and university subcommittees set up to review the CFK/IRKH courses. Another reason was the perception that some of the CFK/IRKH courses were irrelevant or were being taught ineffectively in relation to economics. The college, on the other hand, had increased its own Islamic courses from 5 in Phase 1 to 7 in Phase 2 (see Table 3). While this may have offset the reduction in CFK/IRKH courses, the overall changes show a movement from one that emphasizes the worldview and civilization of Islam to one that is limited to fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). Also, in this respect, while the report by Ahmad commenting on the lack of Arabic and fiqh content was partially addressed by the introduction of additional courses, it seems to have been done at the expense of the CFK/IRKH courses. Hence, it is not

Table 2: CFK/IRKH Courses in 1983/84 and 1993/94

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours
Phase 1 (1983/84)		
Year 1 Semester 1		
AA 110	Introduction to Islam and its 'Aqīdah	2
Year 1 Semester 2		
AA 111	Introduction to the Qur'an	2
Year 2 Semester 1		
AA 210	Introduction to the Sunnah	2
AA 211	Introduction to the Shari'ah	2
Year 2 Semester 2		
AA 212	Fiqh of the 'Ibādāt (Acts of Worship)	2
Year 3 Semester 1		
AA 310	Ethical Philosophy of Islam	2
AA 311	The Preaching of Islam	2
Year 3 Semester 2		
AA 312	Islamic Civilization	2
Year 4 Semester 1		
AA 410	Modern and Contemporary History of Islam	2
AA 411	Islam and Society	2
Year 4 Semester 2		
AA 412	Islamic Thought and Contemporary Issues	2
Total		22
Phase 2 (1993/94)		
College (Kulliyah) Courses (To complete any 4 courses or 12 hours)		
IRKH 1010/A	Science of the Qur'an	3
IRKH 1020/A	Science of Hadith I	3
IRKH 1050/A	Biography of the Prophet	3
IRKH 1110/A	Islamic Da'wah I	3
IRKH 1120/A	Islamic 'Aqīdah	3
IRKH 1150/A	Fiqh of the 'Ibādāt	3
IRKH 1210/A	Man in the Qur'an and Sunnah	3

Note:

CFK refers to Centre for Fundamental Knowledge courses offered in 1983/84; IRKH refers to Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences courses which were offered in 1993/94.

surprising that Shareef pointed out that the 12 credit hours of CFK/IRKH courses, carrying only 9.2 percent of the total curriculum, were insufficient and very "imbalanced." While the Islamic input overall has declined, it should also be mentioned that the economics content was already sufficient in Phase 1. This was supported by Glassburner, who commented that as far as the economics content of the program was concerned, the IIUM economics program in Phase 1 had more than adequately covered the areas in contemporary economics. In fact, compared to economics majors in universities in the United States, where students take 24-36 credit hours of economics courses, the 97 hours required by

Table 3: Required College (Kulliyah) Islamic Courses in 1983/84 and 1993/94

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours
Phase 1 (1983/84)		
Year 1 Semester 1		
QK 1113	Economics I*	3
Year 2 Semester 1		
QK 2013	Fiqh for Economists I	3
Year 2 Semester 2		
QK 2023	Fiqh for Economists II	3
Year 3 Semester 2		
QK 3613	History of Islamic Economic Thought	3
Year 4 Semester 2		
QK 4413	Regional Cooperation among Muslim Countries	3
Total		12
Phase 2 (1993/94)		
College (Kulliyah) Courses		
ECON 1710	Foundation of Islamic Economics	3
ECON 3510	Transactions in Islamic Economy I	3
ECON 3511	Transactions in Islamic Economy II	3
Department Courses		
ECON 3550	Usul Fiqh I	3
ECON 3551	Usul Fiqh II	3
ECON 4010	History of Islamic Economic Thought	3
ECON 4610	Issues in Islamic Economics	3
Total		21

Note:

* Economics I was an introductory course on Islamic economics.

the IIUM were more than sufficient. Therefore, the increase of economics courses to 105 hours in Phase 2 may not have been necessary to achieve a "balanced" curriculum.

