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## Worldview Theory and its Relation to Islam and Muslim Identity

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# Worldview Theory and its Relation to Islam and Muslim Identity

## Abstract

Since the 18th century to the present, the concept of worldview has been used in various forms by various writers and extensively in several fields of academic disciplines. The article provides a brief historical overview of its usage in the literature and demonstrates how worldview has been perceived differently over time. It presents the evolution of the concept, its essential characteristics, worldviews frameworks, Muslim worldviews, and the identity formation of young Muslims. Thus, it provides a detailed, overview of how the concept has been understood in the core disciplines, particularly in Islam and Western culture and most relevant for Muslim identity.

The Worldview Theory has been popular in the West but has not yet found a proper place in the Turkish context. This study aims to remedy the lack of the concept of worldview in the current literature. Nevertheless, exploring the Muslim identity is important. The meaning of identity is defined with Tariq Ramadan's four foundational pillars. These four aspects provide sufficient idea of the basics of Muslim identity, individual and social, in a particular area of the world. Regarding this, religion and religious education have attempted to respond to the challenges faced by many young people seeking to find a worldview that holds the promise of a meaningful life. Thus, the religious worldview dimension of life is significant and is given special attention in this article. This paper is concerned to be one of the few attempts to discuss a need for professional care in dealing with the development of worldview and identity relations.

## Keywords

Worldview Theory, Muslim Identity, Secular and Islamic Worldviews

## Dünya Görüşü Teorisi ve İslam ve Müslüman Kimliği ile İlişkisi

### Öz

18. yüzyıldan günümüze kadar, dünya görüşü kavramı çeşitli yazarlar tarafından çeşitli biçimlerde ve akademik disiplinlerin çeşitli alanlarında yaygın olarak kullanılmıştır. Makale, kavramın disiplindeki kullanımına ilişkin kısa bir tarihsel genel bakış sağlar ve dünya görüşü teriminin zaman içinde nasıl farklı algılandığını gösterir. Kavramın evrimini, temel özelliklerini, dünya görüşü teorisini ve çerçevelerini, Müslüman dünya görüşlerini ve genç Müslümanların kimlik oluşumunu sunar. Bu nedenle, kavramın temel disiplinlerde, özellikle İslam ve Batı kültüründe nasıl anlaşıldığına ve Müslüman kimliğiyle ilişkisine dair ayrıntılı bir genel bakış sağlar.

Dünya Görüşü Teorisi Batı'da popüler olmuştur, ancak Türkiye bağlamında henüz uygun bir yer bulamamıştır. Bu çalışma, dünya görüşü kavramının güncel literatürdeki yerinin Türkiye literatüründeki eksikliğini gidermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bununla birlikte Müslüman kimliğini keşfetmek önemlidir. Araştırma, Tarık Ramazan'ın dört temel özelliğiyle kimliğin anlamını tanımlıyor. Bu dört yön, dünyanın belirli bir alanındaki bireysel ve sosyal bir Müslüman kimliğinin temelleri hakkında yeterli fikir sağlar. Bununla ilgili olarak, din ve din eğitimi, anlamlı bir yaşam vaadini yerine getiren bir dünya görüşü bulmaya çalışan birçok gencin

karşılaştığı zorluklara cevap vermeye çalışmaktadır. Bu yüzden makalede hayatın dini görüşü kapsayan boyutuna vurgu yapılmış ve özel önem verilmiştir. Makale, dünya görüşü ve kimlik ilişkilerinin gelişmesine profesyonel yaklaşım ihtiyacı duyulduğunu tartışan birkaç çalışmadan biri olma niteliğindedir.

### **Anahtar Kelimeler**

Dünya Görüşü Teorisi, Müslüman Kimlik, Seküler ve İslam Dünya Görüşleri

### **Introduction**

The subject of worldview is currently a hot topic in Religious Education. Since the 18th century to the present, the definition of 'worldview' has been used widely in a wide range of academic disciplines. This paper conducts a multidisciplinary literature review in order to clarify the term's historical and current use through a variety of subject areas.

Worldview is a concept with a history and context; however, that history and context is only a partial guide to how 'worldview' can be used to guide the development of Religion and Worldviews. Rather, 'worldview' is a term that will gain further definition and content as it is developed in schools, by teachers and other stakeholders, in the future. There are tentative maps of what worldview is and might mean, which are set out in this paper, but this will be made and re-made, not necessarily following a pre-ordained route with clear edges and horizon.

Many of the scholars expressed dissatisfaction with the way religion is often conceptualized in the public domain and in classrooms.<sup>1</sup> Part of this dissatisfaction stems from how 'religions' and non-religious worldviews are often viewed as monolithic and unitary. Many of the scholars were aware of how alienating this can be for students in the classroom based on their study or teaching experience<sup>2</sup>. Consider a young Muslim person who is exposed to a version of Islam in schools and the media that bears no resemblance to the culture they have grown up with. Alternatively, a young person who identifies as 'non-religious' or 'nothing' and has been led to believe that the subject's material has no meaning on their own life, thinking, or history. Both of these young people, and many others like them, may feel excluded and marginalized from the public discourse on religion. For these young people, the idea of 'worldview' has the ability to act as a 'can opener,' re-opening the study of religious and non-religious worldviews, as well as their interactions, at the organizational, intimate, and in-between levels, so that every young person sees themselves as having something to learn and contribute.

