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Knowledge Integration and Moderation in Contemporary Islamic Thought: A Comparative Study of Muslim Intellectuals

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Abstract

This study analyzes major paradigms of knowledge integration in contemporary Islamic thought, examining the perspectives of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Kuntowijoyo, Nidhal Guessoum, and M. Amin Abdullah, and focusing on their relationship to the principle of moderation (*Wasatiyyah*). Using a qualitative library research design with a philosophical-historical approach, the study examines key texts and intellectual contributions, applying descriptive-analytical and interactive methods to identify patterns of coherence and relevance. The findings indicate that each thinker offers a distinct yet complementary model: Islamization of knowledge, *adab*-based epistemology, scientification of Islam, reconciliation between Islamic tradition and modern science, and integration–interconnection. Despite these differences, all paradigms converge in rejecting the dichotomy between religious and secular sciences and in promoting a holistic epistemological framework. Moreover, moderation emerges as a unifying ethical principle reflected in the balance between revelation and reason, openness to diverse perspectives, and the integration of normative and empirical knowledge. This study concludes that knowledge integration constitutes not only an intellectual endeavor but also a civilizational imperative for addressing contemporary challenges..

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Introduction

The discourse on the integration of knowledge within the Muslim intellectual tradition emerges from a growing awareness among Muslims of their relative backwardness in the modern era (Sudirman, 2023). This condition is evident in both traditional and modern domains of knowledge, where Muslim societies have often lagged behind. Scientific disciplines such as physics and sociology have, in many contexts, historically been approached through mystical and speculative frameworks that lack empirical rigor, critical inquiry, and scientific objectivity (Rohana, 2019). As a consequence, the development of knowledge in Islamic civilization has experienced a dichotomous structure, characterized by a dualism between religious and secular sciences. This dichotomy has further reinforced the spread of secularism across various spheres of life, including economics, politics, and culture, both at the level of thought and praxis.

In response to this condition, a renewed awareness of the need for a unified epistemological framework—often referred to as the "unity of knowledge" or *monodichotomy*—has emerged among

Muslim intellectuals (Dartim, 2021). Prominent figures such as Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Mohammed Arkoun, Mohammed Abed al-Jabiri, Muhammad Abduh, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Nidhal Guessoum, and Fazlur Rahman have significantly contributed to the formulation of integrative paradigms. In the Indonesian context, similar ideas have been advanced by Kuntowijoyo, M. Amin Abdullah, Azyumardi Azra, and Imam Suprayogo, among others. Notably, the spirit of integration can also be traced back to Ahmad Dahlan, whose reformist vision emphasized the harmony between religion and modern knowledge (Ali & Dartim, 2025). Beyond individual contributions, institutional actors such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama have played a crucial role in promoting knowledge integration through organized educational and social movements.

Various conceptual frameworks have been proposed to address the dichotomy of knowledge. These include the Islamization of knowledge, the scientification of Islam (*Pengilmuan Islam*), the reconciliation between Islamic tradition and modern science, and the widely discussed paradigm of integration-interconnection (Diana & Tanjung, 2022). The latter has gained significant institutional recognition, particularly within Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, where it has been adopted as a foundational academic framework. These paradigms represent systematic efforts to eliminate the epistemological divide and construct a holistic, integrated vision of knowledge.

From a comparative perspective, Western epistemology has largely developed within a framework of secularization, wherein knowledge is detached from religious values (Erviana et al., 2023). This orientation is historically rooted in the Western experience of religion, which was often perceived as constraining intellectual freedom. In contrast, the Islamic intellectual tradition originally fostered scientific inquiry as an extension of religious motivation and theological reflection (Adnan, 2007; Rohana, 2019). However, in the contemporary Muslim world, the influence of Western secularism has contributed to the persistence of the dichotomy between religion and science. This phenomenon has created a significant imbalance, reflecting the internalization of secular paradigms within Muslim intellectual life.

Nevertheless, the call for the integration of knowledge has re-emerged as a critical response to these challenges. The concept of the "Muslim intellectual," as articulated by Mohammed Abed al-Jabiri and further developed by Fazlur Rahman, offers a compelling framework for bridging the gap between religious commitment and scientific rigor. Fazlur Rahman, in particular, lived in a modern context marked by a strong dichotomy between tradition and science. His intellectual project sought to reconcile these domains through a methodological synthesis that integrates classical Islamic scholarship with modern critical approaches (Ali & Dartim, 2025).

