

REFLECTIONS ON THE IDEA OF ISLAMIC SOCIAL SCIENCE*

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The Meaning of 'Islamic Social Science'

When we refer to Islamic social science what do we mean? In what ways can the social sciences be Islamic? There are two such ways. One involves approaching specifically Muslim problems, that is, problems found in Muslim society, in a social scientific manner. An example would be the issue of the relationship between religion and the state. Concepts developed in Western social science would be modified and applied to achieve this aim. The other way in which social science can be Islamic goes beyond the former and involves the idea that social scientific theories, concepts and methodologies can be derived from the history and thought of Islam in order that these social sciences may be based on the Islamic *Weltanschauung*. The Islamic social sciences should not be confined to the tackling of just Muslim society but are to be extended to the interpretation of the whole world from an Islamic point of view. They are, therefore, juxtaposed to the Western social sciences which involve the interpretation of not only Western civilization but non-Western civilizations as well.

What does it mean to say that the writing of history or the social sciences are to be based on a particular *Weltanschauung* or point of view whether this is Islamic, European, Malay or Asian? In the field of Southeast Asian history something of a debate on this issue took place during the 1960s.

Two extremes are discernible in the debate. Bastin gave an extremely dismal picture of the possibility of writing Southeast Asian history from the Southeast Asian point of view.

The type of Asian and Southeast Asian history which is being written today, even by Asian historians themselves, is history in the Western tradition; for the kind of history with which we are all familiar is indissolubly tied to the whole Western

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cultural base. No amount of emotional criticism of this historiography will alter this state of affairs. If a different sort of Southeast Asian history is ever to be written, then what is required is a revolutionary reappraisal of existing historical methods and techniques, and of existing historical concepts and periodization. But that particular task, which is so often talked about, is fraught with so many difficulties and hazards that it remains unattempted (John Bastin, 1959).

Bastin doubts the possibility of writing Southeast Asian history from the Southeast Asian point of view because both Western and Southeast Asian students of Southeast Asian history are immersed in the Western tradition (Bastin, 1959:22). The possibility of what Collingwood calls "empathic understanding" or what Windelband, Dilthey, Rickert and Weber call *verstehen* as the means by which Southeast Asian history can be understood from the Southeast Asian view point is not entertained by Bastin (Alatas, 1964:250-1). In criticizing Bastin, Smail goes to the other extreme to say that there is only one thought-world and, as a result, "whatever the modern Asian historian can achieve in the way of an Asian-centric perspective can equally be achieved by the Western historian" (Smail, 1961:75). Southeast Asian culture and society have come within the fold of a single world civilization with a single universal history and all that is meant by Asian-centric history is a history in which the "Asian, as a host in his house, should stand in the foreground. . ." (Smail, 76, 78). For example, attention should be displaced from the colonial relationship to domestic history (102). It is astonishing to me that the creation of Asian-centric history in Smail's sense is not regarded by him as a philosophical problem and that Western cultural hegemony in this "world culture" is of little importance (76). To set aside epistemological and ontological issues and to posit a universal civilization and history is really to impose a Western, disguised as universal, point of view on us. For if epistemology and ontology are set aside in the writing of history it is Western epistemology and ontology that will inform such history. Furthermore, why should Asians be in the foreground in order for there to be an Asian point of view? Could there not be an Asian point of view in the history of Europeans or of Eskimos? Clearly, there is more to an Asian, Malay or Islamic point of view than that suggested by Smail. I shall try to articulate what "point of view" means using Islam as the case in point. Accordingly, the present discussion is situated between the two extremes described above.

These are the extremes of subjectivity on the one hand and objectivity on the other, represented by Bastin and Smail respectively. Rather than participate in the already sterile debate concerning the importance of

objectivity and subjectivity in the social sciences, I would like to address the problem of meaning in history and how this relates to that of "point of view." While it is obvious that social theory must be both objective as well as subjectively meaningful, who it is meaningful for remains the question.¹

The problem of linking the objective, isolated facts of history in order to create a meaningful picture of the past has been the subject of historical sociology. Ibn Khaldun made the distinction between the outward (*zahir*) and the inner (*batin*) meaning of history (ibn Khaldun, 1867:3). In the science of history, the movement from the *zahir* to the *batin* is necessary to yield an understanding of both meaning as intended by actors and the context in which action takes place and imparts meaning. The Dutch historian, Jan Romein, was one of the first in modern thought to raise this issue. He pointed to the need for a field, which he called theoretical history, to bridge the "gap that divides the cautiously objective technique employed to ascertain the isolated facts of history, and the arbitrarily subjective method by which these facts are assembled into a picture of the past" (Romein, 1948:54). The problem is the arbitrary assembling of isolated facts; Romein gives the example of historians of the French Revolution.

But is it less ridiculous to write, as hundreds of reputable historians have done, that the events of the French Revolution occurred in order to deal a final blow to feudalism and to bring the bourgeoisie into power? Are not these combinations as naive, as overhasty, as unproven as the assertion that cows have tails for the purpose of swishing flies?

On the other hand, such combinations are necessary if the past is to be known. What is crucial here is that the structure of any historical event has its origins not in the isolated facts of history but rather in the mind of the historian and that, therefore, the "historian's value lies primarily in what he knows about man, rather than in what he knows about the past" (55).

Our value as historians lies in what we know about man. This amounts to bringing subjectivity into our work for in order to assemble a picture of the past, among the tools required is that of the skill to imagine the thoughts, actions, and situations of men and women of the past. In fact, the same can be said of the study of the present. Social theory, whether applied to the present or to the past, must take into account subjectivity.

If the issue is to know man in order to assemble an accurate picture of the past, then, when it comes to the history of a particular civilization, say

Islam, the problem becomes knowing Muslims. This is so in order that the history of Islam be written from the point of view of the experience of the Muslims rather than from that of colonizers or other intruders. When historical and social scientific writing are carried out with the experience of Muslims in mind, then such writings can be said to be done from the Muslim point of view or from the vantage point of the Muslim *Weltanschauung*. But this is not complete. Do we have a Muslim *Weltanschauung* only when the subject-matter is Muslim or can there be a Muslim point of view of Eskimo society and history? Clearly, the latter is possible. A Muslim point of view of Eskimo history would be one in which the Muslim scholar draws upon his own experiences, philosophy, and history for concepts and theories in order to apply them to and grasp the reality of Eskimo history.

