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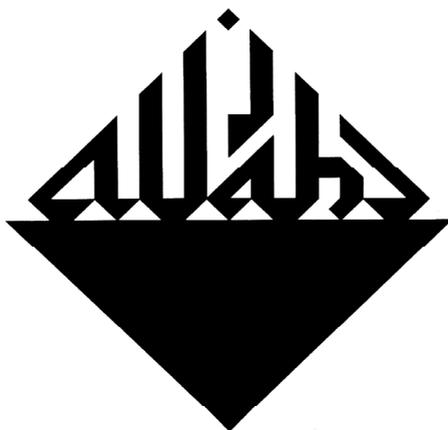
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ECLECTICISM OF MODERN ISLAM:
ISLAM HADHARI IN MALAYSIA

Muhamad Ali

THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATION IN *TURJUMĀN AL-MUSTAFAĪD*:
A STUDY OF THEOLOGICAL AND ESCHATOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Ervan Nurtawab

ISLAM, HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION AND MUSLIM
AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN THE INDONESIAN NEW ORDER

Mohamad Abdun Nasir

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Muhamad Ali

Eclecticism of Modern Islam: *Islam Hadhari* in Malaysia

Abstrak: *Islam Hadhari* (“*Islam peradaban*” atau “*Islam progresif*”) di *Malaysia* telah menjadi perhatian publik serta perhatian ilmiah di *Malaysia* dan *Indonesia*, sebagian negara-negara Muslim, *Amerika*, *Eropa* dan *Australia*. Sejumlah kalangan Muslim dan sarjana Barat membahas kebangkitan, karakteristik, dampak, kekuatan, dan kelemahan *Islam Hadhari*. Beberapa terfokus pada aspek peradaban, selain teknologi dan budaya, dan juga politik. Namun, sedikit studi yang membahas cara di mana *Islam Hadhari* menyoroti persoalan multikulturalisme dan eklektisisme Islam di dunia modern.

Kasus *Islam Hadhari* di *Malaysia* kontemporer memperlihatkan bagaimana multikulturalisme dan eklektisisme menjadi karakteristik bagi proyek-proyek Muslim terkait modernitas. Untuk membahas persoalan tersebut, artikel ini mendekati *Islam Hadhari* dari perspektif wacana dan kontra-wacana dan pada saat yang sama berusaha untuk memberikan manfaat dan batas dari teori-teori modernisasi. Teori-teori Islamisasi cenderung menekankan peran Islam dalam membentuk kehidupan masyarakat Muslim berhadapan dengan kekuatan-kekuatan lain, sementara teori-teori modernisasi cenderung mengabaikan peran agama dalam membentuk kehidupan masyarakat Muslim modern, meminimalkan keberadaan agama di ruang publik.

Artikel ini memperlihatkan bahwa *Islam Hadhari* berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai respons religio-politik terhadap krisis internal yang dirasakan masyarakat Melayu, polarisasi budaya, dan politik global yang tidak seimbang, tetapi juga menunjukkan multi-interpretasi dari teks-teks Islam, sejarah, budaya dan konteks multikultural. Kasus *Islam Hadhari* menjadi contoh dari “tradisionalisme” dan “modernisme” Islam yang bukan dalam bentuk ideal, tetapi dalam ekspresi diskursif campuran. *Islam Hadhari* harus dipahami dalam kerangka persaingan ide-ide lokal dan global, yang muncul di negara-

negara mayoritas Muslim di era negara-bangsa modern dan globalisasi.

Meski dikonstruksi sebagai komprehensif dan progresif, Islam Hadhari dapat berperan sebagai (1) pendekatan normatif yang mendamaikan kesalehan dan pragmatisme, daripada sebuah mekanisme praktis untuk memahami akar masalah kaum Muslim Melayu di Malaysia, (2) alat untuk memperoleh atau mempertahankan kekuasaan di tengah-tengah ideologi yang bertentangan, (3) pemulihan identitas dan citra Islam sebagai sebuah peradaban yang lengkap saat ini dan masa depan sebagaimana di masa lalu, dan (4), respons terhadap dominasi Barat dan merehabilitasi sejarah Islam serta rasa ketertinggalan.

Kasus Islam Hadhari di Malaysia kontemporer menunjukkan praktik berulang Muslim dalam membangun apa yang tetap dan apa yang berubah, yang religius dan tidak religius, yang otentik dan yang modern, serta yang Barat dan yang Islam. Progresifisme di dalam Islam dimungkinkan melalui kontekstualisasi yang terus-menerus dari tradisi Islam ke dalam tradisi lokal dan modernitas global. Umat Islam terus melihat ke dasar dan masa lalu, yang hasilnya dapat diterapkan dalam konteks sekarang. Tindakan melihat bolak-balik ini dapat dilihat sebagai usaha kreatif untuk mencari keseimbangan dan sebagai mekanisme untuk menyelesaikan kontradiksi yang dirasakan. Pada saat yang sama, belajar dari kontestasi Islam Hadhari oleh para pemimpin UMNO dan PAS, tindakan “melihat ke belakang, melihat saat ini, dan melihat ke depan” juga dapat menjadi bagian dari proses memperoleh kekuasaan.

Artikel ini menunjukkan pentingnya mengamati reformasi Islam sebagai dialektika gerakan dan kontra-gerakan, wacana dan kontra-wacana, tetapi juga dalam hal waktu (masa lalu, sekarang, dan masa depan). Menggunakan teori modernisasi dalam menjelaskan hubungan antara Islam dan modernitas, artikel ini diharapkan dapat berkontribusi dalam memperoleh jawaban mengenai kondisi sosial-politik yang membuat gagasan Islam progresif atau Islam peradaban harus terjadi. Artikel ini memperlihatkan cara bagaimana multikulturalisme dan eklektisisme mengkarakterisasi proyek Muslim terhadap modernitas di tengah-tengah keterhubungan yang kuat dengan masa lalu dan kitab suci.

Muhamad Ali

Eclecticism of Modern Islam: *Islam Hadhari* in Malaysia

الخلاصة: حركة إسلامية المسمى بـ «الإسلام الحضري» التي تتطور في ماليزيا أصبحت مهتمة عند الباحثين في ماليزيا واندونيسيا والدول الإسلامية الأخرى وكذلك في أمريكا وأروبا وأستراليا. وقد كشف الباحثون من المسلمين والغربيين عن نهضة منهج الإسلام الحضري و ما يتعلق بصفاته وآثاره وقوته وضعفه. بعضهم حددوا بحوثهم من جانب الحضارة والآخر إلى علاقته بالتكنولوجية والثقافية والسياسية. لكن قل منهم من اهتم بمسائل تعدد الثقافى والانتقائى الإسلامى فى العصر الحاضر.

وظهر من هذه الإشاعة أن تعدد الثقافى والانتقائى يؤدي إلى التناقض الوجدان وأصبح صفة للمشروع الإسلامى المعاصر. فهذه المقالة تمنع النظر إلى الإسلام الحضري من جانب الإشاعة والاختلاف الجارى عنها، وفى نفس الوقت تبذل المنفعة وحدودَ النظريات العصرية. النظريات فى الإسلامىة تميل إلى تأسيس حياة المسلمين تقابل القوات الأخرى، مع أن النظرية العصرية تميل إلى إهمال الدين بتأسيسها فى مجتمع المسلمين المعاصر حتى يؤدي إلى تخفيف دور الدين فى المجتمع. وحققت هذه المقالة أن الإسلام الحضري له دور فى مجال واسع الذي لا ينحصر إلى تفاعل الدينية السياسية فى مواجهة الأزمة الداخلية التى يشعروها المجتمع الملاوية، لكن توسع إلى تنوع التأويلات على النصوص الإسلامىة والتاريخ والثقافة وسياق

تعدد الثقافة. الإشاعة عن الإسلام الحضري لا بد أن تفهم على شكل التنافس بين الآراء سواء كانت محلة ومجملة التي نشأت في الدول الإسلامية في العصر الحاضر. وللإسلام الحضري دور متنوعة منها (الأول) الاقتراب المبدئي الذي أجمع بين صلاحية وواقعية، (الثاني) الآلة التي تدفع عن السيطرة أثناء اختلاف إيديولوجيات، (الثالث) إصلاح كون الإسلام ووجهه الذي أصبح حضريا شاملا و كذلك حالا ومستقبلا كما جرى في العصر الماضي. (الرابع) تفاعل على سيطرة الغربية وإصلاح على التاريخ الإسلامية مع الشعور بالتأخرية.

