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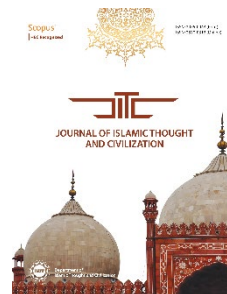
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# Rethinking the Essentiality of Homo Islamicus: Exploring the Fundamental Critiques

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## Abstract

This paper examines the necessity of homo islamicus perspective in Islamic economics. As such, it is a conceptual paper that emphasizes a critical approach to identify new concepts and critiques regarding homo islamicus. The conceptual approach focuses on theoretical analysis, in which the study aims to investigate the concept of homo islamicus and explain its logical implications. This approach enables the researcher to critique and identify a research gap regarding the concept of homo islamicus. The study highlighted several reasons, which identify that homo islamicus is not essential. Firstly, it was marked that the development of Islamic economics does not rely on the obedience and righteousness of economic actors. Secondly, as homo islamicus holds significant status, it should not be prioritized over other foundational concepts. Lastly, the study foregrounded that although homo islamicus is significant in its current form, it is not necessary to establish the basis for transforming the Islamic economy. Furthermore, it was also observed that it is still required in Islamic economics; thus, homo islamicus should not be the sole concept, excluding other relevant concepts for comparison. Additionally, this study underscores that homo islamicus loses its significance when it is seen as final and absolute; however, it may contradict the ongoing quest for the identity of Islamic economics.

**Keywords:** critiques, economic agents, homo islamicus, homo economicus, islamic economics

## Introduction

Homo Islamicus represents the Islamic morals of human nature and behaviour.<sup>1</sup> It also represents Islamic values by exemplifying human traits—as an ideal economic agent with high morality and spirituality. According to scholars like Furqani and Echchabi, Qur’an verses 53:39-40, 76:3, and 90:10 suggest that homo Islamicus, as an economic actor, follows Islamic principles in their decisions.<sup>2</sup> In this regard, its free will and understanding allow it to make ethical decisions, underscoring its importance in Islamic economics. This notion emphasizes human agency and devoted values, making homo islamicus a fundamental Islamic economic assumption. This concept<sup>3</sup> makes homo islamicus the appropriate model for moral-economic behavior. Homo islamicus has unique qualities that make it a complete Islamic economic model. This prominence stems from its

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<sup>1</sup>Ali Can Yenice, “From Homo-economicus to Homo Islamicus: A Comparative Research,” *International Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance Studies* 2 (July 31, 2020): 138–55, <https://doi.org/10.25272/ijisef.751251>.

<sup>2</sup>Hafas Furqani, and Abdelghani Echchabi, “Who Is Homo Islamicus? A Qur’anic Perspective on the Economic Agent in Islamic Economics,” *ISRA International Journal of Islamic Finance* 14, no. 2 (September 5, 2022): 206–20, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJIF-05-2021-0102>.

<sup>3</sup>Mehmet Asutay, “Conceptualisation of the Second Best Solution in Overcoming the Social Failure of Islamic Banking and Finance: Examining the Overpowering of Homoislamicus by Homo-economicus,” *IJUM Journal of Economics and Management* 15, no. 2 (2007): 167–95.

Quranic alignment, Islamic ideals, and economic model status. Briefly, these crucial factors can be described as follows:

- i) Homo Islamicus has always been geared toward maximizing "*maslahah*" in every economic decision undertaken<sup>4</sup>;
- ii) Islamic economics regards homo Islamicus as possessing Islamic economics' axiological principles.<sup>5</sup> In this light, homo Islamicus is viewed as an economic agent capable of striking a balance between cultural and instrumental-economic rationality.
- iii) The primary objective of Islamic economics is to create economic justice for society.<sup>6</sup> In this regard, homo Islamicus as a basic assumption of Islamic economics is believed to have a high awareness of justice and the rights of Allah Almighty.<sup>7</sup>

The mentioned description of homo Islamicus as a fundamental assumption has led to several critical responses that have grown among contemporary scholars of Islamic economics. Initially, detractors argued that homo Islamicus's real-world activities contradict the ideal Islamic economic behavior, making a claim impractical. Kuran (1995), pointed out that homo Islamicus cannot be generous and rational.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, skeptics disputed homo Islamicus claims, which differ from homo economicus.<sup>9</sup> However, this criticism did not stop Islamic economics scholars from developing the concept of homo Islamicus, and they further formulated the following description of homo Islamicus as an economic agent:

- i) Islamic economists use the entire concept of homo economicus to explain Muslim economic behaviour.
- ii) To re-examine the homo economicus model so that it can be applied to communities with solid Islamic values.
- iii) To introduce a new model of economic agents, such as homo Islamicus, which believed to represent Islamic values fully.

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<sup>4</sup>Hafas Furqani, and Mohamed Aslam Haneef, "Usul Al-Iqtisad Approach in Developing the Foundations of Islamic Economics Discipline," in *Methodology of Islamic Economics: Problems and Solutions*, ed. Necmettin Kizilkaya (New York: Routledge, 2020), 117–58, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ndteint.2014.07.001> %0Ahttps://doi.org/10.1016/j.ndteint.2017.12.003%0Ahttp://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.matdes.2017.02.024.

<sup>5</sup>Q U Zaman et al., "Does the Interest Tax Shield Align with Maqasid Al Shariah in Finance?," *Borsa Istanbul Review* 19, no. 1 (2019): 39–48, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bir.2018.07.004>.

<sup>6</sup>Shamim A Siddiqui, "Defining Economics and Islamic Economics," *Review of Islamic Economics and Finance* 15, no. 2 (2015): 113–42; Ahmed El-Ashker and Rodney Wilson, *Islamic Economics: A Short History* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006).

<sup>7</sup>Loredana Cornelia Bosca, "Criticism of Conventional Economy and of The Homo Oeconomics Paradigm in the Philosophy of Islamic Economics," *Cogito* 7, no. 1 (2015): 77–90, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/cogito7&div=11&id=&page=>.

<sup>8</sup>Timur Kuran, "Further Reflections on the Behavioral Norms of Islamic Economics," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 27, no. 1 (1995): 159–63, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0167-2681\(94\)00030-I](https://doi.org/10.1016/0167-2681(94)00030-I).

