Intellectual Discourse

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Unintended Consequences? The Commodification of Ideas in Tertiary Education and their Effects on Muslim Students

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Abstract: Islamic education, from a holistic point of view, is more than just the direct transmission of the pure Islamic sciences. It encompasses other branches of specialisation and ideally accompanies Muslims, through reflections of the Islamic worldview, during their formal and informal formation. This paper reflects how, in the contemporary tertiary education in the Islamic world, commodified concepts stemming from a non-Islamic worldview are being proliferated, and what the expected results are for Muslim students. The paper expounds on differences in worldview and educational systems and the commodification of ideas. It gives examples from business school curricula, psychology and the impact of teaching in a foreign language, to summarise (un)intended consequences on the students' educational developments. It also shows how the agency of the theory of Maqāṣid, the higher objectives of Islamic law, has immersed Islamic thought in reaction to the bias in the educational system.

Keywords Islamic education, worldview, commodification, Maqāṣid, business schools, tertiary education

Abstrak: Pendidikan Islam daripada perspektif holistik bukan sahaja dilihat melalui perpindahan terus sains Islam tulen. Ia juga mengandungi beberapa

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cabang lain seperti kepakaran dan iringan orang Islam menerusi cerminan pandangan dunia Islam semasa proses pendidikan formal dan tidak formal. Kertas kajian ini menunjukkan bagaimana pendidikan tertiari kontemporari dalam dunia Islam telah mengubahsuai konsep diambil dari pandangan dunia bukan Islam yang sedang berkembang, dan apakah kesan yang dijangkakan kepada pelajar Islam. Kertas kajian ini juga menerangkan tentang kepelbagaian dalam pandangan dunia dan sistem pendidikan serta idea-idea pengubahsuaian. Disertakan juga, contoh-contoh daripada kurikulum sekolah perniagaan, psikologi dan kesan pengajaran dalam bahasa asing sebagai rumusan kesan-kesan tidak diingini dalam pembangunan pendidikan para pelajar. Kertas kajian ini juga melihat kepada bagaimana agensi teori maqasid sebagai objektif yang lebih tinggi undang-undang Islam, telah menggunakan pandangan Islam dalam mereaksi terhadap ketidaksamarataan dalam sistem pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Islam, Pandangan dunia, Pengubahsuaian, Maqasid, Sekolah perniagaan

Introduction

The contemporary education system in the Islamic world has its roots in colonialism. It has, with its institutions, curricula and teaching methodology, either been implanted after the traditional Islamic system of education had been eradicated; or been introduced as the saviour of societies in the Islamic world whose education systems had become stale due to neglect (Hegazy, 2006; Denman, 2012; Progler, 2004)[1]. The problem is not new to research and analysis; however, there may have been disparities between the analysis of the problem and the attempt to find solutions; as well as between the problem-solving strategy and its realisation. Mistakes have been made either in methodology or implementation; the trajectory of the school of Islamisation of human sciences may serve as a recent example of this phenomenon (Hussain & Bouzenita, 2011).

Education is a significant political topic in many societies and, also, between them. In democracies, the education system is frequently 'over-hauled' as each of the various parties of competing ideologies takes their turn in power, resulting in varying emphases in the curriculum over time (Denman, 2012; Hegazy, 2006), depending on the government, but, in the era of neoliberalism, increasingly, on the market (Bridges & McLaughlin, 1994; Hatcher, 2006; Hogan, Sellar, & Lingard, 2016; Roberts, 1994).

Criticism directed at the education systems of the Western, industrialized countries and those following their pathways is increasingly being voiced (Gatto, 2000). Critiques usually mention that the system is a product of industrialization, merely aiming at producing a mass of obedient, non-critically thinking human resources to work in factories, some people who are qualified to do administrative jobs to run and manage the factories, and a chosen few to pursue an academic career (Chomsky, 2014). This 'development' of students in the school system aims for them to take their place in an industrialised workplace, meaning educational emphases are primarily social conformity, rather than creative (Robinson, 2011), but also vocational, right up to the highest levels of terminal degrees.