ويرى من الإسلام الحضري بماليزيا إظهار ما هو ثابت ومتغير، وما هو ديني وغير ديني، وقسم وحادث، وغربي وإسلامي. وأمكن الوصول إلى التقدمي في الإسلام بالمنهج القريني المداوم عن الثقافة الإسلامية القديمة إلى الثقافة المحلية والمجتمعية العصرية. وما زال المسلمون ينظرون إلى المبدأ والماضي، ثم يستنتجون منه على النظريات المطبقة «هنا والآن». احتمال في هذا الموقف أن نراه على شكل متناقض وكذلك احتمال فيه أن نراه كبذل الجهود في تحرى البحوث عن الموازنة، وأصبح ميكانيكيا في حل الاختلاف الشائع. وتعلم عن تطبيق الإسلام الحضري عند زعماء حزب المسيطر UMNO وحزب المعارض PAS، يستطيع أحد أن يفسر عن موقف «النظر إلى الماضي والحال والمستقبل» كشروع في إيجاد السيطرة. هذه المقالة تحقق على أهمية إمعان النظر إلى تجديد الإسلام الذي أصبح محلّ الجدل للحركة وضد الحركة، والإشاعة وضد الإشاعة في الأوقات الثلاثة المذكورة. ويرجى من هذه المقالة - باستعمالها على النظرية العصرية في بيان علاقة الإسلام والعصرى - أن تجد الأجوبة المينة عن الأحوال السياسية الاجتماعية التي صدر منها رأي الإسلام الحضري أو الإسلام التصاعدي. وظهر في هذه الرسالة كيف يكون تعدد الثقافى والانتقائى في تعامل شروع المسلمين على العصرى أثناء علاقته القوية بالعصر الماضى والنصوص الدينية المقدسة.

Malaysian *Islam Hadhari*, translated as “civilizational Islam” or “progressive Islam”, has received public as well as scholarly attention in Malaysia and to a less and varying degree also in Indonesia, part of the Muslim countries, America, Europe and Australia. It became somewhat controversial in the public debate from its announcement in 2004 to its end in 2009 when the shift occurred in Malaysia’s leadership from Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to Najib Tun Razak. Muslim and Western scholars have discussed its rise, characteristics, impacts, strengths and weaknesses. Some focused on its civilization aspect, others on its technology and culture, and still others on its politics. For example, American Islamicist Carl W. Ernst has discussed if “civilizational Islam” is merely a slogan aimed at pleasing various audiences or it actually offers the prospect of demonstrating Malaysia as indeed a “progressive Muslim state”.¹ David Hakken has observed competing ideologies at play, that as a proposal *Islam Hadhari* has had “modernist”, “developmentalist”, and “progressive”, as well as “post-modernist” ethics.² Other analysts have focused on the political aspect, one of them arguing that the interpretation and contestation of “progressive Islam” is a struggle for legitimacy within the modern nation-state.³ Malaysian intellectual-activist Faris Noor saw paradox, “Here lies the trap that the UMNO leadership has dug for itself: while promoting a vision of Islam that is plural, modern, and liberal, it has also cultivated a community that is narrow, reactionary, and conservative.”⁴

However, few studies have addressed the way in which *Islam Hadhari* highlights a wider question of multiculturalism and eclecticism of Islam in the modern world. It would be misleading to locate Islam as a separate, monolithic entity, either as self-sufficient way of life or as modern religion. At the same time, scholarly attention has been given especially to non-governmental Muslim thinkers as individuals or networks and to its doctrinal dimension. The case of *Islam Hadhari* in contemporary Malaysia offers us with not only the way in which “Islamic reform” is constructed and contested by the ruling party and the oppositional party, but also offers us with the way multi-culturalism and eclecticism, often ambivalent and paradoxical, well characterizes Muslim projects of modernity. To address this question, this article approaches *Islam Hadhari* from discourse and counter-discourse perspective and at the same time seeks to provide the usefulness and limit of theories of modernization. Theories of Islamization tend to

emphasize the role of Islam in shaping the life of Muslim societies overlooking other forces, whereas theories of modernization tend to de-emphasize the role of religion in shaping the life of modern Muslim societies, minimizing the public presence and persistence of religion.

Then Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi first mentioned the phrase *Islam Hadhari* in September 2003, but gave his most important speech on September 23, 2004 in which he described it in terms of characteristics of an ideal society:

“Islam Hadhari is an approach that emphasizes development, consistent with the tenets of Islam and focused on enhancing the quality of life. It aims to achieve this via the mastery of knowledge and the development of the individual and the nation; the implementation of a dynamic economic, trading and financial system; an integrated and balanced development that creates a knowledgeable and pious people who hold to noble values and are honest, trustworthy, and prepared to take on global challenges.”²⁵

As can be seen, *Islam Hadhari* was constructed and contested within the modern sphere of competing forces in Malaysia and the world at large, including Islamism, conservatism, nationalism, developmentalism, scientific and technological modernism, and globalization. *Islam Hadhari* became better known with the search for achieving ten goals as follows: 1) faith and piety in Allah, 2) a just and trustworthy government, 3) a free and independent people, 4) mastery of knowledge, 5) balanced and comprehensive economic development, 6) a good quality of life, 7) protection of the rights of minority groups and women, 8) cultural and moral integrity, 9) safeguarding the environment, and 10) strong defenses. These goals, except the first one, can be found in any modern nation-state today, but this poses a crucial question concerning the complex relationship between Islam and modernity in a predominantly Malay Muslim country. This sustains an argument for eclectic characteristic of modern Islam.

As will be discussed, *Islam Hadhari* serves not only as a religio-politico response to the perceived and real internal crisis of Malay population, to a polarizing symbolic culture, and to imbalanced global politics, but also shows multi-interpretability of Islamic texts, histories, and cultures and multi-cultural contexts. The case of *Islam Hadhari* offers an example of both “traditionalism” and “modernism” of Islam not necessarily in their ideal, distinct forms, but in their hybrid discursive expressions. In its formulation and contestation, *Islam Hadhari* may be better explained in terms of the following concepts: government project

and public discourse, Islamic comprehensiveness and secular religion, individualism and communalism, Islamic politics and substance, revelation and reason, past authority and present-mindedness, and nationalism and globalization. *Islam Hadhari* has to be understood within the framework of competing old and new, local and global ideas and concepts that have emerged among Muslim majority countries in the era of the modern nation-state and globalization.

Between Government Project and Public Discourse

The ideas of civility, civilization, and progress are not new, but in Southeast Asia, the association of these with Islam as a “public” discourse did not emerge until the early twentieth century. Islam has come to the Malay world as a significant force from the fourteenth century, but it was only in the early twentieth century that the *kaum muda* (the young faction of ulama) came to take roots in urban mosques, schools, and through the establishment of associations, primarily with influence of Egyptian reformism of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ‘Abduh, and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā. In the Malay world, this reformism coincided with British colonialism. As in South Asia, Islamic reform preceded the Western presence, having its roots in the Islamic past. Islamic reform also helped to prepare Muslims for the world of the modern political party and the modern state.⁶

Islamic reform and colonial encounter helped Malays to realize their racial identity, but more importantly their “Malay problems”: backwardness, domination by alien races, laziness, complacency and inability to cooperate for the common good.⁷ One of the reformist authors who wrote in the journal *al-Imām* (1906-08), for example, said that because the Malays failed to grasp *tamaddun* (civilization) and acquire *‘ilm* (knowledge), they had been subdued by an alien white race. Racialization of Islam and Malay emerged. *Al-Imām* criticized the Malay kings and the “conservative” ulamas (*kaum tua*) for being “old-fashioned” and “passive”, and many of the new intellectuals (*kaum muda*) who were writers and activists championed property rights for women and women’s education.⁸ The division of the reformist and the conservative began and continued to be popular in the sermons, schools, and publications. However, the current conflict between the ruling party of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) and the opposition party PAS (the Malay Islamic Party) was not always a

conflict between the *kaum muda* and the *kaum tua*. It occurred often between the *kaum muda* themselves because of their active engagement in social and political problems. Many of them contested notions of Malayness, Malaysian citizenship, civilization, civility, “Asian values”, “Islamic ethics”, and modernity in the Muslim and Malaysian public, but it was in the contemporary time that the ideas of “progressivism” and “moderation” have become more salient, more intense, and more public, and at the same time have become more eclectic in sources and expressions, thanks to a greater access to information and, to the role of the printing press, and more recently to the internet and other forms of communication technology.

