

CENTRIS E-BULLETIN

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**History of the
Emblem of the
IIUM**

8

**The Axis of the
Jerusalem and
Makkah
Paradigms**

13

**The Spiritual
Enhancement
Programmes and
Activities of SHAS
Mosque (Part II)**

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From the Editor's Desk

Dr. Zahid Zamri

Head, Research and Publication, CENTRIS, IIUM



“Communiversality” as a Portmanteau

The word “communiversality” is a portmanteau. It is the combination between “community” and “university.” One of the purposes of a portmanteau is to solidify the meanings of two different but interrelated words into one word to show its significance and uniqueness in the realm of language.

If we look closely, we will notice that the portmanteau to a certain extent is created from a binary opposition, which is between the term “community” and “university.” Hence, the portmanteau dissolves the binary. Perhaps this is because, throughout the modern period, the meanings of a university and a community have been defined as “in contradiction” to one another. On the one hand, we have a university which is an ivory tower that is secluded from the community, consisting of intellectuals who are regarded as elites. On the other hand, we have a community that consists of laymen or “non-intellectuals.”

Thus, to escape this dichotomy, we need to deconstruct the binary opposition. This can be done by privileging the traditionally underprivileged term, which is the community. Modernity has been degrading the community as the lower part of the hierarchy between the university and the community. By privileging the community, we will be able to destabilize the binary opposition, and thus prove that the two terms are so closely intertwined that it no longer makes sense to divide them apart.

In terms of processes, to break from the traditional dichotomy, firstly the university needs to understand the community that it wants to “absorb” to become part and parcel of its operation. The university’s community must listen to the existential problems of the outside community. Secondly, both parties must brainstorm plausible solutions. This is where the question of practicality comes in.

From the Editor's Desk

Being pragmatic without losing the grasp on the theoretical foundation of communiversity is a continuous challenge. For instance, the demands from the community sometimes do not tally with the university's roles that exclude community services. The university must be effective in finding a way to engage the community without "succumbing" to merely providing public services e.g. cleaning up the streets, washing cars, enlarging the roads, building affordable houses, etc. The community must be clear on this matter. Public services are the jobs of the government.

Therefore, the solutions must be reciprocally organic in terms of contributing to the growth of both parties. As mentioned, they constitute the same entity which is the larger society. And there is nothing un-Islamic about it as it is one of the elements that completes the Islamic precepts.

EDITORIAL

Director:

Dato' Hamidon Abd
Hamid

Editor:

Dr. Zahid Zamri

Assistant Editor:

Dr. Nur Jannah Hassan

Graphic Designer:

Sr. Saidatunnisa'
Zainuddin

Administration:

Br. Faizal Kamal Mohamed
Sr. Norlelah Mohamed

Published by:

Centre for Islamisation (CENTRIS) Level 3
Administration Building International Islamic
University Malaysia, Jalan Gombak 53100 Kuala
Lumpur
email: zahidzamri@iium.edu.my/
centris_reception@iium.edu.my **phone:** (+603)
6421 6797

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