Social scientific theories, concepts and methodologies that claim to be Islamic need to go beyond simply tackling problems in Muslim society with the appropriate modification of concepts and theories developed in the West along the way. They need to go beyond bringing Muslims and their problems to the foreground. What is required are systematic bodies of knowledge based on the various Islamic cultures in the same way that the Western social sciences are based on Western culture, especially Western history and philosophy. For example, the organic image of society that is central to functional evolutionism which in turn informs a wide variety of theories of development, is traced back to Aristotle. The organic image of society is thus deeply rooted in Western consciousness. In a similar fashion, Muslim social scientists need to base their theories and concepts on Islamic history and thought. Of course, this is not to say that the Quran and Sunna are to be set aside. Let us proceed in more detail.

What are the various sources that give nourishment to the Islamic social sciences? They are the Quran, the Sunna (traditions of the Prophet) and the various Islamic sciences of fikh (jurisprudence), kalam (scholastic theology), tasawwuf (metaphysics), and falsafa (philosophy). Also, social scientific theories should be derived from Islamic history. Finally, the contributions of Western and other social sciences should be taken into account. Before considering a concrete example of what Islamic social science is, it should be mentioned that what we are positing here is not an Islamocentric as opposed to a Eurocentric social science. Why then the Islamic social sciences? If we say that the goal is to understand Muslim society, this will be readily understood. But still, Islam makes the claim to universality. Concepts and theories derived from the various

Islamic sources should be able to yield understanding of non-Muslim societies too. Accepting this, however, places upon us a task, hitherto not identified by Muslim social scientists (Alatas, 1985a). Can we say that our understanding of, say, Western society is better than the Western self-understanding? This would be a tenuous assumption. On the other hand, we are bound to concede to the ability of the Islamic social sciences to comprehend all of mankind. The formidable task is then to reconcile these two seemingly contradictory positions. Clearly, our claims to universality cannot deny the self-understanding of other civilizations. The regeneration of Islamic thought is, therefore, simultaneously an attempt at such reconciliation.

Such reconciliation presupposes an assumption about the cognitive status of the social sciences. There are a number of such possible assumptions. First of all, it can be held that social science is a universal discourse and that national or civilizational versions of it are distortions. On the other hand, one can revert to cultural relativism which amounts to accusing Western social science of ethnocentrism, replacing this with an Islamic ethnocentrism that can be understood in two ways: (1) Islamic social science is only applicable to Muslim society and (2) Islamic social science denies the self-understanding of other civilizations. Clearly, this is not a position we want to take with regard to the cognitive status of social science. I think a third position is possible. This is to posit a universal social science which has various civilizational or cultural expressions, all contributing to the understanding of mankind. If this is our position, then our project seeks to fill in a void in this universal discourse in the social sciences, that is, the absence of the Muslim civilizational expression. The contribution is, therefore, to Muslim society and to civilization as a whole. To make this point, let us take an analogy from art. We do not deny that the painting of churches has aesthetic qualities and is representational of reality. But why not paint mosques too? We, who have been painting churches all this time, have failed to see the mosque as an object of art. By painting mosques we not only fill a void in universal art by presenting another representation of reality but also reveal another avenue of expression, hitherto unavailable.

I must emphasise here that the Western social scientific tradition is not at all to be left out in the regeneration of Muslim thought, the reason being that there are, obviously, relevant concepts and theories from this tradition that we can utilise. The criteria in the selection of concepts and theories for a social science do not include the cultural origins of these concepts and theories. But if this is the case, why do we refer to our social

science as Islamic? The reason is that we are looking to a tradition, hitherto ignored, as one of our sources of theories and concepts. Islamic social science, then, is not a delimited body of knowledge that is distinctly Islamic. Rather, it is an activity, a process of social scientific creativity that enriches the already existing social sciences with other concepts and logics of discovery.

Now we come to our example of what Islamic social science is. We take ibn Khaldun's theory of the transition from the khilafa to mulk (royal authority). Most Sunni Muslim scholars regard the time of the Prophet and his four successors (al-khulafa' al-rashidun) as the only period when Islamic principles were applied to the fullest extent.² This is what ibn Khaldun referred to as the khilafa period. The khilafa is a political institution, the exercise of which means

to cause the masses to act as required by religious insight into their interests in the other world as well as in this world. (The worldly interests) have bearing upon (the interests in the other world), since according to the Lawgiver (Muhammad), all worldly conditions are to be considered in their relation to their value for the other world. Thus, (the Caliphate) in reality substitutes for the Lawgiver (Muhammad), in as much as it serves, like him, to protect the religion and to exercise (political) leadership of the world (ibn Khaldun, 1958; I:387-8).

The head of the Muslim state during the khilafa period was, therefore, the keeper of the Shari'a, there to ensure that it was enforced. From the khilafa period we have a transition to what ibn Khaldun refers to as mulk.

We have also mentioned before that according to their nature, human beings need someone to act as a restricting influence and mediator in every social organization, in order to keep the members from (fighting) with each other. That person must, by necessity, have superiority over the others in matters of group feeling. If not, his power to (exercise a restraining influence) could not materialize. Such superiority is royal authority (mulk). It is more than leadership. Leadership means being a chieftain, and the leader is obeyed, but he has no power to force others to accept his rulings. Royal authority means superiority and the power to rule by force (284).

Mulk is distinguished from khilafa by the ability of the ruler to rule by force. Although the rulers of the dynasties following the khilafa period continued to use the title of khalifa many of them were not khulafa' in the true sense of the term as they ruled by force and not by allegiance to the divine order. Thus, in the mulk period of West Asian history, the Muslim bourgeoisie was in constant danger of having their property confiscated due to the jealousy of their rulers. "Government decisions are as a rule unjust, because pure justice is found only in the legal caliphate that lasted

only a short while" (285). This injustice is to be understood in a more general sense than as the confiscation of property and money. It includes forced labour, the imposition of duties not required by Islamic law, the collection of unjustified taxes and so on (II:106-7).

Let us now take a look at the sources of ibn Khaldun's theory in order to understand what makes it an Islamic theory. First of all, his conception of the khilafa is derived from the Quran (al-An'am[6]:165). Khalifa here connotes heir, successor or inheritor. In the political sense it refers to heir, successor or inheritor of the Prophet. Of course it was to man in general that the amana (trust) was given (al-Ahzab[33]:72. But because social organizations inevitably result in disagreements a khalifa who exercises a restraining influence through the Shari'a is necessary (II:389-90).

During the Umayya period, the authority of the Shari'a began to decline. A transition to mulk began to take place. This concept too is from the Quran but here the reference is to absolute mulk that only Allah possesses (al-Mulk[67]:1). Ibn Khaldun uses the Quranic mulk analogously in his political theory. The ruler who possesses mulk is the one who has the power to rule by force and does not necessarily hold allegiance to the Shari'a. The concepts of khilafa and mulk were utilized by scholars before ibn Khaldun, but it was ibn Khaldun who refined them and made them more suitable for use in modern social science. The issue at hand in the preceding paragraphs has been the Quranic-historical roots of these concepts.

