



Revisiting an Islamic Approach to Humanities: A Critical Review

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study aims to develop a relevant counter-argument and supporting justification on ideas offered by Zaman (2014) in his paper titled "An Islamic Approach to Humanities."

Design/Method/Approach: This study adopts a quantitative approach in form of a literature survey, discourse and critical content analysis. For achieving the goal, we capitalize on Ghazi (2006) to support the argument that the source of knowledge is not only through observations. Kalin (2016) and Zarkasyi (2018) are being used to show that Islam encourages reasoning and observations. To support the argument that Islamic economics can be positivistic, we use Abdullahi (2018) as a related paper to deal with that issue.

Findings: The study found that Islamic Economics can use the tools of logical positivists in its observation as long as such tools do not contradict the logical structure of the Islamic worldview. Social science like Islamic economics is only an avenue to see the expression of free will that Allah gives to the human being by observing the pattern of human behavior. When the results can describe closer to reality, it can survive and support the development of social science itself.

Originality/Values: The main contribution of this study is to clarify the position of Islamic economics on the logical positivism method and its implication in value integration.

INTRODUCTION

This article attempts to provide some appropriate responses to the issues raised by Asad Zaman in his 2014 paper titled "An Islamic Approach to Humanities" as published in the Journal of King Abdulaziz University: Islamic Economics. In that paper, Zaman tries to reveal the believed misconceptions about science amidst western scholars producing controversial social sciences methodologies. According to Zaman, such a method will not be able to capture human behavior with free will. Hence, the endeavor of western scholars goes in the wrong direction in the improvement of social science. Meanwhile, Islam comes with a radically different approach, which is a farther practical way to humanities.

We recognize that Zaman's paper consists of five sections. Section 1 introduces the discussion by starting with the Islamic civilization's triumph in the mid-century due to knowledge development. He asserts that the Islamic intellectual legacy has contributed enormously to human knowledge advancement in this modern era. The misconceptions about science brought by logical positivists are delivered in section 2. In section 3, he elaborates the severe implication of such misconceptions, namely the abandonment of morals in social sciences and mechanization of human behavior generated by simple universal laws. Section 4 is dedicated to explaining human free will and its consequences. Lastly, the primary significance of norms is disclosed in section 5.

In a way, the next sections cover our attempt to critically comment on the issue raised by Zaman (2014). Section 3.1 will deliberate on the supporting argument of Islamic and western contributions in advancing present-day social science and how Islam encourages reasoning and observing. In sections 3.2 and 3.3, we try to criticize Zaman's view on adopting mathematical formulation in social science like economics that it could be positivistic. The supporting justifications about the existence of value/norms in social science are furnished in section 3.4. Accordingly, we will scrutinize, evaluate, and state our position on Zaman point by point based on his validity and soundness of assessment and assertions. Section 4 concludes this article.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative approach in form of a literature review, discourse and critical content analysis. In order to support our review, we utilize some works done by other scholars. The book written by Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad (2006) under the title Truth and Knowledge is capitalized to support the argument that the source of knowledge is not only through observations. The paper of Ibrahim Kalin (2016) under the title Reason and

Rationality in the Quran and The Epistemological Implication of al-Ghazali's Account of Causality written by Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi (2018) are being used to show that Islam encourages reasoning and observations. To provide that Islamic economics can be positivistic, Shafiu Ibrahim Abdullahi (2018) has a related paper on the Contribution of Mathematical Models to Islamic Economics Theory: A Survey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Two Western Misconceptions about Science: Not Reject Totally

Before the deliberation about western misconceptions, Zaman begins his elaboration with the triumph of Islamic Civilization in the mid-century due to knowledge development. He cites the book of historian Marshall Hodgson, *the Venture of Islam*, to describe the Islamic golden age. Notwithstanding many western scholars disregard its contribution, Zaman believes that the Islamic intellectual legacy has contributed enormously to human knowledge advancement in this modern era. Meanwhile, the endeavor of western scholars goes in the wrong direction in the improvement of social science.¹

We agree with Zaman about this statement as modern western science, which is only based on logic and rationality, does not achieve aim. In his book, Ali (2009) cited Condorcet's (1743-1794) prediction, a prominent western philosopher, that by accepting and advancing the scientific method and knowledge, a progressive and flourishing society for humanity would be a reality. Nonetheless, Ali (2009) stated that Condorcet's promise is not realized in natural science and social science, which have largely failed. Especially about the failure of the social sciences, Ali (2009) quoted the comment of Richard J. Bernstein in the following words:

