



# Javnost - The Public

Journal of the European Institute for Communication and Culture

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjav20>

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To cite this article: Basyouni Ibrahim Hamada (2022): Islamic Worldview As A Model For De-Westernising Journalism Studies And Profession, Javnost - The Public, DOI: [10.1080/13183222.2022.2067955](https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2022.2067955)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2022.2067955>



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Published online: 19 May 2022.



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# ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW AS A MODEL FOR DE-WESTERNISING JOURNALISM STUDIES AND PROFESSION

Basyouni Ibrahim Hamada 

*Despite the various attempts to de-Westernise journalism studies and profession, the dominance of Western theories and practices remains absolute. This article seeks to develop a hybrid Islamic/Western worldview that represents a comprehensive, flexible and multicultural paradigm that emphasises sharing rather than imposing one's heritage and view. The article particularly reflects on resolving the existing ontological, epistemological and methodological issues as a crucial task in overcoming obstacles and stagnation related to the hybridisation of theory-building efforts. This article demonstrates how the proposed normative paradigm can be grounded in the realistic context of journalistic practice by examining two research issues: media and democratisation and the globalisation of journalism ethics.*

**KEYWORDS** de-westernisation; Islamic worldview; hybrid worldview; news media and democratisation; global journalism ethics; just objectivity

## Introduction

Despite the serious attempts to internationalise journalism studies, Western hegemony remains the sole determinant of disciplinary research methods, theories and knowledge (Alatas 2006; de Albuquerque et al. 2020; Ayish 2003). Various sources offer pieces of evidence illustrating that a Western model of journalism culture in terms of its liberal norms, journalistic autonomy and objectivity has been the benchmark against which journalism is evaluated in the rest of the world, (Hanitzsch 2019) especially in Muslim majority countries “MMC.” Besides, the tradition of the four theories of the press and the modernisation perspective remain the pillars of journalism education, research and practice everywhere despite being based on a biased Western approach (Curran and Park 2003). Miike (2002) observed that Asian cultures had been used as testing grounds for American theorisation. Likewise, Ayish (2003) reminds us that communication studies in the third world is generally subsumed by Western theories and methodologies. The discontent with the third world academic dependency was strengthened by Said (1979), whose criticism of orientalism sparked a need to develop communication studies from the Arab Islamic perspective. Furthermore, the growing significance of postmodernism, post-colonialism and deconstructionism (Wang and Shen 2000, Miike 2006) has influenced attitudes towards communication theories and methodologies being Western-centric. It has also fuelled the efforts of several non-Western social scientists (Gunaratne 2010; Alatas 2011) to approach journalism studies from a truly international perspective to accommodate a holistic

perspective for indigenous people to understand their agency and provide practical solutions for realistic issues (Miike 2006).

The present article argues that Islamic and Western worldviews share some basic universal human principles and are not mutually exclusive, yet have two distinct cultural backgrounds. Journalists' perceptions of their roles, ethics and daily practices are constrained by the cultural milieu in which they operate (Mutsvairo et al. 2021). Since the peoples of each civilisation have different views of reality, it is not logical that the scientific worldview as invented and applied in the West identifies and generates solutions for MMC. The challenge addressed in this article is how to merge two detached and distinct worldviews in a hybrid perspective. De-Westernisation in this context does not mean excluding the current science of journalism simply because of its affiliation to the West (Gunaratne 2008). Instead, the aim is to localise, reorient and more importantly, to reinvent the ways of theorising that respond to the local context. As Malik argues, Western science has not been developed exclusively from within, where Islamic scientists have enormously contributed to the Western renaissance (cited in Ray 2012). Iwabuchi (2010) proposes a partnership between Western and non-Western cultures in this process as the only and best way to supersede the West-non-West dichotomy. It is emphasised throughout that hybridity intends to enrich the universal literature by opening a more comprehensive intellectual dialogue between academic communities rather than merely rejecting Western values. In other words, this objective extends beyond de-Westernisation (Wang 2011) to avoid issues of nativism and cultural essentialism (Khiabany 2011).

To develop a normative and practical hybrid worldview, the article deals with five questions: (1) How is de-Westernisation understood differently and why? (2) How well do Western theoretical approaches in journalism and communication studies apply to MMC? Alternatively, how applicable are theoretical approaches based on secularism to Islamic cultural context that lies at odds with such philosophy? (3) To what extent and in what levels does the Islamic worldview support scientific knowledge production? (4) How does the Islamic worldview overcome the limitations of the scientific worldview? (5) How and what ought to be de-Westernised?

