Islamic Social Sciences and the Crisis of Modernity
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Abstract

The contemporary world is confronted with complex crises that span religious, social, economic, and political dimensions, manifesting in widespread instability and moral uncertainty. Although material and technological advancements have reached unprecedented levels since the Renaissance, modern civilization has largely neglected the spiritual and ethical development essential for responsible human conduct aligned with the Divine Purpose. Ideologies such as materialism, racial supremacy, and territorial nationalism—once contested by the transformative teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW)—have reemerged, intensifying human susceptibility to unchecked desires. The research questions is what are the crises of Modernity in the context of Islamic Social Sciences and what are the possible solutions in this regard? This article underscores the pivotal role of Islamic Social Sciences in responding to these multifaceted challenges. It proposes a foundational framework to guide Muslim scholars and policymakers in strategically advancing the Islamization of contemporary social sciences. By harmonizing Islamic epistemology, moral values, and rational inquiry, Islamic Social Sciences not only offer descriptive analyses of societal conditions but also normative directions for ethical engagement. Central themes include a critical assessment of secular social sciences, the philosophical underpinnings of Islamic Social Sciences, and practical strategies for their systematic implementation to promote civilizational revitalization, peace, and the preservation of human dignity.

Keywords: Crisis, Modernity, Islam, West, Social Science.

The Interconnection between Islamic Social Sciences and the Crisis of Modernity

The intersection of Islamic Social Sciences1 and the Crisis of Modernity2 present a rich and complex field of inquiry that seeks to understand and address the profound socio-cultural challenges faced by contemporary Muslim societies. The Crisis of Modernity refers to the multifaceted rupture arising from the dissonance between modernity's promises of progress, rationality, and autonomy and its resultant dislocations such as alienation, ethical disintegration, environmental degradation, and socio-political instability. Modernity's universal narratives and values often clash with traditional Islamic worldviews, creating tensions that call for a reflective critique and alternative frameworks of knowledge. Islamic Social Sciences, rooted in the Qur'ān, Sunnah, and Islamic epistemology, offer a distinctive paradigm that seeks to reinterpret social phenomena through ethical, spiritual, and communal values embedded within Islam. By engaging critically with the Crisis of Modernity, Islamic Social Sciences aspire to provide holistic social theories and solutions that not only critique the limitations of Western-dominated social sciences but also reformulate understandings of human nature, society, and governance in harmony with divine injunctions. This relationship underscores a critical scholarly endeavour to renew Muslim intellectual traditions while responding meaningfully to contemporary global transformations and crises.3

Problem Statement

The ongoing *Crisis of Modernity*—characterized by moral fragmentation, spiritual alienation, and socio-political instability—poses significant challenges to contemporary Muslim societies.4 Modernity's secular and materialistic paradigms often conflict with the ethical and metaphysical foundations of Islam, resulting in intellectual dissonance and social disruption.5 Despite its promises of progress and autonomy, modernity has generated profound crises that question its universal applicability across diverse civilizations.6 In response, *Islamic Social Sciences*, grounded in Qur'ānic and Prophetic epistemology, attempt to reinterpret social realities through a framework that integrates faith, ethics, and community.7 However, the relationship between Islamic Social Sciences and the Crisis of Modernity remains underexplored, particularly in terms of how Islamic epistemology can offer viable alternatives to Western-dominated paradigms of knowledge (The Islamization of the Social Sciences, 2021).8 This study,

therefore, seeks to investigate how Islamic Social Sciences can critically engage with and respond to the Crisis of Modernity by reconstructing social theories that align with divine guidance and address contemporary human and societal needs.

Research Question

How can Islamic Social Sciences critically engage with and respond to the Crisis of Modernity by reconstructing social theories rooted in Qur'ānic and Prophetic epistemology to address contemporary moral, intellectual, and societal challenges?

Sub-Questions

1. What are the key features of the *Crisis of Modernity* as identified by contemporary scholars?
2. In what ways do modernity's secular and materialistic paradigms conflict with Islamic ethical and metaphysical principles?
3. How do Islamic Social Sciences conceptualize knowledge and social reality differently from Western social sciences?
4. What methodological approaches within Islamic Social Sciences can contribute to reconstructing social theories aligned with divine guidance?
5. How can Islamic epistemology provide viable alternatives to address moral and social fragmentation in modern Muslim societies?