These structures have been internalised through the representatives of the system in a way that unwritten rules are being followed, and those characterized as 'outsiders' in terms of socialization or descent may find difficulties in succeeding within the system (Chomsky, 2014; Robinson, 2011; Gatto, 2002). There have been criticisms of the education model from a wide range of groups and interests, who criticise it as stifling creativity, subjugating personality and inculcating servitude. Our interest is in how far this model, imported across the Muslim world, has served Muslim students.

This paper looks into some of the problems Muslim students may face with regard to an imported system of education, studying in a foreign language, and being consumers of commodified ideas without the expertise to deconstruct them. It particularly asks what the (un) intended consequences of these ideas may be.

Commodification of Ideas

Commodification has a number of possible definitions, with the original meaning attributed to Karl Marx (Marx, 1975). The term is used to describe the process whereby something which does not have an economic value is assigned one– illustrating how market values can replace social values across society. This allows relationships between things or objects, which formerly had no economic connection to be commercialised.

Strasser (2003) refers to commodification as a historical process, a process where things "at one time produced or distributed in non-market

contexts" (p.7) as collected up as capitalism encourages societies to take "the rules of the market as our culture's default setting" (Agnew, 2003:21). The culture referred to here is the Western one.

Commodification, in this sense, means to take something special or unique, and treat it as if it is indistinguishable, interchangeable, every day. The education system worldwide, both in etic and emic views, is a victim of this kind of commodification. Globalisation, a phenomenon of exporting of Western models, duplicated across the world through colonisation or imitation, resulted in a monolithic format of schooling being adopted worldwide. This system, which is instilled with the values, perspectives and goals of a Western society naturally reflect values of Christianity and secularism, capitalism, industrialism and, perhaps most significantly, of consumption/consumerism. A remake of the export and duplication may currently be observed in the wake of the accreditation process many universities in the Islamic world strive for.

Western business school discourses consider consumption to apply to the gamut of human experience – from idea generation to purchase, from material goods to observations, ideas and experiences (Solomon, 2016). This approach essentially commodifies participants – people and institutions. A simple example of this is the management studies term 'human resources', which refers to the people who work for a company, the human workforce. Obviously, one unique person is not interchangeable with another, however similar their characteristics, despite the rise of the term 'human resources', the age of a contracted, ad-hoc workforce and other manifestations of capitalist hegemony (NPR, 2018; Forbes, 2015).

Commodification, then, is the re-packaging of things and concepts in order to make them more attractive, more convincing, and more palatable in the service of a capitalistic global economy.

The authors of this paper have previously used the term commodification so as to mean "the choice of certain ideas, their simplified symbolic representation (sometimes with a lack of consideration of their intellectual or societal background) and their translation into a standard and/or merchandise" (Bouzenita and Boulanouar, 2016, p.61). We will use the term in that sense here as well.

Recently, Adi Setia has remarked the conflation and co-optation of the theory of Maqāṣid (Setia, 2016). We use the term commodification

in a comparable way, with the additional focus on how the conflated and cooptated concept (Setia) is being proliferated.

Traditional Islamic Model of Education

Traditionally, Muslims were taught in mosques, beginning with the fundamentals of Islamic Dīn (Qur'an, Sīrah, Ḥadīth, Arabic) as a backdrop to all vocational and cultural education which followed (maths, science, languages, poetry etc). Ibn Khaldun wrote '"It should be known that instructing children in the Qur'an is a symbol of Islam. Muslims have, and practice, such instruction in all their cities, because it imbues hearts with a firm belief (in Islam) and its articles of faith, which are (derived) from the verses of the Qur'an and certain Prophetic traditions" (Ibn-Khaldun: 1958, #38). In this way, learning was located within a comprehensive Islamic learning, meaning students had a good resource of Islamic learning even with very little formal education. It also meant that students learned Islamic models and ethics as starting points for all evaluations.

This point is very important, because the development of the various educational systems has reflected their emphases and requirements. In the West, schools developed from Christianity to philosophy to economics and the other business disciplines. In the Islamic tradition, all learning developed from the Qur'an.