"Where do we stand on the question of the promise of social sciences to achieve not only internal scientific progress but no further social reform? Frankly, the situation today looks like chaos: a new babel, confusion. There is no rational consensus about what (if any) are the well-established social science research results. There is a plethora of research programs, each having its own strong having advocates. There is no generality agreed-upon method, the conception of theory or explanation. Hardly anyone still speaks of the discovery of social scientific law."²

On the other side, the contribution of Islamic intellectual legacy has influenced the development of knowledge. However, this donation does not get

¹Asad Zaman, "An Islamic Approach to Humanities," *Journal of King Abdulaziz University, Islamic Economics* 27, no. 2 (2014): 3–27.

²Ali Muhammad Mumtaz, *The Philosophy of Science: Western and Islamic Perspectives on Certain Aspect* (Selangor Malaysia: Thinker's Library, 2009).

acknowledgment from western thinkers, like Schumpeter, Eric Roll (1956), Spengler and Allan (1960), Henry Spiegel (1971), Robert Ekelund and Robert Hebert (1975), and, Madema and Warren J. Samuel (2003) in their books on the history of economics thought. In his encyclopedia titled History of Economics Analysis (1987), Schumpeter denied the contribution of Muslim scholars by claiming that there was a 'great gap' of 500 years in the history of economic thought, from the Greeks (300 BC) to Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) then jumped to the time of Adam Smith (1723-1790).³

Meanwhile, such a period was the era of the Islamic golden age, which enlightened the earth with knowledge. The many concepts produced by Muslim thinkers affect the thought of western scholars. Taking Adam Smith in his magnum opus the Wealth of Nation, for instance, we can detect the thought of al Ghazali cited, Hoetoro (2017). Another simple example is the Laffer curve, which Arthur Laffer introduced to support low taxes worldwide. He argued that the tax increase does not incline the revenue because it will discourage people from working. This concept came from Ibn Khaldun's thought, and Laffer admitted it.⁴

According to the Zaman, there are two general mistaken ideas about knowledge that have been believed historically amidst western society. He asserts that those are not compatible with the worldview of Islam. The first is that science is the only valid source of knowledge. When it comes to the second idea, which is the methodology of science is based solely on observation and logic. Zaman explains two different approaches of science, nominal's and realist. He avows that Islamic philosophy does not deal with the nominal's method yet agreeable to realist. As such, the nominal's approach only concedes to observable objects and not to the underlying hidden reality. This view was recommended by logical positivism in its rising era of the mid-twentieth century. Meanwhile, realism believes that observation is to deduce the unobservable object, force, and causal relations.⁵

We agree with Zaman that those concepts are not compatible with the Islamic worldview. The reason is that western societies adopt both concepts as belief. They believe such misconceptions as '*ism*' while Islam has a different worldview about science. On the other hand, Islam believes that the source of knowledge is not only from observation and logic but from various resources. In Ghazi (2006), human beings comprise three main elements: body, soul, and

³Arif Hoetoro, *Ekonomi Islam Perspektif Historis Dan Metodologis* (Malang, Indonesia: Empat Dua Kelompok Instras Publishing, 2017).

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Zaman, "An Islamic Approach to Humanities."

spirit, where each element has its own source of knowledge. Knowledge of the body can recognize the existing realities via physical sense, whereas the soul's knowledge is from intelligence, the will, and the sentiment. Revelation is the most confident and undoubted source of knowledge coming from the spirit's knowledge. The other sources of knowledge for spirit are the inspirational, subtle heart, intellect, and visionary dream.⁶God, through revelation, is the leading cause of knowledge.⁷Nevertheless, Ali (2009) that Quran, as a revelation, is not a book of knowledge instead of a book of guidance guiding science. Kalin (2016) explained that the Quran is primarily "guidance" for humankind (2:2).⁸

However, Islam can accept both concepts since Islam as a faith highly encourages reasoning and observing. Islam motivates to lead its followers from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light, from injustice and oppression to freedom. Many verses in the Quran emphasize to use of rationality and logic. Some of them are 2:164, 3:190, 5:58, 13:4, and 16:12. This thinking mode has to be combined with empirical observation, rational analysis, moral judgment, and spiritual refinement. Through observation, science's methodology is stimulated in Islam as when reason investigates natural phenomena and the universe. It looks for order, structure, and intelligibility. In other words, something that is intelligible means that it has a certain order and structure by which we can understand it.⁹

