

ISLAM, SCIENCE, AND MODERNITY:
FROM NORTHERN VIRGINIA TO KUALA LUMPUR

By

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For Julie.

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The purpose of this dissertation is to describe and contextualize post-colonial negotiations among contemporary Muslims by using science as a case. This research project contributes to both the anthropology of science, technology, and medicine and science and technology studies by improving knowledge of the practice and perception of science in the Islamic world and among Muslims living in the West. This project also contributes to anthropological understandings of globalization and modernity. Specifically, this project examines the Islamization of knowledge debate through a multi-sited ethnography of four institutions: (1) the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Herndon, Virginia; (2) the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Leesburg, Virginia; (3) the International Islamic University of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and (4) the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. At each site, I collected (1) participant-observation data and (2) semi-structured and life history interviews. I supplemented these data with an analysis of technical and popular literature.

The Islamization of knowledge debate constitutes one locus for Muslim intellectuals' re-evaluation of the meaning and relevance of "Islam," "science," and "modernity." I have described three philosophical positions within the debate, which I labeled modernization, indigenization, and nativization. Each position offers differing answers to fundamental questions surrounding the debate.

On the ground and apart from its main protagonists, the Islamization of knowledge is less rigidly definable into neat epistemological categories. Individual participants are attracted either by the philosophical ideas or, just as likely, by a desire to affiliate themselves with ideas and institutions where they can express their Islamic identity.

The most significant conclusion is that the institutional (think-tank, small graduate school, and large university) and national (American and Malaysian) contexts have a significant impact on the operational implementation of the philosophical positions held within the Islamization of knowledge debate. The answers proposed by the Muslim intellectuals engaged in the Islamization of knowledge debate are interrelated with the local and global contexts of knowledge production and reproduction in which they are situated.

CHAPTER 1 ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE: HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of this dissertation is to describe and contextualize post-colonial negotiations among contemporary Muslims by using science as a case. This research project contributes to both science and technology studies and the anthropology of science by improving knowledge of the practice and perception of science outside the Euro-American context. This project also contributes to the anthropological understandings of globalization and modernity. Specifically, this project examines the Islamization of knowledge debate concerning the legitimacy and relevance of Islam and science as means to address the particular needs of the Islamic world. The Islamization of knowledge debate constitutes one locus for Muslim intellectuals' re-evaluation of the meaning and relevance of "Islam," "science," and "modernity."

Science and Islam are much alike in that they are both global in scope, make universalist claims about the world, and are the focus of much angst and misunderstanding.¹ Today, a growing number of Muslim scholars have noticed this and are attempting to merge these two seemingly contradictory worldviews. At the same time, other Muslims are arguing that while Islam is valid and has a place in individuals' lives it has no place meddling with science. This debate over the Islamization of knowledge² has sparked controversy, conferences, publications, and the founding of centers and institutes. While the debate appears highly intellectual, at the same time it is also highly political. At stake is the right to define the bounds of Islam in science and

society and to represent and mobilize the histories of Islam and science for contemporary political purposes.

The intellectual side of the debate centers around the question “what roles can and should Islam and science play in society?” However, it is clear that the sub-text of the debate centers partly around the question “what political course should Muslims and Muslim nation-states pursue—Western-style modernism, Islamic radicalism, or some kind of middle-ground reformism?”

While many views are represented in this debate, two poles can be identified: Islamic traditionalism and Euro-American secular modernism. The extreme traditionalist position advocates the return to the original Islamic civilization as it existed in the time of the Prophet Muhammad, while the extreme modernist position advocates the total imitation of Euro-American civilization (Furlow 1996).

The contemporary revival of Islam is viewed by many in both the West and the Muslim world as anti-modernist, anti-rationalist, and anti-science. However, a brief examination of the Islamization of knowledge debate challenges this overly simplistic assertion. Boullata (1990:4), for example, discusses traditionalist intellectuals who “advocate the elimination of all external cultural influences” and “call for a return to the original, pristine essence of Islam as they perceive it to have been in the early centuries.” Despite this, these traditionalists “do not negate science and rationalism but consider them to be modern products of the earlier efforts of Muslims during the heyday of Islamic civilization, and they teach those products must be reacquired” (Boullata 1990:4). The deference that these extremely anti-Western intellectuals give to science and technology shows the extent to which the belief in science and technology transcends cultural

differences. While not all parties fully agree on the relative merits of science, all groups feel compelled to address the question of science.

This project documents the ways that contemporary Muslims conceptualize “science” and “Islam” within the Islamization of knowledge debate as they seek to construct an Islamic modernity and how their constructions are interrelated with “local” and “global” socio-cultural, political, and intellectual factors. Specifically, the project consists of a multi-sited ethnography of Muslim institutions where the Islamization of knowledge is being debated and advocated in Northern Virginia in the United States and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The institutions include (1) the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (GSISS) in Leesburg, Virginia; (2) the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in Herndon, Virginia; (3) the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and (4) the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

These sites, which include three institutions of higher education and one think-tank, represent key sites where an Islamic modernity is being constructed and contested. These institutions offer privileged sites in which to view how social actors negotiate, operationalize, implement, and sometimes subvert state and community policies and goals. States and local communities train and socialize modern citizens at educational institutions. At the same time, educators and students often have different agendas than the state and community. Furthermore, by examining multiple sites, it is possible to examine how variation in local, institutional, and national contexts contributes to the reproduction and transformation of knowledge and identity.

Given the political influence of intellectuals in the developing world and given the attacks of September 11, 2001, carried out by Muslim terrorists and the global war on terrorism that has followed, the outcome of this debate has significant ramifications for the political and social policies Muslim nation-states pursue and the ways that Muslims living in the West choose to live their lives, educate their children, and participate in society. Indeed, in Malaysia, political and educational leaders are central players in both the academic side of the debate and in policy-making concerning the role that science and Islam play in society.

The Anthropology of Science

Over the last decade and a half, anthropologists have devoted increasing attention to the practice and perception of science. Michael Fischer (1991:525) points to science as one of three “broad areas of opportunity” for anthropological study. Annette Weiner, in her 1993 Presidential address to the American Anthropological Association (AAA), claimed that anthropological studies of science will lead to important discoveries about our contemporary world while helping anthropologists bridge their own internal differences. The anthropology of science was featured in the *Annual Review of Anthropology* (Franklin 1995). And the Committee for the Anthropology of Science, Technology, and Computing (CASTAC) within the General Anthropology Division of the AAA serves as an institutional nexus for anthropologists of science.

The emergence of the anthropology of science occurred simultaneously with the rise of science and technology studies (STS). STS, which is dominated by Western-oriented disciplines of history, philosophy, and sociology, has focused almost exclusively on Euro-American science. Anthropologists of science have followed the example set by

STS researchers, and, with few exceptions (e.g., Furlow 1996; Hess 1991; Laughlin 1995; Shrum and Shenhav 1995; 1988; Traweek 1995; Watson-Verran and Turnbull 1995), have also concentrated on Euro-American science. Thus, researchers have ignored the majority of socio-cultural contexts in which science is practiced. This project will improve knowledge of the practice and perception of science outside the Euro-American context by examining the interaction of science and society in one non-Eurocentric context—the Islamization of knowledge debate.

The examination of the intersection of the “local” and “global” contexts of knowledge production is central to this project. Franklin (1995) identifies two major strands of research in the anthropology of science—cultures of science and science as culture. In studies of cultures of science, researchers examine the thoughts and behaviors of scientists in traditional scientific settings like laboratories and research institutes (e.g., Latour and Woolgar 1986; Traweek 1988). Early studies treated laboratories as if they were “bounded” communities possessing “local knowledge,” and the focus of research was on internalist studies of scientific practice and discourse. Substantive contributions of researchers studying cultures of science include greater understandings of the processual nature of knowledge formation and experimentation, the social structure of laboratories, internal scientific communication, and the production of scientific texts (e.g., Clark and Fujimura 1992; Knorr Cetina 1981; Latour and Woolgar 1986; Lynch, Livingstone, and Garfinkel 1983; Pickering 1992; Traweek 1988). However, these studies often ignored the broader social and political contexts.

Studies of science as culture examine the ways that science transcends its traditional settings like laboratories and becomes embedded in society (e.g., Haraway 1989; Martin

1994a; 1994b). Bruno Latour's (1987) actor-network theory proposes that "technoscience" is best understood as multiple, competing networks that include both people and things. The people involved in the production of science are not limited to scientists. Collins and Pinch (1979), for example, include both constitutive forums (or scientific forums like labs) and contingent forums which may include individuals in corporations, the media, government agencies, engineering firms, and so forth depending on the particular case.

Latour and others have also demonstrated the importance of including broader social factors in analyses of science (e.g., Callon, Law, and Rip 1986; Haraway 1989; Latour 1987). Moreover, the complexity of studying "science in the making" (Latour 1987) has led to new methodological approaches.

Perhaps the most significant technique is the multi-sited ethnography. Franklin (1995) notes the shift of anthropological studies of science from ethnographies of the lab which looked at science as local, bounded cultures, what Martin (1998) calls citadels, to multi-sited ethnographies. The trend toward multi-sited ethnographies is increasingly prevalent in many areas of anthropology that examine the "circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities" through the world system (Marcus 1995:96).

Emily Martin's (Martin 1994a; 1994b) study of immunology in American society is perhaps the most mature multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995). Martin followed immunological concepts as they moved and changed from context to context—from science lab, to AIDS activist group, to medical interns, to the media. Martin's findings that could not be duplicated by a community-based, single-site ethnography clearly demonstrate the utility of multi-sited ethnographies for studying complex and dispersed cultural objects.

Central to the argument for multi-sited ethnographies is the effect of the world system in local cultural production. For example, the shift toward multi-sited ethnographies in studies of science is motivated by the realization that laboratories and research centers are parts of dispersed, global networks. Similarly, globalization and transnationalism direct anthropological attention to the global flow of people, capital, information, symbols, and commodities (Kearney 1995).

The conceptualization of a system of global networks of people, culture, and capital in which the boundaries between core and periphery dissolve is a significant change from earlier hierarchical models of a world system (Kearney 1995) and is similar to Latour's (1987) conceptualization of technoscientific networks.

The Muslims, institutes, universities, professional associations, conferences, books, and journals involved in the Islamization of knowledge debate constitute several overlapping and interrelated global networks and are best conceptualized as global spaces where "local" and "global" factors simultaneously influence and are influenced by knowledge production. This project describes and traces these global networks through a multi-sited ethnography of specific sites or nodes involved in the Islamization of knowledge debate.

In this introduction, I describe the history and philosophical underpinnings of the contemporary Islamization of knowledge debate. I argue that Muslim intellectuals engaged in the Islamization of knowledge advocate one of three distinct philosophical positions that I have previously labeled the modernization, indigenization, and nativization approaches (Furlow 1996). After a discussion of similar debates during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, I describe these three approaches in terms of

their philosophies, legitimation strategies, and political implications. I conclude the chapter with a brief outline of the dissertation.

Late-19th and Early-20th Century Debates

The current debate is the latest of many attempts to reform Islam and mirrors earlier debates about Islam and modernism which took place during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries among Muslim secularists, Islamic modernists, and traditionalist *ulama*. The Muslim secularists sought to relegate Islam to an individual, moral level while advocating the imitation of Western scientific, technological, and political models. The traditionalist *ulama*, in contrast, sought to retreat from the West by returning to an Islamic society based on the model of the early Islamic community at the time of the Prophet Muhammad. In between the extremes of the secularists and the traditionalists were the Islamic modernists whom I will discuss in some detail.

The Islamic modernists voiced several themes that reappear in the contemporary Islamization of knowledge debate. First, the Islamic modernists asserted the primacy of the original Islamic sources—the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*—above all others. Second, they sought to re-establish the practice of *ijtihad*, the interpretation of Islamic sources to make judgements regarding Islamic law, and reduce *taqlid*, the blind imitation of traditional interpretations. Thus, they rejected the assertion by Islamic jurists in the tenth century that continued *ijtihad* was unnecessary because Islamic law was fully realized. Third, the Islamic modernists advocated the continued relevance of Islam in the modern world and the assimilation of the universal principals of Islam and the best of Western science and technology in order to meet the challenge of the European colonialism. They sought neither to reject the West and restore an idealized, historical Islamic society, like

the traditionalist *ulama*, nor to relegate Islam to a personal, moral level, like the Muslim secularists. Fourth, the Islamic modernists asserted, as did the traditionalist *ulama*, the self-sufficiency of Islam. However, the Islamic modernists differed with the community by modernizing Islam within the constraints of British colonial rule (Esposito 1984; Ruthven 1984).

Ahmad Khan's practical program of modernization was directed at both the structural (through founding institutions) and ideological (through a concerted traditionalists over what constituted Islam. The most influential Islamic modernists include Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Rida.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-98) was an Indian Muslim from an established family who worked for the British East India Company. Following the failed “Indian Mutiny of 1857” and convinced of the futility of Islamic revolts, Ahmad Khan chose to reform the Muslim reinterpretation of Islam) levels. Khan's structural interventions include founding the Scientific Society in 1864 that translated Western texts into Urdu and the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College modeled on Cambridge University in 1874. The purpose of the College was to teach Muslims Western disciplines alongside the Islamic heritage thus demonstrating their compatibility (Esposito 1984).³

At the ideological level, Khan advocated the modernization of Islam through direct interpretation of the original Islamic sources—*ijtihad*. The new interpretations would utilize the universal principles of Islam to solve modern problems. Khan saw no contradiction between Islam and science. Khan rejected the static, legalistic Islam as promulgated by the *ulama*. Instead, Khan viewed Islam as the religion of reason and

nature. For Ahmad Khan, as Esposito (1984:53) states: “There could be no contradiction between the Word of God (*Qur’an*) and the Work of God (Nature).” Therefore, Western science and technology were translated into resources that were both relevant *and* authentic.

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-97) traveled throughout the Islamic world from Egypt to India promoting Islamic reform and unity. Al-Afghani, like Khan, called for both a return to the original sources of Islam and the adoption of Western science, technology, and political institutions (Barakat 1993). However, unlike Khan, al-Afghani advocated the overthrow of colonialism and the formation of an Islamic state. According to Esposito (1984:47), “Afghani believed that Muslim revitalization . . . could be achieved not by ignoring or rejecting the West but by direct, active engagement and confrontation.”

Al-Afghani’s goals were political, and his approach was activist. Although al-Afghani's pan-Islamic dreams of liberation and reunification of the Islamic world were unattainable, his ideas greatly influenced many Muslim reformers including Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida (Esposito 1984).

Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), like Khan and al-Afghani, advocated both a return to the original sources of Islam and the adaptation of Islam to modern circumstances. As Barakat (1993:244) states, Abduh’s “call for a return to the original sources of Islam was matched only by his ardent insistence on the need to adapt to the requirements of modern life.” This adaptation included the pragmatic decision to work within the framework of British colonial rule in Egypt (Barakat 1993; Esposito 1984).

The adaptation of Islam was to be obtained through *ijtihad* and, like Ahmad Khan in India, implemented through educational reforms. These reforms included the teaching of Islamic and Western knowledge in the same schools and were aimed at demonstrating the relevance of Islam to modern thought and society (Barakat 1993; Esposito 1984).

Abduh held the highest religious-legal office in Egypt. As Mufti, Abduh was in charge of Egypt's *Shariah* (religious) law courts and pioneered a reform of Islamic law in Egypt and used his reinterpretation of Islamic law to legitimize his social reform agenda. An important justification was Abduh's division of Islamic law into two realms: duties to God (which were eternal and unchangeable) and social duties and regulations (which were open to new interpretations as conditions changed). Abduh used this distinction to great effect with regard to his social reform agenda which included his educational reforms and women's rights (Barakat 1993; Esposito 1984).

Rashid Rida (1865-1935), a colleague of Abduh, also advocated a return to the original Islamic sources. However, after the death of Abduh, Rida became increasingly critical of the West and of other Islamic modernists like Qasim Amin, Lufti al-Sayyid, and Saad Zaghlul who had moved toward a secular, Egyptian nationalism. Rida, in contrast, moved away from Western ideas by advocating the self-sufficiency of Islam as embodying a complete way of life. While Al-Afghani had espoused a similar view in his fight against Western colonialism and imperialism, Rida's position was much more conservative eventuating in his complete rejection of anything Western. "From being an Islamic modernist, Rida had become an Islamic fundamentalist ideologue" (Esposito 1984:64).

To summarize, the Islamic modernists though ideologically diverse held a core of beliefs emphasizing the primacy of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, *ijtihad*, the integration of Islamic principles and Western science and technology, and the self-sufficiency of Islam. These beliefs emerged in the context of the fight against European colonialism and a debate with Muslim secularists and traditionalist *ulama* about the role of Islam and Western science in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Muslim world. The Islamic modernist themes reappear in the contemporary Islamization of knowledge debates to which I now turn.

The Contemporary Debate

In the earlier debate, Muslims were responding to European colonialism.⁴ For the contemporary Islamization of knowledge debate, decolonization, development, and, more recently, globalization and modernity form the broad contexts. Within this context, the newly independent Muslim countries viewed European-style education as the key to development (Faksh 1977; Shami 1989). According to McDonald (1986:59), who studied Egyptian education and development, “education came to be universally recognized as a major determinant of individual and societal progress toward the goal of modernization and an essential component of development.” This view that education and development are directly linked continues to be a dominant theme in much of the world and can be found in the official rhetoric of many Third World governments (Alborno 1989).

It is ironic that Middle Eastern countries viewed European-style education as the chosen route to development because a long Arab/Islamic educational tradition already existed. The oldest university in the Middle East, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, was

founded in 970 A.D. and still flourishes today as part of Egypt's system of national universities.

Despite this, European-style educational institutions opened and operated alongside of the religious educational system. These systems were mutually exclusive and in competition with one another with the religious schools providing basic education and religious training to the masses and government schools providing European-style education to the elite (Faksh 1980).

A product of this dual system of education is a cultural rift between those who are more traditionally oriented and those who are more Euro-American oriented (Faksh 1980; Radwan 1951). This rift has culminated in what some scholars have described as a civilizational crisis (see Abaza and Stauth 1990; Boullata 1990; Dekmejian 1980; Dhaoudi 1990; Laroui 1976). According to these scholars, the civilizational crisis is a crisis of legitimacy and identity resulting from the failure of Muslim countries to provide effective rulers, achieve development and social justice, succeed in confrontations with Israel, Zionism, and the West, and is a direct result of colonialism and Westernization. Dekmejian (1980:8) writes that "by the late 1960s due to the confluence of these catalytic factors a multi-dimensional crisis situation was engulfing the Arab and Islamic countries, which continues to dominate their social and political life today."

The Islamization of knowledge debate emerged within the context of the perceived crisis of Islamic civilization and is one response to this crisis. The participants in this debate are not homogeneous. While all the participants are Muslims, they include individuals who are both Western trained and Islamically trained, who reside throughout the Muslim diaspora and within the Muslim world.⁵ All are scholars or professionals of

one sort or another and are employed in universities or other research centers and institutes.⁶ Muslims engaged in this debate propose three different philosophical approaches that I label modernization, indigenization, and nativization.

Modernization

The advocates of the modernist approach to science hold that science is value-free, neutral, and objective. Any values which surround science are primarily personal in nature and therefore do not affect the content of science. While arguably most Muslim scientists hold this view (1985; Sardar 1988), only a few participate in the Islamization of knowledge debate. Among these, two physicists, Muhammad Abdus Salam and Jamal Mimouni, represent the modernist approach of science most forcefully.

The modernists have a two-tiered legitimation strategy—they attempt to construct modern, i.e., Euro-American, science, as both Islamically authentic and as relevant to the problems of contemporary Islamic civilization. Each tier is, in turn, based on two arguments.

The modernists construct the Islamic authenticity of science on two premises. First, the *Qur'an* and the Prophet Muhammad both advocate the search for knowledge. And second, modern science is a part of the Islamic legacy.

To demonstrate Islamic legitimacy, the modernists quote extensively both the *Qur'an* and the Prophet Muhammad. For example, Abdus Salam (1989:135) states:

Seven hundred and fifty verses of the Quran (almost one eighth of the Book) exhort believers “to study Nature, to reflect, to make the best use of reason in their search for the ultimate and to make the acquisition of knowledge and scientific comprehension part of the community's life.” The Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon Him) emphasized that the “quest for knowledge (and sciences) is obligatory upon every Muslim, Man and Woman.”

Abdus Salam also argues that modern science is part of the Islamic legacy. He argues that the transition from the medievalists to the modernists occurred during the “Golden Age of Science in Islam” around 1000 AD. According to Abdus Salam, Ibn al-Haitham and Al-Biruni were the first modernists, i.e., empirical scientists. Next he cites Euro-American authorities on the history of science, Brifault and Sarton, who back his point. Mimouni (1987:87) follows Abdus Salam’s construction of modern science as a Graeco-Islamic legacy and states that the “natural sciences are as Islamic as Nature could be.”

The third and fourth steps attempt to demonstrate the relevance of modern science and technology to solving the problems of Islamic civilization. First, the modernists emphasize the success of modern science by pointing to Euro-American success and to the development of non-Euro-American countries like Japan. And second, the modernists argue that the decline of science in the Islamic world is responsible for the lack of success of Islamic civilization.

According to the modernists, the cause of the decline of science is partly due to external influences, partly due to the faults of Muslim scientists, but mainly due to the *ulama*, or traditional religious scholars, and other advocates of Islam. According to Abdus Salam (1989), the reinvigoration of science depends on both scientific freedom and the existence of a critical mass of practitioners. If Muslim nations “decide to support Science and create considerable self-contained and internally-free bodies of scientists, Science will do well. Democracy in the society as a whole is not essential for its flourishing: democracy and openness (plus generous patronage) within the scientific community is essential” (Abdus Salam 1989:134).

The political implications are obvious. The modernists are politically conservative. While it is the responsibility of the government to allow scientists the freedom and independence necessary for the success of the scientific enterprise, the government need not be democratic. Science can flourish under any style of government.

Indigenization

The second approach is the indigenization approach. The indigenists' goal is the production of knowledge relevant to the specific problems of Islamic countries. While the indigenists argue that the Euro-American model of science cannot work when adopted uncritically, they are not willing to discard the whole enterprise.

The indigenists hold that the crisis of the Islamic civilization resulted from the division of knowledge into what might be called “rational” or “modern” sciences and Islamic sciences—a system institutionalized in contemporary, Muslim educational systems. The indigenists argue that educational reform is needed in order to re-unify knowledge. The reformed educational systems will produce individuals who have a unified knowledge of both rational and Islamic science that is relevant to the Islamic civilization. While several indigenization models exist, the two most distinct models are the model proposed by the late Ismail Al-Faruqi and the imitation-innovation-assimilation model proposed by S. Waqar A. Husaini.

In his book *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan*, Al-Faruqi (1982) outlined his vision for the Islamization of knowledge.⁷ This model is championed by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS). Al-Faruqi's model was revised and expanded after his death in a second edition by Abu Sulayman (1989) and revised again by Taha J. Al-Alwani (1995).

For this group, the political, economic, and cultural spheres reflect a civilizational malaise; and European colonization, in various forms, is directly responsible. The core of the crisis is a crisis of intellectual thought and methodology that is closely linked to the educational system's lack of Islamic vision. The solution is to reform education by integrating the Islamic and European-style educational systems (AbuSulayman 1989).

The integration of the curriculum will occur through the Islamization of the social sciences. The indigenists argue that Islamization will unite objectivity and values which

are separated in the Euro-American classification of knowledge into the social sciences and the humanities but which can not be separated in an Islamic classification (Al-Faruqi 1981). This synthesis of objectivity and values will occur at the disciplinary level utilizing Al-Faruqi's twelve-step work plan or, more likely, a variation thereof.

In the work plan itself (see Figure 1-1), Al-Faruqi emphasizes establishing first the relevance of Islam to the modern disciplines and second the relevance of the resultant indigenized knowledge to the solution of both the problems of the *Ummah*, or Islamic community, and the problems of all humankind.

For this group, Islamic methodology is founded on a few basic Islamic tenets. "These principles constitute the framework of Islamic thought and methodology; they are the lighthouse that guides Islamic mentality, psychological build-up and personality in academic and everyday life" (AbuSulayman 1989:33). Foremost among these is the principle of *tawhid* or the unity of *Allah*. Essentially, this means that there is no god but *Allah*, and everything derives from *Allah*. Following this first principle and derived from it are the principles of the unity of creation, the unity of truth and unity of knowledge, the unity of life, the unity of humanity, and the complementary nature of revelation and reason (AbuSulayman 1989). Individual scholars are responsible for the development and use of an Islamic methodology appropriate for their discipline.

Al-Alwani (1995) lists three specific goals of the IIIT group: (1) to reintegrate knowledge and values, (2) to link *Allah's* two sources of knowledge—His revelation (the *Qur'an*) and His creation (the natural universe), and (3) to redirect Western philosophy's concern with the problem of ends toward the recognition that this problem is limitless. According to Al-Alwani, any true account of the universe needs to combine readings from both sources.

To undertake a reading of either without reference to the other will neither benefit humanity nor lead it to the sort of comprehensive knowledge necessary for the building and maintenance of civilized society or to knowledge worthy of preservation and further development or exchange. (Al-Alwani 1995:85)

While the IIIT approach creates a new Islamic methodology derived from Islamic principles, S. Waqar A. Husaini, an engineer, utilizes the Islamic law—*Shariah*. For Husaini's imitative-innovative assimilation model, *Shariah* provides the normative criteria from which decisions about what Western science and technology can be assimilated by Islamic civilization without compromising the *Umma's* (Islamic community's) integrity (Husaini 1980).