<sup>9</sup>Ibrahim Warde, *Islamic Finance in the Global Economy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

Modern Islamic economists insist on the essentiality of homo Islamicus in Islamic economics.<sup>10</sup> It must be noted that this position has been elaborated partially, which is diverse and dynamic, and certainly not unidimensional.<sup>11</sup> In this context, the critical assessment of the concept of homo-Islamicus is significant in facilitating the reinterpretations of Islamic conceptions of human nature. Thus, the objective is to establish homo Islamicus as a proponent of Islamic economic ideas. However, research in this area is scarce. Some Muslim Islamic economists like Necati Aydin (2012), have investigated "human nature"; however, some are still taking into account Islamic economic agent assumptions claiming that this assumption is important and supports the development of Islamic economics. Therefore, this study examines human nature within the Islamic meta-framework and traditional thought. It seeks Islamic economics-compatible ideas regarding economic actors. For this purpose, this research incorporates the following structural elements. The subsequent section presents the concept of homo islamicus, followed by a critical analysis. The fourth section provides a concise overview of Islamic economics's fundamental assumptions. Finally, the fifth section offers a conclusion, highlighting the limitations and proposes potential avenues for the future research.

## 2. Homo Islamicus as the Assumption in Islamic Economics: A brief Description

Homo islamicus serves as the foundational assumption in Islamic economics, which plays a pivotal role in the Islamization of economics and sets it apart from conventional economics.<sup>12</sup> This positioning is based on a micro-foundation of Islamic economics.<sup>13</sup> In the preceding literature, homo islamicus is defined an economic agent who integrates Islamic ethics into all decisions and behaviours,<sup>14</sup> embodying the Islamic worldview. This belief drives the distinction between homo islamicus and conventional homo economicus. This has been the core argument for homo islamicus as the basic assumption of Islamic economics. As an integral aspect of Islamic economics, homo islamicus empowers economic agents to reflect Islamic principles in their choices and actions, solidifying its centrality in Islamic economic thought.

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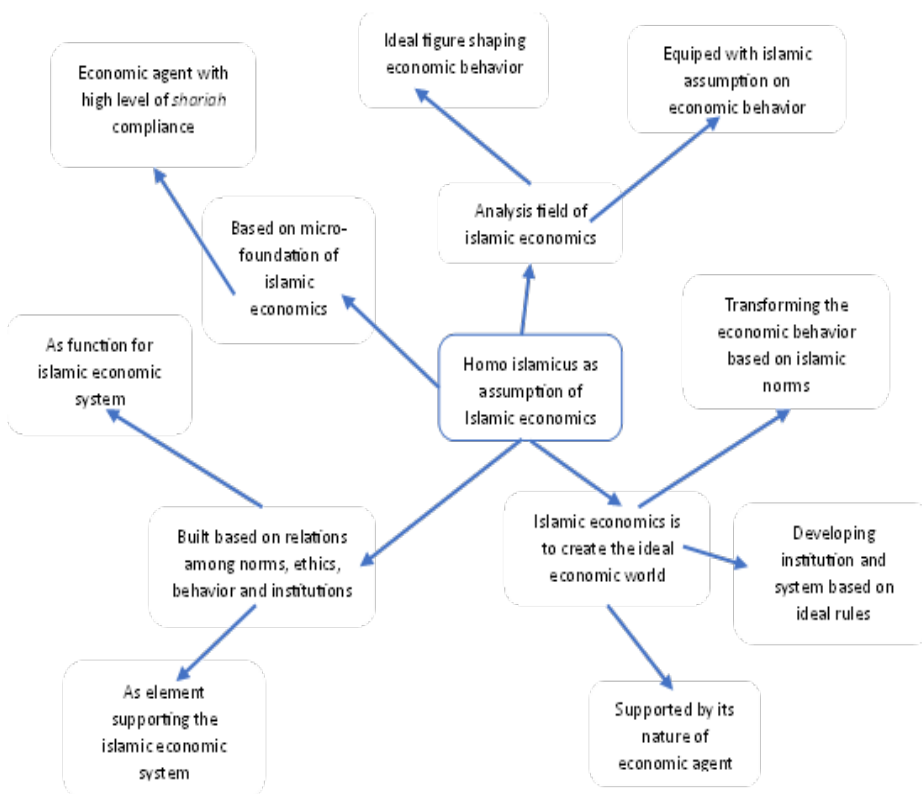
<sup>10</sup>Paul Davidson, "Reality and Economic Theory," *Journal of Post Keynesian Economics* 18, no. 4 (2018): 479–508.

<sup>11</sup>Hardivizon and Muhammad Sholihin, "Hybrid Rationality behind Customers' Choices of the Islamic Banks : An Experience of Bengkulu, Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 11, no. 1 (June 23, 2021): 175–200, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.111.10>.

<sup>12</sup>Mehboob Ul-Hassan, "The Islamization of the Economy and the Development of Islamic Banking in Pakistan," *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies* 1, no. 2 (2007): 92–109.

<sup>13</sup>Hafas Furqani, "Individual and Society in an Islamic Ethical Framework Exploring Key Terminologies and The," *Humanomics* 31, no. 1 (2014): 74–87, <https://doi.org/10.1108/H-04-2014-0037>.

<sup>14</sup>Hafas Furqani, "The Concept of Human Development in the Notion of Economic Man: Secular and Islamic Perspective," *Media Syari'ah: Wahana Kajian Hukum Islam Dan Pranata Sosial* 13, no. 2 (2011): 131–46.



**Figure 1.** Classification of the Description of Homo Islamicus as an Assumption

Source: Author's Construct

Figure 1 illustrates how homo islamicus emerged as a fundamental assumption of Islamic economics and has been introduced by modern scholars. The main argument of this notion can be identified from the homo islamicus position as an analytical unit. This economic agent anchors Islamic economic theories, *dan secara umum*, which is supported by two foundational arguments for its role in Islamic economics that can be stated as follows:

- i) Homo islamicus are the only economic agents enriched by Islamic economic ideas.<sup>15</sup> In this regard, Muslim economists build human models shaped by Islamic worldviews, allowing the possibility of integrating Islamic ethics into economics to shape its trajectory.<sup>16</sup> In practical application, homo islamicus bases economic decisions on Islamic beliefs, ethics, and morals.<sup>17</sup> Thus, homo islamicus' economic decisions and behaviors differ from homo economicus.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Furqani, "The Concept of Human Development in the Notion of Economic Man."; Salma Abdellatef, "Rational Behaviour in Islam ( Islamic Rationalism ): A Critical Evaluation of the Extreme Rationality Assumption," *Journal of Islamic Economics* 2, no. 1 (2021): 54–80.

<sup>17</sup>Furqani, "The Concept of Human Development in the Notion of Economic Man: Secular and Islamic Perspective"; Furqani, "Individual and Society in an Islamic Ethical Framework Exploring Key Terminologies and The."