In Ali (2009), it is stated that all branches of knowledge were developed based on empirical evidence during the beginning of Islamic civilization. The Quran also emphasizes that knowledge has to be started with concrete thinking. Therefore, the Muslim approach to research and investigation may be spelled out as:

Revelation + Observation + Experiment + Thinking Knowledge = Science

According to Ali (2009), this thinking process is called the revelation-observational method of human thought. The other counterpart approach starts with conjecture and ends up with science.

Conjecture + Observation + Experiment + Thinking Knowledge = Science

⁶Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad, "5 Islamic Epistemology" (Bristol: Book Foundation, 2001), 19–51.

⁷Hamid Fahmi Zarkasyi, "The Epistemological Implication of Al-Ghazali's Account of Causality," *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling* 53, no. 9 (2013): 1689–1699.

⁸Ibrahim Kalin, "Reason and Rationality in the Qur'an," *The Rise of Early Modern Science* (2016): 89–117.

⁹Ibid.

Based on conjuncture, such knowledge of the material fact is partial and incompletely representative of truth and may even contradict truth.¹⁰

Three Major Problems with Social Science; Seeing the Pattern

According to Zaman, social sciences like economics tried to infuse more mathematical literacy to be called a 'science' due to following a logical positivist methodology based solely on observations and logic. At this point, we view that the adoption of a mathematical model in economics is to ease in deriving a set of conclusions or theorems from a given set of assumptions or postulates. This is because mathematics symbols are more convenient to use in deductive reasoning and are more conducive to conciseness and preciseness of statement.¹¹ The use of complicated mathematics could clarify ideas and unify different fields under a common framework. Nevertheless, the Zaman states that this was a double error. The reasons are the differences between the nature of science and human beings and the misunderstanding of the scientific approach's nature. Zaman elaborates three aftermaths of these two misunderstandings as follows:¹²

Morality is not Just Noise

Zaman asserts that positivist scholars conclude that morality is not scientific because non-measurable and unreliable. Morality is nothing more than a feeling's expression like a cry of pain. Therefore, almost of educational institutions in the US removed civics, which is closely associated with morals. The Zaman gives some examples of morality degradation happened in western, especially in the US. In this section, Zaman describes the ignorance of western society to morality and norms by revealing the example of the removal of civics as a subject taught in both secondary and elementary school in the US. He also capitalizes on the US military's crudeness in Iraq and the violent scene in Hollywood movies.¹³

These examples cannot be generalized to justify the perspective of secular science on morality and norms. There is one of the economics thoughts, even not become a predominant school of thought, namely institutionalism or institutional economics. This school of thought is a celebration of norms and morality in economics. Moreover, in 20 years, four novel laureates in economics were awarded by institutionalists to prove its existence. Taking Douglas C

¹⁰Ali Muhammad Mumtaz, *The Philosophy of Science: Western and Islamic Perspectives on Certain Aspect*.

¹¹Shafiu Ibrahim Abdullahi, "Contribution of Mathematical Models to Islamic Economic Theory: A Survey," *International Journal of Ethics and Systems* 34, no. 2 (2018): 200–212.

¹²Zaman, "An Islamic Approach to Humanities."

¹³Ibid.

North as an instance, North stresses the importance of norms and rules in his new institutional economics. Strong social norms will make rules, and enforcing sanctions will produce a superior outcome. North and other institutionalists expect that social norms will determine the prosperity of a country's economy, which can be enjoyed by individuals and society. Cooperative and trustworthy behavior of society would be shaped because of the crucial role of social norms to overcome the obstacle in development.¹⁴

Mechanization of Human Behavior

Zaman blames the way of logical positivism to enforce scientific methodology to humans. Western scientists have ignored their original independence in acting. He asserts that this methodology treats humans as robots who can be programmed by planned instructions. He takes the theory of revealed preference of Samuelson in economics as an example of positivism falling. Samuelson replaced unobservable preference and satisfaction with the observable choice. Because of this idea, Samuelson won the Nobel Prize. However, Wong excoriated this theory of transitivity that it is not applicable to certain conditions. Zaman uses this specimen to prove the second misconception, which the methodology of science is based purely on observations and logic, is false. Whereas other social science like Behavioural Psychology has adjusted to this collapse, economics still follows this concept. Henceforth, it becomes Economics poor at explaining human behavior due to denying the unobservable impetus of human.¹⁵