Furthermore, ibn Khaldun's conceptions of the khilafa and mulk are not from the Quran alone. In his theory the two concepts were given shape and form by history. It was in history that ibn Khaldun observed the development of the khilafa and mulk. It was in history that he observed the transition from the one to the other as well as the ill-effects of this transition on, for example, Muslim commerce. In other words, if Quranic concepts are to be used in the social sciences, they should be seen not as abstract concepts but as concrete concepts taking shape in history and society.

Thus far, in brief fashion we have shown how ibn Khaldun's political theory is an example of Islamic social science, being based on both the Quran and Islamic history. It remains for us to consider the potential contribution of Western social science to Islamic social science. Again we will take ibn Khaldun's political theory as an example.

We have already discussed his theory of the transition from khilafa to mulk. The khilafa period was described by both Weber and Turner as one

of charismatic leadership (Weber, 1978; Turner, 1974). I do not believe that this is entirely accurate. The khilafa period as described by ibn Khaldun betrays a semblance of what Weber referred to as rational-legal authority. Weber defined rational-legal authority as being based on rational grounds, "resting on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands" (Weber, 1978:215). Furthermore, "obedience is owed to the legally established impersonal order." During the khilafa period obedience was not owed to the khalifa as such (traditional authority) nor was his exceptional or exemplary character (charismatic authority) the most important aspect of his office. Obedience was owed to the divine order, the khalifa being merely the representative of the Prophet. This is similar to Weber's rational-legal authority in which "members of the organization, insofar as they obey a person in authority, do not owe this obedience to him as an individual, but to the impersonal order" (218). Also, it was true in the khilafa period that the khalifa himself was subject to the laws of the divine order in much the same way that the head of a modern state is "himself subject to an impersonal order by orienting his actions to it in his own dispositions and commands" (Weber, 1978:217).

After the khilafa period and the establishment of the Umayya dynasty we have ibn Khaldun's transition to *mulk* or what approaches Weber's patrimonialism. Ibn Khaldun's description of injustice in terms of the precarious position of the Muslim bourgeoisie vis-à-vis the rulers, the confiscation of money and property, forced labour and unfair taxes that is engendered by *mulk* corresponds to the "unpredictability and inconsistency on the part of court and local officials, and variously benevolence and disfavor on the part of the ruler and his servants" (Weber, 1978:1095). So the transition from khilafa to *mulk* in Weberian terms approximates the transition from rational-legal authority to patrimonial authority. This is not to say that there are no differences between ibn Khaldun and Weber. The point of this brief discussion on ibn Khaldun and Weber is to show how Islamic and Western social sciences can be mutually reinforcing. In some ways, the views of Weber corroborate and strengthen ibn Khaldun's arguments. Without overlooking critical differences we can see here that Western social science is to be considered as a source of Islamic social science not only in methodology but in substantive areas as well.

By now it should be clear that merely focussing on Muslims, their problems, placing them in the foreground, and so on does not constitute historical writing or social science from the Muslim point of view. In

fact, a work that focuses entirely on a Muslim subject may not at all be from the Muslim point of view unless the concepts and theories employed are Islamic ones, based on the history and philosophical traditions of Islam. What makes a social science Islamic is not its subject-matter but rather the sources from which its concepts and theories are drawn. Also, the whole enterprise would be a waste of time if those who are developing such indigenous concepts and theories do not take into account concepts and theories already present in the West which may in fact be sufficiently universal to be applied to Muslim society. Relevant to this discussion is Atal's distinction between indigenization and endogenous development.

Taken literally, endogenous development signifies development generated from within and orthogenetically, which would, thus, have no place for any exogenous influence. . . . Indigenization, by contrast, at least honestly alludes to outside contact by emphasizing the need for indigenizing the exogenous elements to suit local requirements; whether this is done by the 'indigenous' or by 'outsiders' is a mere detail (Atal, 1981:193).

It is clear that both indigenization and endogenous development are required in the effort to develop relevant social science for Muslim society and that the selective assimilation of exogenous elements should be considered as a part of endogenous activity (Alatas, 1981:462). The writing of history from the Muslim point of view is not to be confined to Muslim subject-matters just as it is true that the social sciences that have grown out of the experience and philosophical traditions of the West are not confined to the understanding of Western civilization. I would, therefore, disagree with Atal regarding his point on indigenization to suit local requirements.

Bastin's recommendation that we reappraise existing historical methods, concepts and techniques is well taken but we would correct his extreme subjectivity and say that not all Western concepts, methods and techniques are irrelevant and that some degree of empathic understanding or *verstehen* is possible on the part of the Western historian of Southeast Asian history. A tradition of interpretation in Islamic thought similar to that of *verstehen* will be discussed below. But, against Smail, we would add that the application of Western concepts and methods, even by Southeast Asians, must be done in concert with the employment of indigenous concepts and methods with the view to developing a universal social science. Universalization is important for two reasons. One concerns redundancy. We do not want to reach a stage where concepts that we have generated are identical to already existing ones apart from their names. This multiplication of concepts serves no real purpose. Secondly,

a universal social science is necessary if scholars from different civilizations are going to communicate with each other. Universalization should not be confused with generalization. Concepts or theories may refer to the general or to the particular but social science is universal in so far as concepts and theories developed in one civilization are available to scholars in another civilization.

The use of indigenous concepts, theories, and methods gives the Muslim tools with which to perceive the rest of the world. Now, if he/she does so without attempting to modify these tools accordingly, then he/she is as guilty of ethnocentrism as many Western social scientists are. But the crucial point is that it is only with such indigenous tools that there can be such a thing as an Islamic view of history or an Islamic social science, which have as their subject-matter not only Muslim societies but all civilizations.

Finally in this section, I wish to introduce what I call the regenerative principles in the Islamic social sciences. The regenerative principles are uniqueness, analogy, and continuity. The idea behind them is very simple. Any effort to develop the Islamic social sciences will require keeping the regenerative principles in mind. Let us once again take the example of ibn Khaldun's political theory. The concept of the khilafa is at once unique to the Islamic social sciences and analogous to rational-legal authority in Weber's theory of capitalist development. However, although analogous ibn Khaldun's theory is rather unique and possesses its own Islamic identity. This is so because in the khilafa allegiance is owed to a divine being rather than to abstract, impersonal rules. In terms of Weber's types of rationality, the khilafa is a merger of formal and substantive rationality. Although the khilafa displays some traits of rational-legal authority and is in this sense formal rational, it also displays substantive rationality. Substantive rationality refers to the degree to which social action is shaped by a criterion of ultimate values (Weber, 1978:85). Formal rationality, on the other hand, refers to the degree to which social action is shaped by rules, laws and regulations. For example, in rational-legal authority, formal rationality exists when the official business of public administration is "discharged precisely, unambiguously, continuously, and with as much speed as possible" (974). This requires the "discharge of business according to calculable rules and without regard for person" (975). Because Islam is an all-encompassing system, it very naturally merges formal and substantive rationality. The two are considered to be parts of an organic whole. From its very inception Muslim society is dominated by this merger or unity of formal

rational and substantive rational action because Islamically-oriented action is shaped by both rules, laws and regulations (Shari'a) as well as by a criterion of ultimate values.