Husaini, like the IIIT approach and the approaches of Khan and Abduh, argues that education is now divided into two types of disciplines: *ulum aqaliyya* (rational sciences) and *ulum Shariah* (religious sciences, literally sciences of Islamic law). Again like the IIIT, Husaini views the reintegration of education as the key to ending the contemporary crisis in Islamic civilization (1981; Husaini 1985).

The difference between Husaini's plan and the IIIT plan is who will reconstruct Islamic civilization once the educational system is reintegrated. In the IIIT plan, the social scientists are responsible for both reforming education and society. In Husaini's plan, while social scientists and humanists work together to reform education, scientists and engineers reform society because Husaini believes "they are the main agents of change in socio-economic development and industrialization" (Husaini 1981:153).

Husaini proposes a three-step plan to reintegrate education: (1) the integration of the humanities and social sciences with Islamic ideology, (2) the integration of the new Islamic humanistic-social sciences with science and technology, and (3) the integration of techno-humanistic and techno-social science disciplines with Islamic ideology. According to Husaini, the reformed educational system, which reunites the rational *ulum aqaliyya* and the religious *ulum Shariyya*, will produce individuals who are knowledgeable in *Shariah* and science and technology and, therefore, are capable science and technology policy-makers (1981; Husaini 1985).

Husaini and the IIIT plans are similar in many respects. Most significantly, each plan focuses on reforming the education system by integrating rational and Islamic

disciplines to produce individuals with knowledge relevant to the contemporary problems in the Islamic world.

The plans differ in respect to which disciplines get “Islamized,” how the disciplines get Islamized, and who become policy-makers. The IIIT plan proposes the Islamization of only the social sciences and humanities using an Islamic methodology based on Islamic principles found in the *Qur’an* and *Sunnah* with scholars from those disciplines becoming policy-makers. Husaini, in contrast, proposes the Islamization of all disciplines. Husaini's model uses Islamic law, *Shariah*, as the normative criteria for decision-making on what Western science and technology can be assimilated. Interestingly in Husaini's plan, the social scientists and humanists do most of the Islamization work while the scientists and engineers become the policy-makers.

For their vision to be adopted, the advocates of each plan need to gain support from potential allies, i.e., social scientists, humanists, natural scientists, the *ulama*, government officials, etc. The IIIT group attracts social scientists and humanists by giving these disciplines the central role in reforming the education and ultimately society at a time when these disciplines are viewed as inferior to the natural sciences in the Middle East (Shami 1989). This strategy also contests the reality of the perceived failure of the education for development model (Albornoz 1989; 1977; Faksh 1980; McDonald 1986).

According to Seteney Shami (1989), a Jordanian anthropologist who is not involved in the Islamization debate, the legitimacy of the social sciences and social scientists stems from their role as educators, as conveyors of knowledge. Thus, the perceived crisis in the education for development model is extremely detrimental to the legitimacy of educators, particularly in countries like Egypt where education has played a central role in development policy. This explains why the construction of “Islamized” knowledge as knowledge relevant to contemporary problems is central to the IIIT model.

While the IIIT plan does little to attract natural scientists, it also does little to ruffle their feathers. The IIIT position is that the natural sciences are objective disciplines that, except for a few areas like evolutionary biology, do not contradict Islamic principles.⁸ In fact, Jamal Mimouni (1987:88), an advocate of the modernist position discussed above, suggests that the IIIT approach that Islamizes the social sciences and humanities is welcome and needed. Mimouni states, “social sciences are much more subjective [than natural sciences] and their ideological implications lie much deeper, and so they are legitimately the prime object for the Islamisation project.”

While the *ulama*, similarly, do not lose anything and gain the prospect of having Islam play an increasingly central role in education and development, government officials are reassured that the Islamization of knowledge is a long process that will take generations. Government officials are also reassured that the IIIT is an apolitical institute (Al-Alwani 1995).

Husaini’s model differs slightly in orientation. While Husaini’s model offers social scientists and humanists a large role in reforming education and teaching scientists and engineers, the scientists and engineers benefit by becoming the policy-makers. Husaini’s model, like the IIIT model, re-legitimizes the education for development model. However, for social scientists and humanists it maintains and reaffirms their role as conveyors of rather than as producers of knowledge and establishes relevant knowledge as the exclusive purview of scientists and engineers.

Husaini’s model follows the IIIT model concerning the *ulama* and the go slow approach to reform (1981; Husaini 1985). For the indigenists, political change consists primarily of structural changes in education though Islam does play an increasingly important role in society and politics.

Nativization

The nativization approach is a third philosophical position advocated by Muslim intellectuals engaged in the Islamization of science debate. The advocates of a

nativization approach hold that the modernist model of science is a product of Western civilization and is embedded in the Western worldview. According to the advocates of nativization, the modernist model of science cannot solve the problems of Islamic civilization because it has a different worldview. Therefore, an authentic Islamic science is needed to solve the problems of Islamic civilization. For the nativists, Islamic science is not an adaptation of the modernist model of science. Rather, Islamic science is a new and different science that must be built upon an Islamic epistemological foundation.

Two main models of a nativization approach exist—the Ijmali model and the S. H. Nasr model. Their visions of Islam are competing for the right to represent authentic Islam that is central to the concept of nativization. The Ijmali vision is a more traditional Islamic vision while Nasr’s vision incorporates aspects of Sufi mysticism.

The Ijmalis, led by Ziauddin Sardar, S. Parvez Manzoor, and Munawar A. Anees, advocate one nativist position. They provide a strong critique of Western science at the epistemological level and attempt to demarcate appropriate Islamic concepts upon which to reconstruct science. The Ijmalis aim at synthesis within the framework of Islamic aesthetics. Sardar (1984:72) describes Islamic science this way:

It is essentially a *subjectively objective* enterprise: objective solutions to normative goals and problems are sought within an area mapped out by the eternal values and concepts of Islam. In Islamic science, both the ends and means of science are dictated by the ethical system of Islam It is a systematic, rigorous pursuit of truth, a rational and objective problem solving enterprise that seeks to understand the whole of Reality. It is wholistic and is founded on synthesis.

For the Ijmalis, the concepts of Islamic epistemology are located in the *Qur’an* and the *Sunnah*. “*Tawheed*,” or the “unity of God,” is the unifying principle of Islamic epistemology. Four other concepts and three pairs of opposed concepts form the remainder of the primary concepts of Islamic epistemology (see Figure 1-2). These Islamic concepts provide the holistic and interrelated foundation on which the Ijmalis want to construct a rejuvenated Islamic science. The Ijmalis seek to apply universal

Islamic concepts to the contemporary situation to achieve an authentic Islamic science that is relevant to and can address the issues of the modern Islamic civilization from within its own worldview.

The second nativistic model is that of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and a small group, most notably Osman Bakar.⁹ In Nasr's (1978) view, the goal of Islamic science is “the demonstration of the interrelatedness of all things” (p.4). The first step toward an Islamic science is to stop imitating the way the West studies Islamic science and to view Islamic science “in an integral manner as part and parcel of the total Islamic intellectual tradition” (Nasr 1985:7).

From Nasr’s perspective, an Islamic science must be established according to Islamic principles. For Nasr, the fundamental Islamic principles include

the sacredness of all *'ilm*, the hierarchy of knowledge which places the knowledge of God above any science of His creation, the inter-relatedness of all orders of reality, the sacred character of the phenomena of nature as the signs (*ayat*) of God, nature's participation in the Quranic revelation, the domination of the vertical cause or the Divine Will over all horizontal causes without the negation of these secondary causes. (Nasr 1985:7)

While most of these principles are similar to those of the Ijmalis and the other advocates of the Islamization of science, Nasr is almost alone in his explicit extension of credibility to the notion that *ayat* are interpretable from nature and that nature has a role in *Qur'anic* revelation.

Nasr's group's legitimation relies on authenticity and Nasr’s own stature within the Islamization of science movement. Early on, Nasr was successful using the strategy of authenticity because his position was practically the only position. Nasr’s best known publications are probably his 1968 book *Science and Civilization in Islam* and his 1976 book *Islamic Science: An Illustrated Study*. Both the books were published before the Islamization of science movement had begun in earnest. Nasr, therefore, had the only claim of representing authentic Islam.

For Nasr, authentic Islam means the renewal of Islamic civilization as it was during the Golden Age. This definition is quite different from the Ijmali definition which relies on authenticity through the derivation of concepts directly from authoritative Islamic sources—the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*. It is this difference that has sparked the harsh criticism of Nasr by the Ijmalis (see Sardar 1988).

The political implications of the nativization position are the most radical. The nativists call for the rejection of Euro-American science and the formation of a new or revitalized Islamic science and Islamic civilization from the ground up. This requires an Islamic revolution though of an intellectual rather than a military sort.

Summary

Several themes link the contemporary Islamization of knowledge debate and the earlier debates during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In both the earlier and contemporary debates, arguments resolve around the relevance and authenticity of science. For example, in the contemporary debate, each of the three positions I discuss—modernization, indigenization, and nativization—construct science as both relevant to contemporary problems and Islamically authentic. However, advocates of each position use different strategies to legitimize their views.

There is also a call to return to the original sources of Islam—the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*—combined with a renewed interest in *ijtihad*. Thus, debate participants must be viewed as Islamic reformers who challenge the traditionalist *ulama* who declared an end to *ijtihad* as unnecessary during the tenth century. Similarly, educational reforms which re-unite European-style and Islamic education are viewed as a promising site for interventions.

The reformers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries had limited success. The success of the various positions represented within the Islamization debate is yet to be determined. Each group of advocates is struggling to establish legitimacy

with the various groups and institutions that possess the power and authority to influence and implement policy-decisions.

Overview of Dissertation

The Islamization of knowledge debate as a whole takes place within the broad context of decolonization and development and within the intellectual milieu of post-colonial negotiations between “nativizing” cultural traditions and “global” modernisms. IOK, as an intellectual movement, is decades old. Discussions of IOK, sometimes labeled Islamic Science, began officially in 1977 at two conferences: the World Conference on Islamic Education held in Mecca and the first International Conference on Islamization of Knowledge held in Switzerland. However, Muslim intellectuals, like S.H. Nasr, Isma’il Al-Faruqi, S. Naquib Al-Attas among others, had been discussing related issues beginning in the 50s and 60s. Similarly, the Muslim Student Association (MSA), which has chapters on many university campuses in the United States and Canada, had held a series of seminars between 1968 and 1977 on related issues (Barzinji n.d.; Maiwada 1999).

During my field research in Northern Virginia and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, I have been struck constantly by the divergent ways that philosophical positions were implemented in different institutional settings depending on their local and national contexts. When I began my research on the contemporary debates about Islamic science using published materials, it appeared each of the institutions that I eventually spent time at held relatively unified positions. However, on the ground, it became clear that a variety of discourses and identities, actors and intellectual positions were in play at each site and that the local institutional and national contexts are critical to understanding the variation in the operational implementation of IOK.

In chapter 2, I outline the theoretical framing for the ethnographic research and describe the data collection and analysis methods used. I define and differentiate between the theoretical concepts “modernity” and “globalization” and argue that both are

critical for understanding the diversity of intellectual positions present within the debate and how the philosophical positions are implemented on the ground within different institutional and national settings. In the methodological section, I argue that a multi-sited research design created the ability to compare institutional settings within the debate and how that added validity to my arguments.

In chapter 3, I examine the Islamization of knowledge in the United States. Specifically, I describe my fieldwork at the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (GSISS) and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). I focus on how the original philosophical positions of the IIIT were transformed as they moved from a think-tank institutional setting to the setting of a school of higher education.

Chapter 4 describes the national context of my Malaysian field research. I examine in detail how the Malaysian national context differs markedly from the American national context in terms of the role of Muslims and Islam in society and how this impacts the way the philosophical positions within the Islamization of knowledge debate get implemented at institutions of higher education.

In chapter 5, I describe and compare the actual implementation of the philosophical positions at the International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM) and at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC). Of particular interest is how the IIUM, led at the time of my fieldwork by a former president of the IIIT, implemented the IIIT-originated ideas within the Malaysian context.

Chapter 6 summarizes the key findings and frames the ethnographic work within its theoretical contexts. The chapter will focus on how the local, institutional, and national contexts impacted the different ways that philosophical positions in the Islamization of knowledge debate were reproduced and transformed as they moved between institutional settings in the United States and Malaysia.

- Step 1: Mastering Modern Disciplines
- Step 2: Disciplinary Survey
- Step 3: Mastering Islamic Legacy
- Step 4: Analysis of Islamic Legacy
- Step 5: Establishing Relevance of Islam to Modern Disciplines
- Step 6: Assessment of Modern Disciplines
- Step 7: Assessment of Islamic Legacy
- Step 8: Survey of *Ummah*'s Problems
- Step 9: Survey of Humanity's Problems
- Step 10: Analysis and Synthesis
- Step 11: Recasting the Disciplines: Textbooks
- Step 12: Dissemination of Islamized Knowledge

Figure 1-1. The Islamization of Knowledge Work Plan of Al-Faruqi.

Concept	Translation/Significance
<i>Tawheed</i>	Unity of <i>Allah</i> ; the unifying principle of Islamic epistemology
<i>Khilafat</i>	Trusteeship of the world given to man by <i>Allah</i>
<i>Ilm</i>	Islamic concept of knowledge that includes both concepts and values and is discoverable through reason and revelation
<i>Ibadah</i>	Worship; the acquisition of <i>'ilm</i> is a form of worship
<i>Taqwa</i>	Allah-consciousness
<i>Adl</i>	Equity or justice; is opposed to <i>zulm</i>
<i>Zulm</i>	Oppression
<i>Halal</i>	Permissible; is opposed to <i>haram</i>
<i>Haram</i>	Forbidden
<i>Istislah</i>	Public interest; is opposed to <i>dhiya</i>
<i>Dhiya</i>	Waste

Figure 1-2. Ijmali Concepts of Islamic Epistemology.

Notes

¹ The late Ernest Gellner (1992) suggested that three ideological options exist today: religious fundamentalism, relativism, and Enlightenment rationalism. While the main thrust of Gellner's argument is that from his perspective as an adherent of Enlightenment rationalism these three positions are distinct and irreducible, he noted the similarity between the absolutist tendencies of religious fundamentalism and enlightenment rationalism. The contemporary Islamization of knowledge debate is a site where the inconsistency and distinctiveness of Gellner's three positions are being contested.

² Some prefer the term Islamic Science (see Rahman 1985). I prefer Islamization of knowledge because it is more encompassing.

³ Today, the College, renamed Aligarh Muslim University in 1920, houses the Centre for Studies on Science (CSOS) that is a leading center in the Islamization of knowledge debate.

⁴ Colonialism lasted as late as the early 1970s in parts of the Arabian Peninsula.

⁵ Interestingly, many of the debate participants reside outside the traditional Middle East. Individuals in South Asia, (particularly India, Pakistan, and Malaysia), Britain, and the United States dominate the debate.

⁶ Major centers of the debate include the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in Herndon, Virginia, USA; the Center for Studies on Science (CSOS) in Aligarh, India; the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) in Islamabad, Pakistan; the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; the OIC affiliated Islamic Scientific, Educational, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) in Rabat, Morocco; and the Islamic Foundation for Science, Technology, and Development (IFSTAD) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

⁷ For a brief biography of Ismail Al-Faruqi see Esposito (1991a).

⁸ Interestingly, Maurice Bucaille (1989) argues that the *Qur'an* reveals many modern scientific theories and that Islam is more scientific than Christianity based on a comparison of the *Qur'an* and *Bible*.

⁹ For a biography of Seyyed Hossein Nasr see Smith (1991).

CHAPTER 2 THEORY AND METHOD: GLOBALIZATION AND MODERNITY

This project documents the ways that contemporary Muslims conceptualize "science" and "Islam" within the Islamization of knowledge debate as they seek to construct an Islamic modernity and how their constructions are interrelated with “local” and “global” socio-cultural, political, and intellectual factors. The examination of the intersection of the “local” and “global” contexts of knowledge production and reproduction is central to this project. At the ethnographic level, I am interested in the ways that ideas are formed and transformed as they move across institutional and national borders. This chapter outlines the theoretical and methodological tools used in this study. Two theoretical concepts and one methodological tactic are central to this project: modernity, globalization, and multi-sited ethnography. In this chapter I will differentiate these concepts and specify how they relate to the Islamization of knowledge.

Modernity

Many of the same scholars and scholarly works are cited in the literatures on both modernity and globalization.¹ While both modernity and globalization are used in contemporary anthropological literature, modernity has a much longer history in the social sciences and sociology in particular.²

Gaonkar (2001) identifies two strands of modernity in classic social theory derived from studies of the West: (1) societal modernization and (2) cultural modernity. Societal modernization involves both social and cognitive transformations. The social

transformations include “the emergence and institutionalization of market-driven industrial economies, bureaucratically administered states, modes of popular government, rule of law, mass media, and increased mobility, literacy, and urbanization”(Gaonkar 2001:2). The cognitive transformations include “the growth of scientific consciousness, the development of a secular outlook, the doctrine of progress, the primacy of instrumental rationality, the fact-value split, individualistic understandings of the self, contractualist understandings of society, and so on” (Gaonkar 2001:1-2).

The societal modernization strand of modernity is linked to the development of capitalism in the West and is well described by Max Weber (1958 [1904]) among others. For Weber, societal modernization consisted of the dual processes of change and routinization. Society was in a state of constant change at the same time many sectors of society were being routinized and standardized through the process of a particular type of rationalization—purposive-instrumental rationality or means/end rationality. The rationalization of society resulted in many material improvements. However, Weber also viewed purposive-instrumental rationality as value-neutral and thus argued that this type of rationality could not confer meaning on the world. The result is that, for Weber, society ends not in the utopia envisioned by Enlightenment philosophers but in an “iron cage” of bureaucracy.

Cultural modernity rose in opposition to societal modernization primarily in the aesthetic realm of literature and art beginning in the late eighteenth century and expanded via the popular media, entertainment, commercial arts, and advertising. Advocates of cultural modernity turned away from the middle class ethos towards self-exploration and self-realization through creative and experiential transgressions of middle class norms and

sensibilities. Baudelaire's valorization of modernity as "the transient, the fleeting, the contingent" condition of everyday life in opposition to the contemplative, the eternal, and the idealized—"nearly all our originality comes from the stamp that time impresses upon our sensibility" (cited in Gaonkar 2001:4)—exemplifies well the notion of cultural modernity. Baudelaire's vision celebrates the spectacle and novelty of modern life. However, Baudelaire's modernity can also lapse into narcissism and hedonism due to its lack of normative limits.

To briefly summarize, both strands of modernity—societal modernization and cultural modernity—are associated with the rise of capitalism in the West, are concerned with the making and remaking of individual and communal subjectivities, and have a Janus-faced characteristic of being viewed as good or bad depending on one's orientation. Upon this theoretical landscape have entered contemporary social theorists including anthropologists.

Several key modifications or additions to the classic view of modernity presented above are necessary.³ First, there is a general consensus that modernity has expanded from its European origins to the rest of the world via colonialism, Westernization, and globalization. Second, most scholars argue that modernity needs pluralizing and relativizing. Modernity does not appear in identical form everywhere it exists nor does it unfold in an identical manner contra to many advocates of the modernization theory of development in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

The conceptualization of multiple modernities or alternative modernities emerged to capture the variable ways in which modernity unfolds across time and space. Gaonkar (2001) notes how even within the Western tradition the term modern has been differently

conceptualized across time. In one conceptualization, the old instructs the new. The old is the standard by which each age measures excellence and “must seek to emulate under altered conditions without ever hoping to surpass it” (Gaonkar 2001:6). In the second conceptualization, the modern is associated with progress in knowledge and material wellbeing and is better than the past. In the third conceptualization (post Baudelaire), modernity is associated with the present. Novelty and the present are valorized and the modern neither looks to the past for models or a standard nor claims the authority to “instruct the future” (Gaonkar 2001:6). Drawing on Foucault, Gaonkar (2001:13) suggests that what underlies each of these conceptualizations of modernity is “an attitude of questioning the present.”

Anthropologists have also used modernity in a variety of ways. Friedman (2002:289) identifies at least four different ways that anthropologists have deployed modernity in recent work including: (1) modernity as the contemporary, (2) modernity as the leading sector or region of the world, (3) modernity as a set of modern commodities or images from the capitalist center, and (4) “as a cultural space, a regime of social experience.”

Each of the four ways specifies a particular articulation between social phenomena characterized as either modern or alternatively modern and capitalism. First, modernity as contemporary specifies the co-existence of phenomena and capitalism in the same social space without the requirement that the phenomena are structurally integrated into the capitalist system. The classic instance of this is Geschiere’s (1997) study of witchcraft. Second, modernity as the leading sector specifies a comparative relationship between the center of the system (usually described as “the West” though a regional center can also fill

this role) and a particular locale. Friedman argues that, because the center functions as a standard of modernity against which a locale defines itself, this necessarily entails a hierarchical relationship that can entail critique or rejection as well as emulation. Third, modernity as commodities or images is a metonymic relationship in which products from the center stand in for or symbolize the center in local discourses of modernity. Fourth, modernity as “a cultural space” and “a regime of social experience” entails a relationship of structural transformation in which subjects and institutions are dominated by the logic of capital.

While some scholars have questioned the utility of modernity as a theoretical construct given its empirical variability and use in practice, I agree with Knauff (2002) and Gaonkar (2001) that the idea of alternative modernities is theoretically productive.⁴ In this study, I will use modernity primarily in the second and fourth senses described by Friedman (2002) and discussed above.⁵ The Muslim intellectuals engaged in the Islamization of knowledge debate are critically engaging with notions of modernity both in a comparative manner (the second sense above) and are actively and creatively engaged in making and re-making an alternative Islamic modernity (the fourth sense above).

Globalization

A critical concern for studies using the concept of modernity is how modernity is differentiated from and overlaps with globalization and capitalism. In this section, I will define and differentiate globalization and capitalism and specify how I use the terms.⁶

Jameson (1998) outlines four possible philosophical positions concerning globalization: (1) globalization does not exist, (2) globalization exists but is not new, (3) globalization exists and is linked specifically to the extension of the capitalist market to

its “ultimate horizon,” i.e., the globe, and thus is new in extent but not in kind, and (4) globalization is a new multinational stage of capitalism associated with postmodernity. Jameson finds the fourth position most interesting. My own position is that (1) globalization exists, (2) globalization is associated with the spread of capitalism, (3) globalization entails aspects that are not entirely new and aspects that have only developed in the last 30-40 years, and (4) whether or not globalization represents a new stage of capitalism is less interesting than the impact globalization has had in the world and the implications this has for anthropological theory.⁷

Globalization is a concept that is used widely across popular and scholarly contexts from presidents and prime ministers to social activists and indigenous peoples, from philosophy and theology to anthropology and political science. Globalization, as a historical process, has been lauded as the path leading to utopian futures and demonized as a Western and capitalist tool of domination of the weak and poor by the strong and the rich. Some characterize globalization as the Americanization or Westernization of the world, others caricature it as McDonaldization (Ritzer 2000); however, most analysts agree it has to do with the spread of capitalism and mass communication around the world. What people mean by this is, at one level anyway, that you can travel the world and experience many of the same hotels, restaurants, entertainment venues, and transport used in the United States.

Beyond anecdotes about the things people experience directly, are the structural inequalities in the global economic system. These inequalities encourage most people in less-developed countries to sell their labor and natural resources to service huge national debt incurred in the process of opening their countries to foreign capital and corporations

(e.g. European, Japanese, and American) that are more interested in profit than local social and economic development (Stiglitz 2003).⁸

Economic globalization did not happen overnight. WWII left the economies of most of Europe, the Soviet Union, and Japan in shambles. The United States, in contrast, emerged with the strongest economy in the world, accounting for nearly half the combined gross world product in 1947, due both to the decline of its former economic competitors and the fact that the vast majority of military combat took place (and therefore had the most damaging impact) outside American territory during both WWI and WWII (White 1998). The decentralization of capital away from Europe to the United States between WWI and WWII marked the end of the British Empire (and other colonial-based European Empires) and signaled the rise of the American Empire.

Capitalism, particularly in its monopolistic and oligopolistic guises that predominate today, suffers from a recurring crisis of over accumulation that must be remedied via the decentralization of capital.⁹ Following WWII, the United States faced just such a crisis and responded by reinvigorating the economies of Western Europe and Japan via massive capital investments. Similarly, the 1970s oil crisis punctuated another crisis of over accumulation and was remedied by a transition to finance capitalism and the rise of neo-liberalism that enabled capital to move more freely across state borders (Harvey 2003; Stiglitz 2003). The transition to finance capitalism and the rise of neo-liberalism initiated a series of significant structural reconfigurations.

Neo-liberalism, as an ideology, views the decline of state regulation of trade and finance as central to the promotion of economic growth and development. Neo-liberal ideology fueled American capitalist imperialism¹⁰ and resulted in a tacit agreement

between the IMF, World Bank, and United States Treasury to promote neo-liberal policies around the globe and specifically as conditions attached to loans which came to be known as the Washington consensus. The results of these policies include the decline of state control over national economies, the subordination of domestic economic policies to the logic of global capitalism, and the decentralization of capital. The triumph of neo-liberalism temporarily relieved the pressure from capitalism's recurring crisis of over accumulation. The deregulation of the flow of capital enabled the decentralization of capital from the United States, Europe, and Japan to East and Southeast Asia, Mexico, Brazil, and India. China, in particular, has been the greatest beneficiary as capitalists look for new places to maximize return on investment. In other words, economic globalization (Harvey 2003; Stiglitz 2003).