We are on a different side with Zaman. Islam Economics as social science, for example, can be positivistic. Akram Khan (2013), in his keynote address for the First World Congress on Integration and Islamisation of Acquired Human Knowledge, accomplished that the existing Islamic economics today so far consists of Islamic teaching. It has to adopt a similar methodology as a genuine social science.¹⁶ On the other side, Zaman says that adopting mathematical models, social science laws, economics, for instance, create mechanization of human behavior. Human is like a robot that his/her behavior can be predicted easily. We criticize this view since the laws of human behavior in economics attempt to see the pattern of the significant realities existing. As Siddiqui (2011) stated that Economics from the Islamic viewpoint of Khaldunian as follows:

¹⁴Claude M nard and Mary M. Shirley, "The Contribution of Douglass North to New Institutional Economics," *Institutions, Property Rights, and Economic Growth: The Legacy of Douglass North* (2012): 11–29.

¹⁵Zaman, "An Islamic Approach to Humanities."

¹⁶Muhammad Akram Khan, "Reconstruction of Economics Based on the Paradigm of Tawhid: Present Challenges and Prospects," *SSRN Electronic Journal* (2017).

*"Economics may be defined as the study of the behavior of men and women, individually and collectively, in order to understand the patterns and modes of this behavior, its motives, and incentives, as well as its goals and objectives and responds and reactions, with and without being confined to a specific situation, norms, set of moral values or legal, political, religious framework."*¹⁷

Furthermore, Abdullahi (2018) deliberated in his paper that adopting a mathematical model in Islamic economics does not cause obstacles to achieving Islamic economics's primary purpose: *Falah*.¹⁸ Instead, it plays a significant role in the development of the discipline. Ismail (2016) added that as long as such methods and tools do not contradict the Islamic worldview's logical structure, we can use them.¹⁹

The Search for Simple Universal Laws

Commencing with the invention of gravity theory by Newton, which was admitted by scientists worldwide, this phenomenon affected the methodology of science globally, including economics. Neoclassical economists infused many symbolic terms from physics in economics. According to the Zaman, bringing physics methodology concepts to a social science like economics causes destructive implications. This is because physics implements simple laws that are similar across time and space, while economics is not. The laws in economics might be dissimilar due to a historical event. For example, the failure of supply and demand's law during the great depression then Keynesian came with the new design of real wage downward direction.²⁰ Fahim Khan (2015) supported Zaman's view. Fahim stated that to make economics fascinated, economists infused sophisticated applications similar to physics to describe the human economic activity.²¹ Zaman states that someone can get the doctoral level without studying the historical event composed present-day economic situation. He illustrates the debate between the German historical school and the Austrian school of economics, which Austrian's quantitative methodology won. The Zaman also states that many prominent scholars of

¹⁷Shamim Siddiqui, "Defining Economics and Islamic Economics," *Review of Islamic economics* 15, no. 2 (2011): 113–142.

¹⁸Abdullahi, "Contribution of Mathematical Models to Islamic Economic Theory: A Survey."

¹⁹Nurizal Ismail, "Scrutinizing The Epistemology of Islamic Economics: A Historical Analysis," *Tsaqafah* 12, no. 1 (2016): 19.

²⁰Asad Zaman, "Logical Positivism and Islamic Economics," *SSRN Electronic Journal* 2, no. 2 (2013): 1–28.

²¹M. Fahim Khan, "Revisiting the Foundational Concepts and Thoughts in Islamic Economics: Where Islamic Economics Should Originate in Terms of Theoretical Content," in *Islamic Economics Basic Concepts, New Thinking and Future Directions*, 2015, 98–111.

economics emphasize that economic theories are on par with physics as a science.²²

We disagree with Zaman. The questions come; is law an essential feature of a successful empirical science? Moreover, does economics possess such laws? Economics is the social science that studies individuals and society with no fundamental law similar to nature.²³ Physics and mathematics produce a precise statement that can be determined to be either true or false.