Islam has gained greater prominence in Malaysian public life especially from the beginning of the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) under Tun Abdul Razak in 1970, following the ethnic unrest of May 1969. The 1970 proclamation of the new ideology *Rukun Negara* (the Pillars of the State) – Belief in God, Loyalty to King and Country, Sanctity of the Constitution, Rule of Law, and Good Behavior and Morality – was a “progressive” move, but later was not seen by the ruling elite led by UMNO as a sufficient vision in improving the economic, social, and political underdevelopment of Malays in particular and Malaysians in general (including Chinese and Indians).⁹

The emergence of *Islam Hadhari* is part of the Malays’ tradition of creating symbols and slogans. The rise of the concepts of *Rukun Negara* alluded above, the Inculcation of Islamic Values (introduced by then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed in 1984), the Vision of 2020 (*Wawasan 2020*, introduced in 1991 by then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad), Asian Renaissance and *Convivencia* (coexistence) promoted by then Minister of Education and Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, represented Malays’ awareness of “progress” through the appropriation of symbolic terminology in search for legitimacy before the populace.¹⁰ *Islam Hadhari* represents a symbolic vision that the Federal Government leaders were proud of and aspired to, although the translation of this vision into actual policies and regulations was multi-faceted and became subject to public debate. The Federal Government’s sponsored think tank institutions and networks, such as *Institut Kesepahaman Islam Malaysia* (the Institute of Thought of Islam, Malaysia), *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia* (the Office of

Islamic Progress, Malaysia), *Yayasan Dakwah Islamiyah Malaysia* (the Foundation of Islamic Propagation, Malaysia), and *Institut Islam Hadhari* (the Institute of *Islam Hadhari*) provided information, news, and articles promoting *Islam Hadhari* as a government and public agenda, but the level of understanding and acceptability of the concept by the wider Malay and non-Muslim population remains considered low.¹¹ *Islam Hadhari* gave a new public space for different interested groups to utilize it,¹² but it was not a vision widely understood and even applied by most people in Malaysia.

Abdullah Badawi urged the local people (*Bumiputera*, “sons of the soil”, meaning the Malays and the indigenous peoples) in particular to have “a quantum leap in attitude”, a ‘mental revolution’.¹³ This emphasis on the sons of the soil overlooks Chinese, Indian and other “foreign” citizens of Malaysia. On the one hand, Malay “problems” had to be addressed, but consequently, non-Malay problems were felt unaddressed and became second-class citizens. Within the National Front (*Barisan Nasional*) Malay leaders faced this dilemma: between race-based categorization and citizen-based modern membership. Malay self-realization of intellectual rigidity (*minda jumud*), backwardness and laziness were to be confronted with raising up a race-based dignity. The domination by “alien races”, including the British colonizers and their legacy of the Indian and Chinese population, was fought against, but this elevation of one race at the expense of the others pose a threat to a multi-racial country of Malaysia. Thus dilemma facing the ruler lies between affirmation of one underdeveloped, rigid race and equality of modern citizenship.

Between Islam and Secularized Notion of Religion

Islam Hadhari can be understood by addressing the concepts of *dīn* and *dunyā*, or *dunyā* and *ākhirah*, and Western concept of *religion* and secularism. *Dīn* could mean a way of life, law, doctrine, teaching, and so forth; it could be narrow or broad. Western construction of religion has tended to be abstract and narrow: it is a private matter focusing on relationship between individual and the divine. On the one hand, Islam is perceived as all-encompassing (*kāffah*) of *dīn* (religion, associated with *ākhirah*, the hereafter) and *dunyā* (the worldly), but on the other hand, Islam is perceived to be about *dīn* that is confined to religion, in line with “Western definition” of religion. Furthermore, in the modernizing

world, Islam is administered as a religion, a field among various fields in this world. Advocates and critics of *Islam Hadhari* reveal continuous debate on ideas of comprehensiveness and narrowness of Islam. They sought to emphasize Islam as a forward-looking worldview.

Can the idea of comprehensive Islam be progressive? For Enlightenment philosophers, progress is an antithesis of religion. In European modern history, to be progressive was to leave religion behind.¹⁴ In Malaysia, *Islam Hadhari* was viewed as a response to the antagonism between progress and religious comprehensiveness. The differentiation of religion and non-religious fields in *Islam Hadhari* was seen as distinct from the idea of “Western type of secularism” of separation of “religion” and “all other things”.

The *Islam Hadhari* advocates, on the other hand, emphasized this not in order to subscribe to the idea of the full integration of Islam and the State in all the legalistic (*fiqh*) matters, including the criminal (*jināyah*) laws that may not be compatible with the modern nation-state. They suggested that politics, economy, and all aspects of life are to be inspired by Islamic norms and values, but not necessarily by its formalities that may not be relevant to the modern time. The proponents constructed which part of Islam is permanent (*thābit*) and which part is changing (*mutaghayyir*) and which part is fundamental (*uṣūliyah*) and what part is of branches (*furūʿiyah*) as a mechanism for combining comprehensiveness and narrowness of religion. For its critics, such as those of PAS, *Islam Hadhari* was partial, not comprehensive. PAS leaders, such as the Chief Minister and spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz bin Nik Mat and PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang, agreed with the comprehensiveness of Islam, but only in terms of their goal of the Islamic State. For Nik Abdul Aziz, the concept of *Islam Hadhari* is not comprehensive.¹⁵ PAS and UMNO criticized each other's claim of understanding and implementing the comprehensiveness of Islam. They charged each other's versions as “partial” (*juzʿī*).

Before *Islam Hadhari*, the *daʿwah* movement which shaped Malaysian young educated class from the 1970s, manifested in the creation of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (*Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia*, ABIM), had embraced what they defined as a comprehensive “Islamic system” (*niẓām Islāmī*), emphasizing Islam as *al-dīn* (a way of life) and promoting a particular kind of the Islamic State (drawn from the traditional concepts of *dawlah Islāmīyah* and *dār al-Islām*), but were

combining – and reconciling - the wide range of views of Sayyid Quṭb, Abū al-‘Alá al-Mawdūdī, Hasan al-Banā, Muhammad Natsir, and Syed Naquib Al-Attas.¹⁶ However, that concept was not considered as progressive and comprehensive enough for Abdullah Badawi. *Islam Hadhari* was to be manifested through a comprehensive agenda of reclaiming an Islamic civilization comprised of the religious (*dīnīyah, ākhirah*) and the worldly (*dunyā*). The ten principles of *Islam Hadhari* mentioned above suggests not only the combination of the religious and the secular values, but also the comprehensiveness and progressivism of Islam as formulated in internationally familiar language.¹⁷

The endorsement of both secular and religious institutions and values was reflected in some of the speeches of Abdullah Badawi. He encouraged the Malays particularly to “nurture a global mindset, understand the global scenario, acquire proper beneficial knowledge and be skilled, master technology and compete, build up international networks, and be able to communicate and interact through a global lingua franca, namely English...”¹⁸ He recognized the prevalence of the secular and the religious matters, but he wanted this dichotomy integrated as beneficial to the life of this world and the hereafter.

The comprehensiveness was also defined as an integration of both scripture-based sciences and modern sciences and as an integration of individualism, socialism, and statism.¹⁹ For Badawi, “Western individualism” is considered insufficient in bringing about development and progress for the Muslim majority because of communalism and cooperative relationship emphasized in the Qur’an, but atheistic socialism or communism would not be sufficient either in creating a prosperous, modern, and progressive Malaysian society. Thus, Abdullah Badawi wrote, “unlike Western individualism, Muslims have a strong sense of fraternity as a community of believers.”²⁰ Here one can see the ambivalent, selective attitude towards Western aspect of civilization as Badawi and other Muslims would have defined it. One can see tension between individualism and communalism in the formulation of *Islam Hadhari*.

Max Weber claimed that Islam is one of the religions that didn’t facilitate trade and market values. In Weber’s view, “norms of taboo may produce extraordinarily severe hindrances to the development of trade and of the market, and other types of social intercourse.” Weber didn’t reject the possibility of Muslims being merchants (except

the Sufi Muslims whose life was primarily spiritual). But for Weber, economic ethic of Muslims was feudal: Muslims tended to search for wealth, power, and honor.²¹ Advocates of *Islam Hadhari* of course did not address what Weber had to say about Islam, but they had to face the dilemma between “Western commercial, individualistic ethics” and “Muslim communalistic ethics”.

Furthermore, Weber and other Western scholars believed that because of their rationality, science and technology, Europeans were inherently superior over the rest of the races and held that the rest could only be modern by following the path of these Europeans.²² The emphasis by *Islam Hadhari* advocates upon Malay rigidity and intellectual inferiority sustains implicitly Euro-centric rationality, progress and modern technology, but at the same time, the realization of the possibility of catching up to the “Western” level of rationality and modernity indicates vision and hope for more balanced and more “cosmopolitanist” view of modern civilization. In other words, although Western modernity was viewed superior, Islam could have inspired a progressive attitude, particularly shaped by its rationalist and reformist doctrines.

Malay dilemmas were thus faced in terms of development and Islam sometimes depicted as contradictory in both Muslim and Western societies. Abdullah Badawi’s definition of *Islam Hadhari* as “an approach that emphasizes development, consistent with the tenets of Islam, and is focused on enhancement of the quality of life,”²³ indicates that Islam and developmentalism are not only compatible but also complementary and therefore both are desirable given the Malay identification with Islam and the perceived and real problems of the Malay people.