Rahman's intellectual formation was shaped by the socio-political context of Pakistan, a newly established state grappling with instability in political, social, economic, and educational sectors. This environment exemplified the deep-rooted dichotomy in both governance and knowledge systems within the Muslim world. As a scholar trained in both traditional Islamic sciences and modern Western methodologies, Fazlur Rahman represents an ideal model of the "Muslim intellectual"—a figure who embodies both religious authenticity and scientific competence.

This study will attempt to position the thoughts of modern Muslim scholars as paradigmatic figures exemplifying the integration of knowledge. Borrowing Rahman's term, this paradigm can be seen not only as "Muslim intellectuals" but also as "intellectual Muslims," reflecting the synthesis of faith and reason within a single intellectual identity. Thus, the rationale for selecting the thoughts of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Kuntowijoyo, Nidhal Guessoum, and M. Amin Abdullah, as mentioned above, demonstrates how their religious commitments and the

scientific methodologies they developed can coexist and reinforce each other. Therefore, this article aims to critically examine the conceptualizations of the Muslim intellectual by these five contemporary Muslim thinkers as a framework for knowledge integration. By exploring relevant theoretical approaches, this study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on the reconstruction of integrated epistemologies in the contemporary Muslim world.

This study also offers a distinct contribution to the discourse on knowledge integration by reinterpreting the concept of the "Muslim intellectual" within the epistemological framework of contemporary Muslim thinkers. While previous studies have extensively examined paradigms such as the Islamization of knowledge, integration-linkages, and reconciliation between Islamic tradition and modern science, these studies often remain at the macro-conceptual or institutional level. In contrast, this study emphasizes ontological and epistemological embodiment by positioning the Muslim intellectual not merely as a theoretical construct but as a lived paradigm (Susanti & Sobri, 2023; Yunita et al., 2023).

Furthermore, this article advances the discussion by synthesizing the ideas of contemporary Muslim scholars into a more operational framework that bridges normative Islamic values with modern critical methodologies. This synthesis has not been sufficiently explored in prior literature, particularly regarding its application in the Indonesian context. In doing so, this study moves beyond the dominant discourse on institutional integration toward an individual-centered epistemological model, highlighting the role of intellectual agency in overcoming the dichotomy of knowledge. Another dimension of novelty lies in the effort to reposition the integration of knowledge as a cultural and intellectual ethos, rather than merely an academic policy or curricular design. This perspective challenges the prevailing tendency to formalize integration within institutional structures without adequately addressing the epistemic mindset of scholars and learners. Therefore, this research contributes a conceptual shift from structural integration to epistemic internalization, which is crucial for sustaining long-term transformation in Islamic intellectual traditions.

The urgency of this study is grounded in the persistent dichotomy between religious and secular sciences that continues to shape the intellectual landscape of the Muslim world. Despite numerous initiatives promoting the integration of knowledge, the gap between normative religious teachings and empirical scientific inquiry remains deeply entrenched. This condition is further exacerbated by the ongoing influence of secular epistemology, which tends to marginalize religious perspectives in the production of knowledge.

In the context of globalization and rapid scientific advancement, the inability to integrate these domains poses significant challenges for Muslim societies. The fragmentation of knowledge not only hinders intellectual progress but also contributes to broader socio-cultural issues, including the disconnection between ethical values and technological development. As such, there is a pressing need for a paradigm that is capable of harmonizing faith and reason in a coherent and applicable manner.

Method

This study is categorized as qualitative research employing a library research design. It is defined as library research because the primary data sources are written documents, including scholarly texts, manuscripts, and other relevant academic literature. The qualitative nature of this study is reflected in the data, which consist of descriptive and narrative information rather than numerical data.

The research adopts a philosophical-historical approach. In this context, the data are obtained through an in-depth review of relevant literature, including both historical analyses and intellectual biographies of prominent figures. The collected data are then critically interpreted to uncover underlying meanings and construct a coherent conceptual framework (cf. Nata, 1997). Furthermore, this study is closely related to historical contexts, particularly the chronology of events and the intellectual trajectories of key figures (a biographical approach), as highlighted by M. Amin Abdullah, Burhanuddin Mack, and other relevant scholars.

This research employs an inductive mode of reasoning, meaning that the analysis begins with specific observations and gradually develops broader generalizations or theoretical formulations. As noted by Sutrisno Hadi, inductive reasoning allows research to proceed from empirical findings toward conceptual conclusions. (Rohana, 2019)

For data analysis, this study employs a descriptive-analytical method. This method is supported by philosophical and historical approaches that are systematic, empirical, and oriented toward uncovering the fundamental essence of the subject matter. The analytical process is further guided by the discourse analysis model proposed by Norman Fairclough, content analysis of the primary literature for each figure, and an intellectual history approach. This analytical model has three dimensions: text analysis; text production and consumption; and its influence on socio-cultural practices (Erviana et al., 2023; Yunita et al., 2023).