Meanwhile, the assumption of economic rationality does not constitute a universal generalization about individual behavior. This is because social science is both tentative and relative. After a long period of observation, some of the prepositions of social science can reach the highest science position, which is the law, such as the law of demand and supply and diminishing marginal utility, whereas many of them cannot achieve that status. Those only have been proven as theory. Even many more are the only hypothesis. However, we can still utilize them as long as practical.

We agree with Zaman that these three issues come from the misconception of science's methodology, which is only observable and logical.

The Consequences of Freedom; Social Science is an Avenue

According to Islam, living in this mortal world is the way to examine humans who have the best performance in serving the almighty God. In order to execute the test, based on some verses from the Qur'an, Zaman avows that all human beings are blessed by Allah with liberty to choose and omit what is right and wrong. This freedom to choose has consequences, either fabulous rewards or heinous sin. Sometimes a man might act wrong because of knowledge limitations or ignoring what he knows that such activity is sinful.²⁴

Therefore, Zaman mentions that human beings' behavior cannot be elaborated by general and similar mathematical formulation.

The Purpose of Human Existence

Even though human beings admittedly have various motives and priorities in their life, by referring to the several verses of the Qur'an Zaman avers that the existence objective of the human being is to obey and worship Allah. Hence, the Zaman emphasizes that human beings and societies'

²²Zaman, "An Islamic Approach to Humanities."

²³Dani Rodrik, "Economics Rules: The Rights and Wrongs of the Dismal Science (an Excerpt)," *Journal of Economic Sociology* 16, no. 4 (2015): 39–59.

²⁴Zaman, "An Islamic Approach to Humanities."

comportment can only be observed by understanding the purpose of human existence.

To convey the goal of human existence, Zaman refers to Quran chapter 92nd verse 4th that each individual's priorities and ends vary due to his/her motive. In Mahyudi and Aziz (2017), there are three concepts of man as the economics' micro foundation. First is the oldest and most popular concept is homo economicus, which is self-interest. Later, homo amicus came as the emergence of Islamic economics. However, this concept has two drawbacks that focus too much on the individual positive aspect and undermine social dynamics' interplay in influencing expressed preferences. Therefore, it cannot describe reality. Then, Mahyudi and Aziz (2017) came up with universal man, which is more applicable in reality. This idea of universal man can be supported by the Quranic verse quoted by Zaman in his article. To describe each concept, Mahyudi and Aziz (2017) differentiate the ends of each concept micro foundation. The ends of homo economicus is utility maximization while *homo islamicus* is *mashlahah maximization*. Interestingly, the goal of universal man is incremental welfare.²⁵

An Important Inversion: Using the World for Spiritual Struggle

According to Zaman, even Muslims nowadays focus on achieving the goal without considering the purpose. They are failing to struggle for justice rather than evaluation on an outcome basis. This condition is due to the materialism concept spread across the globe. Zaman argues that other religions and traditions believe that their achievement is separated from the world, while Islam has an extremely distinctive view that our spiritual progress is produced from our endeavor in the world, which is in harmony with Allah's commandment. Besides, Islam orientates itself towards the process, whereas conventional is outcome-oriented. Islam views that the result is only the gift from Allah as long as we perform well in the process.²⁶

We agree with Zaman about this point that process to achieve the goal is appreciated in Islam. However, this elaboration does not answer the problem of believed misconceptions from western scholars due to logical positivism. The problem criticized by Zaman is the problem of epistemology, yet he comes with an ontological perspective, which is the theory of existence.

²⁵Mohd Mahyudi and Enizahura Abdul, "Rethinking the Structure of Islamic Economics Science: The Universal Man Imperative," *IIUM Journal of Economics and Management* 25, no. 2 (2017): 227–251.

²⁶Zaman, "An Islamic Approach to Humanities."