### **De-Westernisation: Alternative Understandings and Justifications**

The intellectual origin of de-Westernisation has historically been rooted in diverse cultural and socio-political settings (Waisbord and Mellado 2014). So, it has no identical meanings. In the West, it refers to broadening the methods of academic knowledge production to accommodate experiences, traditions and theories of non-Western cultures (Wang 2011). In the East, de-Westernisation is approached contrastingly as a process of reorienting Western knowledge production that has perpetuated the Western hegemony at the expense of the indigenous ideologies of the global south (Al-Faruqi 1982). Proponents of this view advocate the sovereignty of national culture as a solution to the concerns of importing alien Western ideals and practices. Gunaratne (2010), for instance, suggests that de-Westernisation implies academic efforts that minimise or fully eradicate the hegemony of Eurocentrism in social sciences, including journalism and media studies. Alatas (2006) considers it a process rooted in the uncritical adoption and application of Western theoretical perspectives produced by the positivist school of thought. As a

response to this phenomenon (Wang and Kuo 2010) recommend an interpretive paradigm based on generating theories rather than testing them. This understanding of de-Westernisation emphasises on the autonomous development of indigenous alternatives to social sciences. This approach is championed by (Takahashi 2007), who offers a genuine analysis demonstrating the inadequacy of Western communication concepts in capturing the particular wisdom of Japanese people's collective and communicative time-space in their daily life.

The history of de-Westernisation in the Arab Muslim world is related to the conflict between secular nationalism (Tibi 1995) and political Islam. Where secularism superseded Islam politically in the aftermath of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1924, the latter prevailed after the Arab defeat in 1967. De-Westernisation in this context means all efforts aiming to provide a completely different Islamic paradigm independent from the Western legacy by reviving the traditional Islamic heritage (Alatas 2011). Due to its advancement in areas of science, economy and military for the last three centuries, some social scientists assume that non-Western countries have to follow the same path to enter the global, digital and developed world. In this context, it is worth mentioning that the unique culture of the West that has led the modernisation project is not (Huntington 1996) universal. Given this fact, the present article does not encourage ways of thinking that perpetuate polarisation; rather, it advocates theorisation without ideological bias or artificial boundaries (Miike 2002) created by arbitrary definitions of what constitutes West or Islamic. This conceptual concern is grounded in the works of several Western scholars and will serve as a foundation to expand upon (Joseph 2007).

### **Scientific and Islamic Worldviews (In)Compatibility**

The Islamic worldview believes in revealed knowledge and regards other research methods as a way knowing of and moving towards Allah. On the other hand, the Western scientific worldview is rooted in reasoning and trust in science and scientific methods as its religion (cited in Sardar 1985). For example, the American Council of the National Academy of Sciences considers religion and science as two isolated domains that cannot coexist, and any attempt to merge them in the same framework will lead to their distortion (Sperry 1988). Recently, three important books — by Terry Eagleton, Jürgen Habermas and Steven D. Smith—insist on the clash between religion and science (Gillespie 2011). In contrast, the hybrid worldview offers a holistic paradigm that enables journalism researchers in MMC to achieve an epistemic shift able to widen the knowledge base of communication scholarship. The core of this view states that Allah has created knowledge, that is, out there; yet, it does not exist for us unless scholars discover it. One of the reasons for our ignorance and inability to reach such comprehensive knowledge in all disciplines is the rigid human-made scientific worldview. This piece intends to merge them to utilise the scientific procedures to verify the assumptions, tenets, norms and beliefs of the Islamic view that exist beyond the direct experience of human beings. Such interactive dialogue expands the research horizons and philosophical underpinnings of the tight scientific view. A view, in fact, not new. The golden age of Islamic civilisation witnessed the integration of sciences of nature and philosophy with revealed knowledge at the top level in a hierarchy that ends with

empirical data (Sarton 1975). The problem started with the domination of Western positivism, with which religion was viewed as incompatible with science (Golshani 2000); a judgement that has no location in the Islamic worldview that embraces social and basic sciences and fulfils the requirements of life, past and future until the end of human existence (Azzam 1982).