Economic globalization has resulted in significant transformations of society. Friedman (2003) argues that globalization results in the fragmentation of society both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, a new cosmopolitan class has emerged consisting of economic and political elites whose prosperity is tied to the expansion of neo-liberal capitalism rather than the expansion or success of a specific state. In contrast to this relatively small group of cosmopolitan elites, there is a rapidly growing underclass due to the increasing disparity between the haves and the have-nots sparked by the decline in the economic self-regulatory powers of states. This disconnect between the interests of social classes helps explain the rise of the various anti-globalization social movements, civil wars, terrorism, and anti-Americanism despite a general trend toward economic expansion.¹¹

The decline of the state, the rise of a cosmopolitan class, and the increase in social stratification also creates tensions horizontally between groups within nationally-grounded underclasses. The rise of identity-based groups within states, whether they are based on religion, ethnicity, gender, or race, at one time thought to contradict the homogenizing aspects of globalization must now be viewed as an outcome of globalization. Specifically, as state hegemony declines, the ability of the state to create citizen-based identities declines. As Friedman (2003:7) states:

If the modernist nation-state is based on the identification of a subject population with a national project that defines its members, in principle, in terms of equality and political representivity, and which is future oriented and developmentalistic, when this project loses its power of attraction, its subjects must look elsewhere....This leads to a range of cultural identifications that fragment and ethnify the former political units, from ethnic to religious to sexual, all in the vacuum left by a vanishing future.

This, in turn, creates the conditions under which alternative modernities can emerge and prosper.

The anthropological study of globalization has grown substantially in recent years. The work of Ulf Hannerz, Michael Kearney, and Arjun Appadurai represent three of the most prominent anthropological analyses of globalization. Ulf Hannerz (1998; 1996; 1989) utilizes a world systems model of center-periphery cultural relations. Hannerz argues that a new “global ecumene” has formed where once distinct cultures interact. This space of interaction is dominated, however, by cosmopolitans from powerful centers in Europe and America.

For Kearney (1996; 1995), the global era is characterized by the disintegration of center-periphery relationships in which hybridized cultural subjects move about as part of global flows across the world. Kearney tempers this vision with the caveat that the

multiplicity of hybridized identities extant in the world are shaped by the transnational economic system.

Appadurai (1996) describes a world in which a series of five “scapes” (ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes) are in competition to make and re-make the world. Appadurai’s conceptualization highlights a deterritorialized cultural imagination as definitive of the global era and determinative of the content of his scapes. And while capital flows are part of Appadurai’s model, he finds that ethnoscapes and mediascapes play a more significant role.

Tsing (2000), in one of the first anthropological endeavors to engage globalization studies critically, argues that globalization, like modernization before it, is a set of cultural projects and as such needs to be investigated with a critical eye. Tsing also notes that Hannerz, Kearney, and Appadurai each focus on particular aspects of globalization. Furthermore, the three distinct perspectives on globalization can be brought into conversation with each other in order to enhance the total understanding of globalization as a phenomenon.

Indeed, much of anthropology can be part of the conversation. As anthropologists focus more on the “contemporary world” and global change, aspects of globalization gain relevance for more of anthropology including studies of urban anthropology (Sassen 1991), migration (Ong 1999), studies of place and space (Gupta and Ferguson 1997), media (Larkin 2002; Yang 2002), identity formation (Featherstone 1995), diasporic communities (Clifford 1997), politics (Adams 2002), nationalism (Nonini and Ong 1997), science and technology (Martin 1994a), economics (Ho 2005; Ong 1987), religion

(Hefner 2000; Peletz 2002), and violence (Friedman 2003; Furlow 2005; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2003; Nonini 2003; Reyna 2003) among many others.¹²

Knauff (2002) treats modernity, globalization, and capitalism as organizing tropes for research and distinguishes them as follows. Studies of globalization tend to focus on flows of people and things (like capital, technology, media, and ideas) across space while foregrounding consumption and are optimistic in outlook. Studies of capitalism tend to focus on the historical development and implications of wage labor while foregrounding production and exploitation and are pessimistic in outlook. In contrast, Knauff argues that studies of modernity are more situational than programmatic and predetermined. Studies of modernity attempt to unite an analysis of economic and political dynamics within the framework of specific local and regional cultural engagements by focusing on “the contemporary experience of alterity and how this is impacted by larger structures of exploitation and domination” (Knauff 2002:39). In other words, Knauff suggests that studies of modernity combine aspects of studies of globalization and capitalism with ethnographically grounded accounts of subject-making and cultural practice.

In contrast, I will distinguish modernity, globalization, and capitalism as follows. First, I will use “economic globalization” and “capitalism” interchangeably to delineate the contemporary global capitalist system described above. Second, I will also use “globalization” as a trope that foregrounds the movement of people and things across national borders. In this study, I am particularly interested in the movement of particular intellectuals and ideas between my research sites in Northern Virginia and Malaysia. I find that neither “capitalism” nor “modernity” captures the importance of movement for this study. Third, I use “modernity” as I described above in a comparative sense and as a

cultural space structured by the logic of capitalism in which Muslims are making and re-making an Islamic modernity. Donham captures well what I have in mind when he describes modernity as a discursive space or public sphere in which “an *argument* takes place” and “at least some actors invoke notions of the modern in claims to power” and where “ideas of tradition are constructed and reconstructed” (Donham 2002:244-245 emphasis in original). Fourth, I will use “alternative modernities” to delineate specific instantiations or constructions of modernity within a particular locale. The conceptualization of modernity in the plural is central to this study as it examines the construction of alternative modernities across multiple research sites.

Research Design

This project is a multi-sited ethnography of the Islamization of knowledge debate. Research methodologies included: (1) participant-observation at institutions and conferences; (2) semi-structured and life history interviews; (3) and analysis of both technical and popular literature. The debate and its participants are both heterogeneous and dispersed. I have selected a multi-sited ethnographic research design because it allows me to examine and compare the complex interrelationship between “local” and “global” contexts at several sites that vary along the axes of national setting, institutional structure, and intellectual position and house individuals with different life histories. This diversity will enable me to examine how the various cultural, institutional, intellectual, and personal factors are related to knowledge production within the debate, e.g., how and why “Islam,” “science,” and “modernity” are being differently constructed. Furthermore, the diversity is essential to the validity of the conclusions drawn from this project.

Research Sites

Based on my preliminary research, discussions with several central figures in the Islamization debate, and my desire to maximize cultural and institutional diversity, I selected four primary institutional research sites clustered in two geographical locales—Northern Virginia and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia—selected for the presence of a critical mass of institutions and individuals engaged in the Islamization of knowledge debate. In each locale, I focused attention on two institutions—one university and one research institute. The institutions include: (1) the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Science (GSISS) in Leesburg, Virginia; (2) the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in Herndon, Virginia; (3) the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and (4) the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in Kuala Lumpur and not affiliated with the IIIT.

Northern Virginia is a leading center in the Islamization of knowledge debate. Over the past three decades, the Muslim community in America has grown dramatically due to changes in immigration laws and the labor market. Muslim intellectuals in America significantly influence Islamic thought throughout the world benefiting from the combination of religious freedom and the approximately one hundred thousand Muslim students studying at American universities who bring American Muslims' views back to their own countries (Haddad 1991b).

The GSISS opened in August 1996. The GSISS was founded by IIIT personnel and offers two programs. The first program leads to a Master of Arts degree in Islamic studies and the second program trains Imams (Muslim prayer leaders). I visited the GSISS for two days in July 1997. During my visit, GSISS President Dr. Taha Al-Alwani, whom I had met in 1995 at the IIIT, invited me to spend the fall at the GSISS and offered me the support of

a GSISS research fellowship. I spent August through December 1997 at the GSISS conducting ethnographic research.

During the fall of 1997, I also spent time at the IIIT and interacted regularly with IIIT personnel. The IIIT was founded in 1981 to promote the Islamization of knowledge. The IIIT is central to the Islamization debate, sponsoring conferences, and publishing the quarterly *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* among other publications. The institute, which is organized on a think tank model, also houses the Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers (AMSE), and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS). The IIIT has branch offices located in London and throughout the Islamic world. In addition to the fall of 1997, I spent a week in May 1995 at IIIT, a week in May 2000 at GSISS and IIIT, and a week in October 2000 participating at the annual conference of AMSS held at Georgetown University.

The IIIT and GSISS, while closely associated, house different personnel and have different missions and therefore offer two contrasting institutional contexts within which to examine the Islamization of knowledge debate. These differences have resulted in the divergence of GSISS and IIIT concerning the goals, methods, and boundaries of the Islamization of knowledge project.

Malaysia is in the midst of an Islamic revival sparked at least partly by Chinese-Malay riots in 1969. Malaysian universities have become major centers of Islamic activism, and the Malaysian government has increasingly supported Islamic institutions including many involved in the Islamization of knowledge debate as a means of maintaining its legitimacy among the Malay-Muslim community (Esposito 1991b; Nagata

1984). And as a Muslim majority nation-state, Malaysia provides an excellent contrast to the United States context.

The IIUM, funded by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), a cooperative organization of Muslim nation-states, and the Government of Malaysia, was established in 1983 and has approximately 8,000 students and 200 faculty members. The IIUM is implementing an Islamization of knowledge policy and regularly hosts conferences on the Islamization of knowledge. The IIUM was led during my visit between October and December 1998 by a former president of the IIIT. Thus, the IIUM enables a comparison between implementation of Islamization in Malaysian and American contexts.

ISTAC is an independently operated research and educational division of the IIUM promoting the renewal of Islamic thought as a means to a better Islamic civilization. ISTAC houses several leading participants in the Islamization of knowledge debate and publishes a quarterly journal dealing with the Islamization of knowledge. ISTAC provides an excellent comparative case to contrast with the GSISS, IIIT, and IIUM because its founder Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and several key personnel advocate a different approach to the Islamization of knowledge from the other institutions.

Data Collection Methods

At each institute, I used the following data-collect methods:

1. Participant-observation. Ethnographic participant-observation research was conducted at each of the four institutions described above. I was an active participant at each institution. I met with and interviewed faculty, staff, administrators, and students. I attended, participated in, and tape-recorded seminars and classes. In Northern Virginia, I shared an apartment with two students while in Malaysia, I spent two-nights in the student dormitories after attending functions that lasted until after the buses stopped running.

2. Semi-structured and life history interviews. I conducted semi-structured interviews with institution administrators focusing on gathering data on the history and activity of the institute. These interviews also provided me with the background material for the in-depth life history interviews.

At GSISS and ISTAC, I interviewed each administrator. At IIIT, I informally interviewed several current administrators as well as conducting formal interviews with two former IIIT presidents who at the time of my research had moved on to lead GSISS and IIUM respectively. At IIUM, I interviewed several administrators focusing particular attention on areas in which the Islamization of knowledge policies were being formulated and who were in charge of implementation.

Life history interviews with faculty, administrators, and students provide data on (1) attitudes toward Islam, science, and the Islamization of knowledge and (2) data related to personal, intellectual, religious, and professional development including informants' explanations for major life decisions. Attitudinal and motivational data was gathered by a series of open-ended questions. The interviews also probed for paths not taken, e.g., a job offer not accepted or a research topic considered but not investigated. The interview guide is shown in the Appendix.

Life history interviewing is a relatively new technique in the anthropology of science (see Fischer 1995; Gusterson 1995) and STS, more generally, despite the prominence of biographies in the history of science. This project builds on and diverges from previous life history research in that I conducted approximately 17 tape-recorded life history interviews covering an identical core set of topics with individuals. Thus, the data will be systematic, comparable across individuals, and generalizable. I also supplemented

these formal, tape-recorded interviews with many formal and informal interviews with individuals who either did not want to do formal interviews or did not want to be tape-recorded.

3. Literature review and archival research. Each institute houses extensive collections of technical and popular literature concerning the Islamization of knowledge. I gathered extensive amounts of literature that I did not previously possess. I also collected historical data about each institution for comparison with interview data. Of primary interest was material concerning the founding of each institution, institutional support, faculty and dates of employment, students' backgrounds, and institution-wide projects. Figure 2-1 contains a summary of the three types of data collected.

Data Analysis

Tape recorded interviews and classes were transcribed by paid transcribers and then edited by me. Transcribed interviews and other ethnographic fieldnotes were systematically compiled, coded, and analyzed using the atlas/ti software package. The atlas/ti software is an industrial-strength text management program that enables systematic coding and analysis of text-based and graphical data, particularly open-ended interviews.

I used atlas/ti primarily for code and retrieve functions. First, each file was coded for country, institution, and type of data (i.e., life history interview, semi-structured interview, class notes, participant observation, etc.) Next, each file was divided into logical subsections and each section was coded for the individual or individuals involved and for specific content.

Once the coding was completed, the interpretation and empirical testing began. As I read through the material several times, I wrote down particular ideas about what seemed important and what dominant themes were present. I then went about using the tools

available in atlas/ti to test my ideas. For example, the code “identity” seemed important based upon the total frequency and the number of files in which it was used. To examine this hypothesis, I called up all the instances in which the code “identity” appeared. I then began to classify each instance according to the institution at which the data were gathered. I then began to subdivide each instance into more specific categories like “institutional identity,” “personal identity,” and “collective identity” which I collated by institution, country, and individual. I then had a clear, simple, empirical map of the code “identity” as derived from my data. I then used this to support my arguments about the importance of identity and its permutations at my research sites. I engaged in similar analyses of other important codes like “Islam,” “Islamization of knowledge,” “science,” etc.

These data gathered using a multi-sited research design and framed using the dual concepts of modernity and globalization enable an empirically grounded ethnographic account of the Islamization of knowledge debate and its interrelationship with “local” and “global” socio-cultural, political, and intellectual contexts.

Summary of Fieldwork Completed

Fieldwork in Northern Virginia/DC	May 1995, August-December 1997, May 2000, October 2000
Fieldwork in Malaysia	October-December 1998
Interviews in London	October 2000

Summary of Data Collected

Research activities included: 1) participant-observation at institutions and conferences; 2) semi-structured and life history interviews; and 3) analysis of technical and popular literature. Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted at institutions and conferences in northern Virginia/Washington, DC, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Europe. Data gathered include approximately 50 hours of tape recorded interviews and lectures, dozens of informal interviews, approximately 150 hours of classroom observations, and approximately 100 hours of archival research in addition to hundreds of hours of general participant-observation in the day-to-day activities of the institutions and people.

(1) Participant Observation: Classes at GSISS and IIUM, Lecture Series at GSISS, AMSS Conference, IIT Seminar on IOK, IOK Circle at IIUM, Political Science Students Meetings at IIUM

(2) Interviews:

Semi-Structured Interviews at GSISS, IIUM, ISTAC, Universiti Malaya, also includes several individuals at IIT either previously or since

Life History Interviews at GSISS, IIUM, ISTAC, also includes several individuals at IIT either previously or since

Informal Interviews/Discussions at GSISS, IIT, IIUM, ISTAC, Universiti Malaya

(3) Analysis of Literature:

Technical Literature includes scholarly books, journals, and newsletters; university catalogs and websites; government reports; class syllabi

Popular Literature includes Malaysian newspapers and books; interviews with major debate figures published in general magazines; speeches and writings by politicians; websites

Figure 2-1. Summary of fieldwork completed and data collected.

Notes

¹ One could also add capitalism as a third concept that anthropologists use interchangeably with modernity and globalization. Some of the central works cited in both literatures include Appadurai (1996), Hannerz (1996), Harvey (1990), Friedman (1994), Ong (1999; 1987) and Giddens (1991; 1990).

² Several works related to modernity helped inform the discussion presented here including Knauft (2002), Gaonkar (2001), Harvey (1990), Taylor (1999), Nonini and Ong (1997), Friedman (2002), and Donham (2002).

³ One important question that I will not address because it is tangential to my purposes is the debate about whether modernity as a project is redeemable or should be scrapped given its Janis-faced characteristic. Briefly, Habermas argued that modernity, though compromised by its association with capitalism, can be fixed. Foucault disagreed arguing that rationality, knowledge, truth, and power are so intertwined that they cannot be separated. For excellent discussions of the Habermas-Foucault debate see Gaonkar (2001) and Knauft (2002).

⁴ Englund and Leach (2000) argue that anthropologists studying modernity use a meta-narrative that undermines the empirical validity of ethnographic research. According to Englund and Leach (2000:228), the meta-narrative includes three assumptions: (1) modernity is everywhere, (2) the institutional configurations cannot be defined in advance but all can be understood as instances of a particular modernity through the abstractions of “reenchantment” and “dedifferentiation”, and (3) the local responses to global processes offer both “creative opportunities” and “threat and danger”. Englund and Leach argue for an anthropology of modernity that takes more care in focusing on the empirical realities of a particular case and is more reflexive to guard against the smuggling in of ethnocentric conceptions of modernity in the form of a predetermined meta-narrative.

Friedman (2002) confronts studies of modernity from the opposite direction arguing that current usage of modernity as a theoretical construct is imprecise. For example, Friedman distinguishes between uses of modernity as contemporaneous and modernity in the structural sense. In the usage of modernity as contemporaneous, subjects participate in global capitalist processes but are not dominated by its logic. In contrast, in the usage of modernity in the structural sense, subjects and institutions are dominated by the logic of capital. Friedman prefers limiting the use of modernity to the latter. This does not mean that Friedman favors modernity in the singular, however, because, as he notes, no society has been fully penetrated and there is variation across time and space as to which institutions have been penetrated and there are differences in local and national cultures.

⁵ I will also draw upon the third sense. However, I would subsume the third sense as a particular instance of the second sense because it presumes a comparative stance vis-à-vis the center.

⁶ This section largely is taken with permission from Furlow (2005).

⁷ Several volumes on globalization helped inform the brief sketch presented here and may be consulted for more detail (see Featherstone 1995; Friedman 2003; Harvey 2003; Harvey 1990; Inda and Rosaldo 2002; Jameson and Miyoshi 1998; Lechner and Boli 2000; Tsing 2000; Turner 2003).

⁸ A related issue is the extent to which economic globalization supplants local, traditional value systems with Western values, e.g., consumerism, materialism, individualism, and secularism that tend to drive capitalist economic systems. You can stay at an American hotel chain, see the latest American blockbuster film, watch CNN and MTV, listen to American pop music on the radio, buy Levi jeans and Nike shoes, and drink a Coke or Pepsi at a local McDonalds or Pizza Hut anywhere in the world. More significantly, however, economic globalization impacts traditional social relations. For example, Aihwa Ong demonstrates the impact on social life and gender relations in Malaysia when the state consciously transforms society along capitalist lines in order to attract foreign investment and the traumatic experience of many young, rural women who relocate in order to work in Japanese-owned factories in free trade zones (Ong 1987).

⁹ For excellent discussions of the problem of over accumulation see Harvey (2003; 1990), Friedman (2003), and Turner (2003).

¹⁰ Following David Harvey (2003), the American ascension to military and economic hegemony can be classified as “capitalist imperialism” that entails the combination of the politics of state and empire as a political project with the processes of capital accumulation in space and time as a political-economic project. Thus, capitalist imperialism links territorial and capitalist logics of power (Arrighi 1994) sometimes working in concert and sometimes independently. However, in capitalist imperialism, the logic of capital usually though not always dominates the logic of territory (Harvey 2003).

An interesting question is whether the world is currently dominated by an American Empire or a more decentralized Empire of the sort Hardt and Negri describe (Hardt and Negri 2004; Hardt and Negri 2000). In my view, both are currently in competition particularly following the Bush administration’s shift toward neo-conservatism.

¹¹ There is not enough space here to document fully the relationship between globalization and violence. For further details, I recommend the volume *Globalization the State, and Violence* edited by Friedman (Elkholm Friedman 2003; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2003; Nonini 2003; Reyna 2003; Wiewiorka 2003).

¹² These represent just a fraction of the studies available. For additional studies I recommend the journal *City & Society* published by the Society for Urban, National, Transnational/Global Anthropology section of the American Anthropological Association, Inda and Rosaldo (2002), Kearney (1995), Hannerz (1998), and Knauft (1997).

CHAPTER 3 ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE UNITED STATES

The American experience with and knowledge of Muslims and Islam over the last quarter century arguably has been defined by a series of violent conflicts. Stretching from the Arab-Israeli wars through the OPEC oil embargoes in the early 1970s to the 1979 Iranian Revolution and hostage taking at the American embassy in Tehran to American support and training of the mujahideen “freedom fighters” in Afghanistan to the attacks on the Marine compound in Beirut, and the Gulf War all the way to the September 11, 2001, Al-Qaida attacks against the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the American invasion of Afghanistan, and the Iraq War, this history continues to shape American views on Muslims and Islam.

The focus on Islam and Muslims as external to daily life in the United States (except for the ever present terrorist threat level) leads to the construction of narrow, iconic Muslim identities—the irrational, jihadist, fanatical, freedom-hating, male terrorist and the passive, subservient, veiled female. This process of “othering” Muslims into homogenized and dehumanized caricatures in American popular culture may make the killing and “collateral damage” that goes along with war more palatable for the American general public; however, this process also marginalizes the growing community of American Muslims.¹

This chapter examines the emergence of Muslims as an identity-based group within American society and the establishment within this context of the International

Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) and the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (GSISS).

Muslims in America

Estimates of the number of Muslims in America range from 1.2 million to 8 million (Leonard 2003). And while the exact number is disputed, it is generally conceded that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the United States and will soon surpass Judaism as the second largest religion behind only Christianity (Leonard 2003).

The three largest groups of Muslims in the United States are African Americans, Arabs, and South Asians. The first Muslims in America were African Muslim slaves. According to Leonard (2003), while approximately 10 percent of African slaves were Muslims, no records exist of slaves who survived and continued to practice Islam. African Americans began to convert to indigenous versions of Islam beginning in the early twentieth century (Leonard 2003).

The first Muslims known to maintain their practice of Islam in the United States were Arabs who came during the late nineteenth century from the Greater Syria region of the Ottoman Empire. South Asian Muslims did not start immigrating to the United States in large numbers until after the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act that expanded greatly the numbers of non-European immigrants including peoples from much of the Muslim world (Leonard 2003).

Muslims' perceptions of the United States (both among American and non-American Muslims) have been shaped by the recent history of the Muslim world and American foreign policy in the region. Haddad (1991a:218) notes that, prior to 1947, Arab perceptions of the United States were generally positive:

America was for many both the land of opportunity . . . and a model of virtue. Its popularity was based, among other things, on President Wilson's espousal in 1919 of the right of subject peoples to self-determination. America was perceived as champion of a righteous world political order that endowed national communities with the right to independence and to free choice of their own government.

This positive view of the United States changed following World War II.

According to Haddad (1991a), with the exception of the Eisenhower administration, every American administration from Truman to Reagan has been perceived by Arabs including Arab Americans (including both Muslim and Christian Arabs) to pursue anti-Arab policies. I would add that Arabs' perceptions have not changed during the two Bush and the Clinton administrations that have held office since Haddad's study was completed. Foremost among these policies has been American support of Israel. However, American support for the non-Arab states Turkey and, until the 1979 Islamic revolution, Iran has also rankled Arabs.²

Haddad (1991a) traces the development of Arab American identities in relation to American foreign policy. Arab immigrants have been coming to the United States since around 1880. Over time their identities have shifted from "Ottoman subjects" or "Turkish" or "Asiatics" to national designations following the transition from the Ottoman Empire to European colonialism and then independence (Haddad 1991a; Leonard 2003). Haddad notes that Arab American organizing on a national scale only began in the 1950s in the wake of the founding of the state of Israel and its immediate recognition by the United States. The founding of the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada (FIA) by immigrant Muslims and the expansion of the Nation of Islam by African Americans in the 1950s marks the emergence of Islam as a national participant in American civil society.

When the United States under Eisenhower forced Israel, Britain, and France to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula following their invasion of Egypt in 1956, both the United States and Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser rose in stature among Arabs and many Arab Americans began to feel pride in and identify with their Arab heritage rather than their national-origin identity. However, in the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Arab Americans' marginalization from mainstream American society was once again reinforced.

At about this time, Muslim students studying abroad in the United States and Canada were laying the foundations for many of the most important immigrant-based Muslim organizations in North America. The Muslim Student Association (MSA) was founded in 1963 to bring together several independent Muslim student associations on university campuses in North America. The students involved at the beginning came from across the Muslim world including Arabs, Indo-Pakistanis, Iranians, and Turks among others (Ahmed 1991).

The MSA is significant for several reasons. First, the MSA represents the first major effort of Muslims in the United States to create an organization based exclusively upon Islamic identity rather than ethnicity, nationality, or race. Second, the MSA created a global network of university-educated Muslims including many prominent participants in the Islamization of knowledge debate. And third, the MSA is the organization from which many of the most significant American Muslim organizations directly or indirectly emerged including ISNA, IIIT, GSISS, AMSS, and AMSE.

Second, MSA created a global network of university-educated Muslims. Of interest here is the great number of individuals involved in the Islamization of knowledge

debate that participated in MSA. Ismail Al-Faruqi, perhaps the most prominent advocate for the Islamization of knowledge, was a leader within MSA. Similarly, Jamal Barzinji, a central figure in IIIT, was a leader within MSA. Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, a prominent Malaysian participant in the Islamization of knowledge debates, was President of MSA while a graduate student studying in the United States.³ And Kamal Hassan, currently Rector of IIUM, also participated in MSA when he studied at Columbia University (SISS 1997a).