- ii) As the analytical core, homo islamicus is justified as a fundamental assumption in Islamic economics because this economic agent exemplifies Islamic ethics and beliefs in various economic activities.<sup>18</sup> The Islamic value system influences homo islamicus' economic decisions, actions, and behaviors. Farooq (2011) explained how homo islamicus' behaviors align with Islamic ethics and principles and the agent's devotion to Islamic reasoning, harmonizing with the Islamic value system.<sup>19</sup>

The above mentioned arguments allow Islamic economics to integrate homo islamicus into its micro-foundations.<sup>20</sup> In this regard, Furqani et al. (2020) emphasized homo islamicus' normative and experiential conformity with these economic foundations.<sup>21</sup> It can be identified that Islamic economics' micro-foundations, such as the ban on usury, guide homo islamicus toward reasonable economic choices that avoid exploitation.<sup>22</sup> This emphasized justice based on *maslahah* (benefit) during homo islamicus' economic decision-making.<sup>23</sup> Homo islamicus practices Sharia values and *maqasid* (objectives) in all economic transactions. Thereby, based on *taqwa* (devotion to Allah), homo islamicus' decision reduces economic risk. Thus, homo islamicus becomes the fundamental assumption of Islamic economics, aligning economic activity with Islamic ethics and aspirations.<sup>24</sup> This ontological advantage enables homo islamicus to create a perfect economic order based on a core principle of Islam for two major reasons:

- i) Islamic economics require models and organizations based on homo islamicus. This character is being assigned the role of "caliph" who maintains morality on Earth. Furqani and Echchabi (2022) noted homo islamicus' potential for this position.<sup>25</sup> Mahyudi (2016) claimed that Islamic economic systems and models are based on homo islamicus in Islamic economics' micro-foundations.<sup>26</sup> Asutay (2007) claimed that presenting homo islamicus is essential for an ideal economy.<sup>27</sup> Thus, reshaping individual behavior norms to comply with Islamic compassion creates a supportive system for Islamic economics to organize an exemplary economic structure.

<sup>18</sup>Furqani, "The Concept of Human Development in the Notion of Economic Man: Secular and Islamic Perspective."

<sup>19</sup>Mohammad Omar Farooq, "Self-Interest, Homo Islamicus and Some Behavioral Assumptions in Islamic Economics and Finance," *International Journal of Excellence in Islamic Banking and Finance* 1, no. 1 (2011): 52–79, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1740729>.

<sup>20</sup>Furqani and Echchabi, "Who Is Homo Islamicus? A Qur'anic Perspective on the Economic Agent in Islamic Economics."

<sup>21</sup>Hafas Furqani, Gunawan Adnan, and Ratna Mulyany, "Ethics in Islamic Economics: Microfoundations for an Ethical Endogeneity," *International Journal of Ethics and Systems* 36, no. 3 (August 6, 2020): 449–63, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-03-2020-0032>.

<sup>22</sup>Norbert Oberauer, "Money in Classical Islam: Legal Theory and Economic Practice," *Islamic Law and Society* 25, no. 4 (October 19, 2018): 427–66, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685195-00254A03>.

<sup>23</sup>Timur Kuran, "Economic Justice in Contemporary Islamic Thought," in *Islamic Economic Alternatives* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1992), 49–76, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-12287-5\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-12287-5_3).

<sup>24</sup>Furqani, Adnan, and Mulyany, "Ethics in Islamic Economics: Microfoundations for an Ethical Endogeneity."

<sup>25</sup>Furqani and Echchabi, "Who Is Homo Islamicus? A Qur'anic Perspective on the Economic Agent in Islamic Economics."

<sup>26</sup>Mohd Mahyudi, "Rethinking the Concept of Economic Man and Its Relevance to the Future of Islamic Economics," *Intellectual Discourse* 24, no. 1 (2016): 111–32.

<sup>27</sup>Asutay, "Conceptualisation of the Second Best Solution in Overcoming the Social Failure of Islamic Banking and Finance: Examining the Overpowering of Homoislamicus By Homoeconomicus."

- ii) The Islamic economic system's ideal state finds reinforcement in homo islamicus. These agents possess attributes instrumental in realizing the system's ideal order. For instance, homo islamicus' inherent social responsibility aids Islamic economics in fostering an ideal economic structure that prioritizes comprehensive welfare, or *falâh*.<sup>28</sup>

Through numerous views, homo islamicus' fundamental function in Islamic economics has been elucidated: Islamic economics is complex and involves a harmonic interaction between rules, ethics, behavior, and institutions. In this regard, Isfandiar (2015) claimed that homo islamicus has an inbuilt reward-punishment system based on economic judgments.<sup>29</sup> Mannan (1984) emphasized its importance in execution for the Islamic socio-economic system's success. This emphasized homo islamicus as a key assumption of Islamic economics.<sup>30</sup> Webb (2014) emphasized its importance for disciplined, corruption-free economics.<sup>31</sup> In addition to economic acts, homo islamicus fosters goodness and justice, strengthening the Islamic economic framework. In this regard, homo islamicus underpins the Islamic economic system's complex ideals, ethics, and practices.

Homo islamicus' role as the foundational assumption in Islamic economics stems from its embodiment of the ideal Islamic agent. This hinges on the micro-foundations of Islamic economics, housing "definite" and "universal" Islamic values, forming the theosophical foundation.<sup>32</sup> This foundation is rooted in the divine vision and tawhîd, influencing the behaviour and decision-making of homo islamicus.<sup>33</sup> Thereby, three implications emerged from this interplay; firstly, the harmonization of micro-foundations with homo islamicus; secondly, the alignment of theosophical foundations with homo islamicus' character; and thirdly, the contrast with homo economicus, highlighting the unique qualities of homo islamicus within the Islamic economic framework, and the theosophical foundations of homo islamicus, which is as follows:

- i) Homo islamicus embodies altruism,<sup>34</sup> mirroring Islamic teachings of social responsibility and economic sharing (Q.S. 19:19). With heightened awareness of others' rights, homo islamicus engages in philanthropic efforts, exemplifying Islamic altruism.<sup>35</sup> This awareness bolsters the

<sup>28</sup>Mohd Nizam Barom, "Conceptualizing A Unified Normative Framework for Social Responsibility in Islamic Economics," *International Journal of Economics, Management and Accounting* 26, no. 2 (2018): 329–63, <https://journals.iium.edu.my/enmj/article/view/615>.

<sup>29</sup>Ali Amin Isfandiar, "Melacak Teori Rasionalitas Ekonomi Berbasis Islamic Ethics," [Tracking the Theory of Economic Rationality Based on Islamic Ethics], *Muqtasid: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Perbankan Syariah* 6, no. 2 (December 1, 2015): 23, <https://doi.org/10.18326/muqtasid.v6i2.23-41>.

<sup>30</sup>Muhammad Abdul Mannan, "Islamic Economics as a Social Science: Some Methodological Issues," *Journal of Research in Islamic Economics* 2, no. 1 (1984): 49–50.

<sup>31</sup>Edward Webb, "Changing the Player, Not the Game: Ennahda's Homo Islamicus," *Air & Space Power Journal -Africa and Francophonie* 5, no. 1 (2014): 1–18.