Literature Review

1. Introduction

The encounter between Islam and modernity has generated one of the most significant intellectual debates in the Muslim world. The "crisis of modernity" refers to a complex set of moral, spiritual, and epistemological challenges produced by the dominance of secular materialism, technocracy, and social fragmentation in contemporary life. Modernity, despite its achievements in science and governance, is often seen by Muslim scholars as having estranged humanity from divine purpose and moral coherence.9 Consequently, the development of Islamic social sciences seeks to respond to these crises by re-grounding social knowledge in Qur'ānic epistemology, moral teleology, and the metaphysical unity of creation.10

2. The Crisis of Modernity: Ethical and Epistemological Dimensions

From an Islamic perspective, the modern crisis stems not merely from political or economic failures but from a deeper loss of the sacred.11 Argues that modernity represents a rupture between the human intellect and the transcendent order, resulting in spiritual alienation, ecological imbalance, and moral relativism. Similarly, Schuon12 and Chit tick13 contend that secular rationalism has reduced knowledge to empirical data, detaching it from metaphysical truth. Turner14 confirms that Western sociology, grounded in secular assumptions about progress and individual autonomy, often fails to capture the religious and moral dimensions of Muslim societies. Thus, a reorientation of knowledge—what Al-Faruqi termed the Islamization of knowledge—is seen as essential to restoring harmony between science, ethics, and revelation.

3. Reformist and Modernist Approaches: Reconciliation and Renewal

Reformist scholars such as Fazlur Rahman and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas emphasize the need for an intellectual renewal (tajdīd) that harmonizes Islam with modern scientific and institutional developments. Rahman15 argues for a contextual hermeneutic of the Qur'ān, proposing that Islamic ethics are dynamic principles adaptable to historical conditions. Similarly, Al-Attas critiques the moral neutrality of Western epistemology and calls for a "dewesternization" of knowledge. Ziauddin Sardar16 extends this vision by advocating a creative engagement with modernity through interdisciplinary methods, emphasizing the moral accountability of scientific and social inquiry.

4. Traditionalist Critique: Recovering the Sacred Order

The traditionalist school, led by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, presents a more critical stance toward modernity. Nasr17 interprets modernity as a spiritual crisis resulting from the loss of a sacred cosmology that once united humanity, nature, and God. His perennial philosophy posits that authentic knowledge is inseparable from revelation, and that the ecological and moral collapse of modern civilization stems from epistemic rebellion against divine reality.

5. Post-Colonial and Critical Perspectives

The post-colonial and anthropological critiques of modernity, exemplified by Talal Asad, Wael B. Hallaq, and Edward Said, interrogate the very categories through which modern knowledge has understood Islam.

Asad18 demonstrates that the Western concept of "religion" is a historical construct rooted in Christian and colonial contexts. Hallaq 19 deepens this critique by arguing that modernity is inherently incompatible with Islamic moral and epistemic foundations, while Said's20 Orientalism exposes how academic representations of Islam served imperial agendas.

6. Empirical and Sociological Studies

Empirical sociologists such as Gellner21, Hefner22, Eickelman, and Piscatori23 examine how modernization and Islam interact in lived social realities. Their studies reveal that modernization does not necessarily lead to secularization or moral decline; instead, Muslim societies display multiple modernities (Hefner, 1998). Lapidus24 and Turner (2011) likewise observe that Islamic institutions have historically demonstrated adaptability, producing hybrid systems that combine religious ethics with modern administrative forms.

7. toward a Methodology for Islamic Social Sciences

Scholars such as Al-Faruqi and Al-Attas envisioned the Islamization of the social sciences as both an epistemic and ethical project. Al-Faruqi and Al-Attas25 proposed developing social theories derived from tawḥīd (divine unity), thereby integrating metaphysics, ethics, and empirical observation. More recently, Kamali26 and Ramadan27 have advanced a maqāṣid-based ethical framework for contemporary reforms, linking classical jurisprudence with social justice and human welfare.

8. Synthesis and Research Gaps

Across the literature, scholars agree that modernity has precipitated profound moral and intellectual dislocations. Yet, they diverge on solutions: reformists advocate reinterpretation and adaptation; traditionalists urge spiritual re-awakening; post-colonial critics demand deconstruction of Western episteme. However, several gaps remain. Few studies link Islamic epistemology directly with empirical social research, leaving Islamic social sciences largely theoretical. Future scholarship must explore how tawḥīdic epistemology can inform social policies in plural, globalized contexts.

9. Conclusion

The literature on Islamic social sciences and the crisis of modernity demonstrates that the Muslim intellectual tradition remains deeply engaged with the moral and epistemological questions posed by modern civilization. While the reformist, traditionalist, and post-colonial perspectives differ in their diagnoses, they converge on one point: the modern world's crises—moral, ecological, and social—are inseparable from its epistemic foundations. Islamic social sciences therefore aspire not merely to critique modernity but to re-sacralise knowledge, reintegrating reason, revelation, and ethics into a coherent vision of human flourishing under divine sovereignty.