Thirdly, MSA is the organization from which many of the most significant American Muslim organizations directly or indirectly emerged including ISNA, IIIT, GSISS, AMSS, and AMSE. While IIIT and GSISS are dealt with in detail below, other organizations merit brief mention here. The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) is now the largest Muslim organization in North America. ISNA developed in 1981 out of MSA as an umbrella organization to link campus organizations represented in MSA and community organizations organized in the Muslim Community Association (MCA). In addition, ISNA houses several professional and service organizations under its umbrella. The professional organizations developed directly from MSA as students graduated and began careers and include the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), the Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers (AMSE), and the Islamic Medical Association (IMA). The service organizations developed through ISNA and include the North American Islamic Trust (NAIT), the Canadian Islamic Trust (CIT), the Islamic Teaching Center (ITC), and the Foundation of International Development (FID).⁴

The formation of an American Islamic identity is linked with the processes of globalization. American foreign policy in the Muslim world and the Middle East in

particular was driven by the requirement of access to oil to fuel the capitalist world system while at the same time limiting access by communist nations. American policy favored stability over democracy and one result was an Islamic resurgence in the Muslim world. At the same time, American cultural and political discourse on Islam and Muslims, fueled by global media coverage of events in or related to the Middle East (e.g. Arab-Israeli wars, the OPEC oil embargo, the Iranian revolution, Palestinian radicalism, etc.), marginalized Islam and Muslims from the American mainstream. This process of “othering” was accomplished intentionally or not through a number of category shifts or slippages. For example, Americans often view the Arab-Israeli conflicts through the lens of religious categories Muslim and Jewish rather than ethnic and national categories like Arab, Palestinian, and Israeli or political or ideological categories like nationalism, secularism, socialism, or Zionism. This type of category slippage obscures important aspects of the conflict including the facts that Arab Palestinians comprise about 15 percent of the Israeli citizenry, that many Arabs and Palestinians are Christians, that the PLO is a secular, nationalist organization rather than an Islamist organization, and that the intellectual construction of pan-Arabism and Arab nationalism was led by Christian Arab Michael Aflaq.⁵

Cultural and political discourses that label and marginalize Islam and Muslims have significant implications for the formation of American Muslim identity. Al-Shingiety (1991:53) argues that there is a “dialectical relationship between Western representations of Muslims and Muslims’ self-image” in the United States. While Al-Shingiety specifically examines the transformation of the identities of members of the Nation of Islam from a Black separatist movement to orthodox American Muslims, he

argues that the model is generalizable to most Muslims in America. First, Americans used public representations of Islam and Muslims to label and identify groups in society. Second, American Muslims then appropriated these representations as their own identity, i.e., they began to self-identify as Muslim Americans. Thus, as Americans began to identify individuals as Muslims, these individuals began to associate with similarly identified individuals in organizations like MSA and ISNA and at mosques and Islamic community centers and to self-identify themselves as Muslims.

Within this context, the IIIT was founded. What I am interested in the remainder of this chapter is to present a brief intellectual and institutional history of how the IIIT's original ideas and work plan developed and have been transformed and reshaped over time both at the IIIT and as they traveled to the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (GSISS).⁶

IIIT

In 1981 in Washington, DC, the late Ismail R. Al-Faruqi, a Palestinian, and a small group of colleagues including AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, a Saudi, and Taha Jabar Al-Alwani, an Iraqi, established the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). Growing out of a 1977 conference on Islamic education held in Mecca and a conference held in Lugano, Switzerland that same year, the IIIT was founded upon the ideas that: (1) there is a malaise in Islamic civilization clearly evident in its political, economic, and cultural spheres; (2) the core of the crisis is a crisis of intellectual thought and methodology; (3) this crisis of thought is the result of the bifurcation of the education system into traditional Islamic and modern European-style educational institutions; and (4) the solution, therefore, is to reform education by reintegrating Islamic and modern

knowledge thus renewing the link between knowledge and values; and (5) the social sciences and humanities are the appropriate targets for this intervention because they are most susceptible to corrupting influences of ideology (Al-Faruqi 1982).

Al-Faruqi and the IIIT called their project the “Islamization of knowledge” (*Islamiyya al-ma'rifa* in Arabic) and conceived a twelve-step work plan (see Figure 1-1). According to the work plan (Al-Faruqi 1982), both the so-called modern disciplines and the Islamic legacy would be mastered and critically evaluated before being synthesized and disseminated in the form of textbooks. Later moving its headquarters to Herndon, Virginia, about 30 minutes drive west of Washington, the IIIT quickly became a global organization, opening branch offices around the world including in London, Cairo, Jordan, the Sudan, Morocco, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. After Al-Faruqi along with his family were murdered or possibly assassinated in 1986, Al-Alwani and AbuSulayman headed the IIIT.

According to Al-Alwani, Al-Faruqi (1982) assembled the initial work plan from conference papers presented by Al-Faruqi, AbuSulayman, and himself following the Second International Conference on the Islamization of Knowledge held in Islamabad, Pakistan. The twelve-step plan was conceptualized by Al-Faruqi as a guide for Muslim graduate students and professors interested in utilizing an Islamization of knowledge approach in their teaching and research projects. Thus, the emphasis was placed on the mastery of Islamic and Western legacies within a particular discipline with the ultimate goal of producing textbooks.⁷ Barzinji also emphasizes the focus on producing the human resources needed to teach the next generation of Muslim scholars (Barzinji n.d.).

Early on, the IIIT was a modest undertaking. Everyone involved was a volunteer and publications were funded using the personal resources of Al-Faruqi and the other participants. However, by 1983, Al-Alwani says everyone recognized the need for a more permanent and better funded institute with a full-time research staff. According to Al-Alwani, Jamal Barzinji and Hisham Al-Talib, American citizens working as engineers in Saudi Arabia where Al-Alwani and AbuSulayman also were located, returned to the United States to raise money and find suitable facilities to house the IIIT. Barzinji and Al-Talib purchased a small house in Virginia and reregistered the IIIT in Virginia. Al-Alwani and AbuSulayman resigned their posts in Saudi Arabia and came to the United States to work full-time at IIIT in 1984.⁸

The focus on the Islamization of particular social science disciplines continued at the Third International Conference on the Islamization of Knowledge convened in 1984 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and co-sponsored by the Malaysian Ministry of Youth and Culture. Specifically, the conference focused on seven disciplines: economics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science and international relations, and philosophy. The IIIT focused on these seven disciplines because it thought these disciplines were most central to Western thought (Barzinji n.d.; IIIT 1989).

A participant at this conference was Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad who stated his support for the IIIT's approach to Islamization (IIIT 1989). Notably, the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) was founded the previous year in 1983. The IIUM also developed out of the 1977 conference in Mecca. Following the success of the Malaysian conference, the IIIT opened a branch office in Malaysia. AbuSulayman, who has been both President and Director General of the IIIT, became

Rector of IIUM in 1988. The IIIT even briefly considered moving their headquarters to Malaysia in the mid-1990s.⁹

After Al-Faruqi's death in 1986, Al-Alwani was elected President of IIIT while AbuSulayman managed AMSS and their peer-reviewed journal the *American Journal of Islamic Social Science* (AJISS). Al-Alwani was quite concerned that the target of the killers was not just Al-Faruqi but his ideas as well including the Islamization of knowledge. Al-Alwani led an expansion of the IIIT across the Muslim world so that the ideas of IIIT could not be eliminated with the murder of a handful of scholars.¹⁰

The expansion included opening branch offices in many Muslim states. The IIIT recruited professors at universities in each country who agreed to act as a representative of the IIIT. If the local representative could use the facilities at their home university, they did. If not, the local representative was asked to rent one room with a fax, a phone, and an address where correspondence could be sent. Once established, the branch offices acted independently through the local representatives' students and colleagues to spread the ideas of the IIIT. The branch offices conducted seminars, workshops, or small conferences with minimal help provided by IIIT headquarters. In time, several branch offices were so successful that they had full-time staffs and managed research projects that rivaled if not surpassed those at IIIT headquarters.¹¹

After its initial success in the early 1980s, the IIIT underwent a critical re-evaluation of its work plan. Barzinji (n.d.) states that the early focus of the IIIT had been to produce Islamized university level textbooks in the core disciplines within 10 years. However, no textbooks yet exist. While part of the reason for the difficulties IIIT had are the result of the death of Ismail Al-Faruqi in 1986, other factors are also involved.

The Fourth International Conference on the Islamization of Knowledge co-sponsored by the University of Khartoum was held in the Sudan in 1987. The conference was organized around the theme “Methodology of Islamic Thought and Islamization of the Behavioral Sciences” in order to address the issue of methodology in the general sense of epistemology. The conference was an apparent failure. Barzinji (n.d.:8) describes the results of the conference as follows:

The results of the fourth conference fell short of the aspirations and hopes of the IIIT. It became evident to us that the Muslim *Ummah*, represented by its scholars and intellectuals is not yet ready to make an original contribution to human thought, more specifically in the Behavioral Sciences, based on the *Tawhidic* paradigm, and drawing on the wealth of our heritage in *Turath*. Further, it became clear that Muslim specialists in the Western disciplines of Social and Behavioral sciences are not able to present an in-depth evaluation and criticism of their own specialization. In all fairness, we concluded, that the Western scholars had assessed their own fields more critically, than Muslim scholars could now do.

During this same period, an internal critique was also undertaken as part of the IIIT’s Western Thought Project (WTP). Initially, Al-Faruqi led the WTP that began in 1984. The goals of the project were twofold. First, the WTP aimed to gather and organize all the most important Western research in each of the seven disciplines listed above. Second, Muslims engaged in the Islamization of knowledge could use this material as it relates to steps 1, 2, 5, 6, 10, and 11 of the work plan (see Figure 1-1). The WTP was later described as:

Opening a new window on the West with a view to a critical appreciation and reflection on that heritage as it is developing in our times and affecting the various disciplines of the human mind and spirit is part and process of the Islamization workplan. The idea is to prepare the ground for a critical and selective assimilation which can act as a catalyst to the process of intellectual renewal as it emerges out of the fermentation which occurs in the course of the more fundamental interaction with the elements of the Muslim heritage itself. (Abul-Fadl 1988:3)

Al-Faruqi sent letters to prominent professors at Western universities in each of the seven disciplines asking them to create and send him bibliographic reference lists of what each professor thought were the most important references in their field. Al-Faruqi envisioned having at least two bibliographic lists in each discipline. Although an honorarium was offered for the work, only two professors responded positively and sent a bibliography. These two professors were in political science and anthropology respectively and apparently were personal friends or colleagues of Al-Faruqi. While collection of materials began using these two lists, the WTP was suddenly halted by the premature death of Al-Faruqi in 1986 (Abul-Fadl 1988).

Approximately six months later in 1987, the IIIT hired Mona Abul-Fadl to carry forward the WTP under the tutelage of AbdulHamid AbuSulayman. Abul-Fadl is a political scientist who was born in Cairo, raised bi-culturally in Cairo and London, and educated in London. She joined IIIT after coming to Old Dominion University in Virginia as a Fulbright scholar from Cairo University.¹² Eighteen months later in October 1988, Abul-Fadl submitted a report on the WTP that had a significant impact on the re-evaluation and revision of the original work plan in the wake of the perceived failure of the conference in Sudan the previous year.

In the report, Abul-Fadl (1988) noted the divergence of the IIIT's current activities and vision from the work plan. While the initial work plan focused on mastering and the Islamization of specific disciplines in order to reform education, in subsequent work the focus broadened to the more fundamental project of the Islamization of Muslim thinking, of transforming Muslim thought itself. Abul-Fadl (1988:9) states:

The emphasis shifted to a concern for critiquing and transforming the thought structures and products among Muslims at the conceptual and the methodological

levels within the context of a revived and reformed cultural context. . . . The result is that the changes at the perceptual level have not been adequately articulated and reflected at the level of the workplan which is currently in circulation.

Abul-Fadl goes on to describe how the WTP has been re-conceptualized in light of the altered vision for the Islamization of knowledge project. The goal of the WTP changed from the mastery of disciplines to the mastery of the essentials of the Western heritage in general with disciplines viewed “as links in a chain, which are neither self-contained entities, nor ends in themselves” (Abul-Fadl 1988:28).

A New Direction

Abul-Fadl’s report and the disappointment of the Sudan conference resulted in a reformulation of the work plan and the trajectory of the IIIT. Central works in this reformulation include AbuSulayman’s (1989) revision of the original work plan in the book *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan, 2nd Edition* and his *Crisis in the Muslim Mind* (AbuSulayman 1993)¹³ and Al-Alwani’s (1995) article “Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and Today.”

The focus of work had already been shifting away from the original work plan towards the development of a general Islamic framework that is described as an Islamic methodology though I would characterize it more as an Islamic epistemology. According to AbuSulayman, Islamic methodology is founded on a few basic Islamic tenets. “These principles constitute the framework of Islamic thought and methodology; they are the lighthouse that guides Islamic mentality, psychological build-up and personality in academic and everyday life” (AbuSulayman 1989:33). Foremost among these is the principle of *tawhid* or the unity of *Allah*. Essentially, this means that there is no god but *Allah*, and everything derives from *Allah*. Following this first principle and derived from

it are the principles of the unity of creation, the unity of truth and unity of knowledge, the unity of life, the unity of humanity, and the complementary nature of revelation and reason (AbuSulayman 1989).

Al-Alwani (1995) lists three specific goals of the IIIT group: (1) to reintegrate knowledge and values, (2) to link *Allah's* two sources of knowledge—His revelation (the *Qur'an*) and His creation (the natural universe), and (3) to redirect Western philosophy's concern with the problem of ends toward the recognition that this problem is limitless. In addition, Al-Alwani describes six discourses (see Figure 3-1) that formed the focus of the IIIT's Islamization of knowledge project at that time. The first discourse aims to articulate the Islamic paradigm of knowledge or the "*Tawhidi* Episteme" as Al-Alwani calls it drawing on Abul-Fadl (1991). The second discourse aims to develop a *Qur'anic* methodology. The third and fourth discourses create methodologies for dealing with the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* respectively by which Al-Alwani means relating each source of knowledge to contemporary society. The fifth discourse re-examines the Islamic heritage. The sixth discourse aims to deal with the Western intellectual heritage (Al-Alwani 1995).

Al-Alwani's three goals and six discourses represent a significant departure from the goal of producing textbooks for Islamized disciplines articulated in the original work plan. However, the idea that education was a prime location for intervention was still a dominant theme for the IIIT. For example, AbuSulayman left the IIIT to become Rector of IIUM in 1988 where he institutionalized the IIIT's ideas on the Islamization of knowledge (see chapter 5). And in 1996, Al-Alwani and several other IIIT personnel

including Mona Abul-Fadl, Yusuf DeLorenzo, and Iqbal Unus formed the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (see below).

IIIT also used the more limited venue of workshops to train and inform Muslims about the Islamization of Knowledge. I attended several days of such a weeklong workshop for Muslim university students in Herndon, Virginia in May 1995. The workshop brought together 40 or so Muslim students from universities throughout the United States who stayed together at a local hotel and attended daily lectures at IIIT headquarters. At the workshop, IIIT staff presented materials on the history, objectives, and current directions of the Islamization of knowledge project.

At the same time, the students were immersed in a thoroughly Islamic environment. For example, the seating was nominally self-segregated by gender with brothers generally sitting on one side of the conference table and sisters on the other with a few exceptions resulting from space constraints. Also, in addition to the usual breaks for coffee and meals, the workshop broke at Muslim prayer times. For several of the students I spoke with, the workshop was an eye opening experience. For a few, this was the case because it was the first time they had been in a social setting that was organized based upon Muslim ritual requirements. However, many more were excited by the idea that Islam could be and should be made relevant to their lives outside the narrow confines of religion.

Post-GSISS Work at IIIT

IIIT refocused its mission again following the founding of GSISS in 1996. IIIT regional offices continued to operate in relative independence and specialize in specific

areas. The Cairo office worked on economics. The London office did most of the publishing. And other offices had their own interests.

At IIIT headquarters in Herndon, Virginia, a new focus emerged that expanded theoretical ideas related to the Islamization of knowledge to practical aspects of the Muslim community. For example, research on Islamic child rearing practices and primary education was conducted. Community education and training from an Islamic perspective is also a focus. A primary example of the latter is the recent founding of the Fairfax Institute that offers continuing education programs in a variety of areas ranging from Arabic language to Islamic wills and investments to the American Muslim community. In addition, IIIT continues to support the AMSS and the publication of AJISS.

GSISS

The origins of the GSISS can be traced back to 1985 when Ismail Al-Faruqi and others at the IIIT had been authorized to enroll students in courses at what was then named the Islamic Institute of Advanced Studies by the Council of Higher Education of the Commonwealth of Virginia (SISS 1997b). The plan was revised at the IIIT in the mid-1990s because IIIT personnel felt that they had built a dependable network of scholars specializing in enough fields who could and would contribute to the development of a new curriculum from an Islamic perspective. The Institute of Islamic and Social Sciences Planning Committee consisting of Iqbal Unus, Muhieldin Attia, and Yusuf DeLorenzo who were IIIT staff members coordinated preliminary planning. The final go ahead occurred after financing was secured in meetings held from July 25 to August 6, 1995, between IIIT officials and officials from the Kuwaiti Department of

Awfaq. The Kuwaitis, who were already familiar with and financial backers of the IIIT, pledged a total of \$5 million towards the new school.¹⁴

In the fall of 1996, the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences opened its doors for classes in half of an unassuming building at the back of an airport office park in Leesburg, Virginia, about an hour's drive west of Washington, DC. Beginning with a core staff and faculty that moved from the IIIT and with Taha Al-Alwani as President, the school began by offering programs leading to either a Masters degree in Islamic Studies or a Masters degree in Imamate Studies.¹⁵ GSISS began with 18 students.¹⁶ Four courses were offered the first semester.

I spent August through December of 1997 at GSISS.¹⁷ During this semester, GSISS had four full-time faculty members, 32 students, and offered 9 regular courses plus English language for some of the foreign students. The faculty, staff, and personnel are shown in the GSISS organizational chart presented in Figure 3-2.

We Are Not the IIIT

The GSISS administration and faculty emphasized that GSISS was not the IIIT. Even before I was officially doing fieldwork when I visited GSISS in July 1997 to try to make arrangements for the fall, DeLorenzo told me that the split between IIIT and GSISS was important. At the purely bureaucratic level, some separation is mandated by the Virginia accreditation regulations and requirements. However, some personnel and board members do overlap. And while funding for GSISS and IIIT is independent of each other, it primarily comes from the same sources with about a 50/50 split between American and foreign sources.¹⁸

DeLorenzo also made clear that the differences went beyond the bureaucratic level to the intellectual level. According to DeLorenzo, GSISS had broadened the horizon of IIIT and the IOK project to incorporate a more collaborative vision linking science and values in society that includes or at least considers other “People of the Book,” i.e. Jews and Christians. One central reason for this is that the missions of the two institutions are different. The focus at GSISS, as an institution of higher education, is on academics with an emphasis placed on producing specialized scholars while the focus at the IIIT, as a “think tank,” is on the production of generalized “manifestos” by already established scholars.¹⁹

Dr. Taha made similar points during one of our meetings during the fall semester. Dr. Taha stated, “Islam needs at this time to deal with all nations as part of the audience for its discourse.” According to Dr. Taha, there are two meanings of Islam. The general meaning is related to Abraham and all the prophets (Abrahamic Islam). According to this perspective, Islam “means to follow God without objection.” Therefore, anyone can be a Muslim if they follow God. The second, more specialized meaning, is related to Muslims as opposed to Jews and Christians. According to Al-Alwani, GSISS views Islam from the Abrahamic point of view while IIIT defines Islam more narrowly.²⁰

At the curricular level, this view translates into trying to integrate social sciences and *Shariah* sciences. According to Dr. Taha, this goal goes beyond the goals of the IOK project of IIIT because all divine sources are relevant. Referring to IOK, Dr. Taha stated, “We are past that.”²¹

In a separate interview on November 17, 1997, Dr. Taha outlined the broader reasons for moving beyond the IOK. Dr. Taha said that the IOK “needs to be reviewed”

because “the world is becoming only one small village” and “I think we need something dealing with the [common] values [by] which we can put the whole human being together.” Dr. Taha felt that the IOK was open to misinterpretation and that this could hinder the broader project of developing common values.

Institutional Identity

GSISS is struggling to create an institutional identity. The struggle to define the institutional identity is apparent in the development of the academic programs, specializations, core curriculum, and their representations in GSISS catalogs and operationalization in classes. In the fall of 1996, GSISS opened with two main academic programs. One led to a Master of Arts in Islamic Studies degree while the second led to a Master of Imamate Studies degree. The Islamic Studies program had sub-specializations in “Islamic Studies” (i.e. *Shariah* sciences) and “Social Sciences” (i.e. history and politics) (SISS 1996).

During the first few years of operation, the curriculum at GSISS evolved and changed. The development of the curriculum began in late 1994 and was guided by a curriculum committee that sent letters to hundreds of individuals who had been associated with the IIIT at some time. Many individuals responded to the letter and sent everything from detailed suggestions to specific syllabi for proposed courses. The committee then began to design a curriculum based partly on the responses and also partly on pragmatic decisions about who could be counted on to teach courses at GSISS once it opened. Thus, *Shariah* sciences, history, and political science were selected.²²

According to Dr. Taha, the sub-specializations were chosen for specific reasons. The *Shariah* sciences specialization was chosen because GSISS aims to integrate the

social sciences and the *Shariah* sciences. History was chosen because every civilization needs to understand how their sciences developed in history. Therefore, history is relevant to develop a link with the past—an idea about how to connect the past to the present. Political science is important because the main problems today involve the relationship between people and the rulers of Muslim states. All the ideas about Islam and democracy are built on the idea that the historical traditions of the Muslim world were shaped by the politics in a particular locale. In addition, when one is trying to rebuild a system, it is important to understand the political system. When studied together, the links and the tensions are exposed. In addition, Dr. Taha said he hopes to include economics and education eventually.²³

The next step was to select a core curriculum. A number of meetings were held at IIT to determine the core courses. One significant debate pitted Dr. Taha against AbdulHamid AbuSulayman. Dr. Taha argued for the centrality of *usul al-fiqh* while AbuSulayman argued to do away with all of the traditional Islamic sciences. In the end, Dr. Taha, who is working to transform aspects of *usul al-fiqh* to make it suitable for use as a methodology for the social sciences, won the day and *usul al-fiqh* became the first core course.²⁴ In total, ten courses were selected for the core curriculum and appear in the 1996-1997 Graduate Catalog from which students had to select four courses (SISS 1996).²⁵

In subsequent catalogs, the core curriculum was parsed down to five courses in 1997 and then four courses in 1998 (see SISS 1997c; SISS 1998). According to Yusuf DeLorenzo, this was done primarily to eliminate redundancies and overlap between courses.²⁶ Three core courses are present in each instantiation: (1) Epistemology of

Islam, (2) Seminar in the Methodology of Comparative Religion and Civilization, and (3) Methodology of Islamic Legal Theory.²⁷

In a sense, GSISS is a global space trying to reach out to disparate audiences. In an interview with Dr. Taha as fellow faculty and administrators call him or Sheikh Taha as most of the students call him, he explained that his goal is for GSISS to be a recognized American-style graduate school specializing in Islamic studies. Dr. Taha was very clear that he did not want GSISS to be an “Islamic seminary.” Dr. Taha was upset about local media coverage that has portrayed the school exclusively as an Islamic seminary latching onto the Imam program and ignoring what Dr. Taha sees as the schools core function, which is the Masters Program in Islamic Studies.²⁸

The Making of the American Imam

The second academic program available when GSISS opened in 1996 was the Masters of Imamate Studies program. Yusuf Talal DeLorenzo²⁹ supervised the Imamate program when I visited GSISS. At the time in 1997, the program was the only such program in the world. In the Muslim world, Imams and Khatibs are trained either in traditional Islamic schools (*madaaris*) or universities or in state-run Imam training schools aimed at producing “domesticated Imams” and no Masters level programs exist at all. In either case, according to DeLorenzo, students are trained exclusively in the classical Islamic sciences and not in any of the practical skills needed to lead a mosque and serve the needs of the community.³⁰

The Imam program originated in the late summer or early Fall of 1995. Previously, the United States Department of Defense (DoD) made the American Muslim Council (AMC) the sole endorser of Muslim chaplain candidates to serve as chaplains for

the DoD. According to DeLorenzo, the first Muslim Imam was trained by and received a Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran Seminary in Chicago. Although the individual also took courses at the American Islamic College of Chicago, there was a general dissatisfaction at the AMC and among Muslims in the military about the idea of Muslim chaplains being trained at a Christian seminary.³¹

The AMC was having difficulty locating institutions to train Imam candidates and approached DeLorenzo in his role as a secretary of the Fiqh Council of North America about the possibility of creating a Muslim organized and operated program to train Imams for the DoD. Yusuf and the AMC agreed that GSISS might serve in this capacity and Yusuf spoke to Dr. Taha and Basheer Nafi at the IIIT and, after much debate, they agreed that GSISS should operate an Imamate program alongside of the Islamic Studies program.³²

The program began with four students and had expanded to seven students the second year (SISS 1997b). While most of the Imam students are from the United States' military and plan to return to the military as chaplains upon completion of their degrees, there was also immediate interest in the program from individuals working as Imams in the American prison system and in community mosques. According to DeLorenzo, there is a great need for professionally trained Imams in the United States and the goal of GSISS is to train Imams for the military, the prison systems, and the American Muslim community at large.³³

DeLorenzo told me that at that time in 1997 the number of Muslims in the United States' military would allow for the placement of fifty to sixty Muslim chaplains immediately if they existed and this figure was expected to double in five years. Muslims

in the military are roughly equally divided between African Americans and immigrant Muslims. According to DeLorenzo, for many immigrant Muslims, the military is like a family business. Fathers and grandfathers served in the military in their native countries and so it is only natural that the immigrants would also serve in the military.³⁴

American prison systems are also in need of Muslim chaplains to serve Muslim inmates. For example, when I was at GSISS in May 2000, negotiations were under way with the prison systems of the states of New York and Georgia for the training of fifteen Imams each.³⁵ In addition, several individuals serving as Imams in prisons had shown interest in the program at GSISS.