The incompatibility issue could be partially attributed to the historical prevalence of the two-entity model's relationship between science and religion. A model that evolved from a specific cultural, historical and scientific context of the West, especially the conflict between the state and the church (Barbour 2000; Iqbal 2007). The second factor relates to a false understanding that Islamic knowledge is supernatural and thus unverified. To clarify this vague point, one must consider that we do not examine the text per se but our interpretations of the text. The Islamic text- Qur'an and Sunnah-like all other texts, is open to a variety of understandings that enable social scientists to verify their visions that could be right or wrong (Ragab 1999; An-Na'im 1990). The tradition attributed to the Prophet Mohammad states that every mujtahid, jurist, who struggles to reach the right answer, will be rightly rewarded (Fadl and Khaled 2004) is an indication that there could be more than a single correct answer to the same question. The historical dialogue between the Prophet and one of his representatives (Ahmed 1992) to Yemen; Muadh ibn Jabal underscores that reasoning has been one of the sources to approach controversial issues. Analysis of this discourse affirms the hierarchical order of authenticated foundations where the Qur'an lies at the top level, followed by Sunnah and reasoning (Ijtihad).

At the core of the hybridisation approach is the argument that the basic beliefs of scientific and Islamic worldviews are compatible. The first is that the world is well organised, ordered and consistent. In the absence of such order, the knowledge production cycle, including experiments, truth and theories, would be impossible. It coincides with its equivalent in the Islamic worldview, where the unity of cosmic order determines the stability of material, social and ethical realities to fulfil the laws permeated by Allah in all His creation (Al-Faruqi 1982). The existence and continuation of scientific research are possible only because of the constant fundamental properties of materials of the universe created and sustained by Allah (Uddin 2012). The Qur'anic verse explicitly states: "The nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no alteration of Allah's creation" (30:30)<sup>1</sup>. The unchanged nature of all creations made it possible to accumulate knowledge where the new scientist begins his investigation from the earlier one; otherwise, the scientific theory would be impossible. The contribution of many non-Muslim influential scientists underscoring, this fact, such as Francis Bacon, was significant because in a universe without a God, one could have no confidence in its order (Carvalho 2006).

The second belief is rooted in the faith that human intelligence can discover facts and understand the world. Starting from Aristotle to René Descartes, along with many other thinkers and scientists of Enlightenment, made their influential contributions through practices grounded in reasoning and rational thinking (Carvalho 2006). In parallel to this, Qur'an tells us that the father of all Prophets, Abraham believed in the existence of Allah, by reasoning and through his intellectual capacity to differentiate between the creator (Allah) and the created (sun, moon and the stars). Specifically, as per Qur'anic instructions, no scientific evidence is accepted without proved reason; meanwhile, scientific theories are only accepted if they are in concord with Qur'an (Uddin 2012). These philosophical beliefs

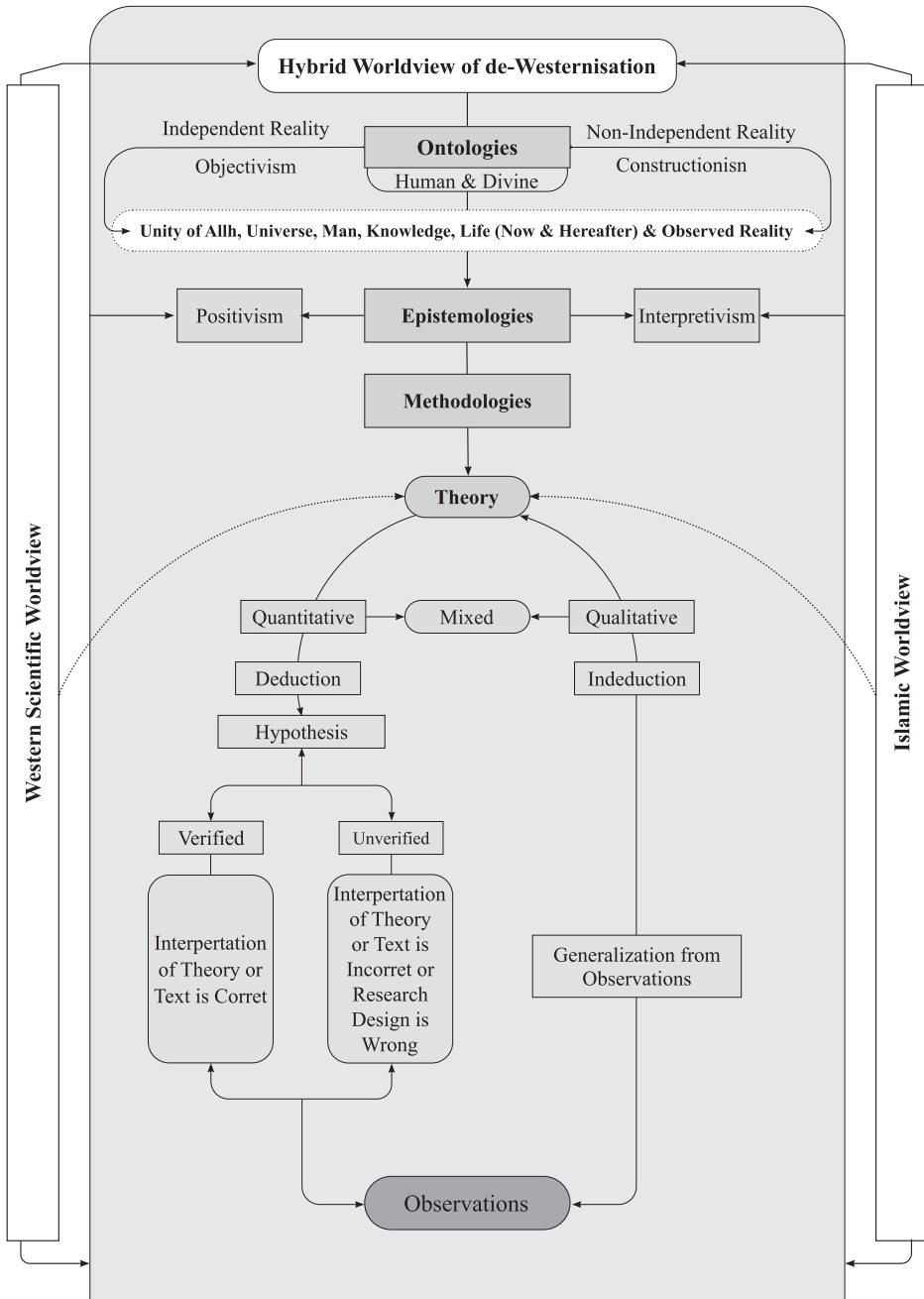
had their origin in Judeo-Christian thought. Roman Catholicism, for example, recommends a specific religious view that addresses nature and man as members of one society (Carvalho 2006). Rogers (2002) reminds us that communication science is not isolated from the cultural values that affect research methods and theory-building endeavours. By the same token, Brooke (1991) contends that scientific research applications vary due to variations among value systems rooted in religions.