Our discussion in this article opens with an introduction to the concept of *"Science."*

Science

Science is commonly understood through multiple perspectives:

a. as the accumulation of knowledge that distinguishes itself from ignorance;
b. knowledge that is acquired through systematic study, experimentation, or practice;
c. a specialized branch of structured knowledge within specific disciplines, such as theology or natural sciences;
d. an organized set of learned techniques or practices;
e. one of the natural sciences concerned with the physical world; and
f. Knowledge about universal truths or general laws, particularly knowledge acquired and validated using the scientific method. Moreover, science is recognized as an organized body of verified knowledge arising from rigorous scientific inquiry, as well as a methodological approach employed to discover this knowledge. Together, these definitions support the inclusion of social sciences—which study human behaviour, societies, and cultures—within the broader scientific enterprise.28

Having outlined the general meaning of science, it is pertinent to consider the specific definition of the "*natural sciences*".

Natural Sciences

Natural sciences are broadly described as:

a. the body of knowledge concerning the physical world and its phenomena;

b. a systematic approach grounded in scientific principles;

c. disciplines such as physics, chemistry, and biology that investigate matter, energy, their interactions, and objectively measurable phenomena; and

d. Sciences that study the natural environment in which humans exist.

These include physics and chemistry, which explore the laws of matter, motion, space, mass, and energy, as well as the biological sciences, which focus on living organisms. Collectively, these definitions highlight the close relationship between natural and social sciences, stressing their interdependence and the reality that neither can be fully understood or applied in isolation from the other.29

In contrast to natural sciences, which examine the physical world, our discussion now turns to social sciences, which study human society and behaviour.

Social Sciences

Before engaging with the discussion on *"Islamic Social Sciences and the Crisis of Modernity,"* it is imperative to critically examine the scholarly definitions and conceptual frameworks surrounding the term "*Social Science*."

Social science is generally understood as:

(a) A branch of science concerned with the institutions, organization, and functioning of human society, along with interpersonal relationships.

(b) A field of human knowledge addressing all aspects of collective life.

(c) A discipline focusing on dimensions of society, such as economics or political science.

(d) An area of study concerned with the social and cultural dimensions of human behaviour, often referred to as the behavioural sciences, which include economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, and human geography.

(e) A broad set of disciplines encompassing cultural and social

anthropology, social and economic geography, and educational studies that examine social contexts. In some interpretations, history is also included, as it bridges the humanities and social sciences. Comparative law is occasionally grouped here, though it is more commonly taught in law schools. The term *behavioural sciences* have become increasingly prominent over the last few decades to emphasize the connection of these fields with related inquiries into human behaviour.

(f) A wide-ranging concept covering multiple scholarly domains that collectively address human society. While the singular *"social science"* may suggest methodological unity, the plural *"social sciences"* more accurately reflects the diversity of disciplines—economics, sociology, anthropology, political science, social psychology, and social biology—while also intersecting with normative studies (law, social philosophy) and historical approaches. These disciplines extend across university departments such as industrial relations, international relations, business studies, and public administration.30

More broadly, the term *"social sciences"* reflects the plurality of disciplines that analyse different dimensions of collective human life. These include cultural and social anthropology, social and economic geography, educational studies, and in some cases history and comparative law. Together, these fields intersect with normative studies (such as law and social philosophy) and historical approaches, extending across university departments like business studies, international relations, and public administration.31

With the concept of 'Social Sciences' clarified, we now proceed to explore the "origin and evolution of contemporary social sciences".

Origin & Evolution of Contemporary Social Sciences

To contextualize the discussion on the "Islamization of Contemporary Social Sciences in the 21st Century," it is essential to review briefly the origins and developmental trajectory of contemporary social sciences, as elaborated in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Although the formal establishment of social sciences occurred in the 19th century, their intellectual roots are traceable to the spirit of rational inquiry characteristic of ancient Greek philosophy. However, this momentum diminished during the intervening

centuries, as medieval scholarship became predominantly theological in orientation, with theology shaping prevailing conceptions of human behaviour. The Renaissance era saw a stagnation in social inquiry, characterized first by an almost reverential adherence to Greek classical texts and subsequently by an engagement with René Descartes' geometrical-deductive philosophy.

- The 17th and 18th centuries witnessed renewed progress in the social sciences, fuelled by expanding global trade and exploration that heightened awareness of human diversity. This period introduced key conceptual frameworks, including the notion of social and cultural structures derived from the physical and biological sciences, developmental list philosophy, and a historicized understanding of the present as a product of past developments. By the early 19th century, amid the transformative effects of the French and Industrial Revolutions, the imperative to redefine human culture considering profound social change became increasingly evident.