DeLorenzo felt the program was important and timely because many American Muslims viewed Imams, and especially the Imams imported from abroad, as ill prepared for the American context. According to DeLorenzo, American mosques established in the 1970s and 1980s were usually founded by immigrants from a particular state or ethnic group be it Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey, or what have you. These mosques often imported an Imam from their home country. However, as the immigrants became firmly established in America and had children born and raised in the United States, the practice of importing Imams has declined. According to DeLorenzo, foreign-born Imams lack the needed experience in the American context to be able to relate to the problems and issues facing second and third generation Muslims. Oftentimes, the Imam does not speak English and the individuals born and raised in the United States do not speak Arabic or Urdu or Farsi, etc.³⁶

As personal identity has shifted from ethnicity and national origin towards Islam, Muslims from many backgrounds now attend the same American mosques. This fact

also has reduced the number of imported Imams. According to DeLorenzo, at the larger mosques, directors are expected to hold a PhD in Islamic studies, comparative religion, or increasingly education as Islamic primary schools affiliated with mosques open and prosper.³⁷

Despite the obvious need for professionally trained Imams. There was much internal debate at the IIIT about whether GSISS should get involved with training Imams. This was due partly to Muslim inhibitions against clergy and partly because of the low regard for Imams in the Middle East and their traditional association with political authority. According to DeLorenzo, the word “Imam” is problematic because in the classical tradition it is immediately associated with “*al-Imama al-kabira*” or the great Imamerate which means political authority. The *Emir al-Mumineen* was also the Imam. The Sultan was also the Imam. Thus, according to DeLorenzo:

In today’s climate of fundamentalism and suspicion on the parts of Muslim governments, or nominal Muslim governments...we talk about Imams or a program for *Imaman* [Arabic plural of Imam] then immediately eyebrows are raised wondering, “what is this?” Not only that, there is no clergy in Islam so to speak, no ecclesiastical hierarchy...I know that people have looked askance at SISS having a program for Imams for the reason that they suppose we are attempting to ordain Imams here.³⁸

Nasr Arif, an Egyptian professor of political science at GSISS, indicated that there was also an image problem with the Imam program. As he told me, “People [in the Middle East] might think why should Imams be trained in the United States?”³⁹

Another point of contention is the prospect of training women as Imams.

DeLorenzo described the issue of women Imams as follows:

When you mention Imam and you mention women then you really get into a sticky situation. If we [GSISS] offer our women students degrees in Imamate studies, a Masters of Imamate, then to some sectors of the community it would be tantamount to our saying that we endorse the Imamate of women—that they can

lead prayers, that they can do this and that and the other thing—which is not the case. That’s a major sort of leap. Rather, what the intention would be if and when we accept women candidates would be to prepare them for essentially the chaplaincy to deal with the problems of Muslim women and children and families in the military because there is a reluctance on the part of both immigrant Muslim women and African American Muslim women . . . to interact with males, whether it be their post chaplain or whether he’s a Jew or Christian or a Muslim, it doesn’t really matter For that reason we would certainly like to have Muslim women in place in the chaplaincy corp.⁴⁰

DeLorenzo, for the same reasons, expects GSISS to train women for the American prison system and to serve as officials in community mosques and Islamic schools.

The playing down of the Imam program, despite a full third of the GSISS students being in the Imam program, is a conscious strategy resulting from the negative stereotype of Imams as ignorant prayer leaders prominent in the Middle East and still held among many first generation immigrants to the United States. This strategy is clearly evident in a comparison of English and Arabic versions of the catalog. In the English “official” catalog, the Imam program is present and prominently discussed. While in the Arabic “unofficial” catalog created for Arabic language audiences who might send students, sponsor scholarships, or provide other financial support, the Imam program is buried in a long list of professional programs of which only the Imam program existed at that time (see SISS 1997c; SISS 1997d).

However, extensive sections on the GSISS mission, its uniqueness, and a justification of its location in the United States are present that are not included or only briefly mentioned in the English language catalog. These sections construct GSISS as a global space distinct from both its physical location in Leesburg, Virginia, and free from the problems of the locations where the catalog is being read in the Middle East. GSISS

is presented as a utopian field where the best of East and West combine to create a whole greater than the sum of its parts that “goes beyond the contradictory dualism between science and values and negates the dualism between East and West” (SISS 1997d:14).

To quote from the Arabic catalog:

The location SISS has chosen is a virgin land, which has not experienced the complicated cultural legacy, or the contradictory ideological formulations [that the Middle East has]. It does not contain stale old civilizational inheritances. It is a land in which pluralism and freedom constitute its basic foundations [It] constitutes a unique location which has no equal in the modern world for such a project The United States of America, with its academic environment, is the place where intellectual trends are formed on a worldwide level North America constitutes an unequaled place for this university where SISS can be a fruitful fountain of knowledge in contact with all the peoples of the world. This university is not simply a normal academic institution that can be counted among the existing list of universities. It is not a university limited to a particular culture reflecting a nationalist, ethnic, religious, or sectarian mindset It contains an intellectual proposal reflecting a paradigm [which is one of only a half dozen words or so that appears in English in the Arabic catalog] which attempts to encompass and go beyond what is present in the modern social sciences (which are of European origin) and the Islamic sciences (which possess a traditional methodology) [*al-manhajia al-taqlidia*]. (SISS 1997d:14)

This utopian vision contrasts markedly with GSISS’s modest circumstances in the far suburbs of Washington, DC. The location in the last building of a small airport office park and the physical structure of the building itself do not attract attention. The lettering above the entryway is nearly too small to see from the parking lot. The marginalization of Islam from the American mainstream is self-consciously duplicated in the materiality of the school (see Figure 3-3).

The conflict between the contrasting representations of GSISS’s institutional identity in the Arabic catalog with its declaration of the negation of East and West, in the English language catalog where it is portrayed as an American-style graduate school, and

in the media's description as an Islamic seminary is also apparent inside the school where individuals' own identities and backgrounds impacted their views of GSISS identity.

Students raised in the United States and used to American categories concerning religion and religious institutions viewed GSISS, like the American media, more as an Islamic seminary than as a graduate school. One second-generation American, for example, asked me how I liked being at GSISS. When I replied I enjoyed being there and that everyone was very friendly and helpful, she got a surprised look on her face and said, "Really! I could never feel comfortable in a Christian seminary."⁴¹ Another American student with whom I was discussing my thoughts about the school's identity stated, "Well if it isn't an Islamic seminary, then what is it?" A third American student who dropped out of course work for the semester but was visiting asked me whether the school was "more academic now." I asked what she meant and she replied that she wondered whether there was more room for "analysis" and discussion of readings rather than just acceptance at face value of whatever the professors say.⁴²

In contrast, two students raised and educated through the undergraduate level abroad told me how different GSISS was from schools in the Middle East and that there was much more freedom to think for oneself rather than being told what to think. One of the students thought the increased intellectual freedom had to do with the school being in the United States where there was generally more freedom in everything while the other attributed it to the general condition of "modernity" which was increasing freedom everywhere.⁴³

However, there were still limits to this freedom. A couple of weeks later when I asked one of the same students who had told me how much freedom there was at GSISS

why none of the students had challenged Dr. Taha when he said that women are naturally better at raising families than at intellectual studies, she replied, “He is our *sheikh*, what would you have us do?” When I mentioned this incident to Nasr Arif, he noted that it was a cultural thing to respect scholars and especially religious scholars, “where I come from we kiss their hands.”⁴⁴

Different Schools of Thought

Contrary to what one might expect based upon a review of the literature on the Islamization of knowledge, on the ground at GSISS, individuals’ positions concerning the Islamization of knowledge are less rigidly definable into neat epistemological categories. What I mean by this is that (1) there are advocates of competing epistemological approaches in the Islamization of knowledge debate represented among the faculty and student body, (2) the majority of individuals are not wed to a particular position within the Islamization of knowledge debate are interested in a variety of theoretical approaches within the debate, and (3) many of the individuals (particularly the students) are not interested in the specific details of the Islamization of knowledge debates and are motivated more by identity than ideology.

At GSISS in 1997, advocates of each of the three epistemological approaches I outlined in chapter one were present. Taha Al-Alwani, Mona Abul-Fadl, and Nasr Arif each advocated an indigenization approach that seeks to combine the best aspects of the Islamic and Western heritages. Each, however, seeks to do this in a slightly different way based upon personal background. Al-Alwani, an Arab Iraqi trained at Al-Azhar University in *Shariah* sciences and without formal training in the social sciences, wants to refine the methods used in the traditional *Shariah* sciences in order to use them to

address social scientific questions. Abul-Fadl, a political scientist raised bi-culturally in Egypt and England, has outlined a *tawhidic* episteme derived from the heritage of Islamic civilization. However, Abul-Fadl approaches the Islamic heritage very differently than does her husband Al-Alwani. Rather than emphasizing *Shariah*, Abul-Fadl looks to the cultural heritage including contributions made by Jews and Christians living in Muslim lands for inspiration. She also looks to participants in the Islamization of knowledge debate beyond and even highly antagonistic toward the views of the IIIT. The result is a much more secular framework that none the less links knowledge and values. Nasr Arif, an Egyptian political scientist who was trained by Abul-Fadl as an undergraduate at Cairo University, draws upon Abul-Fadl's work but focuses more narrowly on ideas from the Islamic civilizational heritage relevant to political science in his research though he draws on a wide range of material in his teaching.

S. H. Nasr and two of his students advocated a nativization approach. S. H. Nasr, an Iranian, *Shi'i*, Sufi, and a professor at George Washington University, gave a series of invited lectures at GSISS the semester I was there and taught a course on the history of Islamic science the following semester. While having no real influence on the direction of GSISS, his students strongly advocated his perennialist school of thought at GSISS.

A Turkish political science post-doctoral scholar represented the modernist approach. In addition, I could be placed in this category. However, as a non-Muslim "visitor" to GSISS, I was treated differently than the nominally Muslim secular Turk.

The differences in the various approaches are best illustrated through brief vignettes in which advocates of opposing positions engaged each other in classes and in conversations outside of class. Indeed, much of the semester, I spent engaged in

discussion with individuals trying to convince me of the superiority of their epistemological position.

A key to understanding Al-Alwani's epistemological approach is his two readings principle. According to Al-Alwani, any true account of the universe needs to combine readings from both revelation and the visible universe. Revelation (which consists of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*) and the visible universe constitute the only two verifiable sources of knowledge and both sources are needed to attain valid knowledge. Al-Alwani argues:

To undertake a reading of either without reference to the other will neither benefit humanity nor lead it to the sort of comprehensive knowledge necessary for the building and maintenance of civilized society or to knowledge worthy of preservation and further development or exchange. (Al-Alwani 1995:85)

In contrast, S. H. Nasr and his students drawing on their Sufi practices look to different sources of knowledge. As one student explained to me, there are two types of knowledge: (1) principle knowledge and (2) secondary knowledge. The sources of principle knowledge are (1) revelation and (2) "intellection" (direct knowing from communion with *Allah*). Secondary knowledge is derivable from principle knowledge but the reverse is not true. The proper metaphysics is critical for understanding the universe. According to this student, the universe is divided into four vertical levels with relationships possible between the vertical levels and horizontally within each level. Western science only is capable of examining secondary knowledge of our own horizontal level and this leads to error. A correct Islamic science, in this student's view, focuses on principle knowledge that is without error by definition because it comes directly from *Allah* either through revelation or direct personal experience (intellection) of *Allah*. Islamic science and Sufism, from this perspective, never change. There is no progress only unveiling.⁴⁵

While S. H. Nasr and his students locate Sufism at the center of Islam and Islamic science, Al-Alwani views Sufism as merely part of the Islamic heritage that needs to be examined and evaluated. Al-Alwani divides Sufism into two types. The first is good or permissible Sufism (“*tasuf sunni*”) that “represents some of the Islamic system of spiritual life” and the second is Sufism that goes beyond the permissible (“*tasuf bid’i*”).⁴⁶

In a class dealing specifically with Sufism, Al-Alwani asked students to debate the boundary between *sunni* and *bid’i* Sufism. Students chose whether they preferred to argue for a more narrow or a more expansive definition of *sunni* Sufism. S. H. Nasr’s two students chose to argue the more expansive side of the debate as did a student from Egypt and an American female convert to Islam while the other three students chose to argue for a narrower definition. Al-Alwani asked which side I wanted to be on and I decided on the more inclusive side because I was sharing an apartment with both of S. H. Nasr’s students. Al-Alwani assigned me the nominal role of defining “*bid’a*” and “*bid’i*.” The following week we held the debate in class. It was clear that the more inclusive side won the debate. Al-Alwani was not pleased by the presentations of the students arguing for the narrower side and asked that the debate be repeated the following week. He also reassigned me to the narrower side with the task of defining “*sunni*.” The second debate was closer though the more inclusive side probably won again.⁴⁷ Al-Alwani spent most of the rest of the class arguing the more narrow side of the debate back and forth with S. H. Nasr’s students.⁴⁸

In one conversation between the Turkish post-doc, one of S. H. Nasr’s students, and myself, the Turk argued along secular relativist/perspectivist lines using the metaphor of “multiple windows” while S. H. Nasr’s student argued in favor of absolute Truth as the

only possible valid perspective. Afterwards, S. H. Nasr's student told me referring to the multiple windows argument "I just don't get this argument. What does he want me to do, look at the world from a false perspective rather than the Truth?"⁴⁹ On another occasion, the Turk and the student of S. H. Nasr discussed the direction GSISS was heading. S. H. Nasr's student wanted GSISS to abandon the idea of becoming an American style graduate school and instead become an "Islamic Academy" specializing in *usul al-fiqh*, *'ilm al-kalam*, Islamic economics, and related fields with the goal of promoting an Islamic alternative to secularism along the lines advocated by S. H. Nasr. The Turk thought that GSISS would have a negligible impact if it followed that path.⁵⁰ And while the Turk was skeptical of S. H. Nasr's position, he was even more skeptical of the views of central figures at IIIT and GSISS. He told me that I could easily deconstruct the IIIT but that they were not very important. He suggested that because most of the faculty at GSISS were "diaspora intellectuals" they did not fully grasp either the West or the East but chose to locate themselves in the Western discourse in order to speak back to their homeland using their location in the West for authority. He went so far as to say that the IIIT/GSISS held a double skepticism in that they were skeptical in their belief in Islam and of science.⁵¹

Most of the individuals at GSISS did not hold such strong views. One student I spoke to wondered which position I thought was most credible. When I asked him the same question he told me that while impressed by S. H. Nasr's lectures he was unsure about Sufism.⁵² Another student I asked about the Islamization of knowledge said she was not familiar with it at all and another had just started studying about it for class at GSISS.⁵³

Similarly, several students attended GSISS more due to issues of identity and a general interest in Islam than anything else. One student told me she attended GSISS as “a hobby” to learn more about the Islamic heritage to help her with her work with Muslim women.⁵⁴ Another student, who had converted to Islam, decided to attend because she felt she needed to learn more about Islam and GSISS was the only Islamic university in the United States.⁵⁵

Conclusion

The debates about the Islamization of knowledge at IIIT and GSISS are occurring at a time that Muslim identity has emerged in the United States. The original idea proposed by the IIIT to develop textbooks in order to train the next generation of Muslim intellectuals capable of reforming Muslim society has not come to fruition. However, the ideas, themselves, have developed and changed as the American context has changed and as individuals have taken the ideas from the institutional context of a think tank to an institution of higher education. The IIIT has continued to adapt to the needs of the Muslim American community and now focuses much more attention on practical issues related to being Muslim in a non-Muslim country.

In terms of GSISS, I would like to concur with the sentiment of one employee who described GSISS as “an experiment.”⁵⁶ GSISS is an intellectual and a social experiment. At the intellectual level, GSISS proposes to link knowledge and values, reason and revelation by developing the “*Tawhidi* episteme” that bridges East and West by identifying and unifying the universal aspects in each. At the social level, GSISS proposes to transform students into modern, rational, critical thinking Muslims capable of remaking Muslim society using a bottom up approach from within Muslim society rather

than a top down approach at the political level. The individuals at GSISS must search for ways to overcome the differences in cultural backgrounds and expectations that each brings to the table. The ability of individuals to set aside at least some of their differences and work together toward helping students reach their full potentials is the first step toward the utopian vision of GSISS.

As a new generation of scholars interested in the Islamization of knowledge emerges, they are transforming discussions of IOK. On the ground, IOK is less rigidly definable into neat epistemological categories. And, the local institutional and national contexts have a significant impact on the operational implementation of IOK as we shall see as we follow the Islamization of knowledge debate to Malaysia.

Islamization of Knowledge: Six Discourses

First Discourse: Articulating the Islamic Paradigm of Knowledge (*Tawhidi* Episteme)

Second Discourse: Developing a *Qur'anic* Methodology

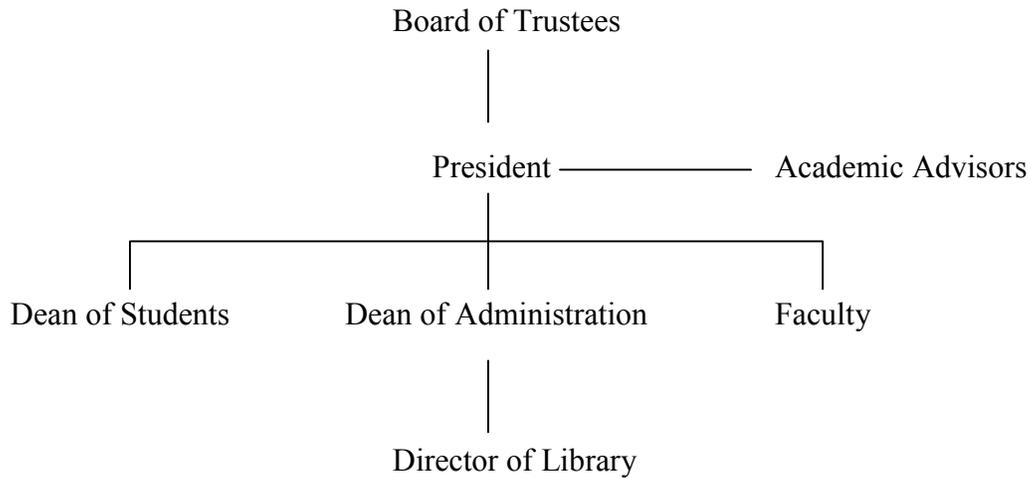
Third Discourse: Methodology for Dealing with the *Qur'an*

Fourth Discourse: Methodology for Dealing with the *Sunnah*

Fifth Discourse: Re-Examining the Islamic Heritage

Sixth Discourse: Dealing with the Western Intellectual Heritage

Figure 3-1. The Six Discourses of Al-Alwani



Board of Trustees: Chair Anwar Ibrahim, Vice Chair Dr. Taha J. Al-Alwani, Secretary Dr. Nasr Arif, Dr. Kamal Hassan, Dr. Ali Mazrui, Dr. Ali Zumai

President: Dr. Taja J. Al-Alwani

Dean of Students: Dr. Iqbal Unus

Dean of Administration: Dr. Mohammad Jaghlit

Faculty (full-time): Dr. Taja J. Al-Alwani, Dr. Mona Abul-Fadl, Dr. Nasr Arif, Yusuf Talal DeLorenzo

Director of Library: G. Yazdani Siddiqi

Figure 3-2. Organizational Chart for the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Leesburg, Virginia during Fall 1997.



Figure 3-3. The Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Leesburg, Virginia.

Notes

¹ Edward Said offers detailed studies of how Islam and Muslims were used historically to define the West (Said 1978) and how contemporary media coverage represents Islam and Muslims (Said 1997).

² For a more detailed discussion of American foreign policy in the Middle East see Haddad (1991a) and Bennis (2003).

³ Professor Wan was MSA President in 1982-1983 and he was also President of the Malaysian Islamic Study Group of the United States and Canada. This information is based on Professor Wan's biodata sheets he provided me while I was in Malaysia in 1998.

⁴ See Ahmed (1991) for an overview of these organizations.

⁵ One can similarly problematize many other popular and media representations of events involving Muslims. The representation of OPEC as Arab and Muslim rather than as comprised by nations from many regions of the world, the representation of Palestinian radicalism as Islamic terrorism, and the representation of long existing tribal/ethnic conflicts in Aceh as a new conflict between Muslims and Christians are just three such examples. Said (1978; 1997) provides an excellent discussion of the Western representations of "the other" and the media representations of Islam and Muslims. For

an overview of the formation of Muslim identity in relation to American foreign policy see Haddad (1991a).

⁶ The School of Islamic and Social Sciences changed its name to the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in 1999 to eliminate confusion among many members of the American Muslim community who thought that GSISS was a primary or secondary school similar to other Muslim parochial schools located throughout the US. In the spring of 2005, GSISS was integrated into the newly founded Cordoba University. I use the name GSISS in this dissertation except in cases where SISS is used directly in a quotation or is the author of the document in question. In either case, GSISS, SISS, and Cordoba University all refer to the same institution.

⁷ Personal communication from Taha Al-Alwani at GSISS on November 17, 1997. Yusuf DeLorenzo, who was at the conference in Islamabad and later worked at IIIT and GSISS, told me that this account seemed likely because although he had no specific information regarding the development of the initial work plan, Al-Faruqi's ultimate goal was always creating an Islamic institute of higher education in the United States (Personal communication Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS).

⁸ Personal communication with Taha Al-Alwani at GSISS on November 17, 1997.

⁹ See chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of IIUM and IIIT's activities in Malaysia.

¹⁰ Personal communication with Taha Al-Alwani at GSISS on November 17, 1997.

¹¹ Personal communication with Taha Al-Alwani at GSISS on November 17, 1997.

¹² Mona Abul-Fadl and Taha Al-Alwani also married during this time.

¹³ I discuss AbuSulayman's *Crisis in the Muslim Mind* in more detail in Chapter 5.

¹⁴ This account is based upon a copy of an internal IIIT document titled "A Summary of the Meetings to Establish The Institute of Islamic and Social Sciences at Virginia, in the United States of America" that specifies participants in the meetings, provides a brief summary of the meetings, and specifies nine points to which the parties agreed and a personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on September 25, 1997, who was also present at the meetings.

¹⁵ The Imam program primarily trains Muslims to be Chaplains in the United States' armed forces and state prison systems.

¹⁶ This figure for the number of students comes from a printout the Dean of Students Iqbal Unus gave me. A separate document (SISS 1997b), cites a different figure including 36 students of which 18 withdrew. Dr. Iqbal assured me that the figure on his printout was the correct figure. Of the 18 students, 11 were enrolled in the Islamic

Studies program and 5 in the Imamate program. In the spring of 1997, 31 students enrolled for classes.

¹⁷ In addition, I returned to GSISS for a week in May 2000 and also met with several current and former GSISS personnel and students at the AMSS meetings held at Georgetown University in October 2000. Finally, I have also kept abreast of developments via email and the GSISS website.

¹⁸ Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on July 1, 1997.

¹⁹ Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on July 1, 1997.

²⁰ Personal communication with Taha Al-Alwani at GSISS on September 15, 1997.

²¹ Personal communication with Taha Al-Alwani at GSISS on September 15, 1997.

²² Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on September 25, 1997. By the fall of 1997, the two specializations had expanded to three as “social sciences” was divided into specializations in “history” and “political science” (SISS 1997c). Interestingly, only political science was one of the seven disciplines targeted by IIIT for Islamization in the late 1980s (see IIIT 1989).

²³ Personal communication with Taha Al-Alwani at GSISS on September 15, 1997.

²⁴ Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on September 25, 1997.

²⁵ The ten courses included: (1) Research Methodology in the Social Sciences, (2) The Epistemology of Islam, (3) Islamic Legal Theory (*usul al-fiqh*), (4) Comparative Religion and Civilization, (5) Prophethood and the State, (6) Islamic History and Civilization, (7) Islamic Reform Movements, (8) Modern and Contemporary Islamic Movements, (9) Islamic Philosophy, and (10) Special Topics—Independent Studies (see SISS 1996:11-13).

²⁶ Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on September 25, 1997.

²⁷ Of these three core courses, only the Epistemology of Islam was taught the semester I was at GSISS. I will discuss this class in detail below. A fourth course, Research Methodology, was part of the core curriculum in the 1996 and 1997 catalogs and was still required in the 1998 catalog though it was not officially considered a part of the core curriculum.

²⁸ Personal communication with Taha Al-Alwani at GSISS on October 15, 1997.

