



Globalization and Its Impact on Islamic Studies in Malaysia

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Globalization

- Some definitions:
 - Range of trends and forces that changing the face of the world in which we live
 - Intensification of world wide social relations linking distant places where local happenings are shape by events occurring many miles away



Pros and Cons of Globalization

- Pro
 - Accessibility and equality
 - Economic sphere: free trade
 - Political sphere: democratization, civil society etc.
 - Emergence of social critics: feminism, ecological movements, Islam liberal?
 - Information: opportunity of alternative views and freedom of expression (global Islam)



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- Cons
 - Exploitation of the rich over the poor
 - Neo colonialism/imperialism
 - Unfair trade agreement (IMF/WTO/GAT)
 - Media negative image projection (Islam=terrorist)
 - Americanization of culture (McDonalozation) or westernization
 - The view that westernization was reduced to include only daily life styles influence, however is no longer applicable after the event of 9/11



Globalization and Islam

- Islam is very accommodative and receptive to the essence globalization
 - Interaction
 - Dialogue
- Elements of Globalization provide opportunities for construction of structures, policies, principles, practices that are Islamic in content, essence and spirit



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- Globalization is not alien to Islam
 - Ummah (citizens of Islam)
 - Single faith (culture, race and geography are irrelevant)
 - Facing Kaabah, Fasting in Ramadan and Hajj
- Appreciation of pluralistic environment



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- No serious attention or analysis is given by Muslim scholars to address issues of globalization from Islamic perspective
- Most writing dominated by rhetoric mainly in politics except a few has seriously discussed it such as Fadzlor Rahman, Faruqi, Attas etc.
- But yet discussion on globalization only started in 1996



Islamic Studies

- Meaning:
 - Academic study of Islam as a divinely revealed religion and civilization in major disciplines of Usul al-Din, Shari‘ah and Akhlaq
- Trends
 - Traditionalists
 - Modernists
 - Reformists



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- Perceptions:
 - Present scope and orientation marginalized the ummah
 - Research and writing based on partisan sentiments and emotions
 - Not everything in the classical legacy is relevant to the present circumstances
 - Graduates cannot find suitable jobs
 - Always regarded as leaning towards opposition



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- Traditional and legalistic in approach and orientation
- Content of studies not integrated
- No critical or scientific thinking
- Less attention to social and political context
- Rhetoric and blaming others



Opportunities

- Despite the above Islam is said to be a dominant force in the future that will influence
 - Politics (war against terrorism and world peace)
 - Social (culture and education)
 - Economic (Islamic finance, oil)



Challenges

(as a result of globalization)

- To develop contemporary approach in teaching-learning process and reflect importance of character building (akhlak)
- Ability to evaluate and use modern knowledge within the Islamic ethos and methods – Islamization of knowledge
- Ability to develop new knowledge from traditional heritage, understanding and application



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- To compete with other world class institutions in terms of staff, students, ranking and academic outputs
- To balance between the need of advancing knowledge and market-driven demands: graduates must be equipped with mega/life/core/soft skills and Islamic character building
- Democratization of higher education: balancing between quality and greater access and increase enrolments and promotion of life-long and life-wide learning



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- Greater collaboration between Universities of Muslim countries and between Industries (what kind of industries?)
- Language skills: English and Arabic at the expense of native language
- Open dialogue or cooperation with non-muslim Islamic studies scholars or “liberal groups”
- In Malaysia context to achieve national education objectives especially in regard of country’s human resource and national unity



Requirements

- Some proposals:
 - Paradigm shift in form of producing actual blue print, human resource development, explorative, dynamic etc.
 - Producing qualified individuals through mastery of fundamental principles of Islam and proper knowledge of contemporary social and applied sciences
 - Strong financial support and recognition from the government and industries
 - Creation of pockets or centres of excellence in teaching, research and publication



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