### Structure, Purpose and Application of the Hybrid Worldview

The hybrid worldview diagram, as shown in Figure 1, merges the two divergent worldviews of the West and the Muslim World. It captures the full view of how to de-Westernise and what to de-Westernise; built upon three interrelated elements of ontology, epistemology and methodology, these factors continue to guide cutting-edge research and theory development explicitly and implicitly. A mastery of ontology allows one to be properly familiar with the nature of reality, of epistemology to understand how he reaches what he knows, and of methodology to determine the relevant practical methods and techniques of data collection and analysis (Tuli 2010). The following section intends to put this normative paradigm into practice, while demonstrating how to apply the abstract concept of hybridisation in journalism research. Although philosophical approaches remain largely hidden in study design, they still influence the research practice and interpretation of results. As such, these approaches have to be identified (Creswell 2014). Obviously, “the paradigm is not a detailed step-by step research method; rather, it highlights the overall concepts and features needed for hybridity as referring to a combination of unlike elements produced by process of mixing, borrowing and appropriation” (Hallin, Mellado, and Mancini 2021, 2).

To simplify reading the worldview as depicted in Figure 1, a researcher must begin by raising the question of the nature of the reality under examination. This might independently exist in the social world and is in need of discovery. Alternatively, reality could result from individual cognition shaped and constructed by one’s mind (Kivunja and Kuyini 2017). From the hybrid worldview, the reality is either independent or non-independent, divine or social/human. Often, objectivism is combined with positivism and quantitative research as epistemological and methodological approaches, respectively. Engaging in such approaches necessitates the deduction of hypotheses from the existing theories that could be true or false. The diagram suggests the divide in which constructivism is often associated with interpretivism and qualitative research as epistemological and methodological approaches. Adopting these philosophical underpinnings requires induction to build and not to test theories (Crotty 2015). (Please see the direction of the arrows in the diagram). Essentially, these are the main philosophical positions that govern social science research. However, they certainly do not represent the whole spectrum of philosophical, theoretical and methodological positions. It is also worth mentioning that “specific ontological positions, epistemological principles, and research practices do not necessarily go hand in hand in a neat unambiguous manner” (Bryman 2008, 33).

For clarity and specificity, it might be necessary to provide deeper comparative analysis to justify the inevitability of the hybrid worldview. The core of Islamic ontology is the unity of Allah (SWT), who is absolutely one determining the unity of creation, whether it be physical, social or human, that finally determines the unity of knowledge, be it revealed



**Figure 1**  
Hybrid worldview of de-Westernising journalism studies and profession.

or observed, and the unity of life now and in the hereafter. This is why human activities are interrelated with no separation of religion from the secular (Mowlana 2003; Kamil 2011). Islam never developed the institutional separation between the state and the religion.