²⁹ DeLorenzo is a Euro-American convert to Islam. Born within sight of Plymouth Rock, he grew up with the Vonnegut and Kennedy children as friends. He converted to Islam

after completing his BA degree and traveling in the Muslim world. After briefly attending Al-Azhar University in Cairo, he went to Pakistan where he spent seven years studying in a traditional *madrassa*. There he married his wife Aisha from a prominent Pakistani family in a marriage arranged by his Sheikh. Later, he and his family moved to Sri Lanka where he ran an Islamic boarding school before returning to Pakistan to serve as a high ranking official in the Ministry of Education when General Zia ul-Haq led Pakistan. He and his family moved to the United States in the mid-1980s. DeLorenzo was hired by the IIIT as part of its translation department before moving to GSISS in 1996 as head of the Imam program along with several IIIT staff members. He left GSISS shortly after I did and he now works as a freelance translator, consults for companies interested in offering services that conform to Islamic law, teaches courses on Islamic economic, and serves on the Fiqh Council overseeing *halal* mutual fund investments which has earned him the honorary title the Sheikh of Wall Street. This brief sketch is derived from personal communications with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on October 28, October 30, December 1, December 2, December 3, December 4, December 5, December 8, December 9, and December 10, 1997 and at his home in May and October 2000.

³⁰ Personal communications with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on July 1, 1997, September 18, 1997, September 25, 1997, and September 26, 1997.

³¹ Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on September 26, 1997.

³² Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on September 26, 1997.

³³ Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on September 26, 1997.

³⁴ Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on September 26, 1997.

³⁵ Personal communication with Taha Al-Alwani at GSISS on May 20, 2000.

³⁶ Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on September 26, 1997.

³⁷ Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on September 26, 1997.

³⁸ Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on September 26, 1997.

³⁹ Personal communication with Nasr Arif at GSISS on December 17, 1997. I would suggest there is also a question of authority and authenticity involved as well.

⁴⁰ Interestingly, DeLorenzo described an early meeting with a chaplain from the Department of Defense in which, after looking over the proposed curriculum, the chaplain said to him, “obviously you won’t be having any women candidates in your program”. DeLorenzo says he laughed and replied, “why obviously?” to which the chaplain replied “obviously”. Personal communication with Yusuf DeLorenzo at GSISS on September 26, 1997.

- ⁴¹ Personal communication at GSISS on September 29, 1997. Please note that I am not identifying students by name.
- ⁴² Personal communication at GSISS on November 24, 1997.
- ⁴³ Personal communication at GSISS on September 15, 1997.
- ⁴⁴ Personal communication with Nasr Arif at GSISS on December 11, 1997.
- ⁴⁵ Personal communication at GSISS on October 13, October 17, and October 24, 1997. While I do not have space to provide detailed descriptions, the four metaphysical levels are from highest to lowest: beyond being, being, logos, and manifestations. Humans everyday experience is at the level of manifestations. The only ways for humans to sense the higher levels are through revelation and intellection.
- ⁴⁶ Personal communication with Taha Al-Alwani at GSISS on November 17, 1997.
- ⁴⁷ The result of the debate was at least partly determined by gender dynamics. In the first debate, the more inclusive side consisted of one female and four males including myself. The three males had a relatively equal say in the discussion of how to argue the debate. The lone female could not attend the organizing meeting while I deferred to the group. The narrow side consisted of one male and three females. When I was reassigned for the second debate, I learned that rather than using an egalitarian or meritocratic style of interaction the younger women deferred to the eldest woman who made all the decisions because the male could not attend the meeting. Thus, because the most knowledgeable woman on the debate topic was not the senior woman, she had little impact on the strategy used in the debate.
- ⁴⁸ Account based on participant observation in Sufism class at GSISS on October 15, October 22, and October 29, 1997.
- ⁴⁹ Personal communication at GSISS on October 2, 1997.
- ⁵⁰ Personal communication at GSISS on November 5, 1997.
- ⁵¹ Personal communication at GSISS on November 6, 1997.
- ⁵² Personal communication at GSISS on November 24, 1997.
- ⁵³ Personal communications at GSISS on October 24 and December 16, 1997.
- ⁵⁴ Personal communication at GSISS on September 29, 1997.
- ⁵⁵ Personal communication at GSISS on December 15, 1997.

⁵⁶ Personal communication at GSISS on October 6, 1997.

CHAPTER 4
MALAYSIAN MODERNITY IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION:
CULTURAL POLITICS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MUSLIM
TECHNOSCIENTIFIC IDENTITIES

Over the last decade, globalization and transnationalism have been central foci of studies of modernity in anthropology and related disciplines. The starting point for global and transnational studies is the recognition that (1) increasingly capital is globalized and markets are integrated, (2) technological innovations in communication and transportation are lessening the importance of political boundaries and the dimensions of time and space as restraining factors resulting in the increase in volume and speed of the flow of people, information, symbols, capital, and commodities on a global scale, and (3) these processes result in the reconfiguration of power and identities (Featherstone 1990; Glick Schiller 1997b; Hannerz 1996; Kearney 1995; Khan 1998). Central to these studies has been the exploration of identity formation and specifically identity politics, i.e., the complex interrelationships between the construction of identities and local, national, and global forces (Glick Schiller 1997a; 1997b; Kearney 1995; Khan 1998). In this chapter, I examine these processes in Malaysia in order to provide the context within which the debates about Islam, science, and modernity are occurring.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and religiously plural state in Southeast Asia located partly on the same peninsula as its northern neighbor, Thailand, and partly on the northern half of Borneo that it shares with Indonesia and Brunei. Of the approximately 22 million Malaysians, 53 percent are ethnically Malays, 26 percent are

Chinese, 8 percent are Indian, 12 percent are non-Malay *bumiputras*, and other ethnicities comprise the final 1 percent. In terms of religious affiliation, 60.4 percent are Muslim, 19.2 percent are Buddhist, 9.1 percent are Christian, 6.3 percent are Hindu, 2.6 percent practice traditional Chinese religion, and 2.4 percent either practice another religion or no religion (Lockwood 2003).

Malaysia is in the midst of enormous societal transformations, and Malay identity is a key locus for these transformations. The Malaysian government, led by the recently retired Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad between 1981 and 2003, has a goal of becoming a fully developed nation by the year 2020.¹ This national plan, known as “Vision 2020,” is developing within the context of local/global debates about Islam, science, and modernity and is best conceptualized as a project for reconstructing Malaysian economy, society, and identity. I call this project in social engineering Malaysian modernity.

Malaysian modernity is not without its critics, however. Malaysians are asking themselves two questions—questions they have been asking again and again (see Rashid 1993; Raslan 1996). What does it mean to be Malaysian? And what does it mean to be Malay? The debates surrounding these very basic but profound questions are rooted in the local, national, and global forces that have shaped the historical development of Malaysia and continue to shape its future. At stake is the future of Malaysia.

This description of the “New Malay” and Mahathir’s social development agenda for reshaping Malay identity are bound up in global processes that have contributed to the historical development of Malaysia.

Historical Development of Malaysia

Identity formation and identity politics are indelibly linked with the processes of globalization. However, while globalization has accelerated of late due to technological innovations, it did not begin yesterday. Mazrui (1998) suggests four major forces are associated with globalization: religion, technology, economy, and empire. Each of these forces has played a major role in the historical development of Malaysia. Here I would like to briefly focus on British colonial policies, Islam, and local cultural traditions which all play a significant role in Malaysia's historical development.

Islam came to what would become Malaysia through trade and traveling religious scholars from Southeast Asia and the Middle East who intermarried with the locals including the royal families of the Hindu kingdoms that ruled the Malay Peninsula and opened religious schools until nearly all the Malays had converted to Islam. As Muslim traders and scholars integrated into and transformed Malay society, Portuguese, Dutch, and British Empire builders were drawn to Malaysia for commercial exploitation and colonization. Eventually the British gained the upper hand. In the late 18th century, Britain gained a foothold in Penang and Singapore before permanently supplanting the Dutch who had held Melaka and Johor and the Thais who controlled what is now northern peninsular Malaysia in the early 20th century. The British established rubber plantations and tin mines and controlled economic matters while the Malay royalty maintained control over most other matters with the guidance of the British colonial administration (Nagata 1997).

British colonial policies are largely responsible for Malaysia's current multi-ethnic citizenry. While the Malay elite held administrative positions and ordinary Malays continued to subsist on fishing and small scale agriculture, the British imported Chinese labor primarily from Fujian and Guandong provinces to work as traders and in tin mines and Indian labor to work in the bureaucracy and on rubber plantations. This division of labor stemming from the British colonial legacy is mirrored in the contemporary

stereotyping of Malaysian ethnic identities—Malays control politics, Chinese control economics, and Indians are prominent in manual labor on plantations and in the professions (Lockwood 2003; Nagata 1997).

At the end of the 19th century, many Hadramouts (from what is today Yemen) and Indian Muslim merchants and scholars immigrated to Penang and Singapore and started to question the Islamic legitimacy of the rule of the Malay sultans and the form of Islam practiced by ordinary Malays. Known as the *Kaum Muda*, or the Young Faction, they utilized print media and linguistic symbolism to critique the ruling sultans and encourage the reorientation of Malay Muslims towards the wider Muslim *ummah*. For example, the *Kaum Muda* used the Arabic concept of *watan*, meaning “homeland” and *negeri*, meaning “territory,” instead of the term *kerajaan* or “government” which meant rajah’s domain (Nagata 1997). The *Kaum Muda*, in combination with the ideas of the Islamic modernists that also made their way to Malaysia via print media, set the stage for Malaysia’s later revival of Islamic identity.

Even while the *Kaum Muda* were challenging the legitimacy of the sultans, British colonial policies were increasingly eroding the power of the sultans. This policy reached an apex following World War II when the Japanese occupied British Malaya. Following the war, the British returned with a proposal for a new policy treating the three ethnic groups equally that would undermine any remaining political authority of the sultans. This proposal, though never implemented, heightened popular Malay resentment of the Chinese as did the formation of predominantly Chinese communist rebel groups (Nagata 1997; Voll 1994).

In response to this proposal, two Malay parties formed and led an anti-British movement. In 1945, the Malayan National Party (MNP), the precursor of today’s leading Islamic political party PAS (*Parti Islam Se-Malaysia*), was established. The following year the United Malays’ National Organization (UMNO) formed. Both groups advocated Malay preeminence and were anti-communist (Voll 1994).

These two parties answered the identity question of “who is the Malay?” differently. The MNP defined Malayness in terms of religion, race, and language. In contrast, UMNO used race, language, and custom. The place of Islam for Malay identity, then, became the defining difference between the MNP (now PAS) and UMNO and continues to shape the identity politics in Malaysia (Safi n.d.).²

Over the next decade, UMNO, which formed an alliance with the non-communist Chinese and Indian elites who formed the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) respectively and also opposed the communist rebels, became the leading Malay political party. This coalition swept national elections in 1955 and has ruled Malaysia, then Malaya, ever since gaining formal independence in 1957. North Borneo and Singapore joined in 1963 and Singapore withdrew in 1965 leaving Malaysia in its current configuration (Voll 1994).

Early Malay activism focused around Malay language rights, e.g., the use of *Bahasa Malayu* rather than English as the official language of the country and in all governmental institutions. However, by the early 1970s, Islam became the central focus of debates over Malay identity (Nagata 1997; Voll 1994).

Several events laid the foundations for the Islamic resurgence. The most dramatic triggering event was the Malay-Chinese race riots in 1969. Malay-Chinese tensions stemming partly from British post-war policies and Chinese participation in the communist movement remained hidden under the surface of peaceful cooperation for more than a decade after independence. However, on May 13, 1969, these Malay-Chinese tensions, held in check to that point by British authorities and the alliance of the UMNO, MCA, and MIC political parties, erupted into open conflict on the streets of Kuala Lumpur. These race riots stemmed from economic inequalities between the ethnic Malays and Chinese that originated from British colonial immigration and labor policies. Significantly, the riots highlighted the limitations of the alliance government for

maintaining inter-racial harmony, a key element underlying popular Malay support of secularist-leaning UMNO following independence (Nagata 1997; Voll 1994).

The 1969 race riots demonstrated that a coalition government alone was insufficient to maintain inter-community harmony. One major response to these riots was the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1970. The NEP was designed to create national unity by attacking major sources of inter-community tensions. First, the NEP aimed to eradicate poverty regardless of race. Second, the NEP aimed to eliminate the linkages between race and economic function. This second aspect essentially provided the Malays with an affirmative action program that mandated quotas for ethnic Malays in education and hiring because they were economically worst off as a group. The overall strategy was to eliminate many of the barriers between ethnic groups thus promoting greater unity (Government of Malaysia 1971; Khoo Boo Teik 2003; Williamson 2002).

The NEP enabled thousands of Malays to study abroad where they encountered Muslim students from around the world. Many of these students participated in groups like the MSA (Muslim Student Association) in the United States and returned to Malaysia with a stronger sense of their identity as Muslims. The ideas of Muslim activists and scholars like Ismail Al-Faruqi, Seyyed Hussein Nasr, Sayyid Qutb, Hassan Al-Banna, and Ali Shariati also returned in these students minds as well as in printed form. Syed Naquib Al-Attas, an Indonesian born and Euro-American educated Malaysian scholar of Hadramout descent, also became influential from his post at the University of Malaya (Voll 1994).

The *dakwah* movement also emerged at this time. “*Dakwah*” is the Malay term used to describe a wide variety of Islamically oriented Malay groups of which the most influential is ABIM (*Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia* or Malay Muslim Youth League). ABIM was founded by Anwar Ibrahim around the issue of Malay language rights before

shifting towards an Islamic focus. In 1982, Anwar accepted an invitation from the then newly elected Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and joined UMNO. Anwar's Islamic credentials legitimized UMNO in the face of the Islamic revival and his presence had an immediate and tangible impact as "Islamization" became official government policy in 1984 (Lotfalian 1999).

The 1980s and 1990s have seen the implementation of a number of formal and informal Islamically-oriented government sponsored programs including an Islamic Bank, a *Shariah* judicial system parallel to the secular judicial system, the International Islamic University, the National Mosque, and the general encouragement of integrating Islamic symbolism into architectural designs. During the same period, however, the government has also cracked down on many Islamic organizations. This seemingly contradictory behavior should be interpreted as the UMNO led government's co-optation and manipulation of Islam and Islamic symbolism for its own purposes including battles with PAS and other Islamic groups and individuals over Malaysian identity. This brings us full circle to Malaysian modernity.

Malaysian Modernity and the New Malay

For the Malaysian government, economic development, first in the form of the NEP and later the National Development Policy (NDP) that was incorporated into Vision 2020, is in a very real sense a social policy designed to create national unity and a Malaysian identity. This is a process that Benedict Anderson (1991) described as imagining a nation.

Mahathir's Vision 2020 is now 15 years into a 30-year long plan. Originating as an address to the Malaysian Business Council in 1991 titled "The Way Forward," Mahathir (1991) outlined what he meant by a fully developed nation and how his

definition differed from Western definitions that relied solely on economic criteria.

Mahathir's definition included all aspects of society. This is clearly evident in "The Way Forward" and in the 1995 book *The Voice of Asia* co-authored with Shitaro Ishihara, who was then Prime Minister of Japan, in which Mahathir stated (1995:20):

In formulating Vision 2020, we had to define what we meant by "developed country." Does the term refer simply to a per capita income of at least US\$16,000, or does it also imply stability and solid cultural values? All these factors have to be considered, but it is clear that wealth alone does not constitute development. No country is really developed, for instance, if it has money but no technology Nor is a country developed, in our sense of the word, if it has money and technology but lacks firm moral values. Many Western societies, for example, are morally decadent. There is diminishing respect for the institutions of the family and marriage, and some even permit same-gender marriages. To us, that is not development. You must maintain cultural and moral values. We do not want to be just a rich country.

For Mahathir, then, developed status requires three things: money, technology, and moral values.

For Vision 2020 to succeed, Malaysia's GDP must average 8% growth over the 30 years of the plan. In order to achieve this, according to Mahathir, requires a transformation to a knowledge-based economy (or K-economy).

Science and technology are central to Malaysia's plans to build a knowledge-based economy. Education and training, research and development, and infrastructure are important locations for government investment. Among the government's investments in infrastructure are the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), a Light Rail Transit (LRT) monorail in and around Kuala Lumpur, a second Proton factory (Proton is the national car manufactured in cooperation with Mitsubishi), Putrajaya (Malaysia's new capital) and the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

Particularly notable is the MSC designed to attract high-tech, multinational corporations and push Malaysia into the forefront of the information based economies of the 21st century. The MSC is a centerpiece of national pride and symbolizes Malaysia's

modernization program. Stretching 50 km from Kuala Lumpur to KLIA and Cyberjaya (a brand new, totally wired Cyber city) and 15 km wide, the MSC is projected to cost approximately RM50 billion and represents a huge investment for a nation of 22 million people with a 1998 federal budget of just over RM64 billion or just under US\$17 billion.³

In a sense, this technoscientific development (at least in terms of its physical infrastructure) is easier to accomplish than remaking Malaysian identity. Building the MSC with its smart schools in smart cities located on former agricultural plantations primarily requires capital (substantial as that may be) to build facilities designed by a relatively small group of Malaysian and foreign businesspeople, thinkers, scientists, and engineers using new but fairly established technology imported from abroad. Remaking the Malaysians to thrive in such an environment while retaining their cultural and moral values seems a much larger challenge.

Intertwined with and at times at loggerheads with the goal of national unity and creating a Malaysian identity is the question of Malay nationalism. The NDP and Vision 2020 extend the economic and structural goals of the NEP to the remaking of the Malay identity. The success of Malaysia's economic and social transformations requires a transformation in Malay identity to what the popular press has characterized as a new breed of Malay and Mahathir has called the "*Melayu Baru*" or "New Malay" (Thompson 2003). According to Mahathir, this new model citizen is a highly educated, self-confident, rational, and tolerant Muslim who can combat neo-colonialism while simultaneously understanding and developing Malaysia's new information based technologies and economy. The new Malay also conforms to descriptions of modern citizens in classic social theory in that he (the subject is usually though not necessarily explicitly masculinized) is an urbanized participant in the industrialized economy and is entrepreneurial (Thompson 2003).

This image of the new Malay represents a complete rupture with the earlier image of the Malay peasant living in a *kampung* (village) surviving by subsistence farming and

fishing. Mahathir (1970) has been highly critical of Malay peasants. Despite this, he argues that Malays must retain their cultural and moral values as they otherwise transform themselves in New Malays. What, however, are these cultural and moral values that need to be retained?

Mahathir is a leading advocate for “Asian values.” The notion of Asian values developed from the earlier concept “Confucian values” promoted in the 1970s by then Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew and others as an explanation for the rapid rise and success of capitalism in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The transformation to Asian values emerged as Asian economies increasingly integrated and regional groups like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) were formed.

For Mahathir, Asian values like hard work, family, and community solidarity are central to Malaysian development. In order to promote Asian values among the citizenry of Malaysia, the Ministry of Education in its Integrated Curriculum has identified sixteen “universal values” which the ministry believes are compatible with all religions, cultures, and norms of Malaysian society and are to be inculcated in all disciplines including in specific moral and Islamic education courses which make up 10% of instruction time at the primary level and 14% at the secondary level. These values are: compassion/empathy, self-reliance, humility/modesty, respect, love, justice, freedom, courage, cleanliness of body and mind, honesty/integrity, diligence, co-operation, moderation, gratitude, rationality, and public spiritedness (Hashim 1996:136, 138).

The Malaysian government is actively trying to integrate these values with science and technology at the National Science Center (see Figure 4-1). The recently opened National Science Center located in the suburbs of Kuala Lumpur is a museum that emphasizes hands-on exhibits attractive to children and exhibits that document the contributions of Muslim scientists and engineers. Indeed, even the architectural design, which resembles a mosque without minarets, reflects government efforts to link technoscientific development and cultural and moral values. For example, compare the

National Science Center in Figure 4-1 and the mosque on the campus of the International Islamic University in Figure 4-2.

This linkage is made extraordinarily clear as one walks into the large exhibition space under the glass dome. Straight ahead is an exhibit on space exploration that includes information on Malaysia's first communications satellite (see Figure 4-3) while flying high above is a large, traditional Malay kite (see Figure 4-4.). The message could not be more clear—we may have started off from humble roots, but we have come far and can achieve even greater things.

Indeed, much of the new skyline of Kuala Lumpur is designed to link Islamic values explicitly to the urban landscape. The Petronas twin towers (see Figure 4-5) and the KL Tower (see Figure 4-6) are prime examples. Both structures draw on traditional Islamic symbolism and motifs while their functions and construction in steel and glass are related to high-tech industries. The twin towers house the Petronas oil company and an immense shopping mall at their base, while the KL Tower serves as a communications relay tower.

While the values listed above hardly contradict Western norms and values, Mahathir (1995) devotes a chapter to the contrasts he sees between “Western Modernism and Eastern Thought.” Mahathir (1995:80-81) argues that the West has separated religious and secular life and replaced religious values with hedonistic ones like materialism, sensual gratification, and selfishness that are leading the West to “an impending collapse.”

This belief makes Mahathir's decision to build the MSC even more daring. Because the development of a knowledge-based economy requires the free flow of information and ideas on a global scale, Mahathir has no choice but to allow the Western ideas and consumerism that he fears into Malaysia via the internet and other communication media. Mahathir has no choice because he needs the assistance of global

corporations and their capital if the MSC is to succeed. And one of the major promises made to attract these corporations is a policy of no censorship of the internet.⁴

Mahathir and other Malaysians developing the MSC recognize many potential implications, both benefits and dangers, inherent with a free flow of information.

Azzman Shariffadeen, a Malaysian CEO and futurist trained in engineering, recognizes that the MSC can contribute immensely to the Malaysian economy because information technology services are not spatially constrained. Thus, these services can be produced anywhere (in this case in Malaysia) and consumed globally due to the cheap and unfettered flow of information via the internet and other communication media (Azzman Shariffadeen 1994).

Azzman Shariffadeen also recognizes the social implications of the free flow of information. “Knowledge is a double-edged sword. Improper use can lead to destruction—destruction of self, society, or even civilizations” (Azzman Shariffadeen 1997: 10). Azzman Shariffadeen also states that social, cultural, and political institutions and mechanisms do not exist to counter the potential abuse of knowledge. However, in the end, he believes that if the citizenry is enculturated with strong moral and ethical values, then Malaysia’s MSC experiment can enable a transformation of Malaysian society along utopian lines, meaning a self-regulating society with unlimited access to information in which rulers are wise and citizens actively participate in their own governance—a society in which human dignity forms the foundation for individuals’ rights not to live in poverty or hunger (Azzman Shariffadeen 1997).

The Discontents

There are voices, however, within Malaysia, opposed to Mahathir's Malaysian modernity. This does not mean that they want Malaysia to reject economic, technological, or social development, nor does it mean that they want Malaysia to be Westernized. Rather, these discontents, if you will, have a different interpretation of which values ought to be valorized, promoted, and acted out. The fault line between Malaysian modernity and its discontents should not be dismissed simply as a political struggle for power between Mahathir and the ousted and then jailed former Deputy Prime Minister and heir apparent Anwar Ibrahim. While this is certainly an important aspect of the disagreements over Malaysian modernity, I think that it goes beyond this to the questions of Malay and Malaysian identity. At a very fundamental level, the issues in the struggle for political control of Malaysia and the questions of Malay and Malaysian identity are the same. What role can and should Islam play in the contemporary world and specifically in Malaysia? And how do you define Islam?

One of the leading discontents is Chandra Muzaffar. Muzaffar was a professor at the University of Malaya until he was fired in the wake of the Anwar controversy. He has been an outspoken human rights activist for some time and is now the vice president of the opposition National Justice Party (*Keadilan*) led by Anwar's wife Wan Aziza.

Muzaffar has been critical of many government policies. In a position paper, Muzaffar (1996) addressed the Asian values debate. He made the point that the values cited as Asian, e.g., hard work, discipline, thriftiness, family solidarity, community cohesiveness, and loyalty to authority are only partly responsible for Asian economic growth, are not uniquely Asian, and are only a partial representation of the values that

Asians hold. He notes that other factors like the circulation of Japanese capital in East Asia, focus on human resource development, the existence of sound infrastructural facilities, emphasis on export oriented industrialization, and general peace and stability in the region were also important in East Asian development. He notes that while these values may be on the decline in the West in the face of individualism they are not limited to Asians. And most importantly, Muzaffar notes that these economic and political values described as Asian ignore other Asian values derived from religion. He calls for a re-interpretation of religious doctrine in order to emphasize the “universal spiritual worldview and its perennial moral values” in each religion in order to foster inter-civilizational dialogue including Western secularism. Muzaffar (1996) concludes: “When such a transformed, reformed religion becomes a way of life, Asian values will cease to be synonymous with hard work or loyalty to authority, and will be equated, as it [*sic*] should be, with justice, compassion and love.”

In an interview with Muzaffar, he told me that Mahathir’s Asian values were nothing more than a screen to hide the fact that Mahathir is a “crass capitalist” who uses old, anti-colonialist rhetoric to stay in power rather than being the great nationalist and anti-colonialist he represents himself as. Muzaffar said that Mahathir’s real Asian values were what he called the “6 Ms” or money, market, machines, media, mega-ism, and Mahathirism. This then is Muzaffar’s characterization of Malaysian modernity.⁵

According to Muzaffar, Islam is also a screen for Mahathir. Mahathir has instituted a system of Islamic banks operating without interest to complement the extent banks. He was also instrumental in Malaysia’s opening of the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) in cooperation with the Organization of Islamic

Conference (OIC). However, Muzaffar views these actions as cynical moves to maintain popular support from ethnic Malays as Islam has become increasingly important for ethnic Malay identity.⁶

In contrast, Muzaffar believes Anwar's advocacy of Islam is much more sincere than Mahathir's. The distinction Muzaffar draws between Asian economic and political values and universalistic moral and religious values is similar to the differences between Mahathir's Asian values and Anwar's Asian renaissance concept. According to Anwar (1996:17-18):

By Asian Renaissance we mean the revival of the arts and sciences under the influence of the classical models based on strong moral and religious foundations; a cultural resurgence dominated by a reflowering of art and literature, architecture and music and advancements in science and technology.