Between Nomadenism and Civilization

The debate on the link between Islam and the concept of civilization has long taken place at least since al-Fārābī (d. 950) or later Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1382), but modern debates have used Ibn Khaldūn as well as modern, including Western notions of civilizations. Among Europeans, civilization became restricted to Europe whereas the rest of the world was restricted to barbarism or “despotism” for Asia (as in phrases like ‘oriental mode of production’ and ‘Oriental despotism’). More recently in the U.S. Samuel Huntington advocated “the Clash of Civilizations”

bringing the West and Islam into the world's debate. "Civilizational Islam", as Carl Ernst put it, "is a phrase that carries considerable ideological momentum from long-standing debates from the colonial and postcolonial eras."²⁴ Among Muslims, terms like *madīnah*, *ḥaḍārah*, *tamaddun*, *ʿumrān*, and *adab* were redefined to make the needs of the present. Thus leaders of the opposition party, PAS, such as Abdul Hadi Awang, challenged *Islam Hadhari* and introduced *ḥaḍārah Islāmīyah*. This was a semantic battle rather than that of substance. But they used this battle to pursue their competing objectives: power. If Abdullah Badawi defined *Islam Hadhari* as a civilizational approach of Islam, emphasizing progress and moderation, Abdul Hadi Awang viewed it as a "heretic innovation" (*bid'ah*). If there were civilizational Islam, Abdul Hadi Awang criticized, then there would be uncivilizational Islam which is unthinkable for him. For him, Islam is inherently civilizational, not "of the desert or the nomadic life" (*badawī*). He commented that Islam does not need any adjective. In one of his speeches and writings, Abdul Hadi Awang has a critical comment of *Islam Hadhari*,

"Islam Hadhari is part of a capitalist Western agenda to undermine Islam, by adopting the concept of civilization (*ḥaḍārah*) from Ibn Khaldun and other ulama who had been successful in Islamizing knowledge. For Khaldun, *ḥaḍārah*, *tamaddun*, and *madīnah*, are correlated, which suggest the life of city and civilization. The West defined civilization as a merely physical, but Muslims created civilization of the material and the moral... it is the Islamic civilization (*ḥaḍārah Islāmīyah*), not the civilizational Islam (*Islam hadārī*), the latter being dangerous to the Islamic community..."²⁵

For Abdul Hadi Awang, the dichotomy should have been between "Islamic civilization" and "Western, foreign, ignorant (*jāhiliyah*) civilization". The Chief Minister of Kelantan and PAS spiritual leader, Nik Abdul Aziz bin Nik Mat, further commented that "Islam from the beginning to the end is always civilizational...and PAS in the State of Kelantan with their concept of *ḥaḍārah Islāmīyah* (Islamic civilization) has proved to get rid of part of "the Malay civilization that is not Islamic", such as interest-banking system, night clubbing, dancing, gambling, prostitution, and so forth"²⁶ These cultural practices were inherent part of what Abdul Hadi Awang regarded as "*jāhiliyah*, ignorant civilization." This *jāhiliyah* civilization is either local Malay or Western (*gharbīyah*). For him, *ḥaḍārah Islāmīyah* is the antithesis of any foreign un-Islamic civilization. In his formulation, Western civilization has essential characteristics: the separation of religion and

politics, the supremacy of Latin script over Arabic and *jāwī* (Malay in Arabic script), free and propaganda media, the prevalence of injustice (*zulm*), extravagance (*tughyān*), moral destruction (*fasād*), arrogance (*takabbur*), luxury, mind rigidity and blind imitation (*taqlid*).²⁷ These qualities deemed “Western” by Abdul Hadi Awang were to be combated through the revival of a true civilization of Islam and the establishment of the Islamic state in Malaysia. All these values were substantive values that Abdullah Badawi and other Malay Muslims would agree with, but Abdul Hadi Awang and the PAS activists used these to distinguish “Islamic values” representing their party, from Western values that UMNO embraced.

On the other hand, Abdullah Badawi kept telling the public that “*Islam Hadhari* values substances, not form.”²⁸ The contextual approach in one of the *Islam Hadhari* advocated is reading the Qur’anic passages in their particular context while taking out their substantive message – such as public interest (*maṣlahah*) and justice (*‘adl*) – to meet the present needs. He said, UMNO did not to subscribe to the idea of the full integration of Islam and the State in all the legalistic (*fiqh*) matters, including the criminal (*jīnāyah*) laws that may not be compatible with the modern nation-state. They suggested that politics, economy, and all aspects of life are to be inspired by Islamic norms and values, but not necessarily by its formalities that may not be relevant to the modern time. Abdul Hadi Awang would not necessarily neglect the substances of Islam – such as justice and freedom, but he defined them primarily in integration with the ritualistic and legalistic products of classical and medieval Islam. Here Islam has been categorized as being substantive versus being formalistic. If Badawi formulated the ten principles, including monotheism, good government, environmentalism, and national defense, Abdul Hadi Awang formulated various fundamental principles of his *ḥadārah Islāmīyah*: apart from comprehensiveness (*shumūliyah*), worship (*‘ibādah*), caliphate (*khilāfah*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), justice (*‘adālah*), freedom (*hurriyah*), knowledge and wisdom (*hikmah*), and unity (*wiḥdah*). Comparatively, there are obviously overlaps between Abdullah Badawi’s principles and Abdul Hadi Awang’s principles. They used concepts from the Qur’an, Hadith, and medieval scholarships.

Between Scripturalism and Contextualism

Islamic reform, Francis Robinson argues for South Asia, led to scriptural knowledge becoming more widespread than before.²⁹ However, there is tension between scripturalism and contextualism. In justifying their definition and view of Islam and its characteristics, both PAS and the UMNO leaders and authors made references to Islamic texts – the Qur'an and the Hadith, but selecting different passages that suit their perspectives in their political and cultural contexts. They also sometimes selected sources from outside Malaysia, such as Indonesia, either to support or reject them.

The UMNO supporters claimed themselves as using “a contextual approach to the Islamic texts”, in a response to the “textual approach” of PAS. A contextual approach to Islam would bring about, this author suggests, a creative, progressive, and dynamic interpretation, relevant to the time and place, whereas a textual approach prompts to radical, extreme, and rigid interpretation that is not applicable today in this particular place.³⁰ Scholars agree that Islam is one of scriptural religions. Max Weber too observed that Islam was scriptural. “the Koran was believed to have been divinely created, and the contents of the scripture must be always validated as divine inspired.”³¹ In his discourse on *Islam Hadhari*, Abdullah Badawi cited passages from certain passages of the Qur'an and certain Hadith and selected some principles from the Islamic tradition, including *fard 'ayn* (personal obligation), *fard kifayah* (collective obligation), *ijtihad* (reasoning), *maqāsid shar'iyah* (objectives of the *shari'ah*), *tajdid* (renewal), *islāh* (reform), *amānah* (trust), *'adl* (justice), and *itqān* (excellence in work). When Abdullah Badawi called for cooperation in the quest for peace, for another example, he did it through the interpretation of *ukhūwah* (brotherhood) and *ta'āwun* (cooperation).³² He defined aspects of *Islam Hadhari* drawing from cross-cultural, eclectic sources of knowledge: they were medieval and contemporary Islamic scholars and activists, ranging from al-Ghazālī, al-Shāfi'ī, Ibn Khaldūn, al-Shāṭibī, Muḥammad 'Abduh, Muhammad Iqbal, Sayyid Quṭb, Yūsuf al-Qarḍawī, to Indonesian Hasbi al-Siddiqi, Harun Nasution, and Abdurrahman Wahid. For example, one of the contributors made a reference to Sayyid Quṭb's *Ma'ālim fi al-tariq* when emphasizing Islam as a civilizational religion, encompassing faith, worship, law, and morality. The author used some sources of prominent Indonesian scholars: theologian Harun Nasution who

emphasizes “rational Islam”, scholar-activist Abdurrahman Wahid who endorses domestication of Islam, and Nurcholish Madjid who promotes secularization of Islam.³³

On the one hand, scripturalism and modernism can support each other if one sees rejection of the authority of the past through direct interpretation of the scripture. On the other hand, scripturalism and traditionalism are closely linked. William Graham’s notion of “*isnād* paradigm” as a characteristic of “Islamic traditionalism”³⁴ is quite relevant in this regard because even though *Islam Hadhari* aimed at promoting progress, it would never be away from the Islamic “character” of scripturalism and traditionalism of the Way of the Prophet, and for Muslim Malays, from the Sunni and the Shāfi’ī tradition. Often taken out of context and of the whole thought of a thinker, the act of eclectic and selective borrowing and adaptation is within the religious boundaries of the adhered theology of *ahl al-Sunnah wa-al-Jamā’ah* and the Shāfi’ī school of thought. Abdullah Badawi, for example, wrote a poem: “I seek not riches untold, to live a life of luxury, I seek not millions, to live a life of plenty, I seek not friends so many, to live a life of profligacy, I seek he who is al-Ghazālī, I seek he who is al-Shāfi’ī, to unravel the secrets in the Holy Book, Seeking guidance, to unravel the secrets in the ways of the Prophet....”³⁵ Authoritative knowledge was passed to the present and for the present (and the future).