The collected data are analyzed using a historical-philosophical analytical approach involving three key stages: identifying correlations, establishing coherence, and determining relevance. Ultimately, this analytical process produces a comprehensive, integrative description in which all elements are interconnected. Such an approach enables the study to present a clear, systematic, and meaningful understanding of the research object, in line with the integrative epistemological perspective emphasized by M. Amin Abdullah.

Findings

Islamization of Knowledge According to Ismail Raji al-Faruqi

Ismail Raji al-Faruqi was born in Jaffa, Palestine, on January 1, 1921. He was raised in a family with strong religious and intellectual traditions, as his father, Abdul Huda al-Faruqi, was a judge and a respected religious figure. Al-Faruqi received his early education in a madrasa and later continued his studies at the College des Frères St. Joseph, a Catholic missionary school where French was the primary medium of instruction. He completed his undergraduate studies in philosophy at the American University of Beirut (1941–1944) and subsequently pursued a Master's degree in philosophy at Indiana University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (Fattah Santoso & Khoirudin, 2018).

According to Al-Faruqi, contemporary Muslim societies are experiencing a profound and multidimensional crisis. Politically, the Muslim world is fragmented into more than fifty nation-states, reflecting a lack of unity. Economically, many Muslim communities remain underdeveloped and impoverished. From a religio-cultural perspective, Muslims face intellectual stagnation characterized by superstition, conservatism, literalism, legalism, and excessive mysticism on the one hand, while on the other hand, they are increasingly influenced by Westernization and secularization (Ahsan et al., 2013).

Al-Faruqi identifies the root cause of this decline in the educational system, particularly in the dichotomy of knowledge and the lack of comprehensive intellectual frameworks and methodologies. He argues that contemporary knowledge adopted in Muslim societies is largely a

product of Western civilization, which is not universal but rather ethnocentric or Eurocentric, relying predominantly on sensory experience and rationalism. In response to this condition, Al-Faruqi proposes the Islamization of knowledge as a fundamental solution to overcome the intellectual and civilizational crisis of the Muslim world (Ahsan et al., 2013).

The Islamization of knowledge, according to Al-Faruqi, is a process of redefining knowledge, reorganizing data, rethinking arguments, reassessing conclusions, and reinterpreting findings so that knowledge aligns with and supports the Islamic worldview and mission. The core principle of this concept is the integration of various branches of knowledge into the Islamic intellectual heritage through processes of selection, restructuring, analysis, reinterpretation, and adaptation in accordance with Islamic values and perspectives.

As highlighted by Fattah Santoso, the fundamental principles underlying Al-Faruqi's concept of Islamization of knowledge include: (1) the recognition that knowledge is not value-free; (2) the understanding that knowledge serves as the foundation for the development of faith (*Iman*) and righteous action (*Amal Sāliḥ*), both at the individual and systemic levels; and (3) the orientation of Islamization toward broader social transformation, encompassing economic, political, and other dimensions of human life (Fattah Santoso & Khoirudin, 2018). The ultimate goal of this approach is the unification of knowledge systems and the harmonization of perspectives within a comprehensive epistemological framework.

In terms of practical implementation, Al-Faruqi proposes a structured program commonly known as the "twelve-step work plan" for the Islamization of knowledge. These steps include: mastery of modern scientific disciplines; survey of contemporary disciplines; mastery of Islamic intellectual heritage; critical analysis of Islamic legacy; determination of the relevance of Islam to modern disciplines; critical assessment of modern sciences; critical evaluation of Islamic intellectual heritage; survey of the major problems facing Muslim societies; survey of global human problems; creative analysis and synthesis; recasting modern disciplines within an Islamic framework; and dissemination of Islamized knowledge (Adnan, 2007).

The Concept of *Adab* According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas was born in Bogor, Indonesia, on September 5, 1931. He later relocated to Malaysia and became a Malaysian citizen. Al-Attas received part of his early education in Indonesia, specifically in Sukabumi at Madrasah Al-Urwah Al-Wutsqa from 1941 to 1945. He pursued his Master's degree at McGill University and completed his doctoral studies at the University of London, United Kingdom (Fattah Santoso & Khoirudin, 2018).