Contrary to the above, we would argue that a "balanced" curriculum in an Islamic framework actually requires either an increase in the CFK/IRKH courses coupled with a reduction of purely economics courses, or an increase in courses where "integration" or at least a comparative approach is adopted (which was not the case, as the next section will show). In this instance, the replacement of the CFK/IRKH courses with more conventional economics courses has led the program and the university further away from achieving its objectives. The issues of which CFK/IRKH courses should be offered and how they are to be taught and by whom are additional issues that need to be considered very carefully. Even if some of the CFK/IRKH courses were not directly related to economics or were being taught ineffectively, their elimination is not justi-

fied. In this situation the problem is the lack of qualified teachers to staff the CFK/IRKH courses.

Approach

In addition to the changes as discussed above, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the approach taken in teaching some of the courses in the program has changed between Phases 1 and 2 toward a somewhat more dichotomized rather than an integrative one. In order to show this, a periodic analysis was undertaken using final examination questions of selected required courses in the program. The assumption here is that the degree of Islamic content in a course (whether or not it was explicitly stated in the course outline) should best be reflected in the final examination questions. In this analysis, "Islamically oriented" questions were defined as questions that specifically relate to the Islamic perspective of the subject (or a critical evaluation of conventional views). These were then computed as percentages of the total number of questions. A similar method was used for nonessay (multiple choice and true/false) questions.

From the results in Table 4, it can be seen that as far as the existing "Islamic courses" are concerned, such as Foundations of Islamic Economics (QK 1113/ECON 1710), Fiqh for Economists I and II (QK 2013/ECON 3510 and QK 2023/ECON 3511), History of Islamic Economic Thought (QK 3613/ECON 4010), and Issues in Islamic Economics (ECON 4610), there has been a consistently high Islamic content, as expected, throughout the period. However, for conventional courses, there has been a clear reduction in the Islamic content. For instance, the course Economics II (QK 1123) had a 6.25 percent Islamic content in the final examination questions in the 1984/85 session, but this percentage dropped to zero in the other following two sessions. This is true even after the replacement of this course with two new courses, Principles of Microeconomics (ECON 1510) and Principles of Macroeconomics (ECON 1610), by the 1993/94 session.

The same pattern of exclusion of "Islamically oriented" questions across the sessions can be seen for Microeconomics/Intermediate Microeconomics I (QK 2114/ECON 2110) and Macro-economics/Intermediate Macroeconomics I (QK 2124/ECON 2310). The latter, however, experienced a more gradual reduction in Islamic content. In the 1984/85 session, the "Islamically oriented" questions comprised 33.33 percent of the entire paper but only 14.29 percent and 11.82 percent in the 1986/87 and 1989/90 sessions, respectively. By the 1993/94 session, none of the questions had an Islamic content.

The course Economic Analysis I/Intermediate Microeconomics II (QK 3114/ECON 2111) experienced a fluctuating trend in its Islamic content, first increasing to 55 percent in the 1986/87 session from 33.33 percent in 1984/85 but then declining to only 10 percent in 1989/90. Data for the

Table 5: Islamic Content Analysis of Final Examination Questions—Bachelor of Economics Program

Code	Course Title	1984/85	1986/87	1989/90	1993/94	1984/85 (%)	1986/87 (%)	1989/90 (%)	1993/94 (%)
ECON 1710/ QK 1113	Foundations of Islamic Economics/ Economics I	10/10	10/10	8.5/10	12/12	100	100	85	100
ECON 1510	Principles of Microeconomics	-	-	-	A:0/7 B:0/40(M/C)	-	-	-	0
ECON 1610	Principles of Macroeconomics	-	-	-	A:0/5 B:0/20(M/C)	-	-	-	0
(QK 1123)	(Economics II—Micro+Macro)**	0.5/8	0/6	0/7	-	6.25	0	0	-
ECON 2110/ QK 2114	Intermediate Microeconomics I/ Microeconomics	1/7*	0/8	A:0/7 B:0/20(M/C)	0/8	14.29	0	0	0
ECON 2310/ QK 2124	Intermediate Macroeconomics I/ Macroeconomics	2/6	1/7	1.3/11	0/6	33.33	14.29	11.82	0
ECON 2111/ QK 3114	Intermediate Microeconomics II/ Economic Analysis I	A:0/20* B:0/20(M/C) C:2/6	3.3/6	A:0/20(T/F) B:0/20(M/C) C:0.5/5	n.a.	33.33	55	10	n.a.
ECON 2311/ QK 3124	Intermediate Macroeconomics II/ Economic Analysis II	1/5*	0.3/6	A:0/62(M/C) B:0/3	2/8	20	5	0	25
ECON 4810/ QK 3223	Research Methodology	1/8*	1/8	1/9	1/7	12.5	12.5	11.11	14.29
ECON 3510/ QK 2013	Fiqh for Economists I	7/7*	6/6	8/8	5/5	100	100	100	100
ECON 3511/ QK 2023	Fiqh for Economists II	6/6	6/6	7/7	5/5	100	100	100	100
ECON 4010/ QK 3613	History of Islamic Economic Thought	6/6*	8/8	8/8	6/6	100	100	100	100
ECON 4610	Issues in Islamic Economics	-	-	-	6/7	-	-	-	85.71
ECON 3010	Malaysian Economy	-	-	-	1/5	-	-	-	20