<sup>32</sup>Necati Aydin, "Islamic Economics as a New Economic Paradigm," in *Islamic Economics Theory, Policy and Social Justice*, ed. Hatem A. El-Karanshawy et al. (Qatar: Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation, 2015), 41–64.

<sup>33</sup>Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr, *Iqtishaduna* (Bairut: Dar Al-Ta'arif Al-Matbu'ah, 1987).

<sup>34</sup>Christopher J Einolf, "Empathic Concern and Prosocial Behaviors: A Test of Experimental Results Using Survey Data," *Social Science Research* 37, no. 4 (December 2008): 1267–79, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2007.06.003>.

<sup>35</sup>Farooq, "Self-Interest, Homo Islamicus and Some Behavioral Assumptions in Islamic Economics and Finance"; Warde, *Islamic Finance in the Global Economy*.

Islamic economic framework, fortifying the attainment of its goals and holistic well-being (*falāh*).

- ii) The Islamic perspective distinctly shapes the nature of homo islamicus, differentiating it from homo economicus. Homo islamicus is perceived as an agent striving to maximize holistic Islamic benefits (maslahah); rather than mere utility.<sup>36</sup> This stems from several arguments; firstly, economic choices signify progress (*falah*) or failure (khusran); secondly, Islam emphasizes balance (tawāzun); thirdly, Islam offers frameworks for maximizing maslahah and achieving well-being.<sup>37</sup> These arguments underpin the validation of homo islamicus as a consistent agent in Islamic economics. Though contemporary Islamic economists introduced the role of homo islamicus, in the recent scenario criticism have emerged against these descriptions.

### 3. How can Homo Islamicus be Accepted? A Critique Based on Human Nature

Several critiques have emerged recently concerning homo islamicus as a distinct figure in contemporary Islamic economics. Kuran (1996) contended that introducing homo islamicus isn't primarily about enhancing Muslim communities' economic performance but rather as a normative to safeguard them from Western cultural influence.<sup>38</sup> This positioning reflects the spirit of "Islamization" more than "science." Warde (2011) critically deemed the distinctions between homo economicus and homo islamicus as unrealistic and irrelevant,<sup>39</sup> asserting that the proposed differentiation lacks empirical accuracy. Kuran (1983, 1996) presented four major critiques to homo islamicus, highlighting the contentious nature of these assumptions within the realm of actual economic behaviour.

- i) Homo islamicus is over-generalized, creating stereotypes within diverse Muslim societies and institutions with varying cultural, historical, and geographical contexts.
- ii) Homo islamicus lacks the accommodation for societal change. Despite the evolving Muslim community, contemporary Islamic economics' definition of homo islamicus excludes this transformative element.
- iii) The current portrayal of homo islamicus in Islamic economics overlooks economic considerations. In this, Kuran contended that the concept overemphasized religion and ethics, neglecting economic and social influences on behaviour in Muslim society. Non-religious factors like economic structure, policies, and environment significantly shape individuals' choices.
- iv) Descriptions of Homo islamicus has failed to acknowledge diversity in religious practices across Muslim societies. The concept generalizes spiritual practices, disregarding variations.<sup>40</sup> This criticism portrays homo islamicus as immature and not fully embraced by Islamic economic thinkers as an agreed concept.

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<sup>36</sup>Furqani, "Individual and Society in an Islamic Ethical Framework Exploring Key Terminologies."

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Timur Kuran, "The Discontents of Islamic Economic Morality," *The American Economic Review* 86, no. 2 (1996): 438–442, <https://www.aeaweb.org/journals/subscriptions>; Farooq, "Self-Interest, Homo Islamicus and Some Behavioral Assumptions in Islamic Economics and Finance."

<sup>39</sup>Warde, *Islamic Finance in the Global Economy*.

<sup>40</sup>Timur Kuran, "Behavioral Norms in the Islamic Doctrine of Economics: A Critique," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 4, no. 4 (December 1983): 353–79, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0167-2681\(83\)90014-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0167-2681(83)90014-8).



Homo islamicus criticism extends beyond Muslim economists, involving scholars from various disciplines. External to Islamic economics, criticisms has encompassed diverse classifications, which include:

- i) Homo islamicus faces essentialism criticism for assuming uniform traits among Muslims, like strong religiosity, work ethic, and unity. This neglects the diversity of real individuals.<sup>41</sup>
- ii) Orientalism-based critique asserted that the concept perpetuates Western views that simplify and stereotype Eastern cultures, including Islam, feeding negative biases, and prejudices towards Islam and Muslims.<sup>42</sup>
- iii) Some critics considered that the concept of homo islamicus is not supported by sufficient empirical evidence. This concept was primarily based on limited observation and reductionism, so it does not reflect Muslim societies' true diversity and complexity.<sup>43</sup>
- iv) Homo islamicus impedes societal progress due to its rigid adherence to Islamic beliefs. Muslim individuals possess dynamic reasoning, enabling diverse responses to islamic values and shariah-stimuli. It also allows for change and economic growth.

Critiques of homo islamicus' definition underscore its limited acceptance in Islamic economics. These criticisms from Islamic economics and other fields rarely delve into "human nature" within Islamic classics to validate or dispute this concept. In this regard, understanding "human nature" in classical Islamic thought is crucial for a philosophical comprehension of humans as economic agents. Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali's (d.1111) works *Ihya ulūm al-dīn* and *Mizān al-amal* offer complete insights. Al-Ghazali (2005) elaborated on "the nature and uniqueness of the human heart" in his opus.<sup>44</sup> He asserted that man's distinctive ability lies in knowing Allah, facilitated by the *qalb* or heart, which harbors divine knowledge. Furthermore, Ferhat (2020) discussed Al-Ghazali's emphasis on *qalb* as the locus for divine guidance.<sup>45</sup> The heart symbolizes individuality, inseparable yet distinct from reason. This heart-reason interplay forms an integral bond rather than a mere complement. The intricate relationship between heart and reason is not one of supplementation but of harmonious interdependence.

Al-Ghazali's exploration of "human nature" is intricate, encompassing various philosophical classifications. He delves into the constitution of human spirituality, internal spiritual conflicts, external relations of the human heart, and explore the connection between ontology and behaviour. Al-Ghazali highlighted that human character can elevate to angelic realms through reason (*ʿaql*) and religion or regress to animalistic levels without these.<sup>46</sup> This duality asserted humans can embody both good and bad qualities, contingent on their components, especially the "soul with its body" (*ruh wal-jasādihi*). Al-Ghazali viewed the spirit (*rūh*) as the essence of divine spirituality, coalescing in

<sup>41</sup>Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016).

<sup>42</sup>Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002): 783–90, <https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2002.104.3.783>.

<sup>43</sup>Abdullah Saeed, *Islamic Thought: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203088685>.

<sup>44</sup>Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumuddin* (Bairut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2005).