For Al-Attas, the essence of the human being lies in *adab*. The term *adab* refers to the recognition that knowledge and existence are structured hierarchically according to their respective categories and levels. It also implies that every individual has a proper place within this order, in accordance with their physical, intellectual, and spiritual capacities and potentials (Dardiri & Baidhawy, 2026).

Accordingly, a "civilized human being" (*Insān Adabi*) is one who is fully conscious of their individuality and understands their proper relationship with themselves, with God, with society, and with both the visible and invisible dimensions of nature. In this sense, *adab*—as a conceptual foundation for the integration of knowledge—represents an awareness of the proper place of all things within the order of creation, ultimately leading human beings to a deeper consciousness of God as the ultimate reality (*Being*).

In the context of knowledge, *adab* signifies intellectual discipline that recognizes and affirms the hierarchy of knowledge based on criteria of nobility and excellence. For instance, knowledge

derived from revelation is considered higher and more authoritative than knowledge derived solely from human reason. Furthermore, *adab* toward nature entails placing all elements of the natural world—such as plants, stones, mountains, rivers, valleys, lakes, animals, and their ecosystems—in their proper positions (Mat Daud et al., 2023).

Al-Attas's conceptualization of *adab* as an educational paradigm (more precisely, an epistemological paradigm) is grounded in the historical condition of the Muslim community. He argues that the crises facing contemporary Muslim civilization stem from both external and internal factors. The external factors include religio-cultural and socio-political challenges posed by Western civilization. The internal factors consist of: (1) errors in understanding knowledge and its application; (2) the loss of *adab*; and (3) the emergence of unqualified or false leadership.

Among these factors, Al-Attas emphasizes that the most fundamental issue to be addressed is the "loss of *adab*," as it directly contributes to the other problems. Since *adab* is intrinsically linked to wisdom (***Hikmah***) and justice (*'Adl*), its absence results in ignorance and injustice (Al-Attas, 1993). Conversely, the restoration of *adab* will lead to the reestablishment of justice and the elimination of ignorance (Al-Attas, 1999).

As a paradigm for integrating knowledge, the concept of *adab* highlights the importance of recognizing the proper order and hierarchy of knowledge. While knowledge based on revelation is regarded as superior, the concept does not negate the role of rational knowledge; rather, it situates it within a broader metaphysical framework. At the same time, *adab* also entails a harmonious relationship with the natural world, requiring human beings to properly understand and position all elements of existence within the cosmic order.

This capacity to place everything in its rightful position is what constitutes justice. A just human being is one who possesses both a correct understanding of values and a sound knowledge of the natural world. From this perspective, Al-Attas's concept of *adab* can be understood as a paradigm of knowledge integration. His thought also shows a degree of intellectual affinity with Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's ideas, particularly in its emphasis on the unification of knowledge (Dardiri & Baidhawy, 2026; Dartim, 2021).

Furthermore, as noted by Fattah Santoso in *Al-Afkaruna*, the practical implementation of Al-Attas's concept of *adab* in the integration of knowledge can be carried out through several strategic steps. These include: the cultivation of virtuous qualities of the soul and intellect; the pursuit of correct behavior rather than erroneous conduct; the disciplined training of the soul, mind, and actions; and the transmission of knowledge that guides human beings in making sound decisions. In this regard, the Islamization of modern knowledge becomes essential, alongside the application of a methodological framework that ensures the proper placement of all things within their respective contexts (Fattah Santoso & Khoirudin, 2018).

The Scientification of Islam According to Kuntowijoyo

The discourse on the Islamization of knowledge has elicited a range of critical and open responses from Muslim intellectuals, including in Indonesia, where it has become a significant topic of scholarly debate. One of the most prominent critical voices is Kuntowijoyo, whose work offers a distinctive perspective on the relationship between Islam and science. His ideas are comprehensively articulated in his book *Islam as Science: Epistemology, Methodology, and Ethics* (2006).

Kuntowijoyo formulates his concept of Islamic science through the term "scientification of Islam" (*Pengilmuan Islam*). This formulation reflects his academic background in the social sciences and humanities, which informs his effort to interpret reality through an Islamic lens. In this regard,

Islam as a textual reality is transformed into a contextual reality—from text to context. This approach contrasts with the Islamization of knowledge paradigm, which tends to move from context to text. According to Kuntowijoyo, contemporary Muslim societies require practical and applicable frameworks rather than merely theoretical discourse (Islam & Karakter, 2024).