Similarly, the physical structure of teaching meant that students sat with teachers in circles in the mosque working together on various lessons (Al Khateeb, 2012) – the groupings being made up by level, rather than age. In this way, one could find a tutor far younger than some of the students in his/her group, as is natural.

In modern times, finding a traditional Muslim model of education may prove a futile endeavour. With decolonisation stagnant and under the influence of globalisation in the Muslim world, the education systems may still be used to 're-educate' Muslims to conform to (Western) values and (Western) norms; with legal systems similarly modified (Charrad, 2001), schooling has been a boon in encouraging conformity in Muslim countries all over the world. In the wake of accreditation, tertiary institutions of learning in the Islamic world streamline their university systems even more along the lines of 'Western' standardisation.

A Difference in Worldviews

It is vital at this point to discuss the differences in worldview, so as to understand the dimensions for importing ideas and systems to the Islamic world for the educational sector.

The Islamic worldview is, first and foremost, based on the concept of Tawḥīd, the oneness of the Creator of the heavens and the earth, Allah (S.W.T) Man has been created as the servant of Allah, his khalīfah or vicegerent on earth. The purpose of his existence is to serve his Creator, obey His commands and prohibitions. This is also the very basic concept, aim ('learning outcome', in pedagogical terms) in any Islamic education on any level. While acquiring basic Islamic knowledge is an individual obligation (farḍu 'ayn), acquiring any other kind of useful (i.e., not harmful) knowledge is recommended, basically permissible or could even be given the rule of collective obligation (farḍ kifāyah). Harmful knowledge is a kind of knowledge that entails or leads to disbelief, like magic, witchcraft and the likes. The basic sources of the Islamic way of life, and therefore its educational system, are the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (S.A.W). It is a commonplace that, while Islamic culture found active implementation, Muslims were at the peak of scientific expertise and development; a reality that finds its secret in the first verse of revelation; "Read! In the name of your Lord Who created, created the human being from a clot of blood (ᶜalaq)." (Qur'an, 96:1-2)

Secular materialist worldview as manifest in Western societies, and imported to the rest of the world in the wake of colonialization and then globalisation, in its technology-minded version, basically states that a Creator may – or may not – exist, but the human being is free to make his own choices of good or bad, right or wrong, create his own systems, according to his own whims and desires, or a real or conjectural 'benefit' (maṣlaḥah). Benchmark of action is the material benefit, ethical guidelines of different proveniences may well exist, but are often sacrificed for this purpose. Secularism is, so to speak, the keeper of the Holy Grail and undisputable.

Observation needs to be made while embarking on scientific expertise of any kind developed within the framework of a different, here the secular capitalist worldview; while the pure sciences, life sciences etc, are often considered to be neutral, they may still express a point of view on life that is in contradiction to the Islamic worldview, either in conceptualisation (theory), or in implementation (practice), or both

(Boulanouar, 2017). As far as human and social sciences, philosophy, psychology, pedagogics is concerned, the guiding principle should be to accept these concepts only after thorough scrutiny with regard to its compatibility with the Islamic worldview. This requires that the students (as well as teachers!) of these sciences are well equipped and versed in the Islamic culture. Particularly here lies the weak spot of Muslim students in tertiary education in the Muslim world (and beyond) today. As a result of the growing secularisation of societies in the Islamic world, and the Westernisation (and secularisation) of the educational systems, Muslim students are practising their Islam on an individual basis (with regard to prayer and fasting), but are not well versed in the Islamic systems, history, and understanding of its sources.

Accordingly, what does it mean to take ideas from one worldview, here the secular materialist, and import them to the other, the Islamic? We need to consider that ideas and concepts carry values and that, from the Islamic point of view, any action needs to be evaluated by and aligned with the stipulations of Islamic law. It may then take the rule of being obligatory (wājib), recommended (mandūb), permissible (mubāḥ), discouraged (makrūh), or prohibited (ḥarām). The field of mubāḥ, the permissible, is quite wide. With regard to the natural sciences, for instance, whatever comes under the description of a given reality is value-free and may be adopted under this category; provided that its usage is embedded in an Islamic framework. In case an idea / a concept stems from a secular point of view, its adoption would run counter to a person's belief system and could entail disbelief; in case it is in contradiction to an Islamic legal rule, it would amount to acquiring a ḥarām status. Importantly, the difference in worldview entails a difference in methodology, merging the two worldviews on the basis of concepts and rules will lead to a hybridised methodology that subtly undermines Islamic concepts.