<sup>45</sup>Loumia Ferhat, "Al-Ghazālī's Heart as a Medium of Light: Illumination and the Soteriological Process," *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 4, no. 1–2 (December 15, 2020): 201–22, <https://doi.org/10.1163/24685542-12340050>.

<sup>46</sup>Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulum-ud-din*; Cemre Atesci, *Imam Al-Ghazali's Understanding of Human Ontology and Behavior* (Ibn Haldun University, 2019).

terms like *qalb*, *rūh*, *'aql*, and *nafs*. The spirit is a divine essence, while the body is material.<sup>47</sup> This dichotomy shapes human character, fostering desires for good and undesirable things. Such insights resonate with Al-Ghazali's profound comprehension of the interplay between human nature's spiritual and material aspects. Al-Ghazali (2014) delineated two human inclinations in *al-risalah al-ladunniyah*: the body's flawed nature and evil impulse lead to corruption, while a hanif (devoted monotheism) spirit embodies simplicity, enlightenment, and behavioural excellence aligned with Islam's core values.<sup>48</sup> Al-Ghazali underscored human ontology rooted in Islamic principles and affirmed that: "[...] The rational soul, by which I mean this substance, has a unique name in each group of human beings: philosophers refer to this substance as the "rational soul (*al-nafs al-natiqah*)." The Qur'ān refers to it as the "quiet soul" (*al-nafs al-mutmainnah*) and the "spirit that comes from the *amr* of Allah" (*al-rūḥ al-Amarah*). Sufists refer to it as "spirit" and sometimes "*qalb*", but although the names vary, the meaning is still one; it makes no difference."<sup>49</sup>

Al-Ghazali extensively explored human tendencies within the *qalb* (heart) context. Unlike Ibn Sina's systematic classifications, Al-Ghazali's treatment was less structured. His central thesis was centered on the human heart (*qalb*) as a profound theory of human ontology. Al-Ghazali cited Q.S. 74:31, where Allah's troops include those within the human heart.<sup>50</sup> According to him, each force within the heart shapes behaviour, decisions, and choices. This al-Ghazali's approach offered a distinctive perspective, emphasizing the centrality of the heart in comprehending human tendencies,<sup>51</sup> even if it's not as systematically organised as Ibn Sina's categorization, this concept was steadily useful for critiquing against homo islamicus as a foundation.

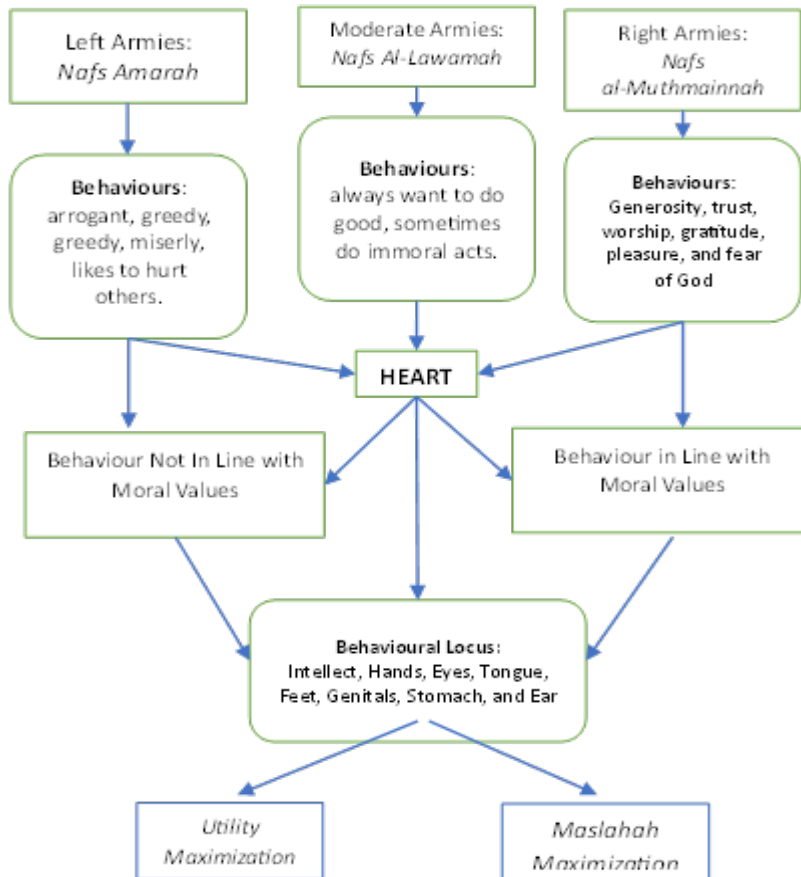
<sup>47</sup>Atesci, *Imam Al- Ghazali's Understanding of Human Ontology and Behavior*.

<sup>48</sup> Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Al-Risalah Al-Ladunniyyah* (Kairo: Dar al-Muqtam lilnasr wa al-tauzi', 2014).

<sup>49</sup>Al-Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ayman Shihadeh, "From Al-Ghazālī to Al-Rāzī: 6th/12th Century Developments in Muslim Philosophical Theology," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 2005, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423905000159>; Atesci, *Imam Al- Ghazali's Understanding of Human Ontology and Behavior*.

<sup>51</sup>Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumuddin*; Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Mizan Al-'aml* (Kairo: Maktabah wa Matba'a Muhammad 'Ali Shabih wa Awlad, 1963); Atesci, *Imam Al- Ghazali's Understanding of Human Ontology and Behavior*.



**Figure 2.** Human's Ontology based on its *Qalb*

Source: Author's Construct

Additionally, Al-Ghazali presented a fundamental thesis concerning human behaviour: individual actions stem from the heart's forces—the motivation behind choices.<sup>52</sup> This idea constitutes his overarching theory for explaining human ontology (Figure 2). The heart is moved by three desire types: "*nafs' ammarah*," "*nafs al-lawamah*," and "*nafs al-muthmainnah*," significantly influencing behaviour. A heart dominated by "*nafs' ammarah*" produces unkind behaviours like pride and covetousness. In a likewise manner, "*Nafs al-lawamah*" prevails over individuals for goodness but occasionally engages in less commendable actions. A heart driven by "*nafs al-muthmainnah*" aligns actions with Islamic teachings and morality.<sup>53</sup> These desires shape human qualities, delineating uniqueness while rendering humans akin to other creatures. Overwhelming anger-driven

<sup>52</sup>Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumuddin*; Atesci, Imam Al- Ghazali's Understanding of Human Ontology and Behavior."

<sup>53</sup>Al-Ghazali, *Mizan Al-'Aml*; Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Jadid Hayatuka* (Kairo: Nahdet Misr, 2004).

desires reduce humans to animal-like traits. However, distinct human knowledge sets them apart from animals and other beings. Al-Ghazali's framework illustrated how the heart forces human actions by significantly creating a sophisticated understanding of human nature.