He argues that the backwardness of Muslim societies is not due to the absence of religious foundations (Texts), but rather to the lack of practical implementation and dynamism in engaging with real-life contexts. Muslims must approach reality through Islam, particularly within the frameworks of cultural studies and sociology. Reality, in this sense, cannot be directly perceived but is mediated through concepts, symbols, ideas, and social phenomena. Consequently, religion, which is initially understood subjectively, must be transformed into an objective scientific framework. In other words, the subjective dimensions of religion are reformulated within the objective structure of scientific inquiry.

According to Kuntowijoyo, the process of the scientification of Islam is carried out through two main methods: integralization and objectification. Integralization refers to the integration of human knowledge with divine revelation, namely the Qur'an and Hadith. Meanwhile, objectification involves presenting Islamic knowledge within an objective scientific framework that is accessible not only to Muslims but also to non-Muslims. Through this process, the universal mission of Islam as *raḥmatan li al-'ālamīn* (a mercy for all creation) can be realized in practical life (Rohmah et al., 2026).

The program of the scientification of Islam requires a comprehensive methodology that includes integralization and objectification, supported by a periodization framework. Kuntowijoyo seeks to initiate an intellectual transformation from secularistic sciences toward integralistic sciences. He argues that secular sciences originate from modern philosophical thought, which emphasizes modernism while rejecting theocentrism.

This epistemological shift leads to the emergence of anthropocentrism, a worldview that positions humans as the central and ultimate authority, effectively marginalizing the role of the divine. As a result, differentiation occurs, leading to the separation of various domains of knowledge. Consequently, secular sciences develop in which ethical values are no longer derived from divine sources but are instead based on empirical tendencies and social relations within the humanities. This condition results in the separation of economic, political, social, and cultural systems from religious values (Dartim, 2021; Rohmah et al., 2026).

In contrast, Kuntowijoyo proposes that the foundation of integralistic sciences should be rooted in divine revelation (the Qur'an and Hadith), which governs the relationship between humans and God as well as between humans and other creatures. The ideas and information contained in revelation can serve as a grand theoretical framework (*Grand Theory*). Thus, knowledge is understood as originating from both human and divine sources, a concept he refers to as *Theoanthropocentrism* (Dartim, 2020).

The subsequent process involves reintegrating science, religion, and various sectors of life that have long been separated. This process is termed Dedifferentiation, which ultimately leads to the emergence of integralistic knowledge—an epistemological synthesis in which science and religion are harmoniously unified. As a consequence, integralistic sciences are characterized by their religious foundation while maintaining empirical validity and universal accessibility. This new epistemological paradigm is referred to as the Islamic scientific paradigm (Dartim, 2020).

The next stage in this framework is objectification, defined as the translation of internal religious values into objective categories. Objectification does not originate from subjectivization; rather, it

can be understood as the concretization of internal beliefs, as suggested by Ari Anshori. In this sense, an action can be considered objective if its benefits are universally recognized and accepted by all people, including non-Muslims, and perceived as natural or self-evident (Anshori, 2018).

Therefore, such actions are no longer viewed merely as religious practices. Even if they originate from religious values, they can be interpreted through an objective scientific perspective rather than a purely subjective one (Siswati, 2017). The final stage is the incorporation of periodization as a dynamic framework for understanding the historical development of knowledge and identifying appropriate solutions to contemporary problems in areas such as economics, politics, socio-cultural life, and other sectors.

The Reconciliation of Knowledge According to Nidhal Guessoum

Nidhal Guessoum is a professor of physics and astronomy at the American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. He is widely known for his influential work in Islamic scientific thought, particularly his book *Islam's Quantum Question: Reconciling Muslim Tradition and Modern Science* (2011), in which he articulates his ideas on integrating Islam and modern science.

In this work, Guessoum proposes a framework for harmonizing Islamic tradition with contemporary scientific knowledge. His contribution enriches earlier discourses on the integration of knowledge while offering a distinctive perspective—namely, an approach that embraces Islamic teachings without rejecting Western scientific developments. Instead, he seeks to establish a balanced and appropriate relationship between the two domains (Halim et al., 2024).

The integration paradigm proposed by Guessoum is commonly referred to as the reconciliation between Islamic (Muslim) tradition and modern science. His approach is intended as a thoughtful and constructive response to the rapid scientific advancements in the West, which have significantly influenced the Muslim world. Rather than positioning these two traditions in opposition, Guessoum emphasizes the importance of maintaining intellectual dignity and mutual respect between them. As noted by Ari Anshori, the primary motivation behind Guessoum's framework is to address the tensions between the Islamic intellectual heritage and modern scientific paradigms, particularly regarding contemporary issues that often intersect with humanitarian concerns and, at times, political tensions (Anshori, 2018).