The institution of khilafa as it existed during the khulafa' rashidun period is thus a new category of authority in the social sciences in general. The unique and yet analogous nature of ibn Khaldun's concepts vis-à-vis Weber gives rise to the idea that, in at least some ways, Weber's theory of development shows continuity with ibn Khaldun's theory. If a Muslim scholar was to develop a political theory based on ibn Khaldun, he or she must necessarily consider the uniqueness of ibn Khaldun's theory, its analogous nature vis-à-vis the Western social sciences, and finally the continuities and discontinuities between ibn Khaldun and Western theorists. The three regenerative principles of uniqueness, analogy, and continuity are guiding principles in the formation of coherent and comprehensive Islamic theories and concepts. Concepts, theories, methodologies, and choice of subjects, Islamic and Western, are continuously juxtaposed, compared and contrasted in the light of uniqueness, analogy and continuity to lead to the Islamic social sciences.

The Social Sciences in Contemporary Muslim Society

As I mentioned earlier the generation of the Islamic social sciences requires an understanding of the inadequacies of contemporary social science in Muslim society. It is necessary to deal with the issue of our state of imitation and dependence vis-à-vis the Western social sciences. During the last twenty years or so there have been some efforts to conceptualise this problem, but as yet it has not become a field in its own right. Because Western social scientists do not imitate others, they have not conceptualized this problem. The Muslims have thus followed them by not developing this concern into a field. We imitate not only what is being done in the West but also what is not being done!

Muslim scholars have described this problem in various ways. Al-e Ahmad in 1962 spoke of the "talisman others have hung around our necks to intimidate and milk us" (Al-e Ahmad, 1982:97). This has been the cause of Gharbzadegi (Weststruckness in Persian). Alatas has referred to the problem as mental captivity as a result of academic colonialism (Alatas, 1972; 1974). There are of course other writings that deal with the issue, though many of them are superficial.

It is reflected in the literature that many Muslims are keen to deny the

colonialist past and build an independent society. During and after the colonial period, however, Muslim scholars used the language of their oppressors to criticize their oppressors and to deal with Muslim problems. Take the example of Shari'ati. His theory of history and ideas on alienation seem to be in the tradition of Western scholarship (Marx and Durkheim) although he does mention the need to return to Muslim scholars of the past. I am certainly not against the use of Western social science but my point here is that Shari'ati did not draw sufficiently upon the Islamic tradition for his concepts and theories.

The use of the language of the oppressors achieves its immediate aims for many non-Western revolutionaries and agitators such as Fanon, Memmi and Shari'ati. But this has yet to be carried to its logical conclusion which is a move away from the exclusive use of the language of the oppressors (Western social science) toward the use of indigenous concepts and theories. Let me make it clear that I am not referring to the creation of an Islamic social science as opposed to Western social science. Rather, I am saying that Muslim scholars have got to draw upon the various Islamic sources when developing and applying theories and concepts to the study of society. The contribution is to a universal social science.

The state of the social sciences in contemporary Muslim societies is such that there is a need for the recovery and reconstruction of more accurate versions of Muslim history and society, hitherto versions being superficially created from and informed by a fusion (or confusion) of European and Muslim civilizations. In his valuable contributions to the field of Malay philosophy and history Syed Muhammad al-Naquib al-Attas highlights the continuity between Islamization and Westernization brought on by the conquest and reconquest of the Malay Archipelago. Malay tasawwuf (Sufi metaphysics) of the 14th to the 17th centuries and the 20th century discourse on its best reflect the attempt to reconstruct Malay history and to understand the development of culture as a cross-civilizational process. My intention is to indicate avenues for the reconstruction of Malay history by illustrating how we may also discern discontinuity between Malay and European history, thus throwing light on serious differences between the two in terms of man, thought, society, and history. My regenerative principles elaborated on earlier are central in the organization and the bringing together of things Malay and European.

An extremely relevant starting point for us from ibn Khaldun concerns the consequences of political domination for the ruled.

. . . the soul always sees perfection in the person who is superior to it and to whom it is subservient. . . . The soul, then, adopts all the manners of the victor and assimilates itself to him. This then is imitation (Ibn Khaldun, 1958, I:299).

This is what I'm going to refer to as the phenomenon of taklid.³

The concept of taklid as I am using it here involves the critique of contemporary social science in Muslim society. Taklid is an important principle which should not be confined to fikh alone but should be extended to all of Islamic thought (Rahman, 1965:ix). My aim is to bring the concept of taklid into social scientific discourse in connection with the state of our social sciences. Using taklid in this manner out of its original context is merely an elaboration of conceptions already found among Muslims. In the various languages of the Muslim peoples such as Malay and Persian the use of the term is not restricted to fikh.

In fikh (jurisprudence) taklid refers to the acceptance of opinions regarding legal rules without any knowledge of how it was derived. Semantically, taklid refers to twisting, winding, or wreathing of a thing around another, the investiture of authority (in religion), the unquestioning acceptance of authority, an imposition to perform an act, and imitation. The various connotations of taklid are derived from the root KLD (Lane, 1863-93). Although there are more connotations, the above are the ones that interest us. Taklid then refers to subservience, the presence of an authority, imitation, and the unquestioning acceptance of this authority. Hereafter, taklid will be used to refer to this constellation of meanings. It will become clearer that what is to be understood as taklid extends far beyond imitation. I had originally selected the term taklid in place of that of imitation because the former is fresh from the soil, as it were. However, in working through the various connotations of taklid it became apparent that imitation is merely a component of taklid. In applying the latter to Muslim intellectual history, I was led to consider the institutional relationships between Western and Muslim social science. The problem cannot be reduced to a psychological one of imitation.