Thus, Anwar's vision of society is founded not upon economic and political imperatives but upon education and religious values.

Two other oppositional political parties are the vocal opponents of Malaysian modernity. The Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) is the main Islamically-oriented party and a direct descendent of the first political party founded in Malaysia and older by a year or so than Mahathir's party, the United Malay National Organization (UMNO), which has ruled continuously since independence in 1957. PAS has long called for an Islamic state. While PAS has yet to outline what this means in practical terms beyond the institutionalization of *Shariah* (Islamic law), it is gaining popular support among ethnic Malays and now controls two state governments. PAS is concerned about UMNO's Islamic commitment in policy. This concern is not new originating as it does with PAS's and UMNO's definition of "Malay." PAS argued for religion, race, and language as the criteria, while UMNO argued for race, language, and custom. However, this

charge has a new salience given Anwar's 1998 ousting and imprisonment since most Malays saw him as the main source of Islamic legitimacy within UMNO.

The second opposition party is the Democratic Action Party (DAP). DAP, while officially not an ethnically-based party like UMNO, is considered the primary Chinese opposition party. DAP has challenged Mahathir and UMNO regarding the inclusiveness of its policies towards non-Malays. Why for example is Mahathir concerned about creating the so-called New Malay they ask? What about the ethnic Chinese, Indians, and indigenous peoples that together make up roughly half of Malaysia's citizens? Other Chinese groups have begun to raise similar questions as well.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Malaysian modernity embodied in Vision 2020 and its plans to build a K-economy run by New Malays asserts a very specific and narrow construction of Malay and Malaysian identity. This construction, which explicitly links economic and technological development with ethical and moral values derived from a specific interpretation of Islam and Malay culture, did not originate with Vision 2020. Rather, this construction is a product of centuries of civilizational interaction and exchange.

The identities being constructed by Malaysian modernity are also being contested. Those challenging these constructions do so on various grounds. Some challenge Mahathir's interpretation of Islam and Islamic values. Some challenge whether these values are actually enacted in government policies. And still others challenge based on the lack of inclusivity of development policies. Both supporters and dissenters of Malaysian modernity think it possible and desirable to be modern without being Western.

By utilizing a discourse about technoscience that is value-rich rather than value-free, this debate raises anew the questions “Whose modernity? Whose values?”

Notes

¹ I refer to the ex-Prime Minister Mahathir throughout this chapter because he was the primary mover behind Vision 2020 and was in power during my fieldwork in Malaysia and because current Prime Minister Badawi has largely carried forward the Mahathir agenda.

² Article 160 of the Malaysian Constitution defines “Malay” as “a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to Malay custom” and was either born or resided in Malaysia or Singapore before or on Merdeka Day (Malaysia’s Independence Day) or the issue of such a person.

³ In the wake of the Asian financial crisis that began in 1997, Malaysia pegged the exchange rate of its national currency the ringgit at RM3.80 to \$1. The peg remained in place until Prime Minister Badawi refloated the exchange rate within hours of China’s decision to do the same earlier this year.

⁴ Malaysia’s pledge of no censorship of the internet was strained in the wake of the political struggle between Mahathir and his ousted Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim when Anwar supporters who felt the traditional media outlets too closely reflected the government views used the internet to post anti-government materials. While the Malaysian government did arrest some individuals within Malaysia who posted material under the Internal Security Act, they have been unable to control most of the information posted on the internet. For a brief description see Nuttall (1998).

⁵ Personal communication with Chandra Muzaffar at University of Malaya on December 12, 1998.

⁶ Personal communication with Chandra Muzaffar at University of Malaya on December 12, 1998.



Figure 4-1. The National Science Center in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



Figure 4-2. The Main Mosque on the International Islamic University Campus in Gombak, Malaysia.



Figure 4-3. The Space Science Display at the National Science Center in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



Figure 4-4. Traditional Malay Kite Hanging above the Space Science Display at the National Science Center in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



Figure 4-5. The Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



Figure 4-6. The KL Tower in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

CHAPTER 5 ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE IN MALAYSIA

The Malaysian context is very different from the American context. Malaysia is a Muslim majority country. Islam is in the midst of a revival and is the official religion of Malaysia. In the United States, Islam, despite being the fastest growing religion, is marginalized in political and cultural discourse. In Malaysia, the government views Islam as an essential source of moral values that must be promoted and inculcated in the identity of the New Malay in order to both temper the darker aspects of globalization and promote economic growth and national unity. In the United States, the government views Islam as the source of international terrorism and thus as the central threat to American hegemony. These differences between the national contexts of the United States and Malaysia make for a substantial difference in the ways that the Islamization of knowledge is represented and operationalized at institutions in Malaysia.

This chapter follows the Islamization of knowledge debate to Malaysia and examines the ways the ideas have been institutionalized at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) and the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC). The Islamization of knowledge came to Malaysia through a variety of channels. The two channels I will focus most on here are through the IIIT and people associated with the IIIT and through the scholarship of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas who founded and, at the time I was there in 1998, was director of ISTAC.

IIUM

IIUM is much larger than GSISS with approximately 7,000 students in the fall of 1998 with plans to expand rapidly to nearly 20,000 students including 14,000 regular students and 5,500 at their Matriculation Center that improves the knowledge and language skills of students wanting to enroll in regular coursework. In 1998, IIUM was in the midst of building two new campuses—one in Gombak approximately 20 km north of downtown Kuala Lumpur and a second in Kuantan on Malaysia's east coast—to compliment its campus in Petaling Jaya just west of Kuala Lumpur that will house the Matriculation Center (International Islamic University Malaysia 1998). Figure 4-2 shows the mosque at the new Gombak campus.

In chapter three, I discussed briefly the 1977 conference on Islamic education held in Mecca as one forum from which the IIIT emerged. Similarly, the idea for IIUM emerged from this conference. IIUM was founded in 1983 by the government of Malaysia and co-sponsored by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) during a period when Islam was undergoing a renaissance in Malaysia (Nagata 1984).

The Third International Conference on the Islamization of Knowledge convened in 1984 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and co-sponsored by the IIIT and the Malaysian Ministry of Youth and Culture also was important for bringing the IIIT's ideas to Malaysia. One participant at this conference was Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad who stated his support for the IIIT's approach to Islamization (IIIT 1989).

As was noted in chapter four, recently retired longtime Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and the Malaysian government have used the Islamic University and similar large-scale projects like the building of mosques and instituting an Islamic banking

system to legitimize the government with Malay Muslims. Another strategy for legitimation with this constituency was bringing Anwar Ibrahim into the government apparently with the urging and support of Ismail Al-Faruqi who founded the IIIT and was a consultant on Islamic and educational concerns for the Malaysian government.

Following the success of the Malaysian conference, the IIIT opened a branch office in Malaysia associated with IIUM. As Minister of Education, Anwar became the President of IIUM and recruited AbdulHamid AbuSulayman from the IIIT to become rector of the university and run the day-to-day operations in 1988. The IIIT even briefly considered moving their headquarters to Malaysia in the mid-1990s.¹

Anwar has been strongly influenced by the ideas of the IIIT and by other leading proponents of Islamic science like S.H. Nasr and Naquib Al-Attas. These influences are extremely clear in Anwar's "President's Message" in the IIUM catalog where he talks about the importance of revitalizing the intellectual tradition of the *ummah*, integrating Islamic learning as a basis for intellectual creativity, and integrating Islamic and world oriented approaches in each individual's personality. According to Anwar (International Islamic University Malaysia 1998:v):

The survival of the Muslim civilisation will and must be a work of scholarship, a scholarship that is not merely abstract but also informed by and sensitive to the pressing problems and concerns of the world in which we live. Knowledge is the most importance resource of the present day global economy. If Muslims do not equip themselves to succeed and thrive in the new economy of knowledge they will fall further behind. If Muslims do not learn how to enter the new economy of knowledge through the conceptual world of Islam they consign themselves to a future that is as fractured and problem ridden as has been our recent past.

It is also clear that the discourse of Malaysian modernity has shaped greatly the discourse of legitimation of IIUM. Islam is good not just for individual Muslims, it is

critical for success in the new global economy. In the first paragraph on page one the catalog states (International Islamic University Malaysia 1998:1):

IIUM regards knowledge as a trust from Allah to be utilised, in accordance with his guidance, for the benefit of life . . . By integrating sources of revealed knowledge with an arts and sciences curriculum the University contributes both to the enrichment of the intellectual tradition and the advancement of the individual and society.

And furthermore, the longest subsection in the “General Information” section is titled “Job Prospects” and details the types of jobs a graduate from each of the *kulliyas* or colleges might expect.

The exact mechanism of the integration of Islam and knowledge is still being worked out at IIUM. In theory, the integration takes place through a combination of required courses on Islamic civilization, Islamic content in all courses, and informal sessions held weekly. However, in practice this model has had mixed results at best. Initially, the Center for Fundamental Knowledge (CFK) organized and taught the formal core courses on Islamic civilization, implemented compulsory weekly *halaqah tarbiyah al-Islamiya* (Islamic education meetings), and *‘ibadah* seminars held each semester. The CFK became the Department of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage in the *Kulliyah* of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (IRKHS) as IIUM expanded from 180 students into a major university. And while the department now offers its own degree program, its influence beyond its own students is substantially reduced (Haneef and Amin 1997).

Few of the faculty members I spoke with about how they operationalized the integration of Islam and knowledge in the courses they taught even said they made a substantive effort in this direction. In many courses, the Islamization of the curriculum

meant assigning one or two relevant IIT publications or AbuSulayman's (1993) book *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*.² One professor of sociology and anthropology who taught for 30 years in the United States before accepting a post at IIUM told me that he taught his courses exactly as he taught them in the United States.³ One non-Muslim graduate student in political science told me that until she took the course "Islamization of Political Science," which I also attended, she had no idea what IIUM meant when they said "Islamization" because all of her courses were similar to courses she took at the secular university where she had completed her undergraduate degree.⁴

In a detailed analysis of the Islamization of knowledge focusing on the economics department at IIUM, Haneef and Amin (1997) describe the relative decline in Islamic content and integration in the economics curriculum. For example, they noted that the core courses on Islamic civilization have been reduced from 22 credit hours to 12 credit hours. Similarly, they conducted content analysis on final exam questions in economics classes and found that while Islamic content was high in courses dealing specifically with economics from an Islamic perspective in courses dealing with "conventional," i.e. non-Islamic, economics that Islamic content had declined steadily between the 1984-85 and 1993-94 school years (Haneef and Amin 1997).

As the curriculum changed from a structured model in which students had to take particular courses during particular years and semesters of their studies to a flexible system in which students could take any course at anytime as long as they met the prerequisites, they found that students' attitudes towards the Islamic core courses had changed. In the former system, students took the required core courses on Islamic civilization early in their studies and could then more easily relate Islamic concepts to

economics. With the institutionalization of the flexible system, students tended to delay taking the required Islamic courses until their final year and therefore had much less background in Islamic heritage to help them conceptualize the relevance of Islam to economics. At the same time, students started viewing the required economics courses as the essential core curriculum rather than the courses on Islamic civilization which they now viewed as unimportant or even “irrelevant.” As Haneef and Amin (1997) summarized, “Clearly they spend more time and effort on their economics courses, considering them of direct relevance in their future careers.”

To a great extent, the administration recognizes and acknowledges this situation. At one point before I was in Malaysia, IIIT’s Malaysian office played an explicit advisory role. By the fall of 1998, however, IIUM was relying on several faculty members who at one time or another had been associated with the IIIT or AMSS. For example, Dr. M’hand Berkouk, an Algerian political scientist and Head of the Department of General Studies at IIUM, was developing faculty-training sessions on how to offer integrated courses. Berkouk became aware of IIIT when he was invited to participate in a IIIT conference at the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom where he was on the faculty. At the time, he was the only Muslim teaching political science in the United Kingdom. He enjoyed the intellectual environment at the conference and eventually became involved with IIIT’s London office and networking to establish the European Association of Muslim Social Scientists. He was invited to join the faculty of IIUM because of his work with IIIT. He came to IIUM in September 1997 in order to get exposed to different ideas and develop a different side of his personality by

learning more about Islam despite getting only 20% of his previous salary teaching the University of Southampton.⁵

According to Berkouk, two special diploma programs were being developed for faculty in order to help them better integrate the social and human sciences with the Islamic sciences in their teaching. The first diploma program is for social and human science faculty in order to introduce them to the principles and methods of the *Shariah* sciences including: *Qur'anic* studies, *Sunnah* studies, *Usul al-Din*, *Fiqh*, and *Usul al-Fiqh*. The course will culminate with a seminar on the integration of knowledge. The “ultimate objective” of this diploma is “the Islamization of Knowledge with the aim to usher in an ideal world order for humanity at large.”⁶

The second diploma program is for faculty teaching in the Islamic revealed knowledge program. This diploma offers an overview of the theory, concepts, and methods of the social and human sciences through six modules including: psychology, sociology and anthropology, political science, communications, social research methods, and comprehensive relational studies.⁷ This course culminates in a seminar on the integration of knowledge as well. The goal of this diploma program is to enable faculty to “acquire and develop rational and integrated approaches to knowledge and teaching.”⁸

Each of these special diplomas consists of 120 contact hours with 80% attendance and passage of a final examination required to receive the diploma. The diploma programs would be voluntary at first and plans called for them to be compulsory by the year 2000. Berkouk said that there was significant resistance to requiring the diplomas for faculty. However, in the end, they passed the faculty senate.⁹

The difference between the goals of the two diploma programs is both interesting and illuminating. The goal of the diploma program for the social and human science faculty is both broad and utopian. This goal is the transformation of society along Islamic lines for all humanity. In contrast, the goal of the diploma program for the Islamic studies faculty is narrow and mundane—essentially coming down to improving scholarship and teaching. The differences stem largely from the differences in the perspectives of the two faculties. Social and human scientists I spoke to at IIUM, and particularly faculty trained and living in the West, often noted that they came to IIUM and Malaysia in order to learn more about Islam and make a personal contribution to the success of Muslim civilization. For example, Berkouk’s comment about developing another side of his personality is relevant here. And while I do not have a specific example to support this claim, I would suggest that the Islamic studies faculty holds attitudes similar to that of PAS, the main Islamic party in Malaysia, which argues that the key to transforming society is the implementation of *Shariah*.

At the same time, Berkouk also said that a course for undergraduates that unified Islamic and social sciences was to be offered the following semester. This course would include material related to the philosophy of science, philosophy of social science, Islamic methodology, and Islamic epistemology. Other courses on quantitative analysis and statistics from an Islamic perspective and “reformed Islamic sciences not traditional Islamic sciences” were planned for the fall 1999 semester.¹⁰

Louay Safi, a political scientist born in Syria but now an American citizen, is a second example. Safi participated regularly in AMSS conferences as a graduate student at Wayne State University in Detroit. Through AMSS, Safi had met many individuals

from the IIIT and IIUM. After completing his PhD in 1992, Safi was offered a position as an assistant professor of political science at IIUM, which he accepted. After teaching for two years, Safi joined the staff of IIIT's Malaysian office (IIITM) as Deputy Director when it opened in 1994. Safi quickly rose through the ranks at IIITM and IIUM becoming Executive Director of IIITM in 1996 and Dean of the Research Center at IIUM in 1998.¹¹

In the fall of 1998, however, with faculty training sessions and unified courses only on paper or at the discretion of individual professors, the primary means of providing students an Islamic perspective is through half-day required study sessions each Friday morning. Generally led by graduate students, the students I spoke to about these sessions were generally underwhelmed. According to students serious about Islam, these sessions were generally considered uninformative. According to students who were not serious about Islam, these sessions were generally considered time that could be better spent at study or recreation.

Students often also participate in student organized and led *halaqah* groups which read, memorize, and discuss the *Qur'an*. I attended several sessions of one *halaqah* group. The group at any particular session consisted of between six and eight students. The particular group I met with was made up of primarily international students studying at IIUM though there was at least one Malay member. The group met once a week on Friday afternoons at the IIUM mosque. We all sat on the marble floor in a circle, which is why the groups are named *halaqah* groups because *halaqah* is the Arabic word for circle. The students were to read and memorize a short section of the *Qur'an* each week. After students took turns reciting a few verses each, one student who was assigned the

task the previous week would present a basic translation from Arabic to English¹² and an overview of the verses followed by an interpretation of the text usually drawing upon an authoritative source. This would be followed by a general discussion with individuals free to pose questions or offer comments on the text, the interpretive presentation, or any related matter.

Other students join the Malaysian Muslim Youth League (ABIM). Founded by Anwar Ibrahim in 1971 as a student, ABIM organized around the issue of Malay language rights before transforming into an Islamic group advocating a Malaysia oriented toward Islam but with freedom of religion at its core. ABIM is not directly linked with the Islamization of knowledge debate though the ABIM chapter at IIUM was forming an IOK Circle discussion group.¹³

There was also a general IOK Circle group that met about twice a month in the evening in an IIUM classroom in addition to the ABIM affiliated IOK Circle discussion group. Two undergraduate students including the son of a Pakistani diplomat and the nephew of a leading figure at the IIIT organized the IOK Circle meetings. Each meeting features one or more invited speakers who present a lecture on a topic related to the Islamization of knowledge or a commentary on a book (often by the author) central to the Islamization of knowledge. Approximately 20 students and faculty attended each of the IOK Circles I was present at with students representing the vast majority of attendees.

At one of the meetings, I was invited to give a commentary on the IIUM Rector AbdulHamid AbuSulayman's (1993) book *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*. I was a last minute substitute for the Rector himself who was on a trip out of the country.¹⁴ I was fairly critical of the book in my presentation. I began with a basic summary of

AbuSulayman's main argument that is essentially the argument described earlier in relation to the IIT, i.e., that Islamic civilization is in a state of crisis, the crisis is a crisis of thought, and he recommends an action plan to reunify knowledge and spread this knowledge throughout society. Then, I read the following quote outlining

AbuSulayman's criteria for evaluating knowledge and scholarship more generally:

The kind of knowledge to be sought and used...is that which is sound in its principles, aims, and structure. Knowledge without these characteristics will be worthless when measured against the standards of Islamic teachings and principles. Any structure of Muslim knowledge that does not provide the Muslim mind with the means to achieve the best possible understanding and performance is not a true Islamic structure or methodology for thought, knowledge, or life. (AbuSulayman 1993:99)

I then used AbuSulayman's own criteria to critique the book. I did not critique the aims of the book, i.e., to revitalize Islamic civilization from within. However, I did argue forcefully that in terms of principles and structure the book failed to meet the standards of either Western or Islamic scholarship.¹⁵

Louay Safi then gave a second commentary on the book.¹⁶ Safi's presentation took a different approach to my own. Safi argued that AbuSulayman's book ought to be viewed as "intellectual activism" rather than as scholarship in a strict sense. He then outlined several points where he agreed or disagreed with AbuSulayman.

A question and answer session followed Safi's presentation. The audience reaction was quite spirited as some individuals defended AbuSulayman and others agreed with at least some of the critiques Safi and I made. The importance of recounting this episode is that it highlights the strong feelings of attachment that many students have to both AbuSulayman and this book. The students who attended the IOK Circle meetings were already interested in the Islamization of knowledge and for many of them it was specifically because of AbuSulayman's *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*. *Crisis in the Muslim*

Mind is required reading in courses throughout IIUM and most students encounter it more than once. And, for a few at least, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind* has transformed their way of thinking about the Islamic heritage. For example, one student before reading works published by IIIT, including AbuSulayman's *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*, advocated a *Salafi* interpretation of Islam and wore a long beard. After reading the works of the IIIT, he is clean-shaven and is willing to critically examine the Islamic heritage including *Salafi* interpretations.¹⁷

A second theme in the question and answer session was whether I could legitimately criticize AbuSulayman's book. Related to this theme were the issues of my familiarity with the Islamization of knowledge and also whether I had read *Crisis in the Muslim Mind* in its original Arabic or the English translation of the original.¹⁸ I deflected both issues successfully and had some support doing this from a few individuals in the audience. The underlying question was the question of authenticity as it relates to authority.

In a separate interview, Safi discussed the question of authenticity. Safi argued that all scholarship depends upon a particular worldview and is thus not value free: "there is no escape from metaphysical understanding you cannot say that people can do research without having any metaphysical commitments or any ontological understanding." Thus, religion is central to research because religion "gives answers to the most basic and profound questions about life—who we are, where we come from, where we are heading, what is the purpose of what we see around us." Therefore, those researchers who hold an Islamic understanding of the universe must relate their scholarship to their metaphysical beliefs "or otherwise something will be missing there.

You can never be authentic if you ignore those fundamental things that influence your outlook in life.” When I then suggested that this leads logically to the point that Westerners could not do Islamic social science, Safi agreed partly. According to Safi, the West can critique Islamic scholarship but not advance it. He stated, “You can critique something you don’t believe in, something you don’t agree with, but you can’t bring it to heart. So, definitely, Western scholars can be authentic only if they were true to their own experiences and consciousness.”

The question of authenticity also is relevant for Muslims working in the Western tradition. According to Safi, the result of Muslim individuals working within the Western tradition is inauthentic scholarship that mimics others. This also relates back to AbuSulayman’s view, and that of IIIT, that there is a crisis of thought originating in the separation of Islamic and modern sciences. In an interview, AbuSulayman told me that the reason education needs to be reformed in the Muslim world is because there is no church in Islam. Therefore, in contrast to Christianity where there is both a church and a state, the only sources for the enculturation of Islamic values are education and the family. Without an institutionalized church to enculturate values, education and thought become critical and this is partly why he wrote *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*.¹⁹

AbuSulayman, contrary to my commentary on the book, felt that *Crisis in the Muslim Mind* is scholarly, systematic, and comprehensive. He did say, however, that the book was based more upon reflection than research. AbuSulayman noted the difference in tone between his book, which is highly critical of the Islamic heritage, and the work of Al-Faruqi, which is generally positive toward the Islamic heritage. AbuSulayman said this difference relates to the context in which each was writing and the intended

audiences. AbuSulayman was writing in Arabic for Muslims from within the Muslim world while Al-Faruqi was living in the West and writing for a Western audience.²⁰ This difference in location and audience is also critical for understanding the views of Al-Attas and ISTAC.

ISTAC

The International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) is a special, fully autonomous post-graduate teaching and research unit attached to IIUM.²¹ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas first discussed the idea for ISTAC with Anwar Ibrahim, a former student of Al-Attas and then Minister of Education, in 1986, and ISTAC was formally established in 1987 with Al-Attas as Founder-Director (Mohd Nor Wan Daud 1991).²² Figures 5-1 and 5-2 show ISTAC.

ISTAC is about three times as large as GSISS. As of September 1998, ISTAC had 14 professors, 4 assistant professors, and several research fellows. ISTAC also had 68 Masters students and 39 PhD students enrolled. Both the faculty and the student body are very international. Only 30 % of the students are Malaysian while all students were Muslims and at least nine of the students were female. Between May of 1991 and 1998, ISTAC had graduated 16 Masters students and four PhD students including two women PhDs.²³

Like GSISS, the administration of ISTAC has a particular institutional vision derived from the thought and research of Al-Attas himself. Wan, who has written extensively on ISTAC, told me that ISTAC “is not just a center of learning It is a center of learning developed by a philosopher and a scholar and based on a very strong philosophical understanding.”²⁴

Al-Attas (1993:44-45, orig.1978) defines Islamization as:

The liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition, and then from secular control over his reason and his language. The man of Islam is he whose reason and language are no longer controlled by magic, mythology, animism, his own national and cultural traditions and secularism. He is liberated from both the magical and the secular world views....It is also liberation from subservience to his physical demands which inclines toward the secular and injustice to his true self or soul, for man as physical being inclines towards forgetfulness of his true nature, becoming ignorant of his true purpose and unjust to it. Islamization is a process not so much of *evolution* as that of *devolution* to original nature....His 'evolution' towards perfection is his progress towards realization of his original nature as spirit. This in the individual, personal, existential sense Islamization refers to what is described above in which the Holy Prophet represents the highest and most perfect Example; in the collective, social and historical sense Islamization refers to the Community's striving towards realization of the moral and ethical quality of social perfection achieved during the age of the Holy Prophet (may God bless and give him Peace!) who created it under Divine Guidance.

The basic idea is that reality consists of differences created by *Allah*. *Allah* also created what might be called a natural order but in reality is a supernatural or divine order. For Al-Attas and his colleagues, when the world is organized based upon this divine order this constitutes justice and the result is justice, harmony, and peace. And the knowledge and discipline of that order is *adab*. As Professor Wan explained, *adab* "is a key element in our identity. *Adab* is the discipline of the mind—always wanting to put things in their right places."²⁵ In summary, for Al-Attas and his colleagues, Islamization is the application of *adab*.²⁶

Al-Attas intends to realize his definition of Islamization in practice through ISTAC. As Al-Attas told me, he "tries to put ideas into concrete reality" and ISTAC is one such reality.²⁷ Al-Attas was deeply involved in creating ISTAC. Al-Attas made every important decision himself from the physical location where ISTAC was built to

the architectural design and even the furnishings and the landscaping (see Figures 5-1 and 5-2).²⁸

The linkage between metaphysics and the everyday lived world is important for understanding Al-Attas. For Al-Attas and his colleagues, Islam is experienced in daily life if one lives according to the correct *adab*. Professor Wan, for example, almost always explained abstract concepts like “Islamization,” “*adab*,” and “justice” by grounding them in terms of everyday interpersonal relationships between husband and wife, between parents and children, between siblings, often using his family and friends as examples. They argue that not only did Muslims live this way in the time of the Prophet Muhammad but that many Muslims continue to live their lives this way right now. The goal is to have all Muslims live according to the correct *adab*. Thus, promoting the ideas of Al-Attas and ISTAC as an institution of learning are important. In line with these objectives, ISTAC has reissued all of Al-Attas’ most important works. ISTAC also has published several volumes by their faculty and publishes its own scholarly journal *Al-Shajarah*.