Broadly speaking, Guessoum's thought can be summarized into three main components. First, he discusses fundamental issues concerning God, the Qur'an, and Islam's stance toward science. He encourages Muslims to adopt a reconciliatory and constructive attitude toward modern science, moving away from negative perceptions and instead recognizing its potential contributions to the advancement of Muslim societies.

Second, Guessoum advocates for a wise and critical engagement with contemporary issues through an Islamic intellectual framework. This implies that the Muslim world should enrich its methodological approaches by selectively and thoughtfully engaging with Western intellectual traditions. Third, he explores future perspectives on the relationship between Islamic and Western worldviews, particularly in education, highlighting the need for a more integrated and forward-looking epistemological outlook (Toedien & Dewi, 2025).

As part of his epistemological strategy for reconciling Muslim tradition and modern science, Guessoum proposes a more dynamic and pluralistic approach to interpreting the Qur'an. This includes the possibility of multiple readings of Qur'anic verses, allowing for intellectually grounded interpretations that incorporate scientific perspectives. In this regard, Muslims are encouraged to master both modern scientific disciplines and classical Islamic knowledge.

The Qur'an, according to Guessoum, can be approached through a multi-level interpretative framework, based on the assumption that its verses are open to broad and deep reflection (*Tadabbur*), depending on the reader's intellectual capacity. As one's level of scientific understanding advances—particularly through empirical research in the natural world—it can further reinforce the perceived coherence and truth of Qur'anic teachings (Islam & Karakter, 2024).

In summary, Guessoum's concept of knowledge integration—framed as the reconciliation between Muslim tradition and modern science—rests upon several key principles: (1) the dialogical engagement between science, religion, and philosophy; (2) the assumption of a fundamentally harmonious relationship among these domains, without inherent contradiction; (3) the recognition of interpretation as an essential component in understanding textual sources; (4) the adoption of a multi-level approach to Qur'anic interpretation, informed by both modern scientific knowledge and philosophical inquiry; and (5) the acknowledgment of the multidimensional nature of knowledge, which fosters an open, interactive, and intellectually mature engagement with both Islamic tradition and contemporary thought, ultimately leading to a more progressive understanding (Halim et al., 2024; Sudirman, 2023).

The Integration–Interconnection Paradigm of M. Amin Abdullah

The integration–interconnection paradigm proposed by M. Amin Abdullah fundamentally seeks to synthesize subjective, objective, and intersubjective values. For this reason, his framework is often referred to as a form of *trilogy* or *trialectics*. More specifically, Amin Abdullah conceptualizes integration–interconnection as a dialectical synthesis among three epistemic traditions: the textual tradition (*Haḍārat al-Nass*), the scientific-academic tradition (*ḥaḍārat al-'ilm*), and the critical-ethical (philosophical) tradition (*ḥaḍārat al-Falsafah*) (Ali & Dartim, 2025; Siswati, 2017).

Within this methodological framework, interpretative engagement with the Qur'an and Hadith does not neglect the broader dimensions of reality as explored in philosophical inquiry, nor does it disregard insights from various scientific disciplines. Consequently, Islamic sciences are developed through a model of *interconnected entities*, in which revelation, science, and philosophy are integrally related. This stands in contrast to a *single-entity model*, where each domain operates independently without meaningful interaction. (Susanti & Sobri, 2023)

The integration–interconnection paradigm, which brings together textual, scientific, and philosophical traditions, promotes a highly critical and dialectical mode of inquiry. Empirical sciences—including the natural sciences, technology, and the social sciences—are no longer treated as isolated domains; rather, they engage in dialogue with philosophical traditions to ensure that emancipatory and ethical values are preserved. Conversely, philosophical discourse risks becoming abstract and disconnected if it is not grounded in religious texts and real-world problems addressed by the sciences (Masruri, 2007).

