

THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE NOTION OF ECONOMIC MAN: SECULAR AND ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstrak

Kajian masalah ekonomi telah bergeser dari studi kekayaan (sumber daya material) kepada studi tingkah laku manusia ketika Lionel Robbins menerbitkan karya besarnya pada 1932. Ekonomi sebagai sebuah disiplin diminati untuk dikaji dalam bidang perilaku agen ekonomi dalam membuat keputusan-keputusan dalam alokasi sumber daya yang terbatas berhadapan dengan kebutuhan-kebutuhan manusia yang tak terbatas. Bagi beberapa sarjana, materi pokok ekonomi Islam sama saja dengan sistem ekonomi konvensional yaitu perilaku agen ekonomi. Yang pasti, kedua sistem ekonomi itu mempunyai beberapa doktrin dan asumsi sifat alami perilaku agen ekonomi yang terkait dengan kehidupan ekonomi mereka dan juga tujuan pengembangan dan kemajuan manusia ekonomi. Tendensi manusia ekonomi sebagai agen ekonomi yang rasional adalah mengejar kepentingan diri, memaksimalkan kegunaan miliknya, dan pertimbangan nilai-nilai sebagai variabel exogenous. Di sisi lain, ekonomi Islam menempatkan Muslim sebagai agen ekonomi yang rasional, mengejar berbagai keinginan (kemaslahatan pribadi bersama-sama dengan kepentingan Tuhan), kemaslahatan sosial, dan kemaslahatan lingkungan), dan pertimbangan etika sebagai variabel endogen yang akan membentuk perilaku Islam dalam analisa ekonomi. Konsep pengembangan dan kemajuan manusia dikerangkakan dalam hubungannya dengan "karakteristik" manusia ekonomi dan "gol"nya untuk dicapai. Artikel ini akan mengeksplorasi perbedaan konseptual tentang manusia ekonomi di dalam Islam dan ekonomi konvensional, khususnya konsep pengembangan manusia dalam kedua sistem ekonomi tersebut.

Kata Kunci: Pandangan Islam, pandangan sekular, manusia ekonomi, Muslim, agen ekonomi, perilaku, perkembangan, kemajuan.

Abstract

Economics subject as study has shifted from the study of wealth (material resources) to the study of human behavior when Lionel Robbins published his monumental work in 1932. Economics as a discipline is interested to study the economic agent behavior in making decisions of allocation resources which are scarce relative to human wants which are unlimited. To some scholars, the subject matter of Islamic economics is similar, i.e., the behavior of economic agent. Both economics, definitely, have several doctrines and assumptions of the nature of economic agent behavior related to their economic life and also the notion of economic man development and progress. Mainstream economics conceives homo economicus as the economic agent who is rational, pursuing self-interest, maximizing his own utility, and consider values judgments as exogenous variables. Islamic economics, on the other hand, conceives homo Islamicus as the economic agent who is Islamically

rational, pursuing multiple interests (self-interest together with God-interest, social-interest, and the environment-interest), and considers ethics as endogenous variables that would shape the behavior of Islamic man in economic analysis. The concept of human progress and development is outlined in accordance with this "characteristics" of economic man and his "goals" to be achieved. This paper will explore the conceptual differences of economic man in Islamic and conventional framework as well as the concept of human development in both traditions.

Keywords: Islamic worldview, secular worldview, homo economicus, homo Islamicus, economic agent behavior, development, progress.

A. Introduction

Kirzner (2000: 14) opens his article *Human Nature and the Character of Economic Science* by saying "It has long been recognized that economics depends for the derivation of its theoretical propositions, upon its understanding of human nature." Economics, as a science, has been approved by most of economists as a social science that studies human behavior in making decisions and solving of what it is called as economic problem. The subject matter of economics in this regard is the "behavior of human being." Specifically, the behavior of economic man (*homo economicus*) who is the 'imaginary' person created with certain assumptions portrayed by economists.

Economics as science studies those assumptions and utilizes them in technical analysis to examine the effects that might take place in economic realities as a result of his action and decisions. Not only that, those assumptions in economic man also ontologically become the conceptual basis and guidance to develop a discipline of economics. Economic man is equipped with the 'vision' putted by economists based on certain ideology or worldview that will guide further development of economics as a science.

Islamic economics, as a new discipline which formally emerged in 1976 when the first international conference of Islamic economics was convened in Mecca, also has particular notions of the behavior of economic agent who will apply its principles/theories in practical life. In fact, to some scholars, the subject matter of Islamic economics will be the behavior of human being in economic matters. The agent in Islamic economics is called as Islamic man (*Homo Islamicus*), who is equipped with Islamic assumptions on his economic behavior.

The similarity of subject matter in both disciplines is an interesting area of study. How both economics construct their economic man? What are their characteristics? What are their vision of his progress and development? Is there any similarities or differences? This paper is trying to explore the notion of economic agent, his characteristics and achievement, in both conventional and Islamic economics. Ontologically, such comparison is justified as both economics is constructed from certain worldview of how do we see human being. Conventional economics (i.e. Capitalist economic) is the economic that constructed based on the vision/ideology of secularism, materialism, positivism, and Islamic economics is created based on Islamic worldview by using Islamic legitimate sources of knowledge. The basic argument is that the economic man behavior is created based on a particular worldview. This ideological difference certainly will lead to some sort of differences in the ontological notion of the nature of man. In addition, the economists do not only portray the characteristics of economic man, but also, interestingly, the concept of progress and development is also derived based on those characteristics which are the subject interest of this paper.