Teaching in a foreign language and its implications

Although it is not the main focus of this paper, the language aspect certainly counts as one educational factor in the absorption of ideas, the lacking ability to deconstruct, and continuity of dependence. We may therefore summarise some ideas to support the main topic of this paper.

The field of psycho- and cultural linguistics is definitely important for any topic related to education in an international context. The

Whorf- Sapir hypothesis, or rather the theory of linguistic relativity, as Whorf preferred, suggests that language influences thought (Chafe, 2013, 122). If this is so, it certainly matters which language is used to acquire basic and more advanced scientific concepts. It may also matter to which degree a student masters the medium of instruction so as to be able to excel and be innovative.

Education in tertiary, and sometimes secondary and even primary levels in the former colonies very often takes place in a foreign language – English in countries historically affiliated with British colonialism or influence; French in former French colonies, and so forth.

Teaching basic concepts in a foreign language, usually for claims of competitiveness, modernity, or functionality, has a number of effects on the learner; among them the danger of a growing disability to express these concepts in the mother tongue; the learners may find themselves restrained or even incapacitated from developing ideas in their own language, while not mastering the foreign language well enough to be able to excel. In addition, the network of meanings that naturally exist while studying in the mother tongue is lost. The process may lead to a disability to refer to the own cultural legacy, as texts and sources the learner gets familiar with are expressions of a different culture; or the learners may start referring to their own culture and heritage through the filter of the (former) colonial language and its sources (Pennycook, 1998).

A certain conviction may spread that the own language/culture is unable to produce 'modern' concepts, solutions, that it is not competitive in the modern world. Reliance on foreign expertise, foreign teachers, and sending young students to foreign universities – an unneglectable economic factor for the former colonial powers (Universities UK, 2017), mainly, is expected to persist. Any language is also a vehicle for cultural concepts; concepts that may be taken over as part of an acculturation process. The usage of a foreign language in tertiary education may have some advantages; however, negative consequences are multi-layered and manifold. Most former colonies have seen discussions on the usage of the former colonial language as medium of instruction, to cite but a recent example, we may refer to the discussion and change in decision making in Malaysia on whether math and science ought to be taught in English or Bahasa Malaysia (Tan, 2011).

Besides the inherent ideological issues with the adoption of a Western, and particularly English language, curriculum by Muslim speakers of other languages, Muslim students are at a fundamental disadvantage within the system when compared to their Western (or even more Westernised) contemporaries (Chase, 1980).

Business School Examples

To give an example of a typically secular connotation and its – non-existent – Islamic counterpart in textbooks of tertiary education; students are exposed to the concept of the economic 'invisible hand' as credited to Adam Smith in his very famous text *The Wealth of Nations* (Smith, 1776). The explanation reflects a Western capitalist or Industrialist viewpoint in its formulation that 'the baker does not bake bread out of benevolence'. The idea is being used – in neoliberal circles, and has probably also seen a commodification and decontextualized usage since Adam Smith formulated it – so as to suggest that individual self-interested actions lead to social benefits, and that, therefore, the state is not in charge of social welfare – as the deregulated market regulates it on its own account. The Muslim student is not exposed to the mechanisms of an Islamic economy; or even the Islamic perspective, as once formulated by Imam al-Shāṭibī in his Muwāfaqāt, that a baker bakes to produce bread for his neighbours to buy as an act of worship, meaning they are fed and he is paid (Al-Shāṭibī, 2003, 2/300). There are many examples of this across disciplines, and certainly the anecdotal result is a compartmentalising of ideas in the Muslim students' minds. They are Muslim at home, but at university, work and especially in business it is perceived as having nothing to do with Islam – different rules apply, different norms abound in these contexts. The link between the Islamic belief, education and professional life is being lost.