The above realities entail another extremely important ontological principle, which is equality of all human beings with no different value for colour, race, sex, religion, or any other ontological value (Al-Faruqi 1982). Epistemologically, the main scientific and authentic knowledge in Western thought came from objective or subjective/constructive experiences. Both are deeply criticised and attacked as not able to provide valid evidence (Hawkesworth 2007). While the purpose of the constructivist is to understand the phenomena, the positivist aims to explain the causal relationship of variables. On the contrary, the hybrid worldview recognises a mixed nature of authentic and observed knowledge, independent and dependent realities, and objective and subjective ways of knowing. All exist in concord, not in conflict; all live in a complementary, not contradictory, relationship. The hybrid worldview represents a complementary paradigm to remedy the weaknesses of any Western mono paradigm. That said, it seems significant to point to the critical view of Abraham Maslow that indirectly supports the central idea of this article. After reviewing the stages through which psychology has been evolved — objectivistic/positivistic psychology, the Darwinian psychology and humanistic psychology-Maslow concludes that when higher needs of people are fulfilled, their motivation is trans-humanistic (Abraham 2013). This result points towards an epistemic shift worthy of scientific consideration.

### How to De-Westernise

The aim of this section is to ground the normative hybrid worldview in the context of journalism studies. Given the ontological and epistemological positions associated with the research topic in concern, researchers can employ quantitative or qualitative methods, or both (mixed research). If the research is of a quantitative nature, it must involve a sequence of steps according to the diagram: (1) Deduce hypotheses from the relevant sources of the Islamic worldview — Qur'an and Sunnah — to explain social phenomena. (2) Collect data by any means of data collection from representative samples to test such hypotheses in realistic contexts. (3) Identify causes that predict outcomes (Creswell 2014). (4) If hypotheses were verified, they should be added to the collection of known facts. (5) If they are not confirmed, this is an indication of either: (a) the proposed hypotheses not correctly representing the Islamic worldview or, (b) the research design in whole or in part having notable flaws (Ragab 1999). The overall objective is to formulate laws, thus yielding a foundation for prediction and generalisation. Finally, engagement in the verification cycle is an endless process to uncover facts and construct theories and models of journalism practice that are measurable, testable, universal, practical and with the potential power to predict the future (Krcmar, Ewoldsen, and Koerner 2016). Based on the above sequence of five steps, one can say that a deductive method is fully experienced (Scotland 2012). The whole research is practised far from mystical intuition or religious answer. Knowledge obtained by such investigation is changeable over time, non-metaphysical, non-absolute, and socially relevant (Winkel 1988). In the meantime, sources of the Islamic worldview constitute the referential framework, the holistic paradigm, the source of aspiration and the ultimate benchmark against which scholars develop theories and suggest policies. Similarly, researchers in MMC may prefer to deduce hypotheses from the Western theories to test them via the same sequence of procedures.

Alternatively, MMC scholars may adopt the induction, constructivist, qualitative approach, which is, in fact, the method of the epistemological mandate of the Qur'an



that requests its followers to rely on reasoning to verify observed phenomena and reach evidence-based conclusion. The Qur'an method is the origin of inductive reasoning as a religious responsibility for every Muslim to examine and discover the laws of nature, society and human (Kamali 2003; Kamil 2011). In contrast to positivists, the constructivist does not need to test theories; instead, he examines qualitative data to generate them (Creswell 2014). As a constructivist, a researcher in MMC frees himself from the positivist scientific paradigm of the liberal, pluralistic empirical approach and the Marxist tradition, which adopts the same ontological assumptions about human society, despite its commitment to the historical perspective (Lee 2014).

### What to De-Westernise

In the following section, based on the previous debate, we will move beyond how to de-Westernise to what should be de-Westernised. The analysis will explore two research areas with an emphasis on the research justifications, questions, theoretical frameworks and methods of study, all of which will help create more adequate and socially relevant knowledge of the theory and practice of journalism in MMC. The purpose is to demonstrate how the normative paradigm relates to the realistic context of journalism research practice.