Engaged participation instead of Detached Observation

One of the vital basic ideas of scientific methodology is objectivity. The observer must be free from value or norm. He/ she should be neutral in order to reach the scientific truth, which unbiased conclusion. In stark contrast to this, according to Zaman, the Islamic approach has a different perspective. Such a principle is only appropriate for studying material objects, but the principle is inapplicable when it comes to humans and societies. This is because human beings' nature is free to act either good or evil, but in hard or natural sciences that study material objects, there is no such condition. Islam encourages us to struggle for the good rather than remain neutral. Moreover, the Zaman avows that the conventional principle will not produce knowledge owing to this objectivity concept. This is because when action is undertaken in line with social norms, the objective description cannot achieve the understanding of what scientific analysis needs.²⁷

Our comment for this idea is that an economist has three roles: philosopher, expertise, and policy advocate. In each role, there is a different degree of objectivity that is applied. As a philosopher, an economist would abstract the phenomenon of human behavior, either individual or society, to the methodological and conceptual issue arising within the scientific discipline of economics. Philosophers of economics should infuse ethical value in economic reasoning to imply justice and human welfare. Meanwhile, as an expert, economists will conduct empirical studies toward human behaviour to test the hypothesis; when proven in many research times, it will be theory. In this role, the objectivity level is that economists should cover both sides of the data and undertake the study in a very objective way. There is no intention to hide reality or unethical activity like falsifying the data. When it comes to the policy advocate level, the infusing value judgment cannot be denied. An economist who engages with absolute idealism will recommend the policy based on his/her beliefs. Taking the eliminating of poverty as an example, an Islamic economist would suggest Islamic charitable activities like Zakat, waqf, and sadaqah as instruments to increase poor people's living standards. We think that what Zaman criticizes is in the policy advocate level and philosopher, but objectivity is a must in the expert's role.

Again, in the early paragraph of this section, Zaman asserts that human beings' behavior cannot be elaborated by general mathematical formulation and law. We comment that economics as a social science is an avenue to see the expression of free will that Allah gives to the human being by observing the pattern of human behavior with freedom of choice. The mathematical model is

²⁷Ibid.

the only tool that can be used by whoever. As long as the tools are not against the principle of Islamic teaching either explicitly or implicitly, we can utilize them to develop the knowledge.

Essential Importance of Norms; the Future Vision

Owing to the misconception of positivist thought that science is the only valid source of knowledge, it escorts them to the conclusion that there is no scientific knowledge about morals. Zaman asserts that Islam has the same view as secular. Nonetheless, Islam believes that morality can be obtained by revelation. Due to secular western scholar do not believe in revelation, they turn to that conclusion.

We agree with Zaman that all social sciences are guided by value. This is because it is impossible to be morally neutral. Hilary Putnam (2002) admitted that moral is always side various important economics consideration. He viewed that in the future, economics will partake in this effort. Value judgment and intellectual endeavor will integrate into the development of social science.²⁸ As a value-laden social science, Islamic economics faces this excellent opportunity to progress. Islamic Economists will be pioneering the paradigm shift with economics since its primary resources are a revelation and provide positive and normative statements to be studied.²⁹

Failure of Scholar Approaches to Morality

To prove secular misunderstanding about morals, the Zaman utilizes a secular philosophy where consensus and utilitarianism are moral. Firstly, he takes homosexuality as an example of fluctuated consensus whatever it is according to moral or not. As such, Zaman concedes that "obviously, social consensus does not provide a stable basis for the construction of norms" Secondly, he uses contradiction between social and individual interests and long and short-term pleasures to illustrate the failure of utilitarianism concept. Zaman also concludes, "this philosophy fails to provide a satisfactory basis for morals."³⁰

We disagree with Zaman on his conclusion to positivists that there is no valid knowledge about morals. He himself states in the first sentence of 5.1 that "there are two standard approaches to morality," which are consensus and utilitarianism. We think that this statement is proven that there is scientific

²⁸Hilary Putnam et al., "The End of Value-Free Economics," *The End of Value-Free Economics* (2012): 1–230.

²⁹Mohd Mahyudi, "Rethinking the Concept of Economic Man and Its Relevance to the Future of Islamic Economics," *Intellectual Discourse* 24, no. 1 (2016): 111–132.

³⁰Zaman, "An Islamic Approach to Humanities."

knowledge about mortality from the secular view. The consensus is about the number, which is scientific, whereas utilitarianism comes from philosophical thought. Again, we borrow the institutional economics based on rules and norms to counter Zaman's argument. The institutionalisms go by data to prove their conjecture, which is scientific. We view that he contradicts himself with his statement in this section. We think that in the secular view, there is scientific knowledge about morals. However, there is an unstable basis for the construction of norms and an unsatisfactory basis for morals.