- The 19th century's intellectual and literary output reflected critical social issues such as population growth, labor conditions, property transformations, social stratification, urbanization, mechanization, the rise of the factory system, and the mobilization of political masses. These dynamics generated diverse ideological responses: conservative thinkers like Edmund Burke, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Max Weber advocated the preservation of democratic, capitalist, industrial, and individualist values, while radicals, including Karl Marx repudiated capitalism in favour of communism. Other influential ideologies of the era impacting social sciences included Positivism, humanitarianism, and evolutionism.

- Within academia, the 19th century fostered increasing specialization rather than the integration of social sciences into a unified discipline. Economics emerged as the first distinct social science, followed by political science. By the century's close, disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, social psychology, social statistics, and human geography had attained recognized academic status.

- The 20th century brought new thematic challenges to social sciences. The advent of nationalism, mass democracy, industrial expansion, and technological innovation spawned ideologies such as Existentialism, Marxism, and Freudianism. This era was marked

by heightened specialization, the rise of interdisciplinary research, and the professionalization of social science fields. The incorporation of statistical methodologies became instrumental across disciplines. Despite an emphasis on empirical method and data, social sciences continued pursuing overarching explanatory frameworks. Prominent theoretical approaches in the modern era include developmentalism—studying growth processes and mechanisms of societal change in emerging nations; the social-systems method—investigating human control functions; structuralism—focused on identifying universal patterns in thought and behaviour; and interactionism—examining socialization and behavioural modification processes.32

Following our review of Science, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and the origin and evolution of contemporary social sciences, we now move toward presenting a formal introduction to **"Islamic Social Sciences"**.

Definition of Islamic Social Sciences

Islamic Social Sciences may be defined as an academic discipline that studies human society, behaviour, and institutions by integrating contemporary social science methodologies with the worldview, values, and principles of Islam. Rather than replicating Western models, they reinterpret key concepts and frameworks considering Qur'anic guidance, the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the broader Islamic intellectual tradition. Their purpose is both descriptive, in analysing social realities, and normative, in offering guidance grounded in Islamic ethics and epistemology.33

Domain of Islamic Social Sciences

Islamic Social Sciences constitute an interdisciplinary domain that integrates Islamic worldview, spiritual values, and revealed knowledge with contemporary social science methodologies. This field seeks to study human society, behaviour, culture, economics, and polity under an Islamic framework, with the aim of providing ethical, holistic, and normative understandings and solutions grounded in Shari'a principles. Islamic Social Sciences emerge from the intellectual project of Islamization of knowledge, which critiques and reinterprets Western secular social sciences to align better with Islamic epistemology and morality. This discipline emphasizes

a sacralised (sacred or holy) knowledge system that encompasses not only empirical and rational inquiry but also divine guidance, thereby offering comprehensive insights into social phenomena from an Islamic perspective.34

Key scholarly perspectives highlight that Islamic Social Sciences:

- Involve an integral theoretical framework combining insights from Islamic revelation and human social sciences.
- Pursue the reform and realignment of social science disciplines to serve the objectives of Islam.
- Aim to address crises in contemporary morality and social issues in both Muslim and global contexts through research and applied practice.35

This definition is consistent with the literature on the Islamization of social sciences movement, notably advanced by scholars like Ismāʻīl Raji al-Fārūqī and Ibrahīm Ragab, emphasizing both epistemological foundations and methodological adaptations for the global academic study of social realities from an Islamic standpoint.36 These perspectives collectively define *Islamic Social Sciences* as both a discipline and methodological approach seeking an Islamically authentic understanding and transformation of social sciences.37

Building upon our exploration of Science, the Natural and Social Sciences, and the origins, evolution, and definitional scope of Islamic Social Sciences, we now turn to a pivotal discussion: *Islamic Social Sciences—Epistemology, Evolution, and Global Relevance*."

Islamic Social Sciences: Epistemology, Evolution, and Global Relevance

Islamic Social Sciences rest on an epistemology grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the Islamic intellectual tradition, integrating revealed knowledge (*naql*) with reason (*ʿaql*) to construct a holistic view of human life (al-Attas, 1980; al-Faruqi, 1982). Emerging with renewed energy in the post-colonial period, the discipline evolved through efforts to "Islamize knowledge" and reconstruct the social sciences upon Islamic foundations (IIIT, 1988; Sardar, 1989).38 Today, Islamic Social Sciences have gained global significance, institutionalized in universities across the Muslim world and increasingly studied in Western academia (Nasr, 1994; Zaman, 2012). In what follows, we shall examine its epistemological bases, historical development, and contemporary global relevance.39