In the same way, Nik Abdul Aziz bin Nik Mat and Abdul Hadi Awang made constant references to the Qur’an, hadith, and the tradition of Islamic thought textually and contextually, depending on what verses and what ideas they were trying to emphasize. For example, Abdul Hadi Awang interprets the Qur’anic passage 4:59: “O believers! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger of Allah, and obey your leaders from yourselves!...” as to suggest that the highest law for an Islamic state should be the Qur’an and Hadith, such as that implemented in the Constitution of Medina under Prophet Muhammad, described as “the first Islamic state”. Then he commented that *Islam Hadhari* ignored the principle of having the Qur’an and the Hadith as the primary basis of the state. UMNO, Abdul Hadi Awang continued to argue, “is using the law of human creation and is forcing people to obey them as the leaders even though they disobey Allah.”³⁶

For Abdul Hadi Awang, Islamic civilization could only take place under an Islamic State (*Negara Islam*), first exemplified by Muhammad

through the Constitution of Medina and as subsequently demonstrated by Muslim caliphs and sultans. “If Islam gains power, the country will be safe; if the *hudūd* law and *qisās* were enacted, criminals would fear; the Islamic state is the solution of the problems. What is prevailing today is not based on the Qur’an...” Abdul Hadi Awang conceives of Islamic comprehensiveness in terms of the formalization of Islamic state in its fullest, judicial sense. On the other hand, UMNO leaders and scholars maintain the Malaysia’s Constitutionalism stating that although Malaysia has Islam as its official religion, she has to recognize all other religions. The same Constitution of Medina is interpreted by UMNO as an inspiring model for “a just and trustworthy government”, and “religious freedom” within a multi-religious and racial country. These Islamic values are persistent, they maintain, but government institutions can change, with a Hadith cited: “you know better the business of this world.”

As discussed above, PAS promoted the idea of the comprehensiveness of Islam in its formality through the creation of the Islamic State in charge of all affairs, including the criminal laws (*jināyah*, as part of the *hudūd*). For them, an Islamic state is a model that follows the model of a religious and political leadership under Prophet Muhammad. The Islamic State, for Abdul Hadi Awang, is a manifestation of *imāmah*, *dawlah*, and *khilāfah*, with references to the Islamic politics (*siyāsah shar‘īyah*) and the laws of authority (*ahkām sultānīyah*), rather than to “Western political science and international relations”. For PAS, the current state of Malaysia is not an Islamic State; it is still a secular, Westernized State, which therefore needs Islamization.³⁷ For UMNO, the Islamic state has been defined quite differently and dynamically. Then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, for example, asserted that Malaysia is already an Islamic State, even without the *hudūd*. Mahathir Mohamad’s assertion that Malaysia is an Islamic state, which sparked a public debate, was aimed to challenge the PAS’ promotion of their Islamic State.³⁸ On the other hand, other UMNO members feared that a call to PAS’s view of the Islamic state would provoke confrontation with the country’s non-Muslim population. UMNO were forced to adopt a more explicit and publicized Islamic stance in order to counter the oppositional argument. Thus, since the Malaysian’s independence in 1957, Malays and non-Malays of a wide spectrum of ideology continued to contest the idea of the Islamic state: whether Malaysia is an

Islamic State, a secular state, or something else. There is no monolithic conceptualization of the Islamic state, beyond the Constitution stating that Islam is an official religion of the country, with recognition of all existing religions.

Partly motivated to go further and beyond the perceived dichotomy, Abdullah Badawi and his supporters, emphasized and described *Islam Hadhari* as the “middle path” between the Western secular state and the Islamist doctrine of the Islamic State. This is a difficult middle path. Their rejection of Western secularism is reiterated in a way that simplifies secularism as a monolithic concept and their rejection of Islamist ritualism is stressed in order to challenge the idea of Islam as merely “religion” in its Western sense. Abdullah Badawi, for example, said in his speech: “Islam is not merely ritual, because ritualism is meant solely for the Hereafter. Similarly, UMNO has never practiced secularism that rejects the Hereafter and focuses solely in worldly matters. Islam must be lived as a system that integrates worldly life and prepares oneself for the Day of Judgment”.³⁹ PAS would not disagree with UMNO’s rejection of secularism that rejects the Hereafter and rejection of ritualism, but the difference lay on their understanding of the role of certain understanding and product of the Islamic law (such as criminal and other *hudūd* laws) in the administration of the state.

In one of his observations, Max Weber described Islam in terms of its tolerance toward non-Muslims and in terms of disconnection between religious laws and secular laws. He wrote the following:

Islam left the governed peoples entirely to themselves in all matters which were of indifference to the Islamic regulation. It is true that Islam did experience conflicts between religious and secular law, which always arise when positive sacred norms of the law have developed. Islam did have to face certain questions of orthodoxy in the theocratic constitution. But Islam did not confront the ultimate problem of the relationship between religious ethics and secular orders, which is a problem of religion and natural law.⁴⁰

We can use these Weber’s statements only partly in explaining how UMNO and PAS described Islamic state and Islamic law in the context of modern Malaysia. Malay Muslims did confront the problem of the relationship between religious ethics and secular orders. For Abdul Hadi Awang, Islamic civilization first developed under the Islamic State (*Negara Islam*) of Prophet Muhammad in Medina. Abdul Hadi Awang did not see his definition of Islamic state as that of a “theocracy” if it

means that the religious scholars, ulamas, or kings, hold both religious and political authority. In his speech, Awang reiterated his concept of the Islamic State based on the Constitution of Medina in which Islam was in power: “if Islam gains power, the country will be safe; if the *hudūd* law and *qiṣās* were enacted, criminals would fear; the Islamic state is the solution of the problems. What is prevailing today is not based on the Qur’an...”⁴¹ Abdul Hadi Awang conceived of Islamic comprehensiveness in terms of legal system – including the criminal law, to be applied in Malaysia when it becomes an Islamic State. However, UMNO leaders and scholars have been maintaining the Malaysia’s Constitution stating that Malaysia has Islam as its official religion but that which recognizes all other religions. In some cases, some UMNO scholars have tried to also justify their view of Malaysian Islamic state through reading the same Constitution of Medina, in a different sense that it provides a model for “a just and trustworthy government”, and “religious freedom” within a multi-religious and racial country. Islamic values are persistent, they maintain, but government institutions can change. As the Hadith inspires them, “you know better the business of this world.”⁴² One may suggest that this is a secularistic interpretation of Islam, and for *Islam Hadhari* advocates, the secular affairs are to be guided by, or in compatible with the fundamental religious values.

Between Political Islam and Substantive, Liberal Islam

The debate was further developed in the definition of politics of Islam. Realizing endless polemics with those termed as Islamists, Abdullah Badawi was reiterating the need for a dialogue, also in response to what some “Western observers” would call “the battle between Islam”. In Badawi’s view, “a battle over who would claim ownership over Islamic discourse would not benefit anyone in the Muslim world. It would become a zero-sum game.”⁴³ The battle of words or polemics between the ruling party and the opposition party however demonstrate tension regarding political Islam. The parties charged each other as being not touching the real problems. UMNO supporters charged PAS as being “too political, not substantive, not systematic, and not concerned about the real problems of the people”.⁴⁴ On the other hand, PAS leaders accused UMNO and their *Islam Hadhari* as “politically driven, Western-oriented, and artificial- not dealing with the real problems”. UMNO supporters defended their position by emphasizing that *Islam*

Hadhari was not meant as a tool to swing the Malay electoral vote in favor of UMNO.⁴⁵ “UMNO”, Badawi repeatedly asserted, “has never allowed religion to be used as a political tool... we staunchly oppose the use of Islam as an instrument to manipulate people’s beliefs”, a message obviously directed to PAS. In one of his speeches, Abdullah Badawi categorized PAS as representing a “political Islam”, or “an Islamist movement”, which does “politicization of religion to the extent that it claims a monopoly on Islam”.⁴⁶ Because *Islam Hadhari* was being promoted by Badawi as the government and the leader of UMNO, it is not difficult for the opposition to charge that *Islam Hadhari* is a political tool and that UMNO is doing a politicization of Islam. UMNO had recognized that the introduction of *Islam Hadhari* during the 2003 campaigns and the 2004 elections helped Abdullah Badawi gain a political support for leadership.⁴⁷ Thus, paradoxically, the agenda of *Islam Hadhari* proved to be both unifying – to all Malaysians, and divisive, provoking reactions from the oppositional party (PAS) and other opposing individuals and groups. Thus both UMNO and PAS leaders charge each other of “politicizing Islam”, using Islam for their political purposes.