#### *Media and Democratisation*

Journalism is partially or fully restricted in MMC where journalists operate in a repressive environment that prevents them from playing an effective role in the political and democratic transformation (Sakr 2003). Most of MMC governments control or completely ban press freedom, civil liberties and opposition parties even with alleged democratic elections. Besides, in MMC where Muslims represent the majority, democracy and freedom are less prevalent compared to Muslim minority countries (Potrafke 2013). Literature displays mixed results to explain these deficits. For example, Rowley and Smith (2009), conclude that the only factor behind this is Islam itself. On the contrary, Kuru (2014) has examined the high rate of autocracies among MMC and attributed it to a combination of rentier states and regional diffusion. Similarly, the empirical analysis of cross-cultural studies suggests that Muslims have no problems with democratic values (Hanusch 2013). Others suggest that the democracy deficit in MMC has no relationship with the culture of Islam; instead, what best explains it is the attitude of Western power that fights against the democratic transformation in MMC (Ahmad 2011). Although it is a controversial position, we agree with (Esposito and Voll 2001) that Islam is not incompatible with the premises of democracy, and it is safe to reject the currently displayed external image of authoritarianism as a consequence of the Islamic worldview.

The Islamic worldview underscores the democratic system and the watchdog role of the press to preserve good governance. The role of the press is to monitor and scrutinise the corrupt behaviour of state power, defend the rights of powerless people, and seek and report truth for the cause of justice. The fourth estate, with its watchdog role, is the essence of the Prophet Mohammad's Hadith, in which he declared that the best form of political and social reform that defends the rights of the majority is, to tell the truth in front of dictators. Democratic principles are well known in the Qur'anic concepts

of Shura (consultation), Ijtihad (independent reasoning) and Ijma' (consensus). There is no dogmatism or autocracy in Islam. Islamic law and political thought are liberated from the charge of dogmatism by the right of jurists in certain circumstances to employ independent judgment and the right of rulers to seek the approval of the majority (Esposito and Piscatori 1991). If the core of democracy is about the diversity of political thoughts in a society, then it has been an integral part of the Muslim legacy. It is well documented that the Prophet, in his tradition, has stated that the diversity of views among scholars is a rahmah (blessing) (Ibrahim 2006). Consistent with these principles, most of Muslim thinkers and reformists have explicitly stated that the Islamic worldview guarantees the establishment of Islamic democracy that is neither Western nor theocratic (Tamimi 2007).

That said, journalism scholars need to initiate a programme of research to answer the following questions. To what extent journalism ownership, practices, reach, freedom and content have contributed to the failure of democratic transition in MMC. Has journalism structure determined the type of pseudo-democracy (Volpi 2004) in MMC? What role does journalism play in shaping the gap between the positive attitudes of Muslim people towards democracy and the authoritarian systems in most MMC (Ciftci 2010)? Is the journalistic practice a predictor of the democracy gap between MMC and the rest of the world (Karatnycky 2002)? Is this due to the wrong adoption or misunderstanding of the Islamic worldview? Why are the majority of news media in MMC state-owned? Why are the majority of news media legitimise the corrupt regimes? Who sets the press agenda in MMC. What explains the failure of the press in setting the public's agenda? Why is private ownership of the press another mouthpiece of ruling regimes? To what extent does the Islamic worldview provide its form of press ownership? How free is freedom of expression in MMC? What predicts the gap between the prevalence of authoritarianism and Muslim' positive attitudes (Maseland and Van Hoorn 2011) towards democracy? The purpose here is neither praise nor attack the Islamic worldview, but to focus on describing the status quo, its determinants, its historical background and consequences. The recurring question asks how adequately the theoretical hypotheses deduced from sources of Islamic worldview make sense of the journalism landscape in MMC. It is evident that any of the above questions provide a practical example of a research problem in which the researcher is free to align himself with a theoretical foundation of Islamic or Western origin. However, de-Westernisation and hybridisation are best served by applying the qualitative research scenario that helps develop indigenous journalism theories rather than testing the existing ones.

### *Global Journalism Ethics*

Journalism ethics is the most crucial aspect in need of de-Westernisation due to the following realities. (1) There is an accumulation of global evidence, indicating that journalism identity, roles, trust and credibility everywhere are declining (Ward 2018). (2). A growing satisfaction exists to redress the widening gaps among diverse cultures and groups. Ward (2008), likewise (Christians 1997), rejects provincialism that lies at odds with the foundations of the information society. In his search for an original model justifying the unmet need to global journalism ethics, he suggests the sacredness of life that establishes mutual respect, truth, human dignity as well as other ethical

standards. Without a commitment to such principal norm that exists beyond personal interests, Christians argue ethical standards are just passionate favourites. Similarly, Johnstone (1993) establishes that in the absence of prime principles, moral reasoning falls into an endless decline and all ethical discourse becomes worthless. In line with this trend, it is argued that Islamic worldview ethics is global and hinges on universal principles that respond to the basic human needs of freedom, diversity, justice and balance. As divine-based ethics, it has evolved to meet the constant dynamic evolution of the digital age (Steele 2011).