All human behavior is value-laden

The Zaman believes that all human action is inspired by value. If someone does something, it means there is a normative idea behind such activity. According to Weber's thought, however, social sciences associated with human behavior have to be free from value judgments. Zaman states that this idea of Weber is also normative. In order to fulfill the concept of science, moral values are hidden behind apparently objective propositions. Instead, it is impossible to study humanities without a background of the normative ideal. Taking the Pareto principle, which is argued that there is no scientific way for income redistribution as an example of such a condition in economics, Zaman expects that it hides the concept of private property ownership. He also reveals that such a concept implicitly supports the small portion of the population with property ownership. On the other hand, he adds that Islam prioritizes the needy's rights over wealthy people's rights.³¹

We are in line with Zaman about this idea. Value cannot be separated in human activity. Because of the understating of secular scholars who do not acknowledge the value, there is hidden value in every policy advocate. For example, a scholar who embraces capitalism will recommend a free market without international trade policy barriers. Alike in the minimum wage issue, a socialist economist will support the powerful labor union to impose a reasonable standard of living for workers.

Norms as Guides for Our Efforts

Zaman states that the norm is essential guidance of the Muslim to pursue their primary objective of striving for the good on the individual and social level. However, western misconceptions about knowledge led to wrong ideas on normative statements, as follows:

Error 1: It is possible to separate the normative and positive cleanly

³¹Ibid.

According to Putnam (2012), both are combined in such a way so that they cannot be isolated.³² Zaman asserts that normative and positive ideas are blend jointly in the majority of economics statement. The Zaman takes the Cambridge controversy on capital measurement, justifying the capital payment is on par with labor payment. Instead, it was accused by Karl Marx that capitalist exploited laborers. Capitalist utilizes technical and mathematical in marginal products to argue their idea concerning the same payment for labor and capital, which is normative. Therefore, this illustration violates Error 1.³³ According to Arnold (2000), "positive economics is the study of "what is" in the economic matter, while the study to overcome of "what should be" in the economic matter is normative economics. Hence, we stand in the same view as Zaman that this error is not proven in reality. Normative and positive are always together.³⁴

Error 2: The Norms are ideals that can never be achieved. Hence they are irrelevant to the real world.

The Zaman argues that something ideal is the guidepost for us despite cannot be achieved. He illustrates Pele's football achievement, inspiring many children to make a career in such sport, although most of them cannot reach it. He also gives an example of how Muslims modeling the action of Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the best role model, even though they cannot imitate perfectly.³⁵

We think that by proving those examples, Zaman does not reject error 2. Instead, he supports it.

Error 3: Observable behavior is the proper scientific study object - idealized norms are subjective and unobservable.

According to Zaman, this statement is a mistaken idea adopted massively by the scholar of social science. He quoted from Cristina Bicchieri about how our expectations concerning behavior governed by social norms. He reveals some ideal norms, which are not unobservable according to western social sciences, intending to disprove the error three statements. He provides some examples to attract the error 3 assumption. The first example is how Islamic firms can pay their workers higher compared to non-Islamic firms, which have a higher profit. This is because Islam teaches its followers to respect the dignity of labor. The second example is that Muslim communities donate

³²Putnam et al., "The End of Value-Free Economics."

³³Zaman, "An Islamic Approach to Humanities."

³⁴Roger Arnold; What Economics Is About.Pdf," n.d.

³⁵Zaman, "An Islamic Approach to Humanities."

their money to charity more than communities in such relative income. This activity is encouraged in Islam. This phenomenon is proved by a large number of researches in philanthropy. A third instance, providing free hospital service, is the reality in many Muslim countries like Pakistan. This is because also the teaching of Islam highly stimulating philanthropy activity. On the other situation, the western teaching account is to make a profit.³⁶

We agree with Zaman that error 3 has been violated by such an illustration. Moreover, those examples of this section are appropriate to violate the error 2 assumptions. Free hospital service, high charity donation, and high payment for workers are ideal norms that are achievable for society.

All Social Sciences is Guided by Norms

In this section, Zaman states that his paper's main idea is to define the ideal state and rectify it if there is any deviation from the definition. This activity is normative since it is guided by revelation from the perspective of Islam. Meanwhile, after the fall-down era of logical positivism, many new approaches came to be alternative, but Zaman adds no scientific basis for norms. Zaman views that despite some pros and cons about morality and norms, the same methodology is applied in social science, including economics. For example, economists admit that perfect competition with self-interest economic agents and profit maximization in a firm perspective cannot be achieved in real life. The reason is that their claim is only descriptive. Zaman state that as follows;

*"In fact, as many have shown, this is pre-scriptive – students who learn these theories of 'rational' behavior, learn to be selfish, while students in other disciplines are more generous."*³⁷

However, Zaman does not put research or study which supports this statement.