As a response to a regional and global discourse of liberal Islam, both UMNO and PAS particularly have felt the need to challenge “liberal Islam”, including the one constructed and contested in Indonesia. For example, one of PAS leaders said in his speech: “Islam Liberal has been penetrating to our state and our people, a disease harming our faith and Islamic lifestyle. The National Front (*Barisan Nasional*) who bases on *Islam Hadhari* have allowed liberal Islam to develop; we, as Muslims and Malays, should not be fooled and damaged by the new way. The real issues (that should be dealt with) are abundant: economic crises, unemployment, corruption and misuse of power, money politics, and so forth...⁴⁸ In the speech, a master ceremony, also a member of PAS, critically commented that “Islam liberal has penetrated to Malaysia from Indonesia: their women do not wear headscarves...PAS Islam is not Islam of *Islam Hadhari*, is not liberal Islam, but is Islam of the Qur’an and the Hadith, ‘*ijmā*’ and *qiyās*...Allah is Great.”⁴⁹ In a PAS gathering in Kota Baru in Kelantan, one speaker criticized liberal Islam approach as being a Western influence in Muslim societies. He said,

In a seminar at Kuala Lumpur, ulama recently issued a *fatwá* on the danger of liberal Islam. It was foreign to Malaysia until recently when the Malays

educated not in Islamic studies, influenced by Indonesian intellectuals via books and seminars. Of course Islam respects reason, but there is faith (*‘aqīdah*) that cannot be reconstructed or questioned unlike in the West where Christian originality has been questioned. For Muslims there is no doubt in the Qur’an, unlike many Christians themselves who doubt the authenticity of the Bible...there is no historical criticism against the Qur’an... liberal Islam is a Western product...”⁵⁰

Many of *Islam Hadhari* advocates would not pay much attention to liberal Islam discourse in Malaysia. In some speeches, they wanted to show their tolerance toward some aspects of liberal Islam, but they tended to try to avoid the association of *Islam Hadhari* with *Islam Liberal*, because the former has been in contradiction with “the consensus of mainstream Islamic scholars” (*ijmā*), or because liberal Islam carried with it a heavy burden of being too Western-oriented. Seminars and public speeches have been held to discuss the characteristics and “danger” of liberal Islam. One of the seminars held by the Muslim Professional Forum, supportive of *Islam Hadhari*, responded to Professor Clive Kessler’s “the Struggle between ‘gentle Islam’ and ‘ungentle Islam’ within Malaysia” who once associated *Islam Hadhari* with liberal Islam. For the speakers in the seminar, “to equate liberal Islam with *Islam Hadhari* is highly irresponsible”.⁵¹ Thus, An attempt to make a distance from liberal Islam was made to maintain the “moderate” positioning of *Islam Hadhari*. *Islam Hadhari* was depicted as a moderate path toward reform and renewal, drawing upon various, but not necessarily liberalist elements. In addition, the term “Liberal Islam” is less accepted in Malaysia than in Indonesia because it has more Western, foreign connotation, and it is often associated with Indonesian form of freedom and democracy perceived to be alien to the sons of the soils of the Muslim Malays.

Unlike the Liberal Islam Network⁵² that focuses on the liberal and liberating principles that are independent of the state, *Islam Hadhari* emphasizes faith in God and the state’s economic and well-being development programs. *Islam Hadhari* stresses the integration of the “religious affairs” and the “world affairs”, whereas the Liberal Islam Network emphasizes the separation between the two. *Islam Hadhari* still relies on the religious scholars/ulama’s interpretations of Islamic Law in Malaysia, whereas the Liberal Islam Network tend to be critical of the ulama in matters that concern the public at large, especially women and minorities.

Between Revelation and Reason

As we can see in the formulation of *Islam Hadhari*, the realm of science was often played out. Abdullah Badawi, for example, made a link between Islam and science: “Islam demands the mastery of science and technology and the enhancement of skills and expertise. Many verses in the Qur’an that touch on the need to master science and technology should be studied. All Muslim students should be aware of Islam’s contribution to science and technology that brought about the birth of Renaissance in Europe. Initiatives to produce more Malay scientists who are capable of making new discoveries must be intensified.”⁵³ In Carl Ernst’s reading, this falls into the category of the Occidentalism that has been a rhetoric among Muslim intellectuals such as Syed Naquib al-Attas through his project of “the Islamization of knowledge”. What’s also interesting is if we look at this from a Weberian perspective of Islam. Weber recognized rejection of magic in early Islam,⁵⁴ but in its development, Islam had only a temporary flourishing time of intellectualism.

As for Islam, its distinctive religiosity could have experienced an infusion of intellectualism, apart from the official schools of law and theology and the temporary blooming of scientific interests, only after its penetration by Sufism, but the orientation of this intellectualism was not of rational character. Indeed, tendencies toward rationalism were completely lacking in the popular Dervish piety. In Islam only a few heterodox sects, displayed a distinctly intellectualistic character. Otherwise Islam, like medieval Christianity, produced scholasticism in its universities.⁵⁵

Weber further observed that “anti-rational inner attitude”, which is “characteristic of religions of unlimited trust in god” may occasionally produce a universalistic indifference to obvious practical and reasonable expectation.....”. Consequently, “anti-rationality may be manifested in a proud virtuosity of faith, or, when it avoids this danger of arrogant self-deification, it may be manifested in an unconditional religious surrender and a spiritual humility.”⁵⁶ For Abdullah Badawi and advocates of *Islam Hadhari*, science and Islam were essentially compatible, but history may not prove this compatibility due to the disobedience toward Islam among Muslims themselves. They blamed Muslims not Islam for the lack if not absence of scientific development, intellectualism and rationalism. God provided them with intellect to use and it would be their fault not to use intellect. The power of human will, which is an

embodiment of the power of God, should be maximized in order to pursue reform and develop science. Weber's assumption of the power of God over humans in Islam does not allow an understanding of humans possessing their will and power over their own actions. The new emphasis of human will, as Francis Robinson has argued, has to be an important characteristic of Islamic reform.⁵⁷ Advocates of *Islam Hadhari* did not see contradiction between the power of God and the power of human will as sought to be reconciled in the Ash'arite Sunni theology exemplified through al-Ghazālī.

Rationality was not merely for science, but for understanding Islam itself, it is argued. Thus, *Islam Hadhari* was located within the context of reform (*iṣlāḥ*) and renewal or independent reasoning (*ijtihād*). Abdullah Badawi encouraged the need for "rational understanding" of Islam so that it be always relevant today and in this place in the following way:

Today we must encourage reform and renewal. I have always believed that by opening up discursive space in the Muslim world, we enrich our intellectual tradition and directly challenge the extremist extremist doctrines which have become synonymous with Islam over the last few years. Muslim political leaders, scholars, and intellectuals, must be courageous enough to encourage – and not stifle – the voices of moderation and reason. Where one refers to these voices as those of 'modernist Islam', or 'progressive Islam', or even 'liberal Islam', I believe they have an important contribution to make toward the renewal of Islamic thought. Islam must not be ossified and fossilized by blind imitation of traditional thought and opinion. Rigid obscurantism, exclusively literalist doctrines and atavistic notions of a past ideal, prevents Islam from being a religion for all time as intended by Allah...⁵⁸

When emphasizing the openness to new thinking, Badawi made a reference to Muhammad Iqbal who wrote, "since things have changed and the world of Islam today confronted and affected by new forces set free by extraordinary development of human thought in all its directions, I see no reason why the attitude of finality in the legal schools should be maintained. The teaching of the Qur'an that life is a process of progressive creation necessities that each generation, guided but unhampered by the work of its predecessor should be permitted to solve its own problems."⁵⁹ Badawi asserts that Islam demands the mastery of science and technology: "many verses in the Qur'an touch on the need to master science and technology. Muslim students should

be aware of Islam's contribution to science and technology, which undoubtedly led to the birth of the Renaissance in Europe...."⁶⁰

PAS authors would not disagree with the importance of knowledge and the pursuit of science and the value of reason but they emphasize that knowledge comes from the divine and its pursuit is not merely for its own sake, but for increasing piety. They value both religious education and academic, secular education, although in reality in Kelantan they promote more religious education (many *pondok* and some "modern" *madrasah*).⁶¹ One of the speeches that Nik Abdul Aziz delivered in Kelantan, addressed the compatibility of Islam and science, but shows an apologetic tone that can be also found in UMNO progressive Muslims:

Before the fall of Islam, many of the ulama were also scientists. Their products were adopted by the West. The perception that religion is against science emerged in the West when church became the antithesis... religion and science come from Allah, and both reinforce the belief in Him. The Qur'an and Hadith contain scientific facts, and many of the Qur'anic verses encourage human beings to study the creature of Allah in order that they admit His glory.⁶²

In his *ḥadārah Islāmīyah*, Abdul Hadi Awang elaborates the value of knowledge and wisdom, but emphasizes that knowledge and wisdom all come from God and should be linked to religion. It seems that Abdul Hadi Awang is more preoccupied with how to advance religious knowledge in Islamic schools rather than public schools. He focuses on the importance of *fiqh* knowledge and moral integrity as the prerequisite for the administration of the state, "unlike that which is being promoted by *Islam Hadhari*".⁶³ Comparatively speaking, the need for renewal and reform through science has been emphasized by the authors of *Islam Hadhari* and not by Abdul Hadi Awang in his *ḥadārah Islāmīyah*.