Notes:

* Indicates 1985/86 data since 1984/85 data are not available.

** Economics II was replaced by Principles of Microeconomics and Principles of Macroeconomics in the 1993/94 session.

M/C indicates multiple choice questions. T/F indicates true/false questions. n.a. indicates data not available.

Percentages are based on essay-type questions only.

From 1984/85 until 1989/90, course codes began with QK.

Fractions indicate the number of Islam-oriented questions to the total number of questions in the various parts or the entire question paper. (Decimal points in the numerator indicate only the portion of one question that is Islamically oriented.)

1993/94 session, however, are not available to be commented on. Similar fluctuations can also be seen for two other courses. In Economic Analysis II/Intermediate Macroeconomics II (QK 3124/ECON 2311), the content was 20 percent in 1984/85 but declined to 5 percent and 0 percent in 1986/87 and 1989/90, respectively. In 1993/94, however, the "Islamically oriented" questions reemerged with 25 percent content of the entire paper. For Research Methodology (QK 3223/ECON 4810), the content declined from 12.5 percent in 1984/85 and 1986/87 to 11.11 percent in 1989/90, but increased to 14.29 percent in the 1993/94 session. No comparison can be made for Malaysian Economy (ECON 3010), which is relatively new, but the Islamic content of the final examination is quite high at 20 percent of the entire test.

Out of the 13 courses analyzed, 5 of them were "Islamic" courses. The other 8 courses were regular courses, which, from the above analysis, should contain some degree of Islamic orientation in approach (at least a comparative approach) within the context of Islamization of knowledge as adopted by the IIUM. However, at least 4 of these courses have shown a total exclusion of Islamic orientation as implied by the fact that eventually the final examination questions had no Islamic content, a process which had started as early as 1986/87. If this phenomenon reflects the dichotomy between Islamic and conventional courses, which is the very element that the Islamization of knowledge tries to reconcile, then even with the increase in the number of Islamic courses over the years, the program has actually regressed to a certain extent in terms of the integration process.

One reason given for the increasingly dichotomized approach was the perceived problem that the Islamic critique of conventional economics tended to be rather simplistic and repetitious. In addition, the unequal levels of analyses between the conventional and Islamic approaches (the former being highly developed with sophisticated models and analyses, while the latter being in its initial stages) had led students to perceive that "Islamic economics" was inferior to conventional economics.

This argument cannot be justified. Although the levels of analyses differ greatly because Islamic economics requires substantial conceptual formulation, exposure to the existing critiques can still benefit students (although they may be repetitious). However, repetition in itself is sometimes unavoidable and may even be necessary to stress important ideas and concepts; hence, it should not be seen as negative.¹⁷ If the current Islamic economic analysis is found to be weak in the existing literature, instead of separating Islam from economics, students and teachers should become more engaged in developing rigorous critiques and techniques to develop the Islamic economic discipline. In fact, the adoption of the dichotomized approach may have contributed to the slow progress

made in research by the teachers of Islamic economics. Witness the scarcity of related journal articles and publications in the last 8 years.

In addition, the lack of enthusiasm in developing an Islamic approach to economics and to a certain extent, the repetition problem, could be caused by teachers not possessing the necessary qualities and knowledge. Most of them are Western trained scholars and thus are not sufficiently exposed to the Islamic worldview; they lack the knowledge of the Islamic legacy—necessary ingredients for the integration process in the Islamization of knowledge. Consequently, a certain lack of confidence on the part of the teachers exists when undertaking research. Therefore, the problem is not just the inadequacy of existing literature, but involves the quality of the teachers themselves who need development before they can contribute positively. The next section discusses this issue in relation to the Islamization work plan itself.