B. Worldview, Economics and Economic Man

Lionel Robbins ([1932]/1945: 16), in the history of economics, is believed to be the one who has revolutionized the subject matter of economics from the science that study wealth to the science that study aspects of human being (Kirzner, 1976). He redefined economics as “the science which studies *human behavior* as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses.” Economics in this regard is put as discipline that study the allocation of scarce resources to satisfy the human’s unlimited wants. Scarcity arises due to human’s wants exceed the available resources, forces human being to choose and make decisions of *what* to produce, *how* to produce and *who* should get the production outputs in the best and efficient ways. The three questions reflect the basic economic problems namely consumption, production and distribution faces by individuals and society at large Robbins argues that in economics, all of those things depend on the actions and decisions of human beings. So, in order to get started, economists are going to make some assumptions about human beings, how human beings act and how human beings decide in facing those economic problems.

The interest to study the behavior of human being in making choices lead economists to conceive certain notions on human being, the actor who will represent these behavioral assumptions in his economic life. Economists conceive that the agent as *homo economicus*(economic man) who is believed to act based on several assumptions portrayed by the economic philosophers. The economists also portray goals going to be achieved by this economic man and also the concept of his progress and development.

In this effort, modern economics is preceded by what Schumpeter (1954) and Heilbroner (1988) call a “vision” or an “ideology” which is constructed from the secularist-materialist worldview of Western civilization. That worldview, which is constructed from the Western society’s experience, plays a role in conceiving the substance of modern economics as Spengler (1980: xiii) observes “the content of economic thought was not initially independent of the socio-physical parameters of the society within which it developed, nor did it ever become completely independent even in modern times.” He further contends “economic science is essentially a product of European civilization with some of its origin dating back to the Greco-Roman and medieval worlds” (p. xii). Therefore, there is an ontological bias of economics which will not make it as universal economics to understand the whole type of society or the whole human being as implied by Heilbroner (1999: 310) in his classic book *The Worldly Philosopher* that contemporary economics “is not a science of society, its purpose is to help us better understand the capitalist setting in which we will most likely have to shape our collective destiny for the foreseeable future.” Modern economics is a special economics which limited scope to explain the behavior of human being based of several assumptions built upon the Western’s worldview and shaped by western society’s experience.

Those assumptions gradually become postulates and ‘unstable’ dogma in economics. The worldview of materialism and secularism considers human behavior in a materialistic perspective by merely concerned on self-material satisfaction and secularist perspective by detaching individual from religion. Any religious/spiritual insight is considered irrelevant. The materialist and secular view of the ultimate nature of human being believes that human action is motivated merely by the materialistic side of human being. His action is basically a response of his natural urge to increase the self-utility and to satisfy all his desire. Human being also will avoid any pain that will reduce his utility.

In this perspective, the metaphysic is removed and the role of religion is eliminated. Scientific methods require source of knowledge from a ‘verifiable’ sources and not a ‘dogmatic’ or mythological

doctrine. The nature is a reliable alternative of God to be the source of knowledge as it is running based on certain fixed and harmony law. This "law of nature" is the ultimate source of knowledge that could explain realities, which is not only in physical realities of the universe but also in the microcosmic nature of human being. The beauty of this law is in its consistency and harmony so that it can predict and forecast well the future.

Utility maximization, individual rationality and self-interest are the primary axioms in capitalism derived from scholars' understanding of nature. Those assumptions, they argue, are very close to the fact (the reality as it is) and could properly explain and predict the behavior of economic man. With the triumph of methodological positivism in economics, economic man behavior should be as close as possible to the fact. Economics is not interested in explaining of what "ought to be". *Homo economicus* (with the assumptions that we will explain in part 3) is conceived as the ultimate nature of human being that perfectly represents the actual view of the nature of man as he "is".

Such notion of economic agent who is driven by self-interest is argued to follow the "moral equivalent of the force of gravity in nature" (Myers, 1983, 4). The nature of human being in this regard is reduced to be an autonomous/atomistic individual in all his activities where he measures value at the level of personal impulses, desires and preferences (Ryan, 2003: 249). Such conception according to Davis (2003: 17) is the result of the "methodological individualism" applied by mainstream economics. Methodological individualism is a doctrine within which "all explanations of social phenomena have to be couched in terms of statements about individuals . . . a refusal to examine the institutional or other forces which are involved in the molding of individual preferences and purposes" (Hodgson, 1988: 53–56). It is ". . . usually associated with the reductionism claim that all theories of Social Science are reducible to theories of individual human action" (Wolozin, 2001: 48). Methodological individualism believes that social structure is influenced by individuals and the individuals in various fundamental respects are not influenced by social structures (Davis, 2003: 128).

As a science, the subject matter of Islamic economics, for some scholars, is also the behavior of human being in allocating the resources and answering the economic problems. Arif (1985), for example, defines Islamic economics as "the study of Muslim's behaviour who organizes the resources, which are a trust, to achieve *falāh*." M.A. Choudhury (1986: 4) defines Islamic economic as "the sum total of historical, empirical, and theoretical studies that analyze the human and the societal wants in the light of an integrated Islamic value system." Khurshid Ahmad (1992:19) defines Islamic economics as "a systematic effort to try to understand the economic problem and man's behaviour in relation to the problem from an Islamic perspective." Naqvi (1994: 20) defines Islamic economics as "a study of the representative Muslim's behaviour in a modern Muslim society." And Kahf (2003) defines Islamic economics as "the study of economic behaviour of men and women, as individual economic agents, and as communities and collective entities."