Between Domestic Tolerance and International Conflict

Islam Hadhari is being constructed not merely as a response to the domestic predicaments of being Muslim in polarizing Muslim communities. Badawi portrays himself and his approach as embodying tolerance in a multi-religious Malaysia: "those of other faiths in Malaysia, although minority, have never been persecuted. There is no tolerance in my administration for discrimination and prejudice against any

religious group. I am a Muslim, but am also a leader of all Malaysians – regardless of their faith.”⁶⁴ Although cases of discrimination and racial prejudices are happening in Malaysia, Abdullah Badawi wanted to emphasize his endorsement of tolerance toward minorities and women as a principle. In other writings, tolerance was emphasized as inherently Islamic. One can argue that the stressing that Islam is a religion of peace, that Islam gives freedom to choose, that Islam promulgates tolerance and dialogue,⁶⁵ serves as a normative approach, rather than a tool of analysis of understanding the causes of the problems of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in Malaysia and elsewhere. The emphasis that Islam is a religion of peace, that Islam gives freedom to choose, that Islam promulgates tolerance and dialogue, can be seen as an assertive if not apologetic statement not so much different from PAS position. It is not a tool of analysis of understanding the causes of the intolerances in Malaysia and elsewhere, neither it is a proposal for theological, religious pluralism.

Global politics has certainly shaped the interpretation of Islam Hadhari. *Islam Hadhari* is a response to what they see as the global misperceptions about Islam and terrorism in the West. For Badawi and his supporters, the perception of the “clash of civilizations” and the association of Islam with terrorism, strengthened the need for an Islam that is civilized, peaceful, and tolerant.

Unlike the previous public concepts, such as *Rukun Negara*, which are local and national, *Islam Hadhari* addressed the international audience. In response to globalization and globalism, Abdullah Badawi encouraged the Malays particularly to “nurture a global mindset, understand the global scenario, acquire proper beneficial knowledge and be skilled, master technology and compete, build up international networks, and be able to communicate and interact through a global *lingua franca*, namely English...” recognizing the value of the secular and the religious matters, a dichotomy to be integrated. The comprehensiveness has been also defined as an integration of both scripture-based sciences and modern sciences and as an integration of individual, society, and state.

Furthermore, geopolitics has shaped the way in which Abdullah Badawi envisaged his progressive vision of Islam in Muslim-West relationship. He often stressed that *Islam hadhari* is a response to what they see as the global misperceptions about Islam and terrorism in the

West. For Badawi and his supporters, the perception of the “clash of civilizations” and the association of Islam with terrorism, strengthened the need for an Islam that is civilized, peaceful, and tolerant. Deputy Prime Minister Dato Sri Mohd Najib, for example, observed that “the Islam community should have a higher quality, be more respected, and be cleared from the misperception of Islamic terrorists nowadays.”⁶⁶ Abdullah Badawi’s position as the chairman of both the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), was used to promote *Islam Hadhari*. He said, “Collectively, the OIC must shatter the increasing prejudices against Muslims worldwide. The international community must stop equating Islam with violence, poverty, and indignity. The OIC must address the issues that are contributing to the growing schism between the Muslim world and the West.”⁶⁷ Badawi saw how the issues of Palestine and Iraq have become obstacles in creating global peace, asking the West to change their policies in the Middle East. As an ideal, Badawi said, “the world should not be divided into the rich and the poor, North and South, East and West, Muslim and non-Muslim.”⁶⁸ This emphasis on global peace does not seem to mean that people are losing or ignoring their identities. In explaining one of the principles of *Islam Hadhari*, Badawi emphasize dialogue and cooperation between countries.

Concluding Remarks

The construction and contestation of *Islam Hadhari* in Malaysia provides a case study of public discourse among the government and the opposition calling for reform in the modernizing world. Although being constructed as comprehensive and progressive, *Islam Hadhari* serves (1) as a normative approach reconciling piety and pragmatism, rather than a practical mechanism for understanding the roots of the Malay Muslims’ problems in Malaysia, (2) as a tool for gaining or maintaining power amidst opposing ideologies, and third, (3) as an identity and image restoration of Islam as a complete civilization today and in the future as in the past; and (4) as a response to the Western dominance and rehabilitating the good old days of Muslim history at times of crisis and “feeling left behind”. Because *Islam Hadhari* belongs to the state, its effectiveness and acceptability among the polarizing Muslim audience remains low.

The case of *Islam Hadhari* in contemporary Malaysia reveals a

recurrent practice of Muslims constructing what is permanent and what is changing, what is religious and what is not religious, what is authentic and what is modern, and what is Western and what is Islamic. In this practice, both UMNO and PAS leaders and intellectuals offer their normative visions, sometimes contradictory sometimes in agreement but without recognition. If William Graham sees traditionalism in Islam because of the constant referencing to the Qur'an and the Way of Muhammad, one then can see progressivism within Islam because of the constant contextualization of the "that tradition" within "local" traditions and global modernity. Despite their political stands, Muslims continue to look back to the basic and to the past, an outcome of which is to be applied "here and now." This act of looking back and forth may be seen as a paradox, but it can also be analyzed as a creative effort at striking a balance and as a mechanism of resolving perceived contradictions. Learning from the construction and contestation of *Islam Hadhari* by UMNO and PAS leaders and scholars, one can also interpret this act of "looking back, looking at present, and looking forward" as a process of gaining as much as power they can obtain.

This paper has proved the usefulness of observing Islamic reform as dialectic of movement and countermovement, discourse and counter-discourse, but also in terms of time (past, present, and future). It has discussed Weberian modernization theory, its uses and limits in explaining the relationship between Islam and modernity. This hopes to contribute to address a wider question of "what social-political conditions make the idea of "progressive Islam" or "civilizational Islam" has to happen." This article offers us with the way in which multi-culturalism and eclecticism, often ambivalent and paradoxical, characterizes Muslim projects of modernity amidst the strong connectedness to the past and scriptures. This makes a Weberian modernization perspective partly illuminating and partly unhelpful.

Endnotes

1. Carl W. Ernst, “the Perils of Civilizational Islam in Malaysia”, in Carl W. Ernst and Richard C. Martin, *Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism* (Columbia: South Carolina: the University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 266-77.
2. David Hakken, “Free/Libre and Open Source Software: A Good Way to ‘Hadharize’ Technology?”, paper presented at the Third Workshop on Transdisciplinary Research, “ICT and Islam Hadhari”, Universiti Sains Malaysia, April 2005.
3. Terence Chong, “the Emerging Politics of Islam Hadhari”, in Saw Swee Hock and K. Kesavapany, eds, *Malaysia: Recent Trends and Challenges* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006), 26-43.
4. Faris Noor, “Islam Hadhari Can’t Save Malaysia”, online at <http://jedyoong.wordpress.com/2008/02/28/farish-noor-islam-hadhari-cant-save-malaysia/>
5. The speech and other official speeches can be accessed on www.pmo.gov.my, www.islamhadhari.net, and www.islam.gov.my/islamhadhari/
6. For South Asian context, see Francis Robinson, “Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia”, *Modern Asian Studies*, Special Double Issue 2-3, 2007, 259-281.
7. William R. Roff, *the Origins of Malay Nationalism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 56-7.
8. See Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii at Manoa, 2001), 208.
9. On 31 August 1970, Malaysia’s Independence Day, the *Rukun Negara* was proclaimed: “Our nation, Malaysia, being dedicated to achieving a greater unity of all her peoples; to maintaining a democratic way of life; to creating a just society in which the wealth of the nation shall be equitably shared; to ensuring a liberal approach to her rich and diverse cultural traditions; to building a progressive society which shall be oriented to modern science and technology.” in Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii at Manoa, 2001), 298-9.
10. See Anwar Ibrahim, *the Asian Renaissance* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1996).
11. There needs to be a separate research on the popularity of, understanding about, and acceptability of *Islam Hadhari*. A survey conducted in 2005 showed that “ninety-three percent had heard about *Islam Hadhari*, but only 53.3 % were able to state that they understood it.” Patricia Martínez, “Thumbs up to living in Malaysia Diversity”, *New Straits Times*, in Gerhard Hoffstaedter, “Islam Hadhari: A Malaysian Islamic Multiculturalism or Another blank Banner?”, *Contemporary Islam: the Dynamics of Muslim Life*, vol.3, no.2, 121-141, published online 18 April 2009.
12. Gerhard Hoffstaedter argues that the conservatives rather than the moderate and liberal groups are those who have been utilizing the public space. However, in my view, this does not mean that the advocates of Islam Hadhari have been passive in disseminating their vision and agenda through the institutions and media. See Gerhard Hoffstaedter, “Islam Hadhari: A Malaysian Islamic Multiculturalism or Another blank Banner?”, *Contemporary Islam: the Dynamics of Muslim Life*, vol.3, no.2, 121-141, published online 18 April 2009.
13. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, “Islam Hadhari and the Malay Agenda,” in *Islam Hadhari: A Model Approach for Development and Progress*, (Petaling Jaya: MPH Group Publishing, 2006), 17
14. See Isaac Kramnick, ed., *the Portable Enlightenment Reader* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995).
15. “Kelantan Rejects Islam Hadhari concept, says Nik Aziz”, *Daily Press*, Tuesday, June 29, 2004.
16. Sharifah Zaleha Syed Hassan, “The Dakwah Phenomenon: Islamic Oppositional Discourses in Malaysia”, *Sari*, Vol. 17, July 1999, 19-36.
17. Badawi, “Islam Hadhari and the Malay Agenda,” *Islam Hadhari*, 4.