Structure

In its initial stage, the economics program was completely structured. Students had to take specific courses in specific semesters. The structured program was useful in that it enabled the “systematic” accumulation of knowledge necessary to make the comparative analysis between the Islamic and conventional perspectives as implicitly required in the program objectives. This was especially true with reference to the CFK/IRKH courses in which the Qur’an, hadith, the sirah of the Prophet, and Islamic history and civilization were offered in specific semesters to develop the students’ Islamic worldview as well as their understanding of what Islam as a civilization is all about. It provided the students with the basic Islamic premises of economics and then moved on to the conventional approach.

In 1990, the full credit-hour system was introduced along with the above-mentioned changes in the course requirements and the orientation of examination questions. Students became free to take any course they wanted whenever they wanted as long as they met the prerequisites, which generally excluded courses on Islam provided by the CFK/IRKH. While this system provides the advantage of being flexible, it lacks the systematic and gradual conveyance of the core (*farḍ ‘ayn*) knowledge necessary to produce the kind of students who are able to use their study at the university as a period of inculcating *adab* (i.e., undergoing the process of *ta’dīb* or education). In the last five years students have relegated the core (CFK/IRKH) courses to the “short semesters” or even to the last year of study, allowing them to concentrate first on their economics courses (which are now seen as the core courses). Discussions with students and their representatives indicate that they do not consider the *farḍ ‘ayn* courses important. Many even see these courses as “irrelevant.” Clearly, they spend more time and effort on their economics

courses, considering them of direct consequence in their future careers—demonstrating a weakness in the education process at the IIUM.

We do not advocate a rigid system; however, the failure to require prerequisites, which surely must include CFK/IRKH courses if we are talking about Islamic education, has led to some problems in relation to our stated objectives. In this respect, a structured program is more effective, especially with regard to the core courses which familiarize the students with the Islamic worldview, its concepts, and their relationships. It is also our view that in order to achieve the objectives of the university and of Islamic education in general, this worldview and its corresponding values must be established in the minds and hearts of the students first, before proceeding to economics. Islamization can only occur effectively if the subjects (through the teachers and students) are first imbued with the necessary prerequisites (worldview) for undertaking Islamization.

The current sequencing of courses in the program demonstrates this misunderstanding of what Islamization entails. If in Phase 1, Economics I (introduction to Islamic economics) were taught in year 1, semester 1 together with an introduction to Islam and its *'aqidah* followed by Economics II (introduction to conventional economics), in Phase 2 the prerequisites for Foundation of Islamic Economics (replacing Economics I) would be Principles of Microeconomics and Macroeconomics (both replacing Economics II). Although the structure of Phase 1 was correct, the reason for the change can be found not only in the developments at the IIUM but also in the development and misunderstanding of the Islamization work plan itself.

The IIUM and Islamization of Knowledge: Past, Present, and Future

The economics program at the IIUM has enabled us to present a case study, albeit a preliminary one, of Islamization of knowledge in practice. Looking at the initial objectives of the IIUM and, in particular, the College (*Kulliyah*) of Economics (the framework upon which it sought to achieve its objectives) and comparing the experience of Phase 1 with Phase 2, we can say that the understanding of the Islamization process was somewhat different in the first phase and the second. Numerous reasons can be given for the changes that have taken place. While there have been positive improvements in the economics curriculum and syllabus, in terms of the number of fiqh and contemporary courses as well as in terms of coverage and depth over the two phases, as far as achieving the objectives of the IIUM and of Islamic education in general are concerned, there is still great room for improvement.

The original aim of the IIUM was to integrate knowledge, i.e., acquire and understand knowledge from the twin epistemological foundations of

revelation and reason (as understood within the bounds of revelation). There was no direct reference to Islamization and al-Faruqi's 1982 work plan¹⁸ was not directly incorporated into the university's agenda in 1983. The system, however, seems to have created a greater dichotomy and confusion of what Islamization is and the process that it entails. The main reason has been the failure to prepare the two ingredients necessary in Islamization, i.e., qualified teachers and the understanding of the Islamization process itself. The curriculum and syllabus only reflect this failure.