Through this integrative approach, Amin Abdullah envisions the emergence of an epistemological paradigm capable of bridging three major domains of knowledge: Islamic sciences, natural sciences, and the social sciences and humanities. Although these domains may not be fully unified, the paradigm encourages fluid interaction among them, thereby eliminating hierarchical distinctions such as superiority and inferiority in knowledge systems. This approach is particularly significant for fostering individuals who are capable of thinking in multicultural, multidimensional, and interreligious contexts. (Purnamasari, 2017)

Amin Abdullah's framework also implicitly defines the characteristics of a Muslim intellectual. Such an intellectual is expected to possess multidimensional and multicultural competencies, as

well as an openness toward diverse cultures and new ideas. This openness, however, does not imply the absence of boundaries. In matters of internal religious belief, a degree of exclusivity remains, as reflected in the Qur'anic principle: *"For you is your religion, and for me is mine"* (Qur'an 109:6). Nevertheless, this principle does not negate the possibility of connecting religious values with broader scientific and intellectual engagements.

Furthermore, Amin Abdullah emphasizes openness as a foundational principle of the integration–interconnection paradigm. Islamic thought, in this sense, should function as an open discourse, particularly in the development of knowledge related to methodology and philosophy of science. This openness is crucial given that many contemporary human problems are more practical and methodological in nature rather than purely ideological or theoretical. Therefore, constructive communication and positive patterns of intellectual interaction are essential and should not be neglected, especially in the context of ideological, cultural, religious, and political conflicts (Anshori, 2018; Adnan, 2007; Badawi, 1991)

In his writings, Amin Abdullah offers a compelling summary of his integration–interconnection paradigm: to be truly religious, one must also be *interreligious*. This implies that when individuals or communities assert their religious identity, they inevitably encounter others beyond themselves. Recognizing the existence of these "others"—whether in terms of religion, knowledge, ideology, ethnicity, or nationality—fosters a dialogical atmosphere that is wise, peaceful, harmonious, and enlightening.

Discussion

The discourse on the integration of knowledge in contemporary Islamic thought can be understood as a collective response to the epistemological crisis marked by dichotomy, fragmentation, and the loss of ethical orientation in science. The ideas of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Kuntowijoyo, Nidhal Guessoum, and M. Amin Abdullah represent different yet interconnected approaches to overcoming this crisis. When analyzed through the lens of knowledge integration and the character of moderation, these frameworks reveal a shared commitment to balance, synthesis, and openness, while differing in methodological emphasis and epistemological starting points.

Al-Faruqi's concept of Islamization of knowledge reflects a transformative integration model that seeks to reconstruct modern sciences within an Islamic worldview. His critique of Western epistemology as value-laden and Eurocentric highlights the need for a balanced approach that neither rejects modern science nor accepts it uncritically. From the perspective of moderation (*wasatiyyah*), Al-Faruqi's framework promotes equilibrium between revelation and reason, as well as between tradition and modernity. His twelve-step program demonstrates a systematic effort to integrate disciplines while maintaining ethical accountability, thereby embodying moderation as intellectual responsibility and civilizational reform.

In contrast, Al-Attas emphasizes the internal dimension of integration through the concept of *adab*, which situates knowledge within a hierarchical and ethical order. His approach underscores that true integration cannot be achieved without the moral and spiritual refinement of the individual. From the standpoint of moderation, *adab* represents a balanced disposition that places everything in its proper position, avoiding both reductionism and excess. This ethical grounding ensures that knowledge does not become value-neutral or instrumentalized, but remains oriented toward justice, wisdom, and harmony between humans, nature, and the Divine.

Kuntowijoyo offers a more sociological and practical model through the concept of the scientification of Islam. His emphasis on moving "from text to context" reflects a moderate stance that bridges normative religious teachings with empirical social realities. By introducing the processes of integralization and objectification, he transforms subjective religious values into universally accessible knowledge. This approach aligns with the character of moderation by promoting inclusivity, applicability, and openness, ensuring that Islamic knowledge contributes to public life without becoming exclusive or dogmatic (Dartim, 2020).

Meanwhile, Guessoum's reconciliation model represents a dialogical and epistemologically pluralistic approach to integration. Rather than framing the relationship between Islam and modern science as oppositional, he advocates for constructive engagement and mutual enrichment. His support for multi-level Qur'anic interpretation and acceptance of scientific inquiry reflects a moderate epistemology that values both tradition and innovation. In this sense, moderation is expressed as intellectual humility, openness to multiple perspectives, and a commitment to resolving tensions without privileging one domain at the expense of another.

Amin Abdullah's integration–interconnection paradigm further develops this discourse by proposing a triadic synthesis of text, science, and philosophy. His framework explicitly embodies moderation through its emphasis on interconnectedness, dialogue, and the rejection of epistemological isolation. By integrating subjective, objective, and intersubjective dimensions, this model fosters a holistic understanding of knowledge that is both critical and inclusive. The notion of becoming "interreligious" as a condition of being truly religious highlights moderation as an ethical and intellectual openness to diversity and plurality.