18. Badawi, "Islam Hadhari and the Malay Agenda," in *Islam Hadhari*, 19.
19. Mohammed Sherif Bashir, "Islam Hadhari: Concept and Prospect", in *ReadingIslam.com*, accessed on February 26, 2008.
20. Badawi, "Islam, Malaysia, and the Wider World," in *Islam Hadhari*, 47.
21. Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff (N.p.: Beacon Press, 1993), 41,93, 161-4.
22. See, for example, C.E. Black, *the Dynamics of Modernization* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).
23. See Badawi, *Islam Hadhari*.
24. See Carl Ernst, "the Perils of Civilizational Islam", 271.
25. Abdul Hadi Awang, VCD, "Jawi dah Jadi Rumi: Penjelasan Perbezaan antara Islam Hadhari & Hadharah Islamiyah", a speech in front of PAS members, at the Darul Ummah, Kampung Pandan, 2006.
26. Nik Abdul Aziz bin Nik Mat, "Sekapur Sireh", in Abdul Hadi Awang, *Hadharah Islamiyyah Bukan Islam Hadhari* (Kuala Lumpur: Nufair Street Sdn Bhd, 2005), x.
27. Abdul Hadi Awang, *Hadharah Islamiyyah Bukan Islam Hadhari* (Kuala Lumpur: Nufair Street Sdn Bhd, 2005), 139-71.
28. Badawi, "Islam, Malaysia, and the Wider World," *Islam Hadhari*, 44.
29. See Francis Robinson, "Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia", 272-7.
30. Syarifuddin Muhammad, *Manhaj Islam Hadhari: Konsep & Metodologi* (Kuala Lumpur: Konsortium Warisan Maju Bersama, 2005).124.
31. Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, 191.
32. Badawi, "foreword", in *Islam Hadhari*, xvi.
33. See Syarifuddin Muhammad, *Manhaj Islam Hadhari: Konsep & Metodologi* (Kuala Lumpur: Konsortium Warisan Maju Bersama, 2005).
34. William Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay of Interpretation" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 23, No. 3, Religion and History (Winter, 1993), 495-522.
35. Badawi, "In Search of Everlasting Peace," in *Islam Hadhari*, cover page.
36. Awang, *Hadharah Islamiyyah Bukan Islam Hadhari* , 44-5.
37. Awang, *Hadharah Islamiyyah Bukan Islam Hadhari*, 39-43.
38. Joseph Chiyong Liow, *Piety and Politics: Islamism in Contemporary Malaysia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 107.
39. Badawi, "Islam Hadhari and the Malay Agenda," in *Islam Hadhari*, 7.
40. Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, 233.
41. Abdul Hadi Awang, VCD, "Jawi dah Jadi Rumi: Penjelasan Perbezaan antara Islam Hadhari & Hadharah Islamiyah", a speech in front of PAS members, at the Darul Ummah, Kampung Pandan, 2006.
42. Syarifuddin Muhammad, *Manhaj Islam Hadhari: Konsep & Metodologi*, Kuala Lumpur: Konsortium Warisan Maju Bersatu, 2005, 271.
43. Badawi, "Islam, Malaysia, and the Wider World," in *Islam Hadhari*, 49-50.
44. Interview, Encik Farid Razak, Kota Baru, Kelantan, June 17, 2006.
45. Badawi, "About the Author," in *Islam Hadhari*, xi.
46. Badawi, "Islam, Malaysia, and the Wider World," in *Islam Hadhari*, 42-3.
47. In the 2004 general election, Badawi's first election as the incumbent Prime Minister, he delivered a victory for his party's coalition Barisan Nasional by winning 198 out of 220 in parliament. This wrested control of the Trengganu state government back from the opposition Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS), as well as coming close to capturing the traditional PAS stronghold of Kelantan. This victory was widely regarded as an approval of his vision of Islam Hadhari over political Islam of PAS. Mohammed Sherif Bashir, "Islam Hadhari: Concept and Prospect", *ReadingIslam.com*, accessed on February 2, 2008.
48. Speech, Datuk Hj. Ahmad bin Yaquub, deputy of commissioner I, PAS of Kelantan, June 14, 2006.

49. Master of ceremony, at the public speech, Kelantan, June 14, 2006.
50. Speech, Mohd. Umar, executive board of PAS of Kelantan, a graduate of Edinburgh University, delivered on a Friday public sermon at the market of Kota Bharu,
51. Unfortunate Labeling: To Equate Liberal Islam with Islam Hadhari is highly Irresponsible” <http://www.aliran.com/oldsite/monthly/2005b/10f.html>
52. The Liberal Islam Network (JIL), founded by young Indonesian Muslim intellectual-activists, in March 2001, was as a counter-movement to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in newly open political circumstances made possible by Soeharto’s fall in 1998, in the context of both Indonesian reformism and global Islamic reformism. Outside the state’s intervention and beyond the political party system, JIL activists define and construct modern concepts such as civil society, pluralism, secularism, liberalism, democracy, human rights and gender equality to conform to the Indonesian context and at the same time reinterpret Islamic texts and intellectualism to conform to these modern values in order to make Islam relevant in the modern world. The development of a a civil association as JIL should be explained in changing national and global discourses of the relationship between Islam, politics, and culture. Please see Muhamad Ali, “the Rise of the Liberal Islam Network (JIL) in Contemporary Indonesia”, the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, 22, 1, 2005, 1-27.
53. Speech, September 23, 2004.
54. See Webber, 78.
55. See Webber, 131.
56. See Webber, 195.
57. Francis Robison, “Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia”, *Modern Asian Studies*, 1-26.
58. Badawi, “Islam, Malaysia, and the Wider World,” in *Islam Hadhari*, 39.
59. Badawi, “Islam Hadhari”, in *Islam Hadhari*, in *Islam Hadhari*, 57-8.
60. Badawi, “Islam Hadhari and the Malay Agenda,” in *Islam Hadhari*, 6.
61. Muhamad Ali, “Transmission of Islamic Knowledge in Kelantan,” *The Journal of Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol.79, no.2, 2006, 39-58.
62. Nik Abdul Aziz bin Haji Nik Mat, *Koleksi Ucapan Rasmi* (Kota Bharu: Dian Darul Naim, 1999), 47-8.
63. Awang, *Hadharah Islamiyah bukan Islam Hadhari*, 121.
64. Badawi, “Islam Hadhari,” in *Islam Hadhari*, 61.
65. Musa Ahmad, “Tolerance in the Perspective of Islam Hadhari”, Musa Ahmad, ed., *Towards the Development of Hadhari Society in Malaysia* (Shah Alam, Selangor: Pusat Penerbitan Universiti, UiTM, 2005), 69-74.
66. Dato Sri Mohd Najib, then deputy prime minister, current prime minister, Kata-kata Aluan”, Syarifuddin Muhammad, *Manhaj Islam Hadhari: Konsep & Metodologi*, Konsortium Warisan Maju Bersatu, 2005), np.
67. Badawi, “Islam Hadhari and the Malay Agenda,” in *Islam Hadhari*, 9.
68. Badawi, “Islam Hadhari and the Malay Agenda,” in *Islam Hadhari*, 11.

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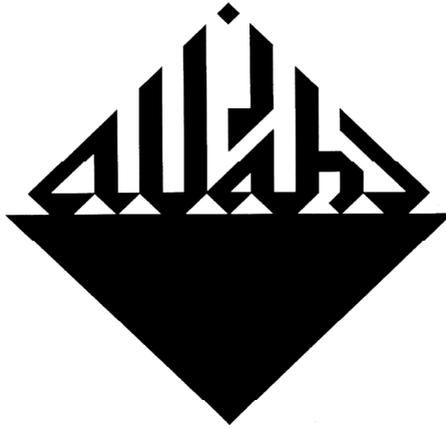
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