The initial attempt to integrate, as seen from the curriculum and the formal/informal educational structure in 1983, had the objective of producing "total" individuals who were not only intellectually developed but spiritually and physically developed as well. The pioneers were committed to this idea but, as mentioned earlier, there existed a major obstacle—qualified manpower. Experiencing almost immediate pressure to expand, new staff were brought in on the assumption that they could understand the objectives of the IIUM and transmit the appropriate knowledge within the framework of the Islamic educational philosophy. However, this was not the case and toward the end of Phase 1, the efforts at integration reached a plateau. There was a dire need for new commitment and direction in the IIUM agenda. In 1988, with the arrival of 'AbdulHamid Abu Sulayman as the rector of the IIUM, one of the first programs organized by him was a reevaluation of the IIUM's progress and problems. Significant changes were introduced, and the Islamization of Knowledge agenda assumed a prominent role in the IIUM's educational goals.

Unfortunately, the Islamization agenda never had the opportunity to take firm root within the academic staff due to the high turnover of staff caused by the large number of contract staff hired to meet the rapid expansion, and also due to the absence of many senior staff (who had left either to other Islamic institutions in Malaysia or to pursue their doctorates). While qualified manpower shortages (especially in relation to scholars who were familiar with Islamization) increased, demand for university education in Malaysia and the ever increasing "encroachment" of market forces into university education in Malaysia are all legitimate factors for the shortcomings in the efforts at Islamization.

This section concentrates on the Islamization process itself, which had, in its original work plan, certain potential shortcomings that were experienced at the IIUM when combined with the other factors mentioned above. These shortcomings were recognized, and some of them were addressed in the revised edition of the work plan. However, Islamization still stalled and therefore we posit an additional factor.

The Islamization of Knowledge plan of al-Faruqi was always presented in the form of a twelve-step plan. This did injustice to

al-Faruqi's document. While the plan itself¹⁹ was always quoted, the prerequisites for the plan as given in his book were frequently overlooked and often not even read by scholars, especially those who considered working at the IIUM as merely a job. Al-Faruqi's discussion on the "malaise of the ummah" is relatively known, but his views in the section entitled "The Task"²⁰ generally are not. His discussion in "Instilling the Vision of Islam" clarifies his priority in conveying a compulsory study of Islamic civilization as a prerequisite to his Islamization of Knowledge plan. Al-Faruqi states very clearly:

It would be a great step forward if Muslim universities and colleges were to institute compulsory courses in Islamic Civilization as part of their basic studies program for all students. This would provide the students with faith in their own religion and heritage . . . but it is not enough.²¹

He also indicates that instilling the vision of Islam is a priority whereby, "it must be the guiding, determining first principle of every discipline, of every pursuit, and of every human action,"²² in order to Islamize knowledge; i.e.,

to redefine and reorder the data, to rethink the reasoning and relating of the data, to reevaluate the conclusions, to reproject the goals in a way to make the disciplines enrich the vision and serve the cause of Islam.²³

It is quite clear that while the twelve-step plan is his more important contribution (for which he has received both praise and criticism), the "prerequisites to Islamization" (his courses on Islamic civilization which instill the Islamic vision) form a very important part of his "total plan." Not only should it be compulsory for all students, but it should be made compulsory for all academic staff as well.²⁴ The importance of this cannot be over emphasized. Al-Faruqi cautions that teachers in Muslim universities, who do not possess the vision of Islam and are not driven by its cause, present the greatest calamity to Islamic education.²⁵ The change in approach taught in the economics program courses neglected this aspect of al-Faruqi's work plan and contributed to the increasingly dichotomized and patchwork-like Islamization.

The criticisms that are leveled against the Islamization of Knowledge program can be avoided only by implementing its prerequisites first. If they are not, then the twelve-step plan along with al-Faruqi's qualification that their "logical order defines the order of priority belonging to each step"²⁶ could justify the criticisms of Sardar²⁷ and Nasr.²⁸ Stemming from this basic misunderstanding and neglect, another problem manifests itself. Al-Faruqi's call to produce textbooks has led some

scholars to replicate conventional economic textbooks and merely add "Islamic" comments and footnotes. This futile attempt at "Islamization" only leads to confusion among students and "economizes" Islam rather than Islamizing economics. This leads to creating textbooks that do nothing more than legitimize and justify conventional theories and tools (as increasingly is the case in contemporary [Islamic] finance literature), albeit with superficial modifications that attempt to prove that Islamic economics is as sophisticated and rigorous as conventional economics. This does not do justice to the noble objectives of the Islamization of Knowledge plan and only leads to the trap of making Islamic economics a mere "special case" of western neoclassical economics.²⁹