The core of the Islamic worldview is the interdependence between all hierarchical levels of the architecture of the global community that embraces individuals, nations, cultures and the globe. None of these layers prioritise the other because they collectively shape one cohesive hierarchical system. The oneness of the creator (Allah) imposes the oneness of the humanity that lives in one ship, in which all passengers have the same purpose to stay in peace and strengthen co-existence; otherwise, the ship will sink. Evidence of this philosophy came from the two sources of the Islamic worldview. The Hadith (saying) of Prophet Mohammad about the “ship” bears obvious implications for global journalism, collective responsibility and freedom. It declares that all passengers are committed to keeping the ship, which stands for humanity, safe and secure to preserve it. This is a master unavoidable norm out of which all branches of journalism ethics are derived from maintaining humanity. There is no doubt as (Peukert 1981) argues certain inevitable rights have to be maintained to safeguard our human identity; otherwise, human existence will be at risk. In addition, the Qur’an explicitly states : “The taking of one innocent life is like the taking of all humankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people” (5:32). In another implicit verse (49:13), it says: “O mankind, indeed, We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another”. Sharing knowledge and constant interactions among the varied cultures and nations is the key requirement for the survival of civilisations.

By the early 7th century, the Islamic worldview has emphasised external evidence to guarantee truth and objectivity, which lies at the centre of Western Journalism ethics (Ward 2020). Hundreds of Qur’anic verses and sayings of the Prophet not only emphasise true and objective storytelling but also details the methods of seeking truth and objectivity. They are ideals that are not negotiable and not changeable over time, issues or news media types (Siddiqui 2000). In contrast, these ideals reject all types of merging beliefs, opinions, ideologies and personal preferences to facts (Maras 2013). Just objectivity, as we call it, rejects one-dimensional, stereotyped journalism; instead, it displays a fair context giving all stakeholders and competitors, minorities and even enemies equal representation. Just objectivity means that there is unjust objectivity that focuses on external evidence and factual reporting without proper contextualisation that ultimately produces misleading reports. The core of realism, as Ward (2020) argues, is that journalistic reports are only true if they are confirmed by external evidences out of the journalists’ views, biases and ideologies. Just objectivity is a combination of facts and evidence presented through just context, be it historical, political or cultural. It differs from active objectivity, as developed by Robinson and Culver (2019), to better serve the full range of communities. Its purpose is to inform and reform, tell the truth and defend justice, which is the core of the rule of law, accountability, fairness and social cohesion. “Just objectivity” is rooted in the holistic context out of which realistic knowledge is produced; it liberates itself from all origins

and social movements of standpoint epistemologies that relate knowledge to political power, feminism, social constructivism or deconstructionism (for more details, see Ward 1997). The following Qur'anic verse briefly demonstrates the essence of the just objectivity that determines the impartial, empirical and detached knowledge and methods of events reportage: "O believers! Stand firm for justice as witnesses for Allah even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or close relatives. Be they rich or poor, Allah is best to ensure their interests. So do not let your desires cause you to deviate from justice. If you distort the testimony or refuse to give it, then know that Allah is certainly All-Aware of what you do" (4:135).

### *What Does the Preceding Analysis Tell Us?*

It shows to what extent we can formulate the research problems and theoretical assumptions with an indigenous eye rather than a Western eye. Why should we see our issues from an exogenous lens? Is it appropriate to apply Western experiences as the benchmark to examine journalism studies and practices in MMC? Is it congruent with the requirements of scientific thinking? The answer is no, and this is why a scholar from MMC has to raise the following research questions: Why do journalism scholars explicitly or implicitly exclude Islamic worldview from global journalism ethics discourse? What prevents journalism scholars in MMC from investigating such issues from a native cultural perspective? Is this a reflection of a Western economic, technological and military power? To what degree is the Islamic worldview a combination of ethical, philosophical ideology and applied ethics that helps guide journalism practice? How do we empirically explain the gap between the theoretical and applied Islamic worldview ethics? To whom are MMC journalists responsible? To answer any of the previous questions, researchers may consider theoretical backgrounds from either Islamic or Western sources, or they may go directly to examine the real world of journalism if "constructs being measured are either unknown or not sufficiently understood" (Gray 2013, 145).