The rise of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula meant the overwhelming of a certain form of taklid. The pre-Islamic Arabs were in a state of taklid in relation to the forces outside the temporal world. Jahiliyya literature, poetry and religion reflected the ahistorical view of life in which the forces of history are to be found without rather than within history. There was no focus on events, personalities and moving forces within history. The focus was on myths, legends, and supernatural forces that were not subject to rational laws, control, and manipulation. Rather, it was these myths, legends, and supernatural forces that controlled man and unjustly

so. It is a form of taklid because man was subservient to these forces, was controlled by them, and looked upon them as authorities.

This recalls the pre-Islamic concept of time prevalent among the Arabs. This is the concept of *dahr* which is deified time, believed to have been the dispenser of good and ill-fortune to men (Ali, 1983:1620). The Quran criticizes this Jahiliyya conception of time.

And they say: "What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live and nothing but time (*dahr*) can destroy us." But of that they have no knowledge; they merely conjecture (al-Jathiya[45]:24).

The pessimistic, dark notion of human destiny inherent in the concept of *dahr* as understood by the Jahiliyya Arabs is not far removed from the notion of time among the pre-Islamic Malays. Here, the gods and demi-gods are seen as the prime-movers of history and live on in the Malay and Javanese *wayang* (shadow-play). If we understand *taklid* in this way we see that it is also ahistoricism because the man of *taklid* believes that there are no regularities to all phenomena. Instead he believes that the world works according to the whims and fancies of gods and other supernatural forces. Finally, it is also reification that leads to domination. Reification, a term associated with Lukacs, refers to the idea that man's products are believed to have a separate existence, are coercive over and control man.

Man in capitalist society confronts a reality "made" by himself (as a class) which appears to him to be a natural phenomenon alien to himself, he is wholly at the mercy of its "laws" . . . (Lukacs, 1968:135).

In a similar fashion, history which is at least partly a result of man's volition, was not seen as history but as something to which man was subjected and had no power over. This leads to alienation, that is, the natural interconnectedness of man, thought, society and history is severed because the various gods and supernatural forces are interposed between man and his thought on the one hand and society and history on the other. There was no question of man thinking and acting to control his destiny because his destiny was determined by the arbitrary authority of the gods. It is clear now that ahistoricism, reification, and alienation are all part of the make-up of *taklid* because by *taklid* we are referring to the notion that man's own creation (gods and supernatural forces) is felt to be in control of his destiny, to have a life of its own (reification), alienating him from history, in terms of human volition and historical laws.

The rise of Islam extinguished this form of *taklid*. No longer was man subservient to myths, legends and supernatural forces. It was no longer an

attitude of ahistoricism because man believed that all phenomena were determined by divine laws, which include laws of history and society. It was no longer reification because man had a choice as to how to influence the course of history. And because man was now in control of his destiny there was no longer alienation. The natural interconnectedness of man, thought, society, and history was restored. Islam changed the hitherto pessimistic and tragic view of human destiny. The concept of man in the Islamic context has to be understood in terms of the related concept of 'akl. Man possesses 'akl, that is, the rational and intellectual capacity to understand the ayat (signs, symbols) of Allah.

In the Malay world it was generally through the medium of tasawwuf that Islam brought about changes in the concept of man as a volitional animal, existing in a cosmos of reason and order, as a privileged animal.

Islam came to the Archipelago couched in Sufi metaphysics. It was through tasawwuf that the highly intellectual and rationalistic religious spirit entered the receptive minds of the people, effecting a rise of rationalism and intellectualism not manifested in pre-Islamic times. This emergence of rationalism and intellectualism can be viewed as the powerful spirit that set in motion the process of revolutionizing the Malay-Indonesian world view, turning it away from a crumbling world of mythology, which can be compared with the Greek world in the Olympian era, to the world of intelligence, reason and order. . . . The essence of Man is that he is rational and rationality is the connection between him and Reality. It is these concepts and that of the spiritual equality between man and man that gave the ordinary man a sense of worth and nobility denied him in pre-Islamic times (al-Attas, 1969:5-6).

The coming of Islam to the Malay Archipelago and the arrival of 'akl constituted, therefore, the negation of taklid. Note that this recalls Weber's concept of disenchantment, the process in which "the unity of the primitive image of the world, in which everything was concrete magic, has tended to split into rational cognition and mastery of nature, on the one hand, and into 'mystic' experiences, on the other" (Weber, 1946:282). Furthermore, "religion has been shifted into the realm of the irrational" (286). This process especially characterizes the transformation of Occidental culture from medieval Catholicism. The Islamic form of disenchantment is not quite the same as Weber's. The disenchantment of the Occident is identical with the shifting of religion into the realm of the irrational. However, the rise of Islam and the subsequent disenchantment of society was not accompanied by the negation of religion. For this reason, it is more appropriate to use the concept of taklid. It is more correct to say that Islam brought about the negation of taklid rather than the disenchantment of society. In the disenchanted Occident, the world is

perceived as a cosmos governed by impersonal rules. In Muslim society, after the extinguishing of *taklid*, the world is perceived as a cosmos governed by divine but non-arbitrary rules. The Islamic orientation is, therefore, both towards rules, laws, and regulations on the one hand, and to ultimate values on the other and therefore not irrational in Weber's sense.

The extinguishing of *taklid* was thus achieved in West Asia with the rise of Islam and was followed by intellectual and economic prosperity, without negating religion, while disenchantment in the West did result in the negation of religion. Between the 12th and 15th centuries A.D. the eastern-most reaches of the Muslim world, the Malay Archipelago, began to experience large-scale Islamization. The Melaka Sultanate was the center of Asian trade during the 15th century after West Asian trade had declined. The 16th and 17th centuries witnessed prolific writings in the Islamic sciences by Malay scholars. But what is more interesting for us is the form of *taklid* in the Muslim world after the coming of the Europeans (Portuguese, Dutch, and British) from the 16th century on. It is important to understand that the nature of this *taklid* differs from that of the pre-Islamic West Asian and Malay worlds discussed above. The regime of *taklid* has changed.

In post-colonial Muslim society the form of *taklid* that dominates us is no longer in relation to myths, legends and supernatural forces. Rather, the new form of *taklid* is in relation to Western civilization. Consequently, the forms of ahistoricism, reification, and alienation are different. *Taklid* is very clear in Muslim society in the social sciences.

There have been attempts in Malay scholarship to discern a continuity between Malay and European history in terms of the development of 'akl (rationality as understood in Islam) and rationality. According to al-Attas

. . . the coming of the West, seen solely from the perspective of a cultural phenomenon and not an imperialistic one, can be considered as a continuation of the Islamization process; it can be considered to have perpetuated the rationalistic spirit, the philosophical foundations of which had already been laid by Islam long before. It is when seen in this perspective that, to use a pregnant remark, Islam had prepared the Archipelago, in a sense for the modern world to come (al-Attas, 1969:9-10).