Al-Attas’ and his adherents’ views at ISTAC differ sharply with the views of both the IIIT and S. H. Nasr. The strongest critiques are reserved for the IIIT. In a book published while I was in Malaysia, Professor Wan (1998) argues that the idea for the concept “Islamization” was invented by Al-Attas and then taken without attribution by Ismail Al-Faruqi who misunderstood the concept and so corrupted it in his popular writings on the subject.

Beyond this issue, is the difference in the definitions and usage of “*ma’rifa*” and “*ilm*.” In Arabic, IIIT refers to its Islamization of knowledge project as “*Islamiyat al-*

ma'rifa” and thus equates “*ma'rifa*” with the “knowledge” that needs to be Islamized. For the Al-Attas and his adherents, knowledge is truth and therefore cannot be Islamized. For this group, “*ma'rifa*” is a type of knowledge that is unique and personal. Professor Wan described *ma'rifa* as akin to something learned in a conversation or through casual observation. According to Professor Wan, *ma'rifa* cannot be Islamized because it is personal regardless of any method used. Similarly, Professor Wan argues that *'ilm* cannot be Islamized because all knowledge must be true and all true knowledge must be Islamic.²⁹

Louay Safi, who has worked with IIIT in Malaysia and more recently in the United States, parsed the definitions differently. For Safi, knowledge “is the outcome of the human intellect interacting with its environment” and science is “an attempt to look systematically in terms of examining the knowledge that you have...[S]cience is more nomothetic, more systematic, more questioning, more logical in trying to decipher or classify the various bits of information you have.”³⁰ According to Safi, knowledge is *ma'rifa* and *'ilm* is science. Every individual possesses *ma'rifa* which is derived from “intuition” and “is the function of the human mind.” Science or *'ilm* occurs when someone begins to evaluate intuitive knowledge or *ma'rifa* according to certain standards using reasoning rather than intuition. Science/*'ilm* is a collective activity while intuitive knowledge/*ma'rifa* is an individual activity. And while *'ilm* is not always superior to *ma'rifa* because one can arrive at false conclusions using reason, as a whole, *'ilm* “denotes a higher level of social development.”³¹ Thus, for Safi and the IIIT, the Islamization of knowledge is the evaluation of intuitive knowledge using reason derived from Islamic epistemological principles.

The fundamental difference between Al-Attas and S. H. Nasr is over the transcendent unity of religion. According to Professor Wan, Al-Attas is tolerant of other religions but does not think there is unity. And while both Al-Attas and S. H. Nasr are influenced by Sufism, Al-Attas is influenced at the intellectual level rather than being a member of a Sufi *tariqa* or mystical brotherhood. S. H. Nasr, in contrast, is a practicing Sufi with disciples or *murid* for whom he is a spiritual master or *sheikh*.³²

Beyond IIUM and ISTAC, there are a number of individual participants in the Islamization of knowledge debates in Malaysia. Munawar Anees, Meryll Wyn Davies, and Ziauddin Sardar, who each advocate the Ijmali position, have all spent time in Malaysia.³³ Osman Bakar, a Malaysian advocate of S. H. Nasr's position, is in the administration at the University of Malaya after chairing the department of science and technology studies. The new chair of the science and technology studies department, Hairudin Bin Harun, told me that the Islamization of knowledge and Islamic science were widely discussed among Malaysian scientists and intellectuals. He noted that the ideas of the Palestinian Ismail Al-Faruqi and Iranian S. H. Nasr were most prominent within the discussion group he participated in while the ideas of Malaysian Al-Attas and ISTAC were not as prominent which highlights a recurring problem of visibility and recognition for Al-Attas and ISTAC particularly internationally.³⁴

Conclusion

The Malaysian context varies significantly from the American context. In Malaysia, Islam is entrenched in the national development agenda. The Islamization of knowledge is thus interpreted within this context as an avenue to advance the Malaysian economy. At IIUM, the Islamization of knowledge, while officially advocated, is often

subordinated to rhetoric more in line with the Malaysian economic development agenda. The large size of IIUM makes strict implementation of the Islamization of knowledge difficult. At ISTAC, its small size allows it to follow more closely the intentions of its founder-director Al-Attas. At the same time, ISTAC is less prominent in Malaysian and particularly international discussions of the Islamization of knowledge. In the wake of the ousting of Anwar Ibrahim, a very strong advocate of Islamization of knowledge, from the Malaysian government, the likelihood is that the subordination of the more intellectual goals and ideals of the Islamization of knowledge, however conceptualized, to the national development agenda will only increase.



Figure 5-1. A Courtyard at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



Figure 5-2. The Mosque at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Notes

¹ Anwar Ibrahim has a long affiliation with the IIIT and GSISS. He is a longtime member of the Board of Trustees for both IIIT and GSISS and was (and may still be) Chairman of the Board of Trustees at GSISS when I was there in 1997.

² *Crisis in the Muslim Mind* is even assigned as required reading in some engineering courses.

³ He gave me syllabi for courses on Criminology and Deviant Behavior as evidence. Personal communication at IIUM on November 17 and December 7, 1998.

⁴ This student was a Malaysian citizen of Indian descent. She said she came to IIUM to get a Masters degree and did not think about the Islamic orientation of the university at all when deciding where to apply and attend. Interestingly, a fellow political science graduate student who was Muslim and a friend of this woman did not know that she was not a Muslim until she told me this in her presence because she chose to wear a head scarf while at IIUM. Personal communication at IIUM on November 30, 1998.

⁵ It is also interesting to note that Berkouk, though a practicing Muslim, became involved with IIIT and then IIUM despite having had only three days of formal religious training at a *Qur'anic* school when he was four years old. Personal communication with M'hand Berkouk at IIUM on November 25 and December 9, 1998.

⁶ The information and the quote are from an internal document detailing the diploma program put together by the Department of General Studies at IIUM in the author's possession.

⁷ Comprehensive relational studies included sections on computers and scientific analysis, innovative thinking, economics in the age of globalization, and legal thinking.

⁸ The information and the quote are from an internal document detailing the diploma program put together by the Department of General Studies at IIUM in the author's possession.

⁹ Personal communication with M'hand Berkouk at IIUM on November 25, 1998.

¹⁰ Personal communication with M'hand Berkouk at IIUM on November 25, 1998.

¹¹ Information based partly on personal communication with Louay Safi at IIUM on December 9, 1998 and partly on Louay Safi's *Curriculum Vitae* provided by Safi to the author.

¹² The students came from a variety of linguistic backgrounds and while most students had some Arabic language training the relative abilities were highly variable. Thus, the

language of choice was English which is the language of instruction at IIUM and therefore common to all students.

¹³ ABIM did have some interaction with the MSA in the United States, however, at least during its formative period. Personal communication with Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas at ISTAC on December 11, 1998. Due to the political circumstances in Malaysia during the fall of 1998 with the ousting, arrest, and trial of Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and the subsequent *Reformasi* movement, I was not able to interview a large number of Malaysian students including representatives of ABIM. Even some Malaysian faculty members were hesitant to speak in any detail about anything related to Anwar including his links to the Islamization of knowledge debate and participants in the debate and his support of Islamization at IIUM that seemed completely separate from the political situation. In addition, I would like to note that my fieldwork in Malaysia was delayed a month and then shortened due to the political situation and Anwar's close ties to many of the central figures and institutions I went to study. For example, Munawar Anees, a biologist and participant in the Islamization of knowledge debates from an Ijmali perspective and also a speechwriter for Anwar, was among the individuals arrested for allegedly allowing himself to be sodomized by Anwar. I had arranged to rent Anees' spare bedroom while in Malaysia which was one reason for the delayed departure. The second reason was an email from a Malaysian professor I had met previously who recommended delaying my plans indefinitely because, as an American, I would likely be viewed as a CIA agent.

¹⁴ I had heard mixed reviews about the book, and I only hesitantly agreed because I was unsure how my comments might affect my ongoing research. At the same time, I decided that the most interesting data is often gathered by full participation. The IOK Circle meeting occurred at IIUM on the evening of November 6, 1998.

¹⁵ Without going into all the details of my critique, I noted four main structural faults and two main faults in terms of principles of scholarship. In terms of structural faults, I argued that (1) the text is not logically ordered, (2) the text is quite repetitive and significant portions of the text are either tangential to the main arguments or are ignored when AbuSulayman summarizes his arguments and proposes his action plan, (3) AbuSulayman seems to make several contradictory statements on several key issues at different places in the text, and (4) there are logical flaws in AbuSulayman's argument. In terms of faults in terms of the principles of scholarship, I argued that (1) AbuSulayman presents no evidence to support his assertions and (2) many of the assertions are problematic.

¹⁶ I had spoken with Louay Safi in his office that afternoon about my apprehension at giving a highly critical presentation on AbuSualyman's book. Safi told me "say what you think" and it would not be a problem because AbuSulayman is open to criticism.

¹⁷ Personal communication at IIUM.

¹⁸ Some individuals present were familiar with my research on the Islamization of knowledge debate and they supported my credibility on the subject in general. In terms of language, I noted that I read the English translation partly because I was asked only three days earlier and also because I knew the translator quite well and he had told me that the Arabic version, if anything, had more examples of the faults I had described in my presentation. In this, I also had some support from individuals present who had read the Arabic version or both versions.

¹⁹ Personal communication with AbdulHamid AbuSulayman at IIUM on December 14, 1998.

²⁰ Personal communication with AbdulHamid AbuSulayman at IIUM on December 14, 1998.

²¹ ISTAC has since 2002 lost its independent status and is incorporated into IIUM as a *Kulliyyah*.

²² Al-Attas was born in Indonesia in 1931. Of Hadramaut descent, he spent his childhood in Johore in the southern part of what is today peninsular Malaysia. After completing secondary school, Al-Attas joined the Malay Regiment and was selected for advanced military education at Eton Hall and then the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst, England. He saw active duty fighting against the communists in Malaya. He resigned his commission to pursue his education at the University of Malaya in Singapore. He went on for his MA degree at McGill University in Montreal and his PhD at the University of London. Al-Attas returned to the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. He was among the founders of the National University of Malaysia, the founder of the Institute of Malay Language, Literature, and Culture at the National University, and he is the founder-director of ISTAC. This brief summary is based upon the introductory remarks given by Professor Wan at the conferment of the Al-Ghazali Chair to Al-Attas at ISTAC (Mohd Nor Wan Daud 1994).

²³ Personal communication with Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud at ISTAC on December 21, 1998.

²⁴ Personal communication with Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud at ISTAC on November 19, 1998.

²⁵ Personal communication with Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud at ISTAC on November 19, 1998.

²⁶ Personal communication with Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud at ISTAC on November 19, 1998.

²⁷ Personal communication with Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas at ISTAC on November 30, 1998.

²⁸ For an extended discussion of the history and philosophy of ISTAC see Wan (1991).

²⁹ Personal communication with Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud at ISTAC on November 19, 1998.

³⁰ Personal communication with Louay Safi at IIUM on December 9, 1998.

³¹ Personal communication with Louay Safi at IIUM on December 9, 1998.

³² Personal communication with Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud at ISTAC on November 19, 1998.

³³ Each of these individuals came to Malaysia from abroad because of Malaysia's, and in particular Anwar Ibrahim's, strong support for Islamization. Anees, a Pakistani-American trained in biology, lived and worked in Malaysia. He was a friend of and occasional speechwriter for Anwar Ibrahim. Anees was arrested for alleged sexual misconduct in the aftermath of Anwar's ousting from his position as Deputy Prime Minister. He now resides part time in the United States and part time in France. Davies, a journalist and anthropologist who converted to Islam, fled Malaysia in the wake of Anees arrest. Sardar, a British citizen of Pakistan descent, spent some time in Malaysia before I arrived. He lives and works in London as a freelance writer on science and technology issues after a stint as a professor of communications at a British university. For a description of the Ijmal position see Chapter 1.

³⁴ Personal communication with Hairudin Bin Harun at the University of Malaya on December 5, 1998. For a discussion of other individuals in Malaysia participating in the debates over the Islamization of knowledge and Islamic science see Lotfalian (1999).

CHAPTER 6 ISLAM, SCIENCE, AND MODERNITY: A CONCLUSION

This dissertation describes and contextualizes the ways that contemporary Muslims conceptualize “science” and “Islam” within the Islamization of knowledge debate. The debate concerns the legitimacy and relevance of Islam and science as means to address the needs of the Islamic world. These constructions are interrelated with the local and global contexts of knowledge production and reproduction in which they are situated. The intellectual positions formed and were transformed as they moved across institutional and national borders. In this concluding chapter, I summarize the key findings.

The contemporary Islamization of knowledge debate emerged in the 1970s and 1980s in the context of decolonization and development and a perceived crisis in Islamic civilization. The contemporary participants in the Islamization of knowledge debate share many similarities with earlier Muslim reformers. For example, the contemporary participants in the Islamization of knowledge debate and the Islamic modernist reformers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries share a belief in: (1) the primacy of the original sources of Islam (the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*), (2) the importance of *ijtihad*, (3) the integration of Islam with science and technology, and (4) the self-sufficiency of Islam. The philosophical positions Muslim intellectuals engaged in the contemporary debate advocate cluster into three competing epistemological categories. I have labeled these modernization, indigenization, and nativization.

Advocates of the modernization approach hold that science is value-free, neutral, objective, and universal. Any values that do surround science are primarily personal in nature and do not affect the content of science. The modernists legitimize their position by constructing modern science as Islamically authentic and relevant to the problems of contemporary Islamic civilization. Advocates of modernization argue that their approach is authentic because: (1) the *Qur'an* and the Prophet both advocate the search for knowledge and (2) modern science is a part of the Islamic legacy. In terms of relevance, advocates of modernization argue that: (1) modern science solves the problems of many different countries including non-Western countries like Japan and (2) modern science would solve the problems of Islamic civilization also if governments provided the necessary infrastructure and let them pursue their research free from the constraints of government and the *ulama*.

Advocates of the indigenization approach hold that the crisis of Islamic civilization resulted from the division of knowledge into two separate spheres: the “rational” or “modern” sciences and the Islamic sciences (i.e., *usul al-fiqh*/legal theory; *‘ilm al-kalam*/theology; *tafsir/Qur’anic* sciences; *hadith* sciences; *‘ilm al-tajwid/Qur’anic* recitation). This division of knowledge, they argue, is institutionalized in educational systems across the Islamic world, and educational reform is needed in order to re-unify knowledge. The reformed educational systems will produce individuals who have a unified knowledge that is relevant to Islamic civilization. The indigenists argue that Euro-American science must be integrated with Islamic values because Euro-American science cannot work within the context of Islamic civilization if adopted wholly and uncritically. Legitimacy is derived through the production of relevant knowledge.

Relevant knowledge is produced through the synthesis of “modern” and Islamic knowledge. The centrality of Islamic values and sciences provide a *de facto* authenticity to this position.

The advocates of the nativization approach hold that the modernist model of science is a product of the Western worldview. Therefore, the modernist model is not relevant to the problems of Islamic civilization and cannot solve them. Rather, an authentic Islamic science is needed to solve the problems of Islamic civilization. For the nativists, Islamic science is a different science built upon Islamic metaphysical and epistemological principles derived from the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* and not an adaptation of the modernist model of science. For nativists, without authenticity, there can be no relevance.

While these three categories identify the range of positions within the debate and the most widely read and influential protagonists fall within one of these three categories, on the ground among individuals who are not among the main protagonists, individuals' ideas about the Islamization of knowledge are less easily categorized into neat epistemological boxes. This is particularly true among students.

The institutional and national contexts have a significant impact on the operational implementation of the theoretical models for Islamizing knowledge. At the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), the original work plan for the Islamization of knowledge had to be substantially revised in light of both practical and intellectual difficulties. At the practical level, the IIIT could not find enough individuals trained or familiar enough with both Western and Islamic educational traditions to bridge the gap and create integrated textbooks. At the intellectual level, the IIIT discovered that

specific Western disciplines like anthropology, psychology, and political science among others were not the appropriate units of analysis upon which to advance its vision of a thoroughly unified and Islamized knowledge nor even for examining and critiquing the Western heritage.

As the ideas of the IIIT developed further and then moved along with key IIIT personnel to the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (GSISS), aspects of the Islamization of knowledge had to be set aside due to practical issues related to the requirements of (1) operating an institute of higher education in the United States and (2) achieving the goal of being an American-style graduate school. Instead of offering courses exclusively on the epistemology of the Islamization of knowledge as defined by the IIIT, GSISS had to offer a more balanced course on Islamic epistemology that included both Western sources dealing with epistemology and Islamic sources that were in direct competition with the ideas of the IIIT. Similarly, the need to train Imams for the American context necessitates a broader approach than the Islamization of knowledge.

The American context in which IIIT headquarters and GSISS operated offers both freedom and constraints. On the one hand, IIIT and GSISS have the freedom to develop and publish controversial and provocative material whether about the Islamic or Western heritage without government interference. On the other hand, Muslims in the United States are quite marginalized; therefore, IIIT and GSISS have minimal impact on the broader American society or government policy-making.

In contrast, in Malaysia, the IIIT and its ideas regarding the Islamization of knowledge have had an impact on government policy-making as have other perspectives within the Islamization of knowledge debate like those of Al-Attas and his supporters at

the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) and S. H. Nasr and his former student Osman Bakar at the University of Malaya. The realities of operating in a Muslim majority state undergoing an Islamic revival alongside a rapidly expanding economy generated extensive financial support from the state for Islamically oriented educational facilities like the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) and ISTAC. At the same time, the necessity to support Malaysia's economic development agenda subverted the operationalization of the Islamization of knowledge on the ground, particularly at IIUM, as did the requirements of operating a rapidly expanding university with hundreds of faculty and thousands of students.

Islam and Modernity

At the intellectual level, the Islamization of knowledge debate is ultimately about the relationship between Islam and modernity—about “questioning the present” (Gaonkar 2001:13). Muslim intellectuals engaged in the Islamization of knowledge debate are critically engaging with notions of modernity in two ways.

First, Muslim intellectuals are engaging with modernity in a comparative manner. However, this goes beyond Friedman's (2002) description of modernity as a comparison between the center of the system usually described as “the West” and a particular locale. Rather, Muslim intellectuals are engaging modernity in a comparative manner in the dual sense of comparing the Islamic world today with both “the West” and with the history of Islamic civilization. The comparisons with the West and with the history of Islamic civilization are inherent in the dual legitimization strategies of relevance and authenticity used by modernists, indigenists, and nativists alike. Similarly, the differences also parallel the legitimization strategies used. Modernists emphasize the relative success of the West and of Western science and technology compared with the Islamic world past

and especially present. The nativists emphasize the moral decay of the West in comparison with the Islamic world, particularly in the past. The indigenists emphasize the superiority of Islamic values while noting the material successes of the West.

Second, Muslim intellectuals are engaging modernity by actively and creatively attempting to make and re-make an Islamic modernity. This is perhaps most evident in the discussion of Malaysian modernity and its discontents. The Malaysian proponents of Vision 2020, what I have called “Malaysian modernity,” seek to mimic the economic successes of Western and Eastern societal modernization while tempering the excesses of individualism. At the same time, Malaysia’s discontents, in a way similar to the cultural modernists in Europe, rose up to oppose being made into an army of New Malays. However, in Malaysia, the discontents did not look for self-realization through the transgression of middle class norms and the valorization of the new. Rather, the discontents sought self-realization through the reassertion of what they view as eternal and universal values that they locate in religion and particularly in Islam.

This engagement with modernity can also be seen in constructions of the “universal man” at ISTAC and the utopian vision of GSISS as a global space transcending the limitations of East and West. Each construction constitutes an alternative modernity that subverts dominant constructions of modernity be they Vision 2020 in Malaysia or American hegemony or neo-liberal globalization in the United States.

Globalization

Economic globalization forms the broadest context within which the Islamization of knowledge debate is taking place. Modernity is associated with capitalism and globalization is largely the result of the expansion of capitalism across the globe.

As I argued in chapter 2 following Friedman (2003), economic globalization results in the structural fragmentation of society vertically between the cosmopolitan elites and the nationally-grounded underclasses and horizontally between a variety of identity-based groups within states. Muslims constitute one such identity-based group in the United States and Malaysia. In the United States, the emergence of an American Muslim identity is linked with American foreign policy in the Middle East that emphasized access to oil and political stability, which enables American economic growth, and the security of Israel over democratization and economic development in the Muslim world. In Malaysia, Muslim identity emerged over the course of the twentieth century as foreign Muslims came to Malaysia and instigated a peaceful Islamic revival movement that only hit full stride over the last twenty-five years or so as Malaysia entered the global economy.

Globalization is also important as a trope for movement including the movement of people and ideas. It should be clear from the history of the Islamization of knowledge debate that it is a global debate. The debate took shape in the United States within the Muslim Student Association and at international conferences in Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Pakistan, Malaysia, and the Sudan. The debate is documented in journals published in the United States, India, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere. Individual participants in the debate were born across the Islamic world and were raised

and educated in the Islamic world and the West. Individual participants in the debate travel and work across the world in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, India, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Indonesia, Canada, the United States and elsewhere. Ideas contained in the minds of these individuals and in books, journals, the internet, audiocassettes, videocassettes, faxes, and email travel across the world as well, all facilitated by economic globalization and information technology. Globalization as it relates to the movement of people and ideas is critical for understanding the Islamization of knowledge debate.

Conclusions

The Islamization of knowledge is a debate in which key concepts like “Islam,” “science,” “knowledge,” “relevance,” and “authenticity” are being multiply constructed and contested. The debate is taking place on a global scale and emerged within the intellectual milieu of post-colonial negotiations between “nativizing” cultural traditions and “transnational” or “global” modernisms. I have described three philosophical positions within the debate, which I labeled modernization, indigenization, and nativization. Each position offers differing answers to fundamental questions surrounding the debate. What role can and should Islam and science play in the reformation of Islamic civilization? What sources of knowledge are relevant and authentic? Each position uses different strategies of legitimation though all strategies revolve around the construction of knowledge as both relevant and authentic.

I have also gone beyond the abstractions of philosophical positions to examine the Islamization of knowledge historically and ethnographically at four institutions. In northern Virginia in the United States, I examined the International Institute of Islamic

Thought and the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences. In Malaysia, I examined the International Islamic University of Malaysia and the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization. On the ground and apart from its main protagonists, the Islamization of knowledge is less rigidly definable into neat epistemological categories. Individual participants are attracted either by the philosophical ideas or, just as likely, by a desire to affiliate themselves with ideas and institutions where they can express their Islamic identity. The most significant conclusion is that the institutional and national contexts have a significant impact on the operational implementation of the philosophical positions held within the Islamization of knowledge debate.

APPENDIX
LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEW GUIDE

Family and Childhood

Date and place of birth; Parents (age, education, occupation, income, religiosity); Siblings (age, gender, education, occupation, income, religiosity, marital status, number of children); Marital status; Children; Other significant family and significant friends; Migration/Moves; Relation with non-Muslims

Education and Intellectual Development

Early education (non-religious, thoughts or opinion about relation/conflict between religion and science); Secondary education (favorite subjects, influential teachers, success); Post-secondary education (major, minor, university, early interests, influential professors, success, research topics); Graduate education (major, university, influential professors, success, research topics); Types of schools; Intellectual landmarks on personal horizon (influential works, books, lectures, thinkers, etc.); Relation with non-Muslims

Professional and Career Development

Post graduate employment; Research projects; Research collaborations; Publications; Intellectual influences; Teaching experience; Other duties; Salaries and other benefits; Any conflicts concerning science/religion occur; Did they ever have to take position to fit in or for other reasons; Ever in environment where one view or the other was dominant; Any moral or ethical dilemma in pursuit of career; Relation with non-Muslims

Religious Training and Involvement

Formal religious training; Informal religious training; Parental influence; Daily prayer; Visit mosque; Islamic dress; Important experiences; Any discussion of relation between religion/science; Relation with non-Muslims

Islamization of Knowledge Debate

General description; Significance; Informant's position; Central figures; Personally influenced by; Collaborations; Disagree with; Involvement with

Closing

Anything informant thinks is important that we did not discuss; Any additional comments; Thank informant

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Christopher A. Furlow was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, on March 13, 1969. Christopher moved with his family to Florida in 1974 eventually settling down in Dania, Florida, where he stayed until moving to Gainesville, Florida, to attend the University of Florida. Christopher graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Arts degree in anthropology in 1990. In 1992, Christopher entered graduate school at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University and was awarded a Masters of Science degree in science and technology studies in 1993. Christopher's master's committee included Gary L. Downey (Chair), Ellsworth "Skip" Fuhrman, and Steve Fuller. Christopher then returned to the University of Florida to begin his doctoral work. Christopher was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degree in anthropology in 2005 after completing his dissertation titled "Islam, Science, and Modernity" based upon fieldwork in the Northern Virginia/Washington, DC, metro area and in and around Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Christopher's doctoral committee included Paul J. Magnarella (Chair), H. Russell Bernard, Robert Hatch, and John Moore. Christopher and his wife Julie were married on December 19, 1993, and they have two wonderful children, Nathan and Andrew.