Since the subject matter is the behavior of human being, then the presence of an economic agent in an Islamic framework who will apply Islamic principles in economics is a necessary. Mannan (1984: 56) writes *homo Islamicus* as "a must for the successful operation of the Islamic socio-economic system." Without *homo Islamicus*, Islamic socio-economic framework cannot be properly implemented. The concept of human behavior in Islamic economics is different to the concept of *homo economicus* in conventional economics as the notion, objective, and the 'expected' behavior of human being to achieve that objective is different. The differences arise due to the ontological differences in economic vision (ie., worldview).

Conventional economics is constructed from the secular worldview that would eliminate any insight from divine revelation (religion) and see human as merely in secular framework. The perspective on the nature of man is purely derived from philosophical speculation of reasoning or accumulated man life experience. *Homo economicus* constructed from that worldview.¹ *Homo Islamicus*, who will be the economic agent in Islamic economic analysis, is constructed from the Islamic worldview of how Islam perceives the nature of human being. The ultimate source of Islamic worldview is the revelation (i.e., the Qur'an and Sunnah) where God, who has created human being, has revealed of where he come from, why he has been created, and what is his destiny in earthly life.

Islamic worldview perceives reality not like the West, devoid of the Divine. Al-Attas (1993) notes the meaning of worldview in Islam as *ru'yatal-Islām li al-wujūd* and not *nazrat al-Islām li al-kawn*. A Worldview in Islam is not merely the mind's view of the physical world and of man's historical, social, political and cultural involvement in it (as the latter phrase denotes). It is beyond that. Worldview in Islam is the way Islam looks at the existences (*al-wujūd*) of God, human-beings and the total universe, and not the way Islam looks at merely the physical universe (*al-kawn*), which usually leads to God-negation metaphysics and a purely materialistic view of reality. The Islamic worldview links inseparably the life in this world (*al-dunya*) with the life in the hereafter (*al-akhirah*). The Islamic worldview, in the word of SayyidQutb (1991: 1) aims at explaining human being with the 'real' realities that confront him which is the reality of the Creator and the created (which include the universe, life and man), the nature of relationship of these realities and their mutual interconnection. This worldview, which is more comprehensive, has implication in deriving human nature, his behavior and action, and also his goals of life which makes Islamic notion of economic man differ to conventional view.

This unique worldview then is going to be adopted, applied and integrated in the conception of Islamic economic agent that will be broaden his nature, responsibility, objective as well as the criteria for his progress and development, rather than merely an individual agent equipped with self-interest, motivated merely by the materialistic side of the human being, and has a vision of merely to this temporary life as in conventional economics. Islamic man has a spiritual-transcendental dimension. His self-interested behavior will not be pursued at the expense of social interest or against regulations set up by the God. His motivation is not only to increase his own utility and valued by the material progress but also other's utility and valued beyond materialist reward. His behavior is consciously targeted to reach happiness in this world and the world after. He will submit to the God in all his economic pursuits. Islamic economics, model and theory, will not restrict man's vision to his existence in this world without any thought of the hereafter.

Islamic economics will not emphasize only one side of behavior as conventional did. But see him as a complete creature, has a potential to be a perfect human being (*al-insan al-kamil*). The nature of human is broadened in Islamic perspective as not to be the physical being with the goal of materialism *perse*. Human being is a physical-intellectual-spiritual being as envisaged in the following verse. His needs are broader to include physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual (*Al-Sajadah, 32, 6-9*).

C. The Characteristics of Economic Man in Islamic and Secular Economics

Economic man or Islamic man is an ideological construction. The economists' view of reality has deeply influenced this conception. His behavior, in making choice and decisions, is not purely derived from the 'facts' as claimed by positivist economists, but based on some economists'

'imagination' attached to him in the form of 'assumptions' which eventually becomes 'untestable doctrine'. Some main doctrines in conceiving economic man as follow.

1. Rationality

Rationality in economics is a *psychological* attribute. The rational economic man is the one who displays a particular *personal* disposition. Rational man optimizes within constrained circumstances; he allocates the scarce resources that are available to him efficiently among competing uses. In so doing, he displays a remarkable set of abilities. He is able to indicate a well-defined preferred objective, to obtain all the information that pertains to that objective, to deduce logically the action that is necessary to reach that objective, and to put that action into effect (Steele, 2005: 559).

In turn this requires that the perfect information of the economic universe and full-determination of the degree of risk and uncertainty behind economic events. Homo Economicus is *rational* in that he has the ability to create mental images of possible goods and the satisfaction they provide as well as the ability to calculate precisely concerning these possible satisfactions. He acts on the basis of these calculations to make decisions that lead to his maximum satisfaction (Tomer, 2001).