In a later work, he qualifies this.

What I meant when I referred to Westernization seen solely from the perspective of a cultural phenomenon as being a continuation of the Islamization process referred in fact to the general effect Westernization had in the disintegration of the magical world view of the Malay-Indonesian. Islam had already initiated the

process of that disintegration, and Westernization continued that process . . . and the sense in which 'Islam has prepared the Archipelago for the modern world to come' was obviously meant to denote not the secularized world, but the Islamized world (al-Attas, 1978:174-5).

Al-Attas' account on continuity between Islamization and Westernization in the disenchantment of the Malay world is indeed a novel idea in Malay Islamic thought. Without denying this continuity, my aim here is to look at the aspects of discontinuity during this inter-civilizational encounter. While it is possible to identify both Islamization and Westernization as forces of demagification, we may also discern differences between the two.

Al-Attas dissolves the coming to the Malay world of Islam into an ideal continuity with the coming of Western civilization. Westernization is seen by him as part of the teleological movement towards final Islamization. In doing so he describes the analogous function of 'akl (rationality in Islam) and rationality in the disenchantment of the Malay world. Taking a different turn, I wish to focus on the uniqueness of their natures. While both Islamization and Westernization disenchanting the Malay world it was only the process of Islamization which extinguished taklid vis-à-vis myths, legends and supernatural forces while that of Westernization brought on and perpetuated a state of taklid vis-à-vis Western civilization.

The positing of analogous functions in terms of disenchantment has rightly led al-Attas to see continuity between Westernization and Islamization. But from another vantage point we may see Westernization not as a continuation of Islamization but rather as the perpetuation of taklid in which a Western interpretation of Malay history and society is appropriated by the Malays themselves. Take, for example, the history of the Islamization of the Malay Archipelago. This is still a much neglected field, particularly the period spanning the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, a period of large-scale Islamization. At the heart of this neglect are two related issues: the impact of Islam in the Malay Archipelago and the periodization of Malay history. The idea of a distinctive period of Islamization between the thirteenth and sixteenth century has been entertained but by a few Malay scholars (Alatas, 1962; al-Attas, 1969; Alatas, 1985b).

Westernization, while on one reading the perpetuation of the rationalistic spirit, is on the other the perpetuation of taklid. But what can be said about this new regime of taklid? In describing the relationship between Western and Malay thought in terms of taklid it must be made clear that

we are going beyond the concept of imitation. The utility of this concept itself is called into question for it is insufficient in and of itself. Hitherto conceptualizations of this problem have not adequately dealt with the notion of power and domination as they come into play with the global spread of the Western social sciences. The problem that we have is not merely imitation. It is not sufficient to say that in Muslim society or the periphery in general the imitation of Western social science does not allow for the comprehension of indigenous problems or that it does not create a liberating discourse or even that it maintains the "mechanism of imperial domination" by legitimating core/periphery exploitation (Szymanski, 1981). Without linking imitation to power and domination in the world system any statement on imitation would tend to be a weak and unsustainable thesis. I wish to move away from the monotonous concept of imitation and instead look at the state of the social sciences in Muslim society in terms of the concept of *taklid*. For this we go back to the idea of reification.

In Marx, the concept of reification comes across in the idea of the fetishism of commodities. There is also such a thing as the fetishism or the reification of ideas. Here it is believed that there are certain objective truths to be found "out there" and that they have been discovered in Western social science to which the scholar in Muslim society surrenders himself. It is "forgotten" that knowledge is a reality that is socially constructed. If we consider the body of knowledge that we call Western social science (including knowledge produced by Muslim scholars) as consisting of reified ideas then we say that it is Western social science that dominates the Muslim and various other civilizational expressions in the non-Western world. The major contradiction is that between the Westernization of the knowledge project and the development of various civilizational expressions. Just as the capitalist controls and has access to the reified structures of capitalism, so the Western scholar controls and has access to these reified ideas. But this is not enough. We need to work out the techniques by which knowledge realizes power. It is necessary to show the modes of domination and control over ideas.

One such mode that is perhaps the most important lies at the metatheoretical or epistemological level. At this level, it can readily be seen that *'akl* (rationality in Islam) and Western rationality are different to the extent that Westernization can be seen as a violent disruption of Islamization, not only in the Malay Archipelago but in the rest of the Muslim world as well.

The differences between *'akl* and rationality involve more than the fact

that in Islam, what is known as the ratio and the intellectus is considered as an organic whole in 'akl. Inseparable from rationality is the philosophy of positivism to which Islam is opposed. To follow the difference between 'akl and rationality in these terms let us take a look at the two dimensions of meaningful objects.

They are the designative and the expressive dimensions. A sign has a meaning insofar as it designates a particular object. Or it may have meaning insofar as it expresses thought, perception or belief regarding the object. The sign is related to the thought that it expresses. The dispute in history concerns the importance of each dimension in the order of explanation. Is expressive meaning determined by designative meaning or does the reverse hold true?

For the ancient Greeks, reality was the Idea of which empirical things were copies. But language was not important, words were not important; they were merely external clothings of thought. Later, St. Augustine posited that the thought of God is clothed externally in creation, meaning that everything is a sign. God's creation was then understood expressively. This Augustinian view set the stage for the semiological ontologies which looked at the world as a meaningful order or text. But even here, language had a marginal purpose for it was God and not man who expresses (Taylor, 1985:223). Medieval nominalism rejected the semiological ontologies. From this point of view, there were no such things as Ideas, forms or essences of things. All things exist as particulars. The universal is simply an effect of language. This view rejects the expressive theory of language. It refuses to see things as the manifestations of the Idea. Furthermore, words have meaning only insofar as they are words for things and not as signs. The world is not understood as a meaningful order but as an objective process. It is this view that informs the development of rationality in modern philosophy that we associate with Descartes, Bacon and Hobbes. As we shall see, this is quite different from an Islamic theory of meaning.

For this, the concept of the aya is very important. The Quran consistently appeals to our understanding of objects not as objects per se but as ayat (signs; sing., aya) that are manifestations of a higher Truth (al-hak). Reality as we perceive it ('ilm al-yakin, 'ayn al-yakin) is symbolic of al-hak. This is the case for all things including the verses of the Quran, which themselves are designated as ayat. From *usul al-fikh* (principles of jurisprudence) and *tassawuf* (Sufi metaphysics) we have *tafsir* and *ta'wil* (methods of interpretation), and the concepts of *al-ayat al-muhkamat* and *al-ayat al-mutashabihat*, the former referring to the verses of established

meaning and the latter to the verses which are figurative, metaphorical or allegorical.