Students face a 'clash' when taught of resource scarcity, when Islam teaches abundance (Qur'an 7:10, 15:21, 2:29). As Zarqa (2003) points out, there is much academic work reflecting the worldview that there is a "possible incompatibility between available resources and human needs" (p.18) when, for Muslim students "the only source of incompatibility that might arise between human desires and the quantities of natural resources available would be man's misbehaviour and his deviation from the norms of production and consumption that have been ordained by God" (p.19). These conflicts can be further reinforced, when Islamic

concepts such as Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, are commodified to make Islamic teaching palatable or 'relevant', or to package these complex concepts to 'meet the needs' of established human theories such as scarcity (eg, Rice, 1999), but also many others.

Students are also disadvantaged with the understanding of some concepts. For example, the concept of interest (Qur'an 2:279) is taught as standard in the Western business school (and from the seventh grade in school mathematics). An enquiry into how money can increase in values is naturally answered by interest, inflation and the like, while for a Muslim student ribā is ḥarām (eg, Qur'an 3:130, 4:161, 2:275-276, 278-279). So, this answer may be difficult to get to, and to learn, and, therefore, to teach. Getting it 'right' actually requires a compartmentalization of belief. In answer to the question of why interest is taught at all, academics may cite globalisation and the global economy. However, with interest being taught primarily or fundamentally, rather than supplementary, the concept of, in this case, interest, is either compartmentalised in a student's mind or it supersedes their 'Islamic self'. It loosens the hold on the rope of Allah (Hussain & Bouzenita, 2011).

Marketing, perhaps the most materialistic business school discipline, is a discipline which strongly supports and promotes the capitalist economy. At the core of this discipline a course called consumer behaviour is taught. This subject examines the behaviour of consumers – be they buyers or 'end-users' – and develops strategies to both interest them (using psychology, anthropology, sociology etc) and to communicate with them (eg, advertising).

Despite the fact that the vast majority of the world's population are so-called 'collective' societies, which focus more on the group than the individual ('we' versus 'me'), consumer behaviour textbooks dedicate a great deal of attention to the (individuated) self and various social science theories related to the concept. A foregone assumption, for example, is that people consume to stand out, to show their individuality, their personal uniqueness, and that consumers generally dislike having the same product as someone else – particularly in the case of female consumers. Within interdependent-self societies this is seldom true, in fact in Islamic understanding this concept could be considered absolutely inverted with this type of display reserved for private gatherings rather than public ones.

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, the Higher Objectives of Islamic Law, and their commodification

The theory of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, the higher objectives of Islamic law, has been developed in an Islamic framework and by Islamic scholars deeply rooted in the Islamic sciences. Through the comparison and assessment of numerous detailed legal rules, these scholars have found that there are certain objectives which are met through the holistic implementation of these rules, such as the preservation of dīn, life, intellect, progeny and wealth. Although these five values are often (particularly in contemporary textbooks) being presented as the only possible solution, different scholars have named different values or diversified them more.

Imam al-Ghazali has defined the maqāṣid as either acquiring benefits (maṣāliḥ) or warding off harm (madharrah), be it in this world (dunyā) or the afterlife (ākhirah). The preservation of these values takes place on different stages of strength (which have come to be called necessities (dharūriyāt), needs (ḥājjiyāt), and embellishments (taḥsīniyyāt). He also underlines the difference between the maṣāliḥ as defined by the Lawgiver, Allah s.w.t, and benefits as intended by the human being. Ghazali imposed a number of conditions to be applied to unrestricted or maṣāliḥ murslah, i.e. benefits not defined through a specific text which are generally not part and parcel of the commodified version. (Al-Ghazali, 1904).