Lastly, the Zaman deduces that all studies about human beings have to be guided explicitly by norms. The attempt to be called "scientific" brings about the hiding of the normative aspect. Therefore, Islam represents the best approach to humanities of all other western methods.

CONCLUSIONS

In his paper, Zaman repeatedly asserts in various forms that Islam cannot accept logical positivism owing to its two misconceptions about science. These are that science is the only valid source of knowledge, and the methodology of science is based solely on observation and logic. According to

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

him, these two views have three deteriorated implications in the development of social science: loss of morality by non-acknowledgment of value brought by science implicitly, mechanization of human behavior by abandoning liberty to choose and implementing simple universal laws in human behavior by modeling in the mathematical formulation. Henceforth, he suggests using the Islamic approach to humanities, which is radically different to study human beings and societies. Islam believes that there are various knowledge sources, not only by observation and logic, where revelation is the most valid source of knowledge. Moreover, Islam also takes human freedom into account seriously and encourages its followers to always struggle for the good instead of remaining neutral.

All in all, we generally concur with Zaman's views. We agree with Zaman that Islam does reject the view of logical positivists. This is because they believe such misconceptions as '*izm*' while Islam has a different worldview about science, as Zaman stated about the source of knowledge. However, Islam, as a faith, highly encourages reasoning and observing. It is stated in many verses of the Qur'an.

On the other hand, we have a different view with Zaman on the point of using tools of positivists. We believe that Islamic scientists can use the tools of logical positivists in our observation of social science as long as such tools do not contradict the logical structure of the Islamic worldview. The reason is that social science is only an avenue to see the expression of free will that Allah gives to the human being by observing the pattern of human behavior. Islamic Economics, for instance, after deriving from Qur'an and *sunnah* teaching, which cannot be separated, we can utilize the similar methodology of its conventional counterpart to observe the behavior of humankind.³⁸ When the results can describe closer to reality, it can survive and support the development of social science itself.

After all, there are three main general issues that we criticize in the paper of Zaman. Firstly, Zaman describes in the abstract that science's methodology is only useful for material, which is a natural science, not for social science. We disagree with this provoking statement. This is because social science is both tentative and relative. After a long period of observation, some of the prepositions of social science can reach the highest position of science, which is the law, such as the law of demand and supply and diminishing marginal utility,

³⁸Necmettin Kizilkaya, "Introduction: Some Considerations on the Methodology of Islamic Economics Studies.," in *Islamic Economics: Basic Concepts, New Thinking and Future Directions*, ed. Taha Egri & Necmettin Kizilkaya (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 1–10.

whereas many of them cannot achieve that status. Those only have been proven as theory, and even many more are the only hypothesis. However, we can still utilize them as long as practical.

Secondly, we think that Zaman uses double standards in his interpretation. In his paper, with many various structures of sentences, Zaman asserts that he rejects the secular worldview. Nonetheless, he still capitalizes Western scholars' products, which were born from the misconceptions, to support his argument. We can find in the section 2 when Zaman elaborates about the 'unscientific' source of knowledge. He uses the work of Noam Chomsky about language and grammar and Pinker to elaborate about the experience as one of the sources of knowledge. In other places, he utilizes Ruben's study, a book by Zygmunt Bauman and Halberstam about morality, to describe the removal of Civics education syllabi in the United States, leading to moral degradation. Zaman uses the phrase "a distinct and measurable decline in moral standards," which means using logical positivists' tools. When he talks about human behavior mechanization, the paper also refers to Skinner's book to prove that proposition. So, we conclude that there is a contradictive process of reasoning in this paper.

Thirdly, Zaman does not solve the problem correctly. At the beginning of the article, Zaman starts with the epistemological problem in western science. He reveals the western misconceptions brought by logical positivists as the main problem and its consequences. This is about epistemology pertaining theory of knowledge. However, in section 4 and 5, as a solution to the issues, he comes up with an ontological aspect: human with free will and an axiological perspective of ethics and morality.

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