The application of the concept of the *aya* can be extended beyond the Quran to other texts, to theories themselves, to human language and to phenomena in general. Human language, institutions, culture, history, etc. may also be referred to as *ayat*. Furthermore, there are two aspects or two levels at which they can be understood. They can be considered as both *al-ayat al-muhkamat* and *al-ayat al-mutashabihat*. Social phenomena (history, society, individual behaviour, etc.) when understood as *al-ayat al-muhkamat* are understood as objective processes that exist independently of the apprehender. This is necessarily so as the meaning they impart to the apprehender is clear, unambiguous, and shared by everyone. On the other hand, when the same social phenomena are looked at from the vantage point of another level, as *al-ayat al-mutashabihat* they are then understood subjectively. Something is said to lie beyond the merely objective. It has been said that it is erroneous to understand *muhkamat* and *mutashabihat* as objective and subjective respectively. To my mind *tafsir* and *ta'wil* (methods of interpretation) cannot be understood as simply the movement from the *zahir* (exoteric) to the *batin* (esoteric) in the metaphysical sense. Where the social sciences are concerned there is another aspect of these methods of interpretation waiting to be articulated and applied to social reality. This is the aspect that requires looking at both the subjective and objective aspects of social reality. Ibn Khaldun makes the distinction between the outward appearance (*zahir*) and the inner meaning (*batin*) of history.⁴

For on the surface history is no more than information about political events, dynasties, and occurrences of the remote past, elegantly presented and spiced with proverbs. . . .

The inner meaning of history, on the other hand, involves speculation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events. (History), therefore, is firmly rooted in philosophy. It deserves to be accounted a branch of (philosophy) (Ibn Khaldun, 1958, I:6).

History on the surface (*zahir*) has as its subject-matter objective (*muhkamat*) phenomena, the interpretation (*tafsir*) of which has "no room for learned guess or conjecture; no room for interpretation based on subjective readings. . ." as these *ayat* are clear and unambiguous (al-Attas, 1980, p. 4). On the other hand, the quest for the inner meaning (*batin*) of history requires our looking at historical phenomena in their *mutashabihat* dimensions, as deserving of subjective interpretation

(ta'wil). Therefore, in the social sciences and in the science of history the movement from the *zahir* to the *batin* is not to be restricted to the metaphysical sense. This is because the quest for inner meanings (in history, society) as the quest for meanings underlying observable socio-historical phenomena requires an understanding of both meaning as intended by actors and the context in which action takes place and imparts meaning. Only in this way can the isolated facts of history be assembled into a picture of the past. I am aware that this view of ta'wil is strongly opposed by contemporary Muslim epistemologists. I have argued that any interpretation of reality (ontological or social) is ultimately subjective. This reading is strengthened by linking tafsir and ta'wil as methods of interpretation with the concept of certainty (*yakin*) in Islam.

Making this link will have important consequences for the Islamic social sciences as it shows that ta'wil is a subjectivist-type method of interpretation. In the Quran, three types of certainty are referred to. One is *al-hak al-yakin*. This is absolute certainty and therefore, absolute Truth that refers to revelation as well as to the true laws of society, nature, physics, etc. But this Truth can only be grasped with relative certainty by man. This relative certainty is referred to in the Quran as *'ilm al-yakin* and *'ayn al-yakin*, which refer to certainty derived from reason and certainty derived from sight or empirical observation respectively. The social sciences can have no claim to *al-hak al-yakin*. Theories that attempt to understand and explain social reality yield relative certainty based on reason or empirical observation. By necessity, ta'wil as the deliberation upon the signs of civilization yield knowledge of relative certainty which is knowledge coloured by man's senses as well as his historical and social conditioning.

In the development of Western thought, by the eighteenth century there was again the rise of the expressive theory of meaning. This time, however, it was no longer God who expresses but man (Taylor, 1985:229). Expression is fundamental to language because it is only in expression that language comes to be. Language is more than a set of words which designate things; it is in the vehicle of reflection, which capacity is realized only in speech. This comes close to the Islamic theory of meaning in which man also yields, in language and behaviour, *ayat* (signs). Since man's speech (and indeed all that he objectifies) is ultimately a manifestation of Allah, then social phenomena too are to be considered as *ayat*. They are to be considered as *ayat* both in their *muhkamat* (objective) and *mutashabihat* (subjective) dimensions. In the Islamic theory of meaning, then, man as a producer of *ayat* is an expres-

sor. But in the West, the Romantic/expressive view which privileges subjectivity in interpretation is opposed to the positivist/designative view and till now the two contend with each other for supremacy. If we understand expressive/subjective as *mutashabihat* and designative/objective as *muhkamat*, then the Muslim position that man is an expressor, a creator of *ayat*, and that there is an expressive (*mutashabihat*) dimension to language and human action, is by and large opposed to the positivist spirit in the Western intellectual tradition. Therefore, Westernization of Muslim society in general and the Malay Archipelago in particular, can be seen as a disruption of Islamization for it imposed the postivist tradition on us, taking us away from the centrality of the concept of the *aya*, an expressive theory of language and human action that informs *'akl* (rationality in Islam). A clear manifestation of this is in the field of Malay historiography in which, partly as a result of the dominance of the positivist tradition, Malays do not view their history in their inner (*batin*) dimensions. That is, we do not understand our history in terms of the experiences of the past Malays and the socio-historical contexts which gave meaning to their experiences. We must not assume that our appropriating Western interpretations of Malay or Islamic history is merely a result of colonialism. It is also a result of thinking within the positivist tradition that is foreign and opposed to the indigenous theories of meaning. Islam privileged man with the faculty of *'akl* to comprehend the signs of civilization. The coming of Islam and the subsequent instillation of *'akl* extinguished *taklid* in Malay society while Westernization, on this reading, constitutes the perpetuation of *taklid* by displacing *'akl*, by imposing Western philosophies of history and philosophies of science. Here, I am by no means identifying the West with positivism. There are various anti-positivist trends such as neopositivism, pragmatism, existential phenomenology, and ordinary language philosophy, not to mention the efforts to replace earlier positivist and romantic models by integrating and transcending them. However, what I am saying is that Westernization, when seen as the perpetuation of *taklid* in the Malay world, was and is the imposition of the dominant trend of positivism.

That positivism has taken us away from the *zahir* and *batin* of Malay or Islamic history is not the only feature of *taklid*. We are in a state of *taklid* for other reasons. In the positivist designative theory of meaning, language becomes an instrument of control to obtain knowledge of a world "out there." The world is seen to consist of objective processes. As such, the language that is used to describe these processes must themselves be transparent. Language

. . . cannot itself be the locus of mystery, that is, of anything which might itself be irreducible to objectivity. The meaning of words can only consist in the ideas (or things) they designate. . . .