A rational *homo economicus* will maximize his satisfaction. The maximization postulates state that the firms in general desire to maximize their profits and the individuals desire to maximize their satisfaction or utility. As a consumer, homo economicus derives maximum utility from consumption of goods and services. The concept of utility refers to the numerical score representing the satisfaction that a consumer gets from a market basket (Pyndick and Rubinfeld, 2001: 73). As a producer, homo economicus' objective is to maximize profits, minimize costs without any regards to the implications for workers or for environment. This is inline with self-interest assumption where homo economicus will maximize his own satisfaction regardless of 'other interest' as large as possible.

Maximizing utility and satisfaction of all unlimited desires becomes a supreme goal in mainstream economics on which all economic theories, policies, regulations and institutions are based on should patronize. The concept of ethics, *sine qua non*, is also developed based on this notion which tends to isolate other ethics of sympathy, ascetic, social solidarity and others. Capitalism, as a secular based economics and detaches 'proper' ethics from its realm, often leads individual character of 'rationality' to be egoistic and exploitative. Rationality is egoistic because in this maximization framework individuals will maximize their own welfare independently of others (as to increase other welfare means we should minimize our own satisfaction), as if the society does not exist. He is an egoist because he is exploitative in the sense that he maximizes not independently of, but at the cost of the others. He exploits the needs of the others.

On rationality assumption in conventional economics regarding the behavior of economic agent, some Islamic economists such as Laliwala (1989) and Syed Agil (1992) contend that rationality and maximization postulates can be retain in Islamic economics as tools of analysis since it has predictive value and leads to some verifiable conclusions. However, the concept of rationality needs to be modified in accordance with Islamic values since Islamic economics insists on the acceptance of Islamic goals.

The notion of rationality as understood by mainstream economics is a narrow concept and not appropriate for homo Islamicus since it measures in its rational calculation only the material satisfaction of individual's utility or firm's profit. Some scholars, such as Siddiqi (1992), Kahf (1992) and Syed Agil (1992) propose 'Islamic rationality' as an extension of conventional rationality which is more comprehensive and integrative with Islamic values. Rationality in Islam although recognizes

the profit and utility maximization of an individual and firm, it is not considered as the 'ends' but as the 'means' that is used to achieve another important objectives such as social, moral and spiritual concern. Syed Agil (1992: 46) and Kahf (1992) contend that rationality in Islam connotes *homo Islamicus* behavior that should lead towards *falah*; a comprehensive concept of satisfaction which means success in this world (*dunya*) and the hereafter (*akhirah*) (Al-Qasas, 28: 77). A rational Islamic man also preserves ethics in his economic behavior and concern with social welfare. According to Siddiqi (1979: 90) rational Islamic man is an individual who would order his behavior with a view to achieve maximal conformity with the Islamic norms and social interests. *Homo Islamicus* is guided by some principles revealed from the God and through tradition of Prophet pbuh. Syed Agil (1992: 44) further provides some criteria of a rational consumer in Islamic economics such as; a moderation spending (Al-Furqan, 25: 67; Al-Isra', 17: 29; Al-An'am, 6: 141); a balanced spending of worldly goods and spending in the way of Allah SWT (Al-Isra, 17: 26); and a rational Islamic man will limit his consumption basket to includes only permissible things and excludes the prohibited things (Al-Baqarah, 2: 173; Al-Maidah, 5: 93).

Hasan (2002: 112-113) contends that maximization as a notion is a value neutral. What is maximized, how and for what purpose are the deciding questions that can be infused with Islamic values. Maximization postulates in Islamic economics are not limited to only maximize individual's utility or firm's profit. The concept in Islamic economics is extended to maximize other satisfaction such as spiritual and moral.

As we have discussed previously that conventional economics defines economic rationality by maximization of exclusively materialist objectives, namely profit by producers and utility by consumers. The Islamic concept of utility is actually a much wider concept than the concept of utility under capitalism. Material prosperity is one of the larger Islamic concepts of utility that is best known as '*maslahah*'. The term '*maslahah*' refers to the well being of the human beings in five basic elements of existence in this world, namely (i) life (*al-nafs*), (ii) wealth (*al-mal*), (iii) faith (*al-din*), (iv) intellect (*al-aql*) and (v) posterity (*al-nasl*). Furthermore, while individual utility may be in conflict with social utility as in mainstream economics, individual *maslahah* is consistent with social *maslahah* since both are integrated in Islamic economic theories and analysis. Therefore, *homo Islamicus* will maximize *maslahah* instead of mere utility or profit (Khan, 1992: 74-75).

2. Self-Interest

Generally human being pursues his self-interest. Economists assume that individual act as if they are motivated by self-interest and respond in predictable ways to changing circumstances according to his expected utility. Self interest has a meaning that human being is an autonomous/atomistic being that measures value at the level of personal impulses, desires and preferences (Ryan, 2003: 249). *Homo Economicus* is self-interested in the sense that *homo economicus* has well-defined preferences for things and experiences that provide satisfaction for the self, *homo economicus* is oriented to getting more of these to benefit the self. Adam Smith articulated the pursuit of self-interest as the natural law for economics and held that it was in harmony with social interest (Sexton, 2006: 6; Tomer, 2001: 282).

Amartya Sen (1990 [1987]: 80) describes the structure of 'self-interested behaviour' as having three distinct and essentially independent features as follows:

1. *Self-centered welfare*: a person's welfare depends only on his or her own consumption (and in particular it does not involve any sympathy or antipathy towards others).
2. *Self-welfare goals*: a person's goal is to maximize his or her own welfare, and –given

uncertainty – the probability weighted expected value of that welfare (and in particular, it does not involve indirectly attaching importance to the welfare of others).