- A central conviction within the Muslim intellectual tradition is that Islam embodies a distinctive conception of the social sciences, integrating religious, social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions into a holistic framework. The articulation and development of this system, however, were significantly constrained under colonial rule, which impeded the application of Islamic socio-political models. Following the wave of decolonization in the mid-twentieth century, renewed efforts emerged to revive and operationalize Islamic principles as a comprehensive code of life. Considering the transformed socio-political realities of the post-colonial period, it became necessary to reinterpret Islamic social sciences in contemporary contexts and to critically engage with modern social sciences, adapting them in accordance with Islamic values and epistemological foundations. This intellectual endeavour, championed by Muslim scholars over the past century, gained considerable momentum in the latter half of the twentieth century. Leading thinkers-initiated projects to Islamise the social sciences through frameworks rooted in Shari'a, a process that eventually crystallized into the academic discipline now identified as *Islamic Social Sciences*.40

- The institutionalization of Islamic Social Sciences has since taken shape across the Muslim world, particularly through Islamic studies departments and specialized faculties in universities established in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Iran, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Uganda, and Niger. Parallel to these developments, the field has attracted increasing scholarly attention in Western academia, highlighting its emerging global relevance.41

- Significant advances were made during the final quarter of the twentieth century, when substantial research contributions consolidated Islamic Social Sciences as a recognized scientific discipline. This scholarly momentum was further strengthened by a strategic program on the Islamization of knowledge, developed through a series of conferences. The program—most notably articulated in the *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Workplan* by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT, Washington, D.C.)—outlined twelve methodological steps for reorienting various human knowledge disciplines along Islamic principles. It emphasized the need for rigorous critical evaluation of

modern Western scholarship in conjunction with the intellectual legacy of Muslim civilization, with the objective of reconstructing disciplines upon Islamic epistemological foundations. This process entails correcting inherent biases, methodological limitations, and flawed assumptions embedded in contemporary knowledge systems.42

- Importantly, the Islamization of knowledge should not be understood as a rigid imposition of doctrine, but rather as a liberation of inquiry from narrow constraints. In the Islamic worldview, knowledge is regarded as universal, rational, and essential, with validity determined by coherence, correspondence to reality, and contribution to human welfare and ethics.43 Consequently, an Islamised discipline aspires to provide both descriptive and normative insights, while inaugurating a transformative stage in intellectual history—advancing human thought toward truth, justice, and moral progress.44

Having established the framework in the preceding discussion on *"Islamic Social Sciences: Epistemology, Evolution, & Global Relevance,"* our analysis now advances to the topic of *"Critical Analysis of Contemporary Social Sciences."*

Critical Analysis of Contemporary Social Sciences

Ralf Dahrendorf45 offers a profound evaluation of contemporary social sciences, noting their emergence from moral philosophy, paralleling the evolution of natural sciences from natural philosophy. He highlights the significant influence of the 18th-century revolutions—both Industrial in England and Bourgeois in France—on the delineation of social sciences as a distinct intellectual domain. Early figures such as the Scottish moral philosophers studied political economy alongside broader social issues, albeit without labelling it as social science. The rise of positivism in early 19th-century France, particularly through Auguste Comte, marked a pivotal shift from moral philosophy to what was termed "social science" or "social physics," emphasizing empirical, factual, and precise knowledge akin to the natural sciences. Comte viewed social science as the supreme integrative discipline within the scientific edifice, asserting that its methodology did not differ from that of natural sciences.46

Dahrendorf further identifies five developments contributing to methodological complexity in social sciences.

1. First, the serious adoption of natural science analogies by scholars engaged in empirical research, as illustrated by large-scale surveys by Charles Booth in Britain, the Chicago School in the U.S., Frederic Le Play in France, and Germany's Verein für Sozialpolitik, laid the groundwork for contemporary empirical social research.

2. Second, theoretical social science informed by natural science concepts gained prominence through figures like Emile Durkheim, who emphasized the study of "social facts," and Vilfredo Pareto, who contributed to metatheoretical insights, though their followers have been limited.

3. Third, methodological divergence emerged with the German school's emphasis on Verstehen, or empathetic understanding, challenging rigid natural science analogies—an approach typified by Max Weber's introduction of hermeneutic and phenomenological perspectives.

4. Fourth, sociology and economics diverged, with economics evolving into arguably the most scientific of social sciences, fostering cumulative theory development tested against models and assumptions, while interpretive or descriptive economics became the exception.