In synthesis, these five paradigms collectively illustrate that the integration of knowledge in Islamic thought is not merely an epistemological project but also a moral and civilizational endeavor grounded in the values of moderation. Despite their differences, they converge on key principles: the rejection of dichotomy, the affirmation of ethical foundations in knowledge, and the promotion of dialogue between tradition and modernity. Thus, the integration of knowledge, when framed through the lens of moderation, emerges as a dynamic, inclusive, and transformative paradigm capable of addressing the complex challenges of contemporary Muslim societies.

The analysis of the five major paradigms—proposed by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Kuntowijoyo, Nidhal Guessoum, and M. Amin Abdullah—demonstrates that the discourse on integrating knowledge within the Muslim intellectual tradition is both multidimensional and dynamic. Each thinker offers a distinct epistemological pathway, yet all converge on a shared objective: overcoming the dichotomy between religious and secular sciences while reconstructing a holistic and meaningful framework of knowledge.

Al-Faruqi emphasizes structural and methodological transformation through the Islamization of knowledge, aiming to realign modern sciences with Islamic values. Al-Attas, on the other hand, places ethical and metaphysical foundations at the center through the concept of *adab*, highlighting that integration begins with the moral integrity of the knower. Kuntowijoyo advances a contextual and sociological approach by transforming Islamic teachings into objective and applicable knowledge, while Guessoum promotes reconciliation through dialogue between Islamic tradition and modern science. Meanwhile, Amin Abdullah offers a comprehensive integrative model through the integration–interconnection paradigm, which bridges textual, empirical, and philosophical traditions within a dialogical and interdisciplinary framework.

Table 1. Knowledge Integration and Moderation from Contemporary Muslim Scholars

Muslim Scholar Figures	Epistemological Focus and Main Characteristics	Moderation Perspective	Methodology / Output
Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (Transformative Integration)	Reconstruction of modern science within the framework of an Islamic worldview; critique of value-biased and Eurocentric Western epistemology.	Equilibrium between revelation and reason, and between tradition and modernity.	A systematic 12-step program for the integration of scientific disciplines with ethical accountability for the reform of civilization.
Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (The Concept of Adab)	Placing knowledge within a hierarchical and ethical order; emphasizing the moral and spiritual perfection of the individual (internal).	A balanced approach that places everything in its proper place, avoiding reductionism and extreme excesses.	An ethical foundation that ensures knowledge is not value-free or merely instrumental, but rather oriented toward justice and harmony.
Kuntowijoyo (Sociological & Practical Model)	Moving from "text to context"; bridging normative religious teachings with socio-empirical realities.	Encouraging inclusivity, openness, and applicability so that Islamic knowledge contributes to the public sphere without becoming dogmatic.	The process of integration and objectification transforms subjective religious values into universally accessible knowledge.
Nidhal Guessoum (Dialogical & Pluralistic Reconciliation)	Constructive and mutually enriching engagement between Islam and modern science, rather than positioning them as opposition.	Intellectual humility and openness to diverse perspectives without compromising one domain or the other.	Acceptance of scientific inquiry and multi-level approaches to Quranic interpretation.
M. Amin Abdullah (Integration-Interconnection)	A trialectical synthesis that bridges the traditions of texts (religious), science (empirical), and philosophy.	Rejecting epistemological isolation. Ethical and intellectual openness to plurality; the idea of being "interreligious" as a prerequisite for true religious practice.	Integrating subjective, objective, and intersubjective dimensions into a dialogical and interdisciplinary framework.

Conclusion

Taken together, these paradigms reveal that the integration of knowledge is not merely an academic or theoretical construct, but a transformative project that encompasses epistemological, ethical, and social dimensions. The principle of moderation (*wasatiyyah*) emerges as a unifying thread across these approaches, reflected in their commitment to balance, openness, inclusivity, and critical engagement. This moderation prevents extremes—whether rigid traditionalism or uncritical secularism—and instead fosters a middle path that harmonizes revelation, reason, and empirical reality. Therefore, the integration of knowledge can be understood as a comprehensive paradigm that seeks to unify fragmented domains of knowledge while cultivating a moderate intellectual character. Such a paradigm is essential not only for advancing Islamic scholarship but also for

addressing contemporary global challenges that require interdisciplinary, ethical, and inclusive approaches. In this context, the integration of knowledge becomes both a conceptual framework and a practical orientation for building a more just, balanced, and enlightened civilization.

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