3. *Self-goal choice*: each act of choice of a person is guided immediately by the pursuit of one's own goal (and in particular, it is not restrained or adapted by the recognition of mutual interdependence of respective successes, given other people's pursuit of their goals).

Homo Economicus in this regard is a single generic variable and a unified model represented by the behavioral rule disposition of rational self-interest rather than many different models of human behavior (Zafirovski, 2003). This notion is 'simplistic' and 'inadequate' to the description of real-world phenomena since it insists that *homo economicus* to be a 'half-person' because individualism overlooks the second dimension of human nature (the social being) or he is assumed to act in a 'social vacuum' (O'Boyle, 2005: 489; Tsakalotos, 2005: 896). This assumption is not correct since *homo economicus* never acts in a social vacuum. Dopfer (2004: 187) demonstrates the 'anomalies' of *homo economicus* where individuals are not merely rational decision makers who pursue selfish aims, but are as well creatures who systematically contradict the rationality assumption by widely exhibiting reciprocally altruistic behavior.

Hasan (2002: 113) and Siddiqi (1992: 5) argue that self-interest is not rejected altogether in Islamic economics since it is believed that the motive to pursue personal gain primarily stems from the natural urge in human beings for self-preservation and self-promotion. Islam upholds the desire for personal gain if exercised within the prescribed behavioral norms (Al-A'raf, 7: 32; Al-Baqarah, 2: 168). But, Islam, instead of making this concept as supreme concept in economics, guides this interest as part of other's interest.

Islam does not accept the "unitary-self view of individual" which seems turn to be "selfishness" in practice although in theory differentiation has been made (Tsakalotos, 2004: 142, 371). The great emphasis on material achievements in Capitalism is usually coupled with a lack emphasis on spiritual matters. Capitalism promise individual utility, profit maximization and economic growth as the goals of economy which is measured in term of material progress. Human life is of this struggle. His entire life is surrounded by this material pressure and his existence is driven by the quest for material objects to the extent that the deeper a person immerses himself into this material life, in time, he will find himself living in a spiritual vacuum. In the absence of spiritual guidance that would help him in regaining the balance of his goal's life, human life is turning to be the more self-centered and individualistic in his thinking will be and the more difficult and elusive salvation will become (Omran, 1996: ix). Islam, therefore, upholds multiple-self view of individual as reflected in *homo Islamicus* with goals broader than the pursuit of self-interest and materialistic objectives as *homo economicus* does. He values social justice and respect for others. His action is always conscious with the presence of God.

Homo Islamicus is a *khalifah* (vicegerent of God on earth) that has three central role of human being (Al-Baqarah, 2: 30). *First*, *homo Islamicus* is an '*abd*' (servant of God) that is created to worship Him and obey all injunctions revealed to him through the Messenger, Prophet Muhammad SAW. This principle reflects man ontological relationship with God who has created him (Al-Zariat, 51: 56). *Second*, *homo Islamicus* promotes *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood) which reflects man relationship with his fellow human being. Human being in Islam has social responsibilities to his family and other mankind in this world (Yasin, 36: 47; Al-Taubah, 9: 61). He does not live in a social vacuum as in *homo economicus*. *Third*, *homo Islamicus* is a *trustee* that holds *amanah* (trust) from the God to regulate the resources so that they can fulfill their needs and distribute among them justly, both resources in the earth as well as the nature out space (Al-Imran, 3:29, Al-Kahf, 18:7, Al-A'raf, 7:32). In short,

self-interest in Islamic economics is not the sole motivational force behind the individual effort. It is jointly pursued with other interests, namely social-interest, interest of universe (environment) with God consciousness. Individual's self-interest is limited in the sense that it is maximized with the view of keeping other interests in harmony. *Homo Islamicus* should not maximize his own self-interest at the expense of other-interests.

3. On Ethics and economics

Economics treats ethical considerations as *exogenous*, that is ethical values exist outside the context of the mechanism of the system. Ethical exogenous implies that economic philosophy under the positive school is independent of value judgments. Values/ethics are assumed to form outside economic theory and is incapable of affecting the ethical parameters of the social order. Although, economists do not deny that individuals live under a societal moral code, they tend to believe that this implicit moral framework can be excised from economic analysis—whether pure or applied—with little analytical loss (El-Ghazali, 1994: 13; Zaratiegui, 1999: 216).

Homo Economicus is conceived as unaffected by culture/values, society, politics, and so forth, unless these enter his preferences and in line with his self-interest. *Homo economicus*'s character is given and unchanging. This character assumes *homo economicus* not as an object of theoretical or empirical study from other behavioral discipline outside the economics, such as psychology, sociology etc., that aim to add realism to his human being character (Tomer, 2001).

Furthermore, Alvey (1999: 53) and Walsh (2007: 70) note that the attempts to present formal treatments of rationality as 'value free' is actually derived from logical positivism. Mainstream economics treats ethics and values outside economic methodology and the social sciences according to Alvey (1999: 53) for two major reasons. *First*, the natural sciences came to be seen as successful, and the attempt was made to emulate that success in economics by applying natural science methods to economic phenomena. *Second*, the self-styled economic science came to adopt positivism, which ruled out moral issues from science itself. Therefore, although ethics and morality figure prominently in economic life, that influence has been largely ignored in mainstream economics analysis. This situation led to many criticisms of the limitation *homo economicus* concept. Currently, economists are becoming increasingly interested in the analysis of moral behavior because of the difficulty in successfully applying the concept of *Homo Economicus* in "ethical" situations (Zaratiegui, 1999; Choudhury and ZiaulHaque, 2004).