The alternative is to lose control, to slip into a kind of slavery, where it is no longer I who make my lexicon, by definitional fiat, but rather it takes shape independently and in doing this shapes my thought (Taylor, 1985:226).

If the world consists of objective processes and if language simply designates these processes, then language can be said to be neutral which is the same as saying that social science is universal. This is a Western social science that is disguised as universal. Practitioners of Western social science including those in Muslim societies are deluded into thinking their categories are universal. They ignore the differences between Islamic and Western settings. We can see how Islamic categories would have less legitimacy in the presence of Western "universal" ones. Positivism is therefore an obstacle in the development of Islamic concepts and theories. Let us now refer to other modes of control and domination over ideas that constitute the state of *taklid vis-à-vis* the Western social sciences.

In discussing division and rejection as a principle of exclusion, Foucault refers to the opposition between reason and madness.

Since the depths of the Middle Ages, the madman has been one whose discourses cannot have the same currency as others. His word may be considered null and void, having neither truth nor importance. . . . It was through his words that his madness was recognized; they were the place where the division between reason and madness was exercised but they were never recorded or listened to. No doctor before the end of the eighteenth century had ever thought of finding out what was said, or how and why it was said, in this speech which nonetheless determined the difference (Foucault, 1981:53).

Foucault goes on to say that although today the doctor does listen, it is within the context of the same division referred to above. This recalls the exclusion of another voice, that of the Muslim writers. The situation of the Muslim writer deeply rooted in the Islamic tradition has parallels to that of the madmen. His point of view is not considered "scientific" and, as a result, does not have the same currency as one trained in the modern social sciences. While his words are not considered null and void, nevertheless they are cordoned off in a separate area. Thus universities in Muslim countries have Islamic studies departments in which Islam is simply an object of study and not a point of view of study. The scholar trained in the area of Islamic studies is not regarded as qualified to enter discourse on man and society as this is within the domain of the

sociologist, political scientist, and historian. This brings us to another mode of control over ideas or discourses.

This refers to the organization of the disciplines. Those among the Muslims who aspire to attain the level of disciplines for their crafts are up against many obstacles for there is more to a discipline than "the possibility of formulating new propositions, *ad infinitum*" (Foucault, 1981:59). A set of propositions that is presented as constituting Islamic sociology, for instance, needs to "fulfill complex and heavy requirements to be able to belong" to the discipline of sociology. Such requirements include an experimental-statistical methodology with which Western social science has a comparative advantage. In order for Islamic sociology to qualify for membership as a discipline, it must deal with a determinate range of objects that should be reducible to "variables." Statements about these variables are true only if there is a one-to-one correspondence with objectively verified situations. In a world in which positivist social science dominates, Islamic social science cannot hope to have its voice heard.

Another mode of control over ideas is the will to truth. The will to truth or the opposition between true and false "tends to exert a sort of pressure and something like a power of constraint . . . on other discourses" (Foucault, 1981:55). Foucault gives the example of how Western literature for centuries tried to ground itself on science, that is, on "true" discourse.

Expression in the Islamic social sciences is governed by the will to truth (in Western social science) in two ways that correspond to the two main trends in the Islamic social sciences. In the first trend, the aspiration is to return to a past logic of discovery, a rationality that is prudential rather than instrumental. The goal of such a rationality was to show man the way of an ascent from a perception of the physical world to that of the spiritual. This type of rationality comes up against an instrumental rationality that excludes the non-technical or non-economic as unreason. Such an instrumental rationality denies the legitimacy of Islamic forms of thought and action.

The second trend in Islamic social science is a "scientific" one, and by virtue of this, grounds itself on positivist science as conceived in the West. I have in mind the attempts at "Islamic economics" that have sought to ground themselves in a theory of wealth and production in very much the manner that Western economics is. Such "Islamic economics" is unable to solve the problems it is addressing because what it amounts to is neo-classical economics dressed and made up in Islamic terminology.

Not very different from orthodox economics it has not dealt with a central problem addressed by Marxist, dependency, and world-system theories in their critiques of orthodox economics and modernization theory, namely, the historical evolution of a highly unequal capitalist system of rich-country to poor-country relationships.

The different forms of control that exist between the Western and Islamic social sciences suggests to us that taklid is more than just a state of imitation. It refers to relationships that are built into the structure of social science and its institutions.

Taklid in post-colonial Muslim society is characterized by a state of subservience towards Western social scientists and their works. They are the authorities. Also with this form of taklid then corresponds a form of ahistoricism in which the man of taklid does not understand history and society from an Islamic point of view but rather "from the deck of the ship, the ramparts of the fortress, the high gallery of the trading house" (van Leur, 1955:261). An alien interpretation of history is appropriated by the Muslims. Muslims have yet to produce brilliant works criticizing, for example, Weber's views on the patrimonial nature of Islam or Marx's views on the Asiatic mode of production in Islam. It is reification because we produce Westernized scholarship which dominates us, maintaining our state of subservience. It is alienation because Western social science and its adherents in Muslim society are interposed between man and his thought on the one hand and history on the other. The result is the inability of the Muslim social scientist to comprehend Muslim problems, Islamic history, and the rest of humanity from an Islamic point of view.

Taklid is a cultural phenomenon, the empirical data of which today is the massive corpus of social science in Muslim society. The man of taklid, apart from uncritically imitating Western social science, does not subject history, society and other categories to systematic understanding. The impact of such an attitude on scientific development is negative, and while this has been dealt with before (Alatas, 1980) this issue has been largely neglected as a field of enquiry. Furthermore, the study of taklid does not stop here. We need to look beyond this objective account to the level of subjective meanings where we experience alienation and the quest for identity in intellectual life.

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NOTES

1. When we say that social theory must be both objective as well as subjectively meaningful we mean that it must yield knowledge of objective structures and forces as well as that of peoples' consciousness and agency as they act upon and are constrained by the former.

2. I am aware that the Shi'a do not accept this interpretation of Muslim political history. The following account, however, is not presented as *the* Islamic interpretation of early Muslim political history but rather as one version.

3. Ibn Khaldun himself used *iktida'* which simply means imitation or emulation. See the Arabic original of his *al-Mukaddima* (1867) *Al- 'ibar* [A general history of the Arabs and of the Muhammadan dynasties]. Bulak. vol. 1-2:123. Our conceptualization of *taklid* enables us to go beyond this as we shall see.

4. See *ibn Khaldun's al-Muqaddima* in the original Arabic (1867, vol. 1-2:3) where he employs the terms *zahir* and *batin* for the surface and inner meanings of history respectively.

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