The partial understanding, presentation, and interpretation of al-Faruqi's work plan has contributed to the situation in the economics program at the IIUM. In addition, in the case of Malaysia and the IIUM, Nasr's³⁰ view that the Islamization of Knowledge project has been "shaped more by political discourse than levelheaded academic understanding" has some credence. Since the IIUM is funded by the Malaysian government, it also has to consider Malaysia's national educational interests which, due to its booming economy, requires an increasing number of (especially Bumiputera³¹) professionals. In some ways, political expediencies have forced the IIUM to push beyond its capacities and possibly to sacrifice some level of quality for greater quantity. It could be argued that the IIUM may have entered the phase of "diseconomies of scale" with its rapid expansion.

It should also be noted here that most of the attention in the Islamization of Knowledge agenda has been to the reorientation of Western trained scholars to become agents of the Islamization process. Little attention has been given to the traditionally trained scholars. As for this group, the Islamization of Knowledge agenda as originally presented by al-Faruqi does not seem to have much to say. The revised work plan (1989) and recent publications of the IIUM have acknowledged the potential contribution of this group.³² In the IIUM, this has resulted in the establishment of the Kulliyah of IRKHS and especially in the Department of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage, where mainly traditionally trained students are exposed to modern contemporary sciences and subjects. At this point, it is still too early to evaluate the success of this venture, but this is certainly a positive development in the integration process.

Another group of students who need to be given special attention are the graduates of the IIUM themselves. Graduates of the IIUM relatively are better exposed to the idea of Islamization. Hence, greater focus should be placed on getting these graduates to return to the university as teaching staff. Certainly the Faculty of Economics and Management has not been very successful in getting them to return due to the lure of a

booming Malaysian economy. In addition, the more dichotomized approach in Phase 2 seems to have alienated the students from realizing the importance of the integration process. This could be one reason why there is still a very small number of students/graduates who are actively involved in the Islamization agenda.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to analyze some of the conceptual and practical problems that directly relate to the Islamization of Knowledge agenda, with special reference to the economics program at the IIUM over the last fourteen years. Due to a variety of factors, including the partial understanding and presentation of al-Faruqi's work plan, we found that the economics program of the IIUM has not been able to provide the students with the Islamic worldview or vision necessary for the integration process to occur. This, coupled with the increasingly dichotomized approach to the teaching of economics, has resulted in not achieving the objectives of the program or the IIUM. In addition to the local scenario of Malaysia, a central cause of the problem has been the lack of qualified lecturers who are able to understand and contribute to the Islamization of Knowledge process.

Another important cause of the problem has been the partial understanding and presentation of al-Faruqi's work plan, which neglects the prerequisites of Islamization. The IIIT has recognized these problems and in recent writings its current president, Taha Jabir al-'Alwani, proposed positive modifications.³³ His clear elucidation of the need to understand the Islamic legacy and its epistemological or methodological principles first, puts the neglected or overlooked aspects of al-Faruqi's work in better focus. This positive development must be seen as a natural response to the debate that has taken place over the last fifteen years, mainly in the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*.³⁴ We hope this positive development and debate will contribute to the present review exercise that is being undertaken by the Department of Economics at the IIUM. Realization of some of the problems and willingness to make changes constitute part of the solution that will hopefully see Phase 3 of the economics program move forward in line with the noble objectives set out by the IIUM—the Islamization of economics and education in general.

Notes

1. Mahathir Mohamed, *The Malay Dilemma* (Kuala Lumpur: Times Books International, 1970), p. 155. Dr. Mohamed's use of Islam should be seen in the context of his views concerning the economic backwardness of the Malays.

2. ABIM (led initially by Anwar Ibrahim) in particular, which was intellectually led by numerous international scholars such as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Atlas, Malik Bennabi, Khurshid Ahmad, and Isma'il al-Faruqi, was leading this call. Many

observers see the manifestation of the IIUM as one of the reasons Anwar Ibrahim joined Dr. Mohamed's administration. (Anwar, who is now deputy prime minister of Malaysia, has been the IIUM's president since 1988.)