5. Fifth, Weber's crucial distinction between factual knowledge and value judgments crystallized ongoing debates about the respective domains of descriptive analysis and normative prescription, which remain fundamental despite disciplinary segmentation among political theory, moral philosophy, and social policy studies.[47]

Consequently, contemporary social sciences comprise heterogeneous methodological elements: empirical social science characterized by sophisticated, varied techniques; rare, non-cumulative theoretical developments; Verstehende Sozialwissenschaft focusing on historically informed analysis of present social phenomena; economics as a comparatively cumulative discipline; and explicitly prescriptive social theory, often politically oriented. This pluralism is widely acknowledged but has resisted synthesis despite efforts by theorists such as Karl Popper and Talcott Parsons. Popper's falsificationist logic, while influential, is often critiqued for its limited applicability to social sciences, where hypothetico-deductive progress is less universal and most scholarly activities fall outside stringent falsification criteria. Popper himself

contributed to social-philosophical analysis beyond methodological rigor.

Parsons, through his theoretical framework of social action and the social system, proposed an overarching model integrating economics, political science, culture, and social integration. However, his influence largely remains confined to sociology, with economists largely dismissing his schema. The social sciences continue their disciplinary trajectories, evidencing progress by varied criteria but often producing "multa non-multum"—much knowledge but limited substantive advance. Given the absence of synthesis, a pluralistic approach fostering disciplinary diversity and cross-boundary innovation appears prudent, with ongoing incorporation of multiple methodologies likely.48

Isma'il R. Al-Faruqi 49 offers a complementary critique, noting that Western social sciences, institutionalized only in the past century, comprise disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, and history, with geography and psychology occupying dual statuses. Their emergence derives from a two-century-old impetus to apply the rigor of natural science methodology to human relations—a paradigm inherited unquestioned by early social sciences.50

Al-Faruqi critically identifies core deficiencies in secular social sciences that bear upon the Islamic alternative.

1) First, Western social science's denial of the relevance of a priori data overlooks the intrinsic moral and spiritual dimensions integral to human behaviour, which are autonomous, culturally contingent, and not reducible to quantifiable natural elements. This reductionism results in incomplete theoretical frameworks incapable of fully accounting for social realities due to their methodological incapacity to engage spiritual phenomena.51

2) Second, Western claims to objectivity rest on a false premise. Human data, unlike inert natural phenomena, are value-laden and responsive to the observer's attitudes. Without empathetic engagement, researchers fail to apprehend these values, rendering purportedly objective findings culturally biased and limited, especially when applied cross-culturally. This explains why Western social analyses inadequately model Muslim societies or experience.52

3) Third, Al-Faruqi highlights a fundamental methodological

divergence rooted in Islamic epistemology, particularly the principle of the unity of truth, which posits an inseparable relation between reality and divine will, integrating value realization as an essential dimension of knowledge. This norm mandates that any investigation of human reality must encompass normative "ought to be" considerations within possible existence. Integral to this is the notion of ummat-ism, which argues that values are inherently communal, embedded within the social order of the Ummah, disallowing purely personal moral imperatives disconnected from societal obligations. Islam's ethical framework is codified through Shari 'ah and public institutions, in contrast to Western individualistic moral schemas, thus emphasizing socialized morality and public responsibility as the core of religious and social knowledge.53

4) Finally, Al-Faruqi criticizes Western separation of humanities from social sciences on methodological grounds, which has excluded ultimate values from social scientific inquiry under the guise of objectivity, leading to normative vacuums and moral degradation in society. This has simultaneously rendered the humanities vulnerable to relativism and skepticism, undermining their capacity to inform societal values on faith, duty, and the good life—domains intrinsically linked to social cohesion and historical agency.54

Secular Philosophy of Natural and Social Sciences

The prevailing philosophy underpinning contemporary natural and social sciences fundamentally rejects metaphysical realities, adopting instead a mechanistic worldview that denies the existence of non-material entities. This secular framework posits materialistic interpretations of human origin and universal governance, asserting that the universe operates according to impersonal laws of nature, often conceived as mechanical or accidental in nature. Within this paradigm, the universe is regarded as serving human interests insofar as it benefits individual instincts and desires. Core concepts such as life after death, divine accountability, sovereignty, humanism, and ethical obligations are either dismissed or reinterpreted solely in terms of secular, often relativistic, values aimed at protecting life, property, and honour from a purely worldly perspective.55

This philosophy privileges human autonomy in thought and action,

emphasizing material gains as the sole legitimate objective of life. It systematically excludes consideration of the soul and its imperatives, focusing exclusively on corporeal needs. Consequently, moral values—which often serve as constraints on worldly ambitions—are either negated or reduced to context-dependent conventions. Due to these fundamental divergences, the secular philosophy underlying modern natural and social sciences is fundamentally incompatible with Islamic philosophical principles. Put succinctly, while secular philosophy is a human construct, Islamic philosophy represents divine revelation guiding human understanding. 56