Ibn Sina, another classical scholar, complemented Al-Ghazali's ideas, emphasizing the uniqueness of humans. Ibn Sina (d.1037) highlighted humans' distinct ability to acquire knowledge and connect it to a higher power, Allah Almighty,<sup>54</sup> setting them apart from other beings. Al-Ghazali further delved into human will, differentiating it from that of animals. Understanding an action's consequences will involve being driven by the best outcome; this is the man's main advantage.<sup>55</sup> This contrasts with animal behaviour. In this regard, Al-Ghazali emphasized knowledge and will as exclusive human traits, separating them from animals and other creatures. Despite the capacity for enlightenment through knowledge and will, humans often exhibit conflicting traits, straying from the ideal human essence. This nuanced interplay of knowledge, will, and behaviour characterizes the complexity of human nature, as expounded by both Al-Ghazali and Ibn Sina.

Al-Ghazali categorized human nature into four types, each representing dominant desires within the human heart: "*sabuiyya*" (exploitative traits), "*bahimiyah*" (cruel qualities), "*shaithaniyya*" (satanic attributes), and "*rabbaniyyah*" or divine nature.<sup>56</sup> The initial three traits arise when the heart lacks good knowledge and will, emphasizing the importance of the divine spirit. Achieving the complete human, or homo Islamicus, requires rigorous training and spiritual exertion, not a simple process. This transformation mandates a systematic approach to self-control and quality enhancement. Al-Ghazali's perspective underscores human complexity and the need for holistic understanding. His work inspired further ontological explorations of human nature, extending beyond homo Islamicus as the current description.

Before Al-Ghazali's work on "human nature," Abū Nasir al-Farabi (872-951) had also explored human ontology. Al-Farabi believed the soul distinguished humans from non-humans, serving as a tool for life enhancement. He categorized human soul abilities, from basic survival to intellectual capacity. Al-Farabi's notion of the soul, which emphasized its significant presence in living things, was in line with Aristotle's theory. He introduced three human characters—the driving soul, the understanding soul, and the thinking soul—defining human abilities to make choices and behave rationally.<sup>57</sup> Al-Farabi's concept of self-awareness through intellectual capacity forms a single consciousness system.<sup>58</sup> It enables humans to adapt, exercise self-control, and interact within social systems.<sup>59</sup> Al-Farabi's work laid the groundwork for understanding human character and capacities,<sup>60</sup> impacting choices influenced by religion, culture, and economic goals. This exploration further enriched the discussion on human ontology alongside Al-Ghazali's contributions.

<sup>54</sup>Maha Elkaisy-Friemuth, *God and Humans in Islamic Thought: Abd Al-Jabbar, Ibn Sina and Al-Ghazali* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203965375>.

<sup>55</sup>Atesci, *Imam Al-Ghazali's Understanding of Human Ontology and Behavior*.

<sup>56</sup>Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumuddin*; Al-Ghazali, *Mizan Al-'aml*; Al-Ghazali, *Al-Risalah Al-Ladunniyyah*.

<sup>57</sup>Ali Abdul Wahid Wafi, *Al-Madinatu Al-Fadilah Lil-Farabi* (Mesir: Nadhatu Misri, n.d.); Luis Xavier López-Farjeat, "The Nature of Human and Non Human Animals in Classical Islamic Philosophy," in *Human*, ed. Karolina Hübner, vol. 13 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2022), 102–33, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190876371.003.0006>.

<sup>58</sup>López-Farjeat, "The Nature of Human and Non Human Animals in Classical Islamic Philosophy."

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, *Ara'u Ahl Al-Madinatu Al-Fadilah* (Kairo: Maktabat Mathaba'at Muhammad Ali, 1906).

Al-Farabi's classification of human characters was distinctive, thus, it can be interpreted as inherent capacities shaping human lives. These capacities significantly impact human happiness and understanding of life's purpose.<sup>61</sup> Al-Farabi asserted that these abilities can lead to happiness, particularly through a strong relationship with Allah Almighty.<sup>62</sup> The quality of the human soul influences their transcendence towards God,<sup>63</sup> supported by "active human reason," which forms the basis of behavior. This active intellect allows humans to comprehend God's essence and knowledge through bestowed reason. A complex human ontology emerges when considering the classical thoughts of Al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina, and Al-Farabi. Humans possess various capacities that guide their choices and behaviors, rooted in different value standards like good and evil. Human transcendence significantly affects the quality of choices and behaviors they exhibit. In this context, the synthesis of these classical perspectives suggests that human nature is intricate, shaped by inherent capacities that drive choices and actions, ultimately influencing their relationship with the divine and the world around them. The view of placing homo Islamicus as an ideal economic agent within essentialism is unrealistic and ontologically inadequate. This critique challenges the notion that homo Islamicus embodies perfect Islamic values and ethics. Several human ontological arguments emerge against this perspective—questioning the assumption that homo Islamicus should serve as the foundational premise of Islamic economics, and can be stated as follows:

- i) Regarding the characteristic dimension, homo Islamicus does not possess inherent distinctions that fundamentally set it apart from other economic agents. Al-Ghazali, Al-Farabi, and Ibn Sina established a framework of human ontology in which homo Islamicus is conceptualized as persons possessing dualistic natures--individuals exhibit a duality in their ability to engage in rational, value-based actions, while also displaying behaviors that are incongruent with Islamic principles.<sup>64</sup> The assertion that homo Islamicus is a fundamental principle in Islamic economics created a dilemma, as it may not accurately depict the economic landscape.
- ii) Homo islamicus is assumed to be an individual or economic agent capable of establishing behavior and making economic choices based, ideally, on Islamic values and morality. However, homo islamicus decisions and behaviors are strongly influenced by structural factors that may limit the ability of these agents to formulate and decide economic choices that are in line and consistent with the Islamic framework, such as, Islamic values and morality.<sup>65</sup>

Homo Islamicus' behavior is influenced by factors like limited information, which hinders well-informed decisions according to Islamic values.<sup>66</sup> This issue affects homo Islamicus and homo economicus due to limited access to information, impacting their decision-making abilities and risk

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<sup>61</sup>Imam Al-Farabi, *Rislatu Al-Tanbih 'ala Sabiili Al-Sa'adah*, 1987; Al-Farabi, *Ara'u Ahl Al-Madinatu Al-Fadilah*.

<sup>62</sup>Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, *Rislatani Falsatani* (Aman, Yordani: Dar Al-Manahal, n.d.); Wafi, *Al-Madinatu Al-Fadilah Lil-Farabi*; Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, *Ihsa'u Al-Ulum Lilabi Nasr Al-Farabi* (Kairo: Matba'a Al-Sa'adah, 1925).