What we need to keep in mind here is that these scholars lived and found themselves under the intellectual and cultural impact of an Islamic system, i.e. the holistic implementation of the Islamic way of life. Therefore, their value system and ideas can be considered as originally Islamic. Within an implemented Islamic way of life, the interpretation of whatever is beneficial or harmful will follow an Islamic conceptualization. Within a capitalist, profit-maximising system, however, the interpretation will tend to be materialistic and profit-orientated, sometimes even without bad intentions. In addition, the contemporary methodology resorted to is to deny the importance of textual evidence and declare the objectives as open-ended; in this way, any appraised concept, from modernity to progress to science to human rights can be claimed to be part and parcel of the objectives of the sharī'ah (Setia, 2016).

Interestingly, it seems that a revival and renewed interest in the theory of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah in the academia has taken place in the last few decades. The reason to this phenomenon may easily be found: Bearing in mind that daily life in the Islamic world is more and more the result of a capitalist way of life, with the absence of the Islamic systems, the gap between reality and Islamic rules becomes wider, leading to disparity between the demands of the legal rule on one hand and a non-Islamic reality on the other. As a result, Islamic rules may seem stale, isolated, unrealistic, not suitable for application. Resorting to a – commodified – model of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah seems, superficially, like a reminder to what the Islamic legal rule is intended to be for, seeming like a defence to the rule; however, it may serve as a cover to introduce capitalist values and thought, trying to 'close the gap' between reality and law; not by changing an un-Islamic reality, but rather by changing the law in the end. Characteristic of attempts to close the ranks between the systems is to refer to the ultimate maṣlaḥah – in faulty reference to Ibn Qayyim – "wherever there is the maṣlaḥah, this is Islam"; with no differentiation between the different systems in term of origins, rules, values and intentions. Interestingly, even non-Muslims have discovered the theory of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah as a means to "harmonise" the Islamic and secular (legal) systems (Bohlander, 2014).

To give an example on how the – commodified – theory serves as a closing of ranks between the outer appearance of an Islamic legal rule and the content of capitalist values, we may resort to the interpretation of benefits and harms in the contemporary ijtihad on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) (Bouzenita, 2012).

It is not astonishing that the theory is very often resorted to in the field of Islamic finance and banking, as the commodified model, i.e. the maqāṣid as decontextualized from their original worldview and textual evidences, offers a vehicle to merge decontextualized Islamic legal rules with a secular capitalist setting.

On the level of specialised writings in economics, social sciences, psychology and others, the reference to a watered-down concept of maqāṣid often takes place with rather good intentions; where Muslim academics attempt at Islamising concepts pertaining to their specialisation, thereby attempting to make their contribution to the betterment of the Muslim Ummah. Despite the good intentions, harm

can be done by the non-observation of fundamental differences between the Islamic and Western capitalist worldviews through these laypeople. As Setia (2016) has observed, it is often the Muslim specialists of the Islamic sciences who deepen the co-optation of concepts despite their in-depth Islamic knowledge, under ignorance of the reality of the Western concepts and their rootedness in the secular worldview. Positively laden terms such as modernism, development, science, and progress are used as exchange maqāṣid, sometimes like the classically mentioned five maqāṣid, and turned into open-ended objectives. The very fact that these, just like the 'maṣlaḥah' and 'madharrah', are then interpreted within a secular materialistic framework is completely neglected. Setia (2016) forwards examples from the pervasive Islamic finance sector and the Halal Industry to illuminate how "original epistemological and axioteleological parameters of what really counts as maslaha are disregarded so that it can be identified with core Western values such as progress, science and development." (p.127). Setia's (2016) critique also encompasses how the hierarchical order of maqāṣid, is often undermined, although substantial for the realization of maqāṣid within the theory, where dīn is the most, māl the least important; he also remarks how the levels of strength within one maqṣad, the ḍarūriyāt, ḥājiyāt, taḥsīniyāt, are being misconsidered.