Reconceptualising Natural and Social Sciences: Insights from Islamic Philosophy

Philosophy, however intellectually appealing, remains inert unless effectively integrated with praxis. Islamic philosophy encompasses a comprehensive worldview that incorporates all branches of natural and social sciences.57 It requires not only adherence to specific beliefs and rituals but, more importantly, a firm conviction in the revealed knowledge contained within the Holy Scriptures58, transmitted by Allah (swt) through His Messengers (peace be upon them). This revealed knowledge validates universal truths concerning the cosmos and humanity itself.59 Hence, Islamic philosophy entails sincere belief in divine revelation, complete submission to Allah's Will, and a commitment to live in accordance with the teachings of Allah and His Prophets. It conceives of human life holistically—as an integrated, indivisible whole—thus rejecting any compartmentalization of natural and social sciences.60

The foundational tenets of Islamic philosophy, derived primarily from the Qur'an and Sunnah, include:

a. the assertion that all existence, including humanity and creation, is contingent upon Allah alone;
b. the creation and governance of the universe according to divine laws or "Laws of Nature," explicitly rejecting mechanistic or accidental notions of cosmic order;
c. the subservience of the universe to human use and benefit within divinely ordained limits;
d. recognition of worldly life as a testing ground upon which eternal life depends;

e. acknowledgement of Allah's exclusive sovereignty, which engenders the principles of human unity and equality, repudiating tyranny, kingship, priesthood, and caste systems;

f. equal rights and legal protections for all individuals regarding life, property, and honour;

g. a balanced approach between bodily needs and spiritual imperatives aimed at collective human welfare, firmly grounded in revelation (Wahī);

h. the belief in eternal moral values essential to the rise and fall of nations;

i. a dynamic yet disciplined intellectual tradition that forbids innovations unsupported by foundational texts, while permitting Ijtihad (independent reasoning) to address evolving contexts; and

j. a commitment to accept valid evidence for alternate viewpoints with humility, while unequivocally repudiating falsehoods. 61

Contrary to common misconceptions, Islamic philosophy does not demand uncritical acceptance of its tenets. Rather, it encourages rigorous reflection and reasoned inquiry into natural phenomena, fostering harmony between faith and empirical investigation. For an in-depth understanding, readers are referred to specialized texts providing extensive treatment of this integrated Islamic worldview.62

Reorienting Contemporary Social Sciences: The Imperative of Islamization63

While Muslims historically did not employ the modern terminology of "social sciences," they nevertheless possessed and practiced a social philosophy rooted in Qur'anic and Prophetic teachings governing social, economic, and political life, both individually and collectively. The colonial era, marked by moral decline, deprived Muslims of the opportunity to exercise this indigenous system.64

The philosophical foundations and methodologies dominant in contemporary natural and social sciences—grounded in secularist and materialist worldviews—exclude the recognition of Allah's will in creation and human affairs. This has fostered an anti-Islamic orientation within these disciplines. A novel metaphysical framework and an adapted methodology grounded in profound faith are urgently needed.65

The secular development of social sciences has resulted in critical ethical and philosophical deficits, causing humanity to conflate physical comfort with true spiritual well-being. Despite technological advancements, contemporary society grapples with existential questions that science and technology alone cannot address. Furthermore, environmental degradation and potential misuse of natural processes threaten human survival. Hence, the urgent Islamization of contemporary social sciences in the 21st century is imperative to avert impending humanitarian crises and to restore a holistic understanding of human life consistent with divine guidance.66

Strategic Framework for the Islamization of Social Sciences 67

This section proposes a strategic framework for the Islamization of contemporary social sciences, intended for implementation by dedicated members of the Muslim Ummah.

1. Knowledge concerning individuals, societies, nature, religion, and science must be restructured according to the principle of *tawhīd*—the oneness of Allah (swt) as the Creator, Sustainer, and ultimate cause and purpose of all existence. All objective knowledge reflects divine will, order, and wisdom. Human endeavors require alignment with divine commands and understanding of the revealed divine pattern to attain true happiness of both soul and body.
2. Sciences that study humanity and social relations must recognize man as existing within a realm governed metaphysically and axiologically by Allah. These disciplines should focus on Allah's sovereignty on earth and man's role as vicegerent (*khalīfah*). Since vicegerency is inherently social, these fields should be termed *Ummatic Sciences*, rejecting any bifurcation between humanities and social sciences, which is incompatible with Islamic epistemology. Furthermore, natural and social sciences require reclassification grounded in Islamic theology, encompassing all branches within a unified framework.
3. Islamic social sciences need not fear engagement with natural sciences, as both share the objective of discovering the divine pattern—though their objects of study differ. Different methods and techniques are necessary but not fundamentally incommensurate.
4. A systematic Islamic critique of Western anthropology is essential. Islamic scholars must discern valuable insights from Western scholarship while exposing mistaken conclusions rooted in

methodological errors or cultural biases. Islamic anthropology should be guided by Islam's vision emphasizing divine unity, reason, affirmation of life and the world, universalism, ummaism, and ethical service to humanity.