3. International Islamic University Malaysia, *The Philosophy and Objectives of the International Islamic University and Their Implications for the Islamic Discipline of the University Community* (unpublished document, 1983), pp. 1-2.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

9. "Susunan Program Akademik," prepared by a special committee and accepted by the steering committee of the U.I.A. project in 1982: 4, in *International Islamic University Malaysia, The Philosophy*, p. 16.

10. Nonformal activities play a crucial role in the moulding of personalities in Islamic education. However, in the present context, the discussion on the role of nonformal activities in Islamic education is beyond the scope of this paper.

11. International Islamic University, Malaysia, *Memorandum for Degree Recognition* (unpublished document, August 1986).

12. International Islamic University, Malaysia, *Kulliyah of Economics and Management Handbook 1990/91* (Malaysia: Kulliyah of Economics and Management, IIUM, 1990).

13. For a detailed exposition of contemporary literature on Islamic education, see the *Islamic Education Series* by Hodder and Stoughton/King Abdul Aziz University, being the Proceedings of the First World Conference on Muslim Education, 1977, especially the volume on *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education*, edited by al-Atlas (1979).

14. International Islamic University, Malaysia, *The Philosophy*, p. 14.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

16. Ziauddin Ahmad, *Assessment of the Bachelor of Economics Programme of the International Islamic University of Malaysia* (unpublished document, 1987); see also Ghouse Ahmed Shareef, *Report of Dr. Ghouse Ahmed Shareef* (unpublished document, 1994); and Bruce Glassburner, *The Curriculum in Conventional Economics at the International Islamic University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Report of the External Assessor* (unpublished document, 1986). Text references to Ahmad, Shareef, and Glassburner refer to these documents.

17. In fact, this could be partially true even in the 97 credit hours in Phase 1 and 105 hours in Phase 2 of economics courses offered in the program, which does have a significant amount of overlapping material.

18. Isma'il R. al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1982).

19. Isma'il R. al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1987), 39-47. This edition is a reprint of the 1982 edition.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-16.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

22. Al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge* (1982), p. 16.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

24. This is now being seriously considered in the IIUM as part of its staff development program.

25. Isma'il R. Al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1989), p. 8. This edition is the second and revised version of the 1982/1987 edition. See also 'AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993) and 'AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman, *Islamization: Reforming Contemporary Knowledge* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1994).

26. Al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge* (1987), p. 39.

27. Sardar's criticism of efforts to develop Islamic economics should be seen in this light. Although we do not entirely agree with Sardar's evaluation of contemporary Islamic literature, we do admit that many weaknesses stem from neglecting the prerequisites to Islamization. See Ziauddin Sardar, *Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to Come* (London: Mansell, 1985), pp. 94-104.

28. Syeed Vali Reza Nasr, *Islamization of Knowledge: A Critical Review* (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992).
29. This point was brought up by Waleed El-Ansary in a discussion with one of the authors. See also Sardar, *Islamic Futures*, pp. 198-217.
30. Nasr, *Islamization of Knowledge: A Critical Review* (1992).
31. *Bumiputera* refers to the Malays and other indigenous people in Malaysia, the majority of whom are Muslims.
32. For example, *Toward Islamization of Disciplines* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1989); and Taha Jabir al-'Alwani, *Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and Today* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1995).
33. Al-'Alwani, *Islamization of Knowledge*.
34. For example, J.S. Idris, "The Islamization of the Sciences: Its Philosophy and Methodology," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 4, no. 2 (1987); I. Ba-Yunus, "Al-Faruqi and Beyond: Future Direction in Islamization of Knowledge," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 5, no. 1 (1988); Fazlur Rahman, "Islamization of Knowledge: A Response," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 5, no. 1 (1988); Taha Jabir al-'Alwani, "Toward an Islamic Alternative in Thought and Knowledge," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 6, no. 1 (1989): 1-12; Ibrahim A. Ragab, "Islamic Perspectives on Theory Building in the Social Sciences," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 10, no. 1 (1993): 1-21; Louay Safi, "The Quest for Islamic Methodology: The Islamization of Knowledge Project in its Second Decade," *American Journal of Islamic Socral Sciences* 10, no. 1 (1993); and Yasien Mohamed, "Islamization of Knowledge: A Critique," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 11, no. 2 (1994): 282-294.