What can be observed in contemporary academic writing, and this is to be seen as one of the consequences of the idea's agency; is a tendency to link an already commodified model or theory to the commodified version of maqāṣid. To give an example; Zakaria and Abdul Malek in their 2014 paper briefly refer to maqāṣid as "purpose, objective, principle, intent, goal and end. Meanwhile, Maqsid of Syariah is the objectives or purposes behind Islamic laws." (p.43) This- and otherworldly dimensions of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah are not mentioned. In the detailed explanation of religion, physical life, knowledge, family and wealth, however, are presented not as objectives that are to be realized upon an implementation of Islamic laws, but *human needs*, with the aim of setting them on a par with Maslow's needs. This merger is then used to assess the efficiency of zakāh distribution, concluding that "human needs based on the integration of human needs as stipulated in Maqāṣid Syariah and Maslow's hierarchy of needs have strong effects on Zakah distribution efficiency. Further, this multi-dimensional evaluation provides useful insights to zakah institutions to not limit of

zakah in monetary form but also can be in other non-monetary forms." (p.40) The academic reach of the paper is assessed as "evaluation of the development of multi-dimensional evaluation of human needs based on the integration of human needs as stipulated in Maqāṣid Syariah and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It is hoped that this multi-dimensional evaluation would lead to a more realistic, fair and holistic management." (p.50).

In a similar vein, El-Din (2013) in his *Maqāṣid Foundation of Market Economics* draws analogies from the five maqāṣid, as formulated by al-Shāṭibī, to principles of economics: "Thus, 'religion' is the strategic vision of well-being; 'self' is the overall economic goal; 'mind' is the productive human resource; 'progeny' stands for intergenerational continuity; and 'wealth' is the material economic resource." (p.11)

"In the final analysis, economics is a human science setting out to understand human behaviour with the primary objective being to promote *well-being*, which means targeting socio-economic goals to promote the state of satisfaction in goods and services. This is precisely the major cause of concern in Islamic economics so long as reliable tools of analysis exist to help define and realise socio-economic goals." (p.14)

The author obviously sets the major assumptions of capitalist economics, such as production as the key initial problem ("central economic problems (what to produce?, how?, to whom?)" p. 12), or the scarcity of goods as formulated by Adam Smith, as default and tries to wrap a maqāṣid-based interpretation of Islamised capitalism around it. ("This chapter approaches the objectives (that is, maqāṣid) of Islamic law (that is, shari'ah) in the socio-economic context as an enquiry of how shariah prioritises the allocation of scarce economic resources in the pursuit of socio-economic goals." (p.11).

In his chapter on "Law of scarcity as a trigger of maqāṣid economics", shariah is presented as the more civilized and ethical way to distribute scarce (!) resources, and the three layers of maqāṣid as described by al-Ghazali (necessities, needs, and embellishments) are re-focused under the angle of satisfaction: "This makes up a three-stage development model starting from the satisfaction of Necessities, (darurat) to the satisfaction of Needs (hajiyat) and finally towards the satisfaction of open-end perfections (tahsiniyat)." (p.16)

Instead of presenting the Islamic economic system in its own right, sharī'ah remains but an ethical cloak to 'embellish' capitalism through its maqāṣid. Setia uses the term "reverse engineering" for this process (Setia, 2016). The authors of this paper have previously researched the hierarchy of needs theory as referred to Abraham Maslow (Bouzenita and Boulanouar, 2016). Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a pervasive model in many specialisations, so many students in the Islamic world will be exposed to it; albeit its intrinsic contradiction to Islamic concepts. To summarise the most important parts of criticism, the model is not empirically proven and is based on randomly chosen US-American experiences of the 1950's, making it ethnocentric. The model does not give room for any spiritual aspect as a motivation to action in human life, while the possibility of "self-actualisation" demands a fulfilment of the basic human needs – quite in contradiction to the reality of human existence. (Bouzenita and Boulanouar, 2016) Teaching this model and its likes as default – without an Islamically founded evaluation – deprives the students of any link to their belief system.

The (un)intended consequences: Effects on students' mind-sets

Muslim students are, either in or outside of the Islamic world, exposed to a seemingly overwhelming, successful modernism they are not able to digest, let alone evaluate as against Islam as a way of life. They are therefore alienated from their innate culture and – intentionally or not – hybridised in a self-perpetuating circle. Their relationship to their own Islamic culture will at best be emotional, not intellectual; they may look at Islamic culture as remnant of a glorious past, but not to be realised in today's age; a creator of problems and ambiguities rather than the solution to it.