The role of moral and religious factors in economic theory has never taken into account. *Homo economicus* bases his choices merely on a consideration of his own personal utility function. Social values might be ignored if it is not included in his personal utility function. Therefore, *homo economicus* is argued to be 'amoral' and 'unethical', since he isolates the ethics consciously in economic activities by ignoring all social and religious values unless adhering to them gives him utility. The notion of individual that is motivated merely by self interest has eliminated the role of ethics in economics (Pickhard, 2005: 276). By producing selfish and uncooperative individuals one may think that there is empirical evidence for the actual detachment of economics from ethics (Alvey, 2000: 1232). This situation according to Sen (1990: 7) leads the nature of economics "has been substantially impoverished by the distance that has grown between economics and ethics".

Islamic economics, on the other hand, explicitly asserts its concern to incorporate values in scientific methods, economic analysis, theories appraisal, as well as policies prescription.² Islamic economics is a self-consciously value-oriented discipline which rejects the idea that economic theories and policies can take place in a climate of positivistic objectivity and of complete value

neutrality (Ahmad, 1979: 226). Naqvi (1994: 20) in this regard argues for 'explicit' inclusion of ethical values into the economic calculus by accepting religion as the sources of ethical values in Islamic economics.

Islamic economists, in attempting to appraise Islamic economic theories will always be guided by this *value-pattern* embodied in the Qur'an and Sunnah (Ahmad, 1979: 226). The result by which a comprehensive ethics in economics could be developed since the Qur'an (the words of Allah) presents a comprehensive explanation of the nature of human being who is created by Him. The explanation that takes into consideration all aspects of human nature and satisfies his needs in every dimension. The Qur'an deals with all matters of human nature of his senses, feelings, thought, desires, aspirations, material and spiritual needs in this physical world (SayyidQutb, 1991: 2). The ethical system derived to be incorporated in Islamic economics (theory and analysis) is actually the one that will make Islamic economics differ to conventional economics, as the latter is purposively design by the scientific method to be free from any value judgments or to follow a narrow positivistic ethics as defined in a secular materialist framework. Islamic economics is going to intertwine the ethical consideration developed in Islamic framework with analytical thought and economic policies.

In fact, this strong normative character of Islamic economics, i.e., the inclusion of Islamic ethics in Islamic economics is the one that will justify Islamic economics to be a discipline in its own right, apart from all other kinds of economics (Naqvi 1994: 153-5). The rejection of conventional economics, if we scrutinize further, is mainly due to the normative differences in conceiving the nature of man and his behavior in economic sphere. Islamic economics is developed with the aim to make this Islamic normative foundation and its ethic-religious connections *explicit* at the very outset by insisting that its ethical philosophy will 'dominate' the economic practical universe.

While, the notion of *homo economicus* is based on the assumption that economics should be free from any values. All values other than rationality, self-interest, and maximization satisfaction are considered as *exogenous* variables that do not affect the behavior of individual. The notion of *Homo Islamicus* on the other hand is based on the assumption of incorporating values into his behavior. Islamic economics as a discipline is trying to formulate economics that treat ethics and religious insights as *endogenous* and simultaneously interact with the economic variables.

Homo economicus behavior therefore is independent of any external elements of society, environment, even God. This notion of 'anthropomorphic' nature of science actually, according to S.H. Nasr (1982) comes from the principle of secularism and materialism in the Western worldview, where the human being is the centre of everything, and the measure of all things. The human being is considered as a purely earthly creature, divorced and cut off from the Divine source, master of nature, but responsible to no one but himself. The principle definitely has no foothold in Islamic scientific tradition, classical and contemporary.

D. Human Progress and Development in Islamic and Secular Framework

The characteristics of economic man as being outlined in the above explanations will be the basis in outlining the criteria of human achievement, progress and development. In conventional economics, the ability of economic man to fulfill and realize those characteristics of individual's rationality, self-interest and ethics externality is said to have progress.

In this regard, the ethical notions of what is good or bad, right or wrong is usually defined in accordance to what extent they are able to achieve the purposes. Since the objective of materialism is to achieve material satisfaction as much as possible, the ethics of freedom and progress then defined

in this perspective. The more man could achieve that 'material' goals the more he is progress and success.

Individual freedom and satisfaction is the basis for his progress and development. This concept, in the west intellectual tradition, was influenced by the renaissance and post-renaissance notion of man as being in revolt against the doctrine of religion. Freedom is conceived as freedom *to do* or *to act* in a real freedom of choice of individuals not in the cage of religious doctrine. In this perspective, freedom could be meant as free to choose of God and evil, or right and wrong, as long as they are in line with individual's preferences, and his own will and consciousness. Therefore, some time freedom could be understood in terms of liberation from religious worldview, or liberation oneself from the traditional ethical dogma.