5. The Islamization of social sciences must demonstrate how the studied realities relate to aspects of the divine pattern pertinent to them. This pattern not only serves normative purposes but is also immanent within creation, as God has instilled a predisposition (*fitrah*) within human nature. Islamic scientific inquiry should seek to reveal and emphasize this divine immanence within human affairs, highlighting what is required for fulfillment.

6. Muslim social scientists are entrusted with the stewardship of this divine pattern. They are not only scientific investigators, but foremost critics guided by divine standards. Serving as *ulama* of the Ummah, they are responsible for strategizing the Ummah's trajectory and educating its political, social, and economic spheres. The *Ummatic Sciences* study human behavior in its societal context, fulfilling the Ummah's historic mission. The Muslim social scientist embodies the dual role of student and teacher, committed to the Ummah's vision as God's witness and trustee upon earth (Qur'an 2:142, 2:143).

7. Islamic social scientists should publicly affirm commitment to Islamic values as a rational, critically grounded ideology. They must welcome corrective engagement from Muslim and non-Muslim peers, recognizing truth as the coherent interpretation of natural phenomena and divine revelation—both authored by Allah. This stance enables a distinctive critical contribution to contemporary natural and social sciences, humanizing them in the process.

8. There is an urgent need to heighten awareness about the existential challenge of Islamising contemporary sciences. Without a conscious commitment from the Muslim intelligentsia to the Ummah's mission, efforts to reconstruct the Ummah will lack efficacy.

9. Scientists and scholars committed to Islam should be identified and mobilized to evaluate their disciplines' Islamic relevance. Likewise, traditional scholars (*'Ulema*)—sensitive to the disintegration of Islamic knowledge and the decline of the Ummah—must integrate secular academic learning with Islamic tradition. Furthermore, creative Muslim thinkers outside institutional academia should be engaged in this transformative task.

10. Developing a consensus-driven curriculum for Islamic social sciences is imperative to train human resources. Such scholars must be conversant with both contemporary scientific paradigms and classical Islamic doctrines, maintaining a clear understanding of the relationship between science and religion.

11. Training Muslim scholars with a vision for Islamization of sciences should be prioritized, particularly at the postdoctoral level. Intensive courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, and research projects will advance this goal.

12. Preparing annotated, thematically organized bibliographies that compare Islamic and secular scholarship across disciplines is crucial. Expert-driven bibliographical surveys, topical anthologies, and analytical reviews on historical and contemporary developments will accelerate knowledge expansion. Subsequently, textbooks aligned with Islamic perspectives must be developed for Muslim institutions, accompanied by trained teachers equipped with both expertise and Islamic vision.

Conclusion

I. The transformation of the global order unfolds by the divine will of Allah—beyond the reversal of human agency. Yet, believers continue to draw guidance from the Qur'an and Sunnah, empowering them to contribute meaningfully to global peace and moral leadership. This potential can be realized through unity, faith, discipline, and wisdom, rooted in Islam's timeless and universal principles. A renewed understanding of these values would mitigate internal divisions within the Muslim Ummah.

II. Muslims occupy a unique intermediary position between the ideological poles of liberalism and communism. However, they face a critical impasse in addressing contemporary intellectual and social challenges. Sustainable solutions must emerge from scientifically informed and innovative approaches firmly grounded in Islamic epistemology and guided by the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition.

III. Education is central to this renewal. Yet, secular-materialistic ideologies—derived from Western and Communist paradigms—have deeply permeated Muslim educational systems. Attempts to reconcile these secular frameworks with Islamic teachings have proven ineffective,

as their underlying worldviews are fundamentally incompatible.

IV.   This tension is most evident in the social sciences, which profoundly shape human thought, behaviour, and socio-political structures. It is therefore imperative to replace secular-materialistic constructs with Islamic paradigms and to reconstruct a sociopolitical order informed by divine guidance.

V.   In a rapidly globalizing world, Muslims risk marginalization unless they revive their intellectual legacy of inquiry, reform, and renewal. Addressing moral fragmentation and intellectual stagnation requires unified efforts from Muslim scholars, thinkers, and leaders to articulate a coherent Islamization strategy for the social sciences—one capable of ensuring the Ummah's intellectual and spiritual prosperity.

VI.   Ultimately, the Islamization of contemporary social sciences offers the promise of cultivating a just and harmonious global order, in accordance with the Qur'anic injunction:

"Verily, never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves; and when Allah wills a people's punishment, there is none who can avert it, nor will they find any protector besides Him." 68

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