<sup>63</sup>Al-Farabi, *Ara'u Ahl Al-Madinatu Al-Fadilah*; Muhammad Aziz, "Tuhan Dan Manusia Dalam Perspektif Pemikiran Abu Nasr Al-Farabi," [God and Man in the Perspective of Abu Nasr Al-Farabi], *Jurnal Studi Islam* 10, no. 2 (2015): 62–91, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234800344.pdf>.

<sup>64</sup>Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumuddin*; Al-Farabi, *Ara'u Ahl Al-Madinatu Al-Fadilah*; Atesci, "Imam Al-Ghazali's Understanding of Human Ontology and Behavior."

<sup>65</sup>Kuran, "The Discontents of Islamic Economic Morality."

<sup>66</sup>Richard H. Thaler, *Quasi-Rational Economics* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1994), <https://doi.org/10.2307/2329014>.

assessment.<sup>67</sup> Cognitive limitations in understanding Islam's value system can lead to non-compliance. Similarly, homo economicus faces cognitive limitations affecting their economic decisions, such as, the market structure also shapes behavior, as supply and demand dynamics play a significant role.<sup>68</sup> Given time and resource constraints, homo Islamicus' decisions might deviate from Islamic and economic ideals in this regard.<sup>69</sup> These criticisms cast doubt on the suitability of homo Islamicus as a foundational assumption for Islamic economics. As a result, an alternative paradigm is needed to integrate homo Islamicus into Islamic economics better, necessitating a comprehensive framework for defining and shaping their role as economic agents.

#### 4. The Unnecessity of the Assumption of Homo Islamicus: A Set of Reasons

Scholars like Kuran (1996), Warde (2011), and Farooq (2011) questioned the necessity of essentialist notions concerning homo Islamicus in Islamic economics. In this regard, the argument against this assumption is based on several reasons: firstly, Islamic economics can advance without relying on perfectly devout economic agents. The growth of Islamic economics isn't solely dependent on an ideal homo Islamicus embodying unwavering piety. Susanto (2020) asserted that the evolution of Islamic economics is not contingent on the immediate enforcement of Islamic economic principles.<sup>70</sup> While the practice involves values guiding economic actors,<sup>71</sup> the complete implementation takes time. The progression of Islamic economics isn't impeded by the absence of perfectly aligned economic agents; it can steadily advance, while accommodating changing economic behavior. The centrality of homo Islamicus might not be crucial for Islamic economics' development. This viewpoint suggested that the field can adapt and evolve in response to real-world complexities and societal change without rigidly adhering to a fixed model of economic agents.

Secondly, in Islamic economics, the concept of homo Islamicus, while crucial, should not overshadow other fundamental principles. Monotheism, the foundation and methodology of Islamic economics,<sup>72</sup> holds primary importance. Thus, the emphasis on homo Islamicus should not hinder exploring other key aspects.<sup>73</sup> As emphasized by Susanto (2020), various subjects play essential roles in this progression and extend beyond knowledge-building to practical areas like promoting philanthropy. The institutionalization of Islamic philanthropy through practices like *zakat*, *waqf*, and alms, alongside the establishment of Islamic financial institutions, such as banks and insurance, has

<sup>67</sup>Nicholas C. Barberis, "Thirty Years of Prospect Theory in Economics: A Review and Assessment," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27, no. 1 (February 1, 2013): 173–96, <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.27.1.173>.

<sup>68</sup>Martijn Schins, *The Influence of Quantity Scarcity and Time Restrictions on Consumer Preference and Purchase Intention* (Wageningen University, 2014); J. Jacoby, G. V. Johar, and M. Morrin, "Consumer Behavior: A Quadrennium," *Annual Review of Psychology* 49, no. 1 (February 1998): 319–44, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.49.1.319>.

<sup>69</sup>Gerd Gigerenzer and Wolfgang Gaissmaier, "Heuristic Decision Making," *Annual Review of Psychology* 62, no. 1 (January 10, 2011): 451–82, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-120709-145346>.

<sup>70</sup>Akhmad Akbar Susanto, "Toward a New Framework of Islamic Economic Analysis," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 37, no. 1–2 (May 16, 2020): 103–23, <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v37i1-2.591>.

<sup>71</sup>Al-Sadr, *Iqtishaduna*, M. Umer Chapra, *The Future of Economics: An Islamic Perspective* (UK: The Islamic Foundation, 2000).

<sup>72</sup>Muhammad Sholihin et al., "Maqasid-Based Consumption Intelligence: An Empirical Model of Its Application to the Intention of Halal Purchase," *International Journal of Ethics and Systems*, July 21, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-11-2021-0204>.

<sup>73</sup>Susanto, "Toward a New Framework of Islamic Economic Analysis."

significantly impacted the discourse of Islamic economics.<sup>74</sup> While homo Islamicus remains relevant, it may not require immediate and exclusive attention in the early stages of modern Islamic economics. The urgency and significance might be better directed towards fields like Islamic finance, outweighing the immediate development of the homo Islamicus concept.

Thirdly, the current form of homo Islamicus is crucial but not essential as the foundational support for transforming the Islamic economy. Its existing portrayal ignores human nature and potential deviations from Islamic values in economic decisions. This depiction negates the human ontology elucidated by classical scholars like Al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina, and Al-Farabi, highlighting that humans, including Muslim economic agents, aren't perpetually virtuous.<sup>75</sup> Islamic economics must adopt a "transformational" character, as Susanto (2020) explained, inspiring change aligned with the Islamic worldview.<sup>76</sup> Homo Islamicus, in its current concept, lacks utility due to its ideological positioning and neglect of the transformational agenda crucial for Islamic economic agents' development. The contemporary depiction of homo Islamicus doesn't adequately align with the concept of change integral to Islamic economics.

Fourthly, homo Islamicus is relevant in Islamic economics but shouldn't replace homo economicus. Some scholars' complete rejection of modern economics is conservative and unhelpful. Islamic economics need not start from scratch,<sup>77</sup> as noted by Susanto (2020). While criticizing conventional views dismissing modern economics contradicts Islam's historical approach towards knowledge, which incorporates many achievements from outside Islamic civilization.<sup>78</sup> This historical precedent shows that Muslim economists should assess and incorporate current economic structures,<sup>79</sup> keeping Islamic values and rejecting extraneous features. The key is balancing preservation and progress. Islamic economics should be constructive and inclusive, embracing modern economics' benefits based on Islam's historical openness to varied knowledge.

Fifthly, homo Islamicus loses value when considered final and sacred, contradicting Islamic economics' evolution. The field needs open debates about its components to find its identity. Islamic economics is still searching for identity,<sup>80</sup> according to Mahomedy (2013). Experts must debate every Islamic economic doctrine. As an alternative to homo economicus, homo islamicus is new. It should be debated and criticized. Sacredness without dialogue inhibits its significance to Islamic economics. The five arguments demonstrate homo islamicus' insignificance and demand for a paradigm shift. This paradigm enables homo islamicus to promote economic improvements that fit Islamic well-being ideals (*falah*). This method avoids treating homo islamicus as unchangeable, allowing it to shape economic behaviour and achieve Islamic economic goals.