In Islam, freedom and progress is understood differently. Freedom and therefore progress mean to choose God in preference of evil, to choose virtues in preference of vice, or in the word of Muhammad Iqbal, it is the self "surrender to the moral ideals" that could lead him into a meaningful place and function in relation to the whole of Reality surrounded him in his life (Bakar, 1997: 65).³ That is the real progress and development in Islam. In the case of Islamic economics, the ability of individual to realize the Islamic rationality, multiple-interests, and to incorporate Islamic ethics in all his economic actions are the criteria for progress and development.

It is true that man is endowed with freedom of the possibility of doing or not doing. He is a unique creation as he is granted a "free will" to select and choose. He then could act voluntarily and none force him except his own consciousness. But Islam also teaches that all decisions made and actions taken have 'values', none are 'useless' and all will be valued by God. Therefore, Islam requires a 'purposeful' action and not a 'meaningless'. The purposeful action is the action that attempts to realize the purpose of Divine's will and patterns, i.e., the realization of obligations towards God, nature and other humans (Nasr, 1981: 18). Individual is said to have progress if he is able to do that. The concept of economic man as understood in conventional economics is not in line with Islam, since it envisages complete freedom for human existence without considering the source, and also the end, of his existence which make his life meaningless.

Islam clearly teaches that there is no progress gained through flight from or rebellion against the principle which is the ontological source of human existence and which determines ourselves. Humans are in Islamic perspective created in the 'image of God' and are also 'God's vicegerent' (*khalifah*) on earth. Individual as well as society progress and development lies in fact in surrender to the divine will and in purifying oneself inwardly to an ever greater degree so as to become liberated from all external conditions, including those of the carnal soul (*nafs*), which press upon and limit one's freedom. In this regard, religion will locate them within a sacred and cosmic frame of reference. Therefore, the form of freedom in Islam is the freedom *to be*. The freedom 'to do' and 'to act', in the absence of guidance of the freedom 'to be', i.e., by rebelling against our own ontological principle is actually not freedom but to enslave our self to another entity which is the *hawa* or *nafs*. By this time, humans are neither free nor progress and indeed they are caught and limit themselves in the cage of another ontological principle which is materialism or utilitarianism.

Human freedom is always respected in Islamic tradition but in the view of "the necessity to conform to the Divine will which rules over both the cosmos and human society and which alone can prevent men from becoming imprisoned in the narrow confines of their own passions" (Nasr, 1981: 20). Freedom never meant individualism that would detach individual from the cosmic structure, but rather to penetrate and integrate the individual into the centre, the absolute and the higher reality. Freedom is exercised within certain 'protective code' that would bind from any

transgressions. The sufi's understanding of freedom according to Nasr (1981: 21) means "ultimately deliverance (*najat*) from all bondage and an experience of the world of the Spirit where alone freedom in its real sense is to be found." In this regard, soul becomes detached from all external factors and also from passionate attachments and the desires and needs. Human being in this regard is said to have progress if he is able to release himself from being slave to his *nafs* (limited interest), *hawa* (unguided desires), or *taghut* (another God), and therefore he moves into the direction of controlling his own interest in order to respect and pursue other's interests, controlling his *hawa* so that he will not exploit other's interests for the sake of his own interest's satisfaction.

The secular and material tradition of the west might see the Islamic concept of human development as limitations imposed to human freedom and therefore will limit his development. Such total submission to the God, in secular framework, is ethically incorrect as it implies force, unconscious action, totalitarianism and does not entail freedom for human being. Al-Attas(1993) however argues that this *submission* to God does not entail loss of 'freedom' for human being since freedom is in fact means *to act as his true nature demand*. The *submission* in the meaning of *din* is in fact a *natural inclination (fitrah)* of human being as before his existence as a physical human being he has recognized his Creator and Cherisher and Sustainer; "When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam – from their loins – their descendents, and made them testify concerning themselves (saying): 'Am I not your Lord?' – They said: 'Yea! We do testify!' (Al-Mu'minun, 23: 12-14)" The statement has sealed a Covenant with God (*mithaq*) that implies recognition of human being of their ultimate destiny by acknowledging and confirming the covenant and then promise to willingly submit to the God. *Fitrah* in this regard is also meant moral innate endowed by the Creator to human being so that he is able to recognize what is good and beautiful and what is bad and morally ugly. He has been granted a conscience that registers right and wrong and a mind that has the ability to reason (Wahid, 2004: 13). This constitutes the second criteria of progress and development. Human being is said to have progress and develop if he is able to put himself back to his *fitrah* as an '*abd*' of his Lord, commit to his primordial covenant with God, commit to the *din* and *Islam*, and manage to do His commands and to avoid His prohibitions.

Progress in Islam is to return to the original spirit by means of sincere submission (*Islam*) to God's Will and obedience to His regulations, fulfilling the obligations toward God, nature and human being, as being enacted and regulated by the *din*. In the ethical dimension, the sincerity to return to the condition of genuine Islam (*fitrah*) is viewed as real development and progress of human self. Which is a sacred character bestowed upon human life which in turn makes possible a greater inner freedom (Nasr, 1981: 18). Unwilling submission, on the other hand, when he has been created, is a form of betrayal, arrogance, disobedience, rebellion, unbelief, immoral (*kufur*) and therefore a form of retreat/decline. Al-Attas (1993: 85) also notes that *kufur* also can be in the form of not real submission as one prefers to submit to his own obstinate way, a way that neither approved nor revealed and commanded by God.⁴ Therefore, progress is not merely by increasing our own self interest and maximizes our material prosperity as in secular teaching. Islam considers those achievements as progress only if they are pursued in line with Islamic principle.