Tragically, they will most likely not even be able to excel, their success will be in the shallow reproduction of ideas, not in their development, as long as the hybridised framework has not been left behind. Success under these circumstances is rather surprising.

Confusion will exist as students' privilege Western 'evidence' over Islamic knowledge – thinking of Western knowledge as the 'right way'. They have a compartmentalised mentality, where they live as Muslims at home and with family and friends, but operate in business and profession in another ethical and legal framework entirely. While in the past, backed through an Islamic system of education, students

and scholars found their grounding in Islam to filter outside knowledge and take the good from it, they now filter Islamic knowledge through Western culture, because they are learning it, in English, including its ethical approach and secularised civil law.

As Ghazali put it, people imagine inconsistency in the religion (dīn) because of their own impotence: "He is indeed like a blind man who entered a house and there stumbled over some of the vessels of the house and said, 'what are these vessels doing in the path; why are they not put in their place?' They answered him, 'Those vessels are in their place, but you did not find the way because of your blindness. How strange it is of you not to blame your stumbling on your blindness, but rather to blame it upon the negligence of someone else.' This is the relationship between religious and intellectual sciences". (Ghazali, 2010, p.48).

Through the Western lens, Muslim students may think nothing really innovative came from Islamic sciences. As a matter of fact, they are taught lots of things that did, but have been 'hybridised' into a gross, unnatural form and then 'sold back' to them as examples of the awe-inspiring superior, progressive, modern west (fuelled by capitalism).

Also, there is the sending of the 'best and brightest' to the west to study. And the home country bias towards those students as if they are better quality graduates, even if they clearly are not.

Then they do research on themselves as 'other' (Self-Orientalization), using the frameworks and methodologies they learned from their Western textbooks, their Western educations, their Western trained teachers.

French colonialism has produced the ultimate example for brainwashing younger generations, the future indigenous co-opted (to use Setia's term) elites of the colonies, with the cultural force of the textbook. "Nos ancêtres les Gaullois étaient blonds"[1], the famous phrase lurching into the mind-sets of primary school students wherever French colonialism had taken hold, and creating the ultimate sense of an inferiority complex amongst the perpetually colonized. As time passed on, the means of colonizing people's mindsets have become subtler, and more pervasive, and maybe more difficult to recognize and

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[1] Our ancestors, the Gauls, were blond.

deconstruct. Roles have been changed; where it used to be the scholars who deconstructed non-Islamic concepts as what they are, it is now very often Muslim scholars and those presenting themselves as such who introduce non-Islamic concepts in a pseudo- Islamic garb. As the Algerian intellectual Malik Bennabi sharply realized in the middle of the 20th century, colonialization, to be successful, needs the colonisable mind-set, "la colonisiabilité" (Bennabi, 2005). The North African polymath Ibn Khaldun, in his Muqaddimah, aptly formulated the relationship between the conquered and the conqueror. The conquered, he says, will always follow the conqueror in habits and attitude (Ibn Khaldun, 1958). It is unlikely that Ibn Khaldun could possibly have imagined the far-reaching consequences of colonisation, particularly in the education system. However, his observation is completely transferrable to our example.

Commodified secular capitalist concepts in textbooks and, to a lesser extent, in academic papers, are absorbed by future generations. From our observation, students in tertiary education (let alone beyond) very often do not have the ability to distinguish between an original concept and a commodified one, nor have they been equipped with the intellectual abilities of deconstructing a concept that defies Islamic culture.

The commodification of ideas, as has been described in this paper, with the assistance of a number of other factors, results in the perpetuation of what Malik Bennabi aptly described as "colonisiabilité".

Conclusions

The paper has showcased, based on examples from the current curricula and teaching approaches in universities, some of the difficulties Muslim students face in the contemporary system of tertiary education. It has explained the importance of worldviews and their main differences in this process. It has further shown how the very phenomenon of commodification becomes an agent to change Islamic thought so as to accommodate the current situation.

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