<sup>74</sup>Kjetil Bjorvatn, "Islamic Economics and Economic Development," *Forum for Development Studies* 25, no. 2 (January 1998): 229–43, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08039410.1998.9666084>.

<sup>75</sup>Al-Farabi, *Ara'u Ahl Al-Madinatu Al-Fadilah*; Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumuddin*; Elkaisy-Friemuth, *God and Humans in Islamic Thought: Abd Al-Jabbar, Ibn Sina and Al-Ghazali*.

<sup>76</sup>Susanto, "Toward a New Framework of Islamic Economic Analysis."

<sup>77</sup>Muzamil Jan, and Tasia Masood, "An Assessment of Life Satisfaction among Women," *Studies on Home and Community Science* 2, no. 1 (July 2008): 33–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09737189.2008.11885250>.

<sup>78</sup>Muzamil Jan, and Tasia Masood, "An Assessment of Life Satisfaction among Women."

<sup>79</sup>Susanto, "Toward a New Framework of Islamic Economic Analysis."

<sup>80</sup>Abdulkader Cassim Mahomedy, "Islamic Economics: Still in Search of an Identity," *International Journal of Social Economics* 40, no. 6 (2013): 556–78, <https://doi.org/10.1108/03068291311321857>.



## 5. Discussion and Analysis

Criticism from Islamic economics scholars has led to various discussions regarding the relevance of homo islamicus.<sup>81</sup> The current paper claimed that though the identified gap is important, the current concept's significance is quite limited. This perspective carries implications that require further exploration, stated as follows:

- i) The irrelevance of the description of homo islamicus in its current form is too ideal. That is it seems certain to put homo islamicus as a topic that must be elaborated within the transformational framework of Islamic economics. Referring to Susanto (2020), the transformation process aims to push Islamic economic objects – economic agents, closer to and representing the ideal concept of Islam.<sup>82</sup>
- ii) Mahyudi (2019) preferred "universal man" to homo islamicus.<sup>83</sup> Islamic moral economics prioritizes Islamic ideals above Muslim economic behaviour, hence, the title. The practicality of Islamic moral economy requires identifying four human dimensions: *ruh* (spirit), *qalb* (heart), *'aql* (intellect), and *nafs*. Mahyudi (2019) believes the R-QAN model is essential for internalizing morality in economic behaviour and constructing Islamic economic policy.
- iii) The development framework of Islamic economics' transformational paradigm should guide homo islamicus.<sup>84</sup> It starts with the formulation of the ideal proposition of behavior, evaluation within the framework of comparison between outstanding propositions and actual behavior, identification of gaps, and formulation of the agenda to transform economic agents into homo islamicus.
- iv) The non-existent idea of homo islamicus has ramifications for Islamic economics experts' attempts to create human concepts that accord with Islamic economics and may be applied holistically to economic development. Mahyudi (2015) proposed "true man," which considers people's positive and negative traits from the Quran. The new Homo islamicus portrays humans as ideals. While not directly stating that humans have a dark side like homo economicus.<sup>85</sup> Thus, science must recognize that humans, with their flaws, need transformational processes to improve.

The four implications above support Islamic economics' transformative approach, which allows for a rethinking of homo islamicus. It is necessary to identify a gap between economic agents' ideal proposition and their actual behavior to formulate the right transformation agenda to create outstanding economic agents like homo islamicus and encourage Islamic economic goals.

## 6. Conclusion

Islamic economics' essential notion of homo islamicus was primarily criticized and unacceptable. As follows are numerous major criticisms that lead to the rejection of homo islamicus:

<sup>81</sup>Kuran, "Behavioral Norms in the Islamic Doctrine of Economics: A Critique."

<sup>82</sup>Susanto, "Toward a New Framework of Islamic Economic Analysis."

<sup>83</sup>Mohd Mahyudi, "Islamic Economics as an Integrated Social Science: Novel Ideas on Its Foundations," in *Methodology of Islamic Economics*, ed. Necmettin Kizilkaya (Routledge, 2019), 134–58, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429320804-6>.

<sup>84</sup> Susanto, "Toward a New Framework of Islamic Economic Analysis."

<sup>85</sup>Mohd Mahyudi, "'True Man': The True Economic Man for Islamic Economics," *Global Journal Al Thaqafah* 5, no. 2 (December 29, 2015): 63–72, <https://doi.org/10.7187/GJAT912015.05.02>.



- i) Essentialist concerning homo islamicus holds that all Muslims share common traits, including high religious commitment, strong work ethics, and social unity. This idea was criticized for neglecting Muslim diversity and complexity.
- ii) Homo islamicus encourages Western orientalism, which minimizes Eastern civilizations, including Islam. This idea perpetuates Islam and Islamic society stereotypes.
- iii) Homo islamicus lacks empirical evidence. Based on limited observation and reductionism, this concept doesn't reflect Muslim society's richness and complexity.
- iv) Muslim society cannot adapt or develop under homo islamicus. This worldview is based on Islamic beliefs and strict religious rituals and rejected change. In addition to these four complaints, homo islamicus as a core assumption of Islamic economics is too sensical, ignoring the nuanced human character that can be good and harmful. This shows the difference between homo islamicus and early human conceptions from ancient academics, including Al-Ghazali, Al-Farabi, and Ibn Sina. Thus, transformational strategies should change human destructive potential so economic agents can act and pick economic options that support the Islamic economy.

This study does not discuss the importance of homo islamicus from an essentialist standpoint, establishing it as the core assumption of Islamic economics to advance it. The contemporary homo islamicus is less critical for four reasons:

- i) The development of Islamic economics does not require or depend on the obedience and righteousness of economic actors.
- ii) Homo islamicus is principally important in Islamic economics but homo islamicus as a concept is not more important than other concepts, which is precisely the foundation for Islamic economics.
- iii) Homo islamicus, in its current form, is ideally important but not needed to become the foundation supporting the agenda for transforming the Islamic economy.
- iv) Islamic economics needs homo islamicus; however, it does not exclude other ideas that Islamic economics may use as a comparison.

The evolving Islamic economy needs a nuanced academic discourse on its concepts rather than assuming finality. While this study lacks empirical evidence against the concept, it proposes that like "homo economicus," "homo islamicus" engages in Islamic economics using cultural and instrumental rationality. Further research is vital. Collaboration and research are emphasized for a deeper comprehension of "homo islamicus" in Islamic economics. This underdeveloped topic offers potential for refinement by future scholars.

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