The exercise of freedom in this framework (i.e., rules and obligations) opens the possibilities of human being to achieve highest moral achievement which is *taqwa*. *Taqwa* is the all composite of ethics In Islam and the highest form of progress and development. *Taqwa* is the fear of God which springs from the heart and expresses itself in righteous deeds. FazlurRahman sees the implication of *taqwa* is that ethics will converge into any system and practice that we have in life of politics,

economics or law. The loss of *taqwa* in the ethical system might lead to others evil consequences to emerge such as the social justice is eliminated, etc.

E. Concluding Remarks

Over the past quarter of a century there has been a constant flow of criticism of the individualistic, utility-maximizing, rational characterization of the economic agent and its treatment of ethics as exogenous variables. This criticism has come from within and outside the economics discipline and attacking the concepts of *homo economicus* itself and the methodology used to produce this concept. Conventional economics, while promoting a value-free science in a positive and objective manner, has lend itself into a narrow and unchangeable system of ethics which is based on individual self interest, the assumption of rationality, and the detachment from religion and complete ethics. The concept of human development is also outlined in this simplistic view of the nature of man whereby the measure is material achievements at individual level.

Scholars have been trying to find alternative to the *homo economicus* and some have offered other kind of actor who is having more integrated and comprehensive behavior as alternative. They reject the idea that economic man's character that is represented by *homo economicus* as a valid stage of human development since *homo economicus* focused only on material growths. A broader conception of man along with our economic inquiries that focused also on human development in a broader scope is urgent to be envisaged (Tomer, 2001: 291). Some other economic agents are offered such as *homosociologicus* who concern with the group interests; *homo socio-economicus* who is other-centered, communal, dependent, alike, and culture bound (O'Boyle, 2005: 489); *homo institutional economicus*, who is strongly influenced by institutions and learns from his social and technical experience; *homo humanistic economicus*, who has a strong tendency to develop and continually moving from the lower self (reflecting the material needs) toward higher self or toward self-actualization (Tomer, 2001: 287-288). Zafirovski (2003) suggests *homo complexicus* that incorporates and tries to integrate all these "hominess".

Islamic economics, however, offers *homo Islamicus*. A man who is equipped himself by Islamic values in all his behaviors. The concept is created based on Islamic worldview which is more comprehensive since it does not dichotomize the divine and mundane, the moral and ethics, body and soul, material and spiritual, *dunya* (the world) and *akhirah* (hereafter) in its view on the nature of man. Islamic economics considers man to have all these characteristics in his behavior. His self and characteristics is not incline to one particular side that make himself as a "half-person" and will make his behavior imbalance or incline to only one side as in conventional economics. Human development in Islamic perspective is developed based on this framework that would give better picture in outlining human nature and his development.

Endnote:

¹ This is not surprising since science and scientific activities are the result of specific ontology which relates the scientific endeavor of the individual to his environment and furnishes their motivational basis. Therefore, knowledge in Islam is not neutral as commonly argued in western epistemology (Furqani, 2006). Al-Attas (1993: 133) asserts "It seems to be important to emphasize that knowledge is not neutral, and can indeed be infused with a nature and content that masquerades as knowledge. Yet it is in fact, taken as a whole, not true knowledge but its interpretation through the prism, as it were, the world-view, the intellectual vision and psychological perception of the civilization that now plays the key role in its formulation and dissemination. What is formulated and disseminated is knowledge infused with the character and personality of that civilization – knowledge presented and conveyed as knowledge in that guise to subtly fused together with the real so that others take it unaware *in tototo* be the real knowledge *perse*".

² As Nienhaus (2000: 86) observes “while Western economists have tended to withhold value judgments and have only begun to return to the treatment of normative questions in the last few years, Islamic economics, in contrast, has always defined itself as a science which makes explicit value judgments and links them to the findings of positive economics.”

³ Therefore, those who have chosen vice over good, evil over God should “liberate” their selves as they have been confined in the immoral cage and meaningless place. They have been moved far away from the ultimate meaning and destiny of his creation. Islam has equipped mankind with the moral and spiritual teachings that could help in this liberation, reviving the spiritual basis of life and rediscovering the ultimate meaning and destiny of his life. The development and progress is defined in this effort of liberation.

⁴ Al-Attas (1993: 85) further adds that man’s covenant with God (*al-mitsaq*) “is of an essential nature; it is the starting point in the Islamic concept of religion, and is the dominant element in all other Islamic concept of religion bound up with it, such as those of freedom and responsibility, of justice, of knowledge, of virtue, of brotherhood; of the role and character of the individual and the society and of their mutual identity in the framework of the state and of collective life”. Al-Faruqi (1992: 81) explains that the semitic religion (Jews and Christian) has this covenant wherein man is to serve God and they are also aware of the opposite of not serving God. Judaism however has altered the covenant into one directional commitment on the part of God to favor the Jews regardless of their piety or righteousness, and for the Christians, this is a unilateral commitment of God to love and ransom His partner (i.e., man) even through the sins against God. Islam has maintained that the covenant gives obligation to both parties, the one to serve and the other to reward; and to privileges to both parties, the one to defy and not serve, and the other to punish.

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