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

This article demonstrates the extent to which Western and Islamic worldviews can be combined to generate a hybrid worldview. Hybridity as an expression of merging identities has been strongly rooted in postcolonial studies and is connected to de-Westernisation discourse (Kraidy 2006). Hybridity responds to the necessities of living together and the imperative of cultural interactions. Any culture is not immune from the effects of convergence and no one is purely exclusive. Therefore, Kai Hafez was right when he advocated hybridity to consider non-Western societies, experiences and audiences that enable African, Latin American, North African and Middle Eastern journalism studies to engage in theoretical debates (Hafez 2013). Hybridity will help make a sense of examined phenomena, and it does not marginalise the particularities of each culture. Based on this understanding, this article calls for reviving the philosophical genius of Judaism, Christianity, Buddha, Laozi, Confucius, Nagarjuna, Ubuntu and Ahimsa, among others, to derive and build on the relevant theoretical frameworks that best explain the domestic experiences and contexts (Rao and Wasserman 2007).

This piece is an extension of many extremely valuable works, though without a singular or homogeneous view on de-Westernisation. It is worth mentioning the works of Mowlana (2019), who suggests a five-dimensional model to embrace communication with God, nature, self, humans and technology. Likewise, Ayish (2003) provides a genuine normative alternative to the dominant Western communication paradigm. His Arab - Islamic communication worldview is based on four dichotomous groups of values: "individualism-conformity, transcendentalism-existentialism, intuition-rationality and egalitarianism-hierarchy" (88). The Islamic worldview of Ayish (1998) is based on the secular and the religious traditions and values that coexist in the current Arab Islamic environment. A third Muslim scholar to advocate for the role of an Islamic worldview is (Azzi 2011), whose main interest is in God's attributes as a source of morality and journalism ethics. This strand of research slightly considers the method/s of application.

The current work also draws on the writings of (Chen 2006), who has introduced the thesis of the union of the polarity of yin and yang, or the Tao, of Asian communication studies. Furthermore, Ching Chuan's model of communication competence or contingency model of communication competence (Chen 1993). Of great value in this discourse is the seminal work of Miike (2006, 2019), who founded the basis of Asiacentric scholarship. More importantly is the Afrocentricity is the most well-established school of thought founded by Asante, who observed that communication is as an institution of social control and economic imperialism (Anderson 2012; Asante and Miike 2013). These are limited, yet prominent attempts with diverse ontological foundations that make de-Westernisation necessary. However, we must be cautious and sensitive to cultural sovereignty as we are not sure whether more integration with powerful cultures such as the Anglo-American represents a threat or an opportunity. But, surely, as anthropologists tell us, studying others when we do not enable them to learn us perpetuates a major imbalance of power (Desmond and Dominguez 1996).

One of the basic ideas this article seeks to develop is the unity of plurality; however, this approach is not without limitations and challenges. The first relates to the harmonious relationship between the dominant elite in the West (the centre) and the dominant centre of the periphery nations in MMC (Galtung 1971). Elites in most MMC may not encourage the revival of the Islamic heritage; instead, they advocate the Westernisation of culture, knowledge production, language, lifestyle, education and academic research for reasons that lie beyond the purpose of this work. The second challenge is closely related to the first. Many influential scholars have received their academic degrees from Western universities away from their cultural traditions, thus dislocated from their heritage. Schools and universities are, as Asante (1991) remind us, social institutions. The third challenge is rooted in the Western academic publishing industry that needs to consider non-European literature as potentially relevant for publication (Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras 2014). The fourth challenge stems from the fact that the fifty-seven Muslim majority countries are diverse in their Islamic culture that have historically been combined with distinct indigenous lifestyles producing somewhat varied patterns of understanding and practicing Islam (Mughtar et al. 2017). As such, MMC not a homogenous entity, nor are their journalism systems. The fifth challenge is the discrepancy between the abstract level of the Islamic worldview on the one hand and the daily practices of the common Muslims on the other. Great ideas and beliefs are not working well unless they are embedded in the lifestyle of ordinary Muslims. This dilemma will appear exclusively in the inductive studies. The sixth limitation

centres on the compact and interdependence of what should be de-Westernised. In this sense, de-Westernisation requires horizontal effort in parallel with theories, concepts, methodologies, ontologies, epistemologies, research designs, subject of studies, analytical frameworks and academic orientations.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Daya Thussu, Hong Kong Baptist University, and Davis Vallesi PhD Candidate, Communication & Culture, York University, Toronto, Canada for their insightful suggestions on the original version of the paper. I also thank Dr. Mohammed Elkafrawey, Department of Mass Communication at Qatar University, for his efforts in designing the model.

## DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

## NOTE

1. Numbers in parentheses represent, respectively, chapters and verses from the Qur'an.

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