On the other hand, social and cultural developments such as secularism, modernity, postmodernity, individualization, and cultural diversity have a significant effect on contemporary Muslim identity. Religion and religious education have attempted to respond to the challenges faced by many young people seeking to find a worldview that holds the promise of a meaningful life. The question of how to construct an identity

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Final-Report-of-the-Commission-on-RE.p>

<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/20-19438-REC-Worldview-Report-A4-v2.pdf>

and worldview in a rapidly changing world is a challenge facing many young Muslims and needs to be seriously explored. Many Muslim youths are looking to either become completely secularized or adopt a rigid Islamic faith structure. This paradox is engendered by tensions between the secular liberal and traditional views of life. It is why the religious worldview dimension of life is significant and is given special attention in this article.

Islam is an important field for religious and worldview research. The combination of secular liberal Western culture and Islamic cultural heritage is significant to understanding the social context of the lives of Muslim young people. This article is concerned to be one of the few attempts to discuss a need for professional care in dealing with development of worldview and identity relations. Therefore, it helps confirm the need for investigation into worldview concept. Thus, it may contribute to the development of new pedagogy and curriculum in religious education, particularly in secondary schools.

The concept of worldview has not been as prevalent in the Turkish context as in the West, such as USA and Europe. Many Christian schools give priority to their pupils' worldview, which is increasingly various, and educators search for measurable results to assess the effectiveness of their educational effort and attempts<sup>3</sup>. On the contrary, the Turkish education system does not give priority to students' worldviews in education policies and curricula; therefore, it creates challenges for social cohesion, policy and education in Turkey today. Currently there is a pressing need for new worldview research and innovative practices.

This article aims to compile a list of academic definitions of the concept 'worldview' from various disciplines. The aim of this literature review is to give academics, policymakers, and teachers a better understanding of how 'worldview' has been constructed in academic disciplines that have traditionally influenced religious education.

### **1. Definitions of the Concept of 'Worldview'**

Definitions of worldview in the literature are many and vague tending to reflect each researcher's ideological perspective.<sup>4</sup> Worldview as a concept has a rich and elaborate history;<sup>5</sup> and finding clear, coherent and detailed definitions of this concept is difficult due to it being a widely contested term. Griffioen writes that "the word is used in a great many areas, ranging from the natural science to philosophy to theology, authors who use it often do so without concern for proper definition, and even when definitions are given they tend to be far from precise"<sup>6</sup>. Thus, texts, which provide definitions of this term, are reviewed in order to develop a foundation for understanding the concept of worldview.

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<sup>3</sup> Schultz, Ketherine - Swezey, James A. "A Three-Dimensional Concept of Worldview," *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 22:3 (2013): 227.

<sup>4</sup> David A. Baker, *A study of the effect of culture on the learning of science in non-Western countries*. (Melbourne: Curtin University, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> James W. Sire, *Naming the elephant: Worldview as a concept*, (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Sander Griffioen, "The approach to social theory: Hazards and benefits", *Stained glass: Worldviews and Social Science*, edited by Paul Marshall - Sander Griffioen, & Richard Mouw, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), 83.

Immanuel Kant originally coined the term worldview in 1790 in German as *Weltschauung*, to mean ‘an intuition of the world.’<sup>7</sup> Although Kant himself did not develop the actual concept, 19<sup>th</sup> century European philosophers adopted the term and elaborated their own interpretations of it.<sup>8</sup> The English word is borrowed directly from the German *Weltschauung*, a technical philosophical and psychological term that translates literally as “a way of looking at the world”.<sup>9</sup> Sandsmark have been using the notion ‘worldview’ as assumptions such as “the latter being view of reality, view of human nature, purpose of life”<sup>10</sup> by inspiring the roots of word from Norwegian (*livssyn*) and German ‘*Lebensanschauung*’.

Worldview is a relatively new concept brought into usage due to the secularization of Western society; it encompasses both religious and non-religious answers to questions posed about the meaning of life.<sup>11</sup> Worldview can also be described as a vague concept; it is about the way we ‘see’ the world, an attempt “to explain the whole range of human experience by reference to what is most ultimately real.”<sup>12</sup> A worldview can include beliefs about the nature of reality, the existence of a god, the nature of man, life after death, and ethics.<sup>13</sup> It is a framework of beliefs, which cannot be scientifically proved, and it is to a large extent determined by a person’s culture, which is formed by religion, philosophy, politics, and more.<sup>14</sup>

One viewpoint that has all the earmarks of being settled upon by scholars is that every individual has a worldview from which they operate. Everyone has a worldview that they operate from - a set of assumptions about the world - that remain to a large extent hidden in the unconscious recesses of their mind.<sup>15</sup> Baker emphasizes this point when stating:

All people possess worldviews. These are germane to what they think and do. Such views are acquired through a variety of influences including the family, media, interpersonal relationships and ways our institutions are structured and the way they function.<sup>16</sup>

Walsh and Middleton writes that if “people probe any society for what it is that primarily forms that society, they discover it is the world view of those who compose that society. This shapes their existence”. A person’s worldview is “their way of thinking about life and the world coupled with the values they set for themselves in the context of that way of thinking.”<sup>17</sup> Notably, Sandsmark says that many people hold a view in accordance with a certain tradition (Christian, Islam, Humanism, Marxism, etc.), others may hold a more

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<sup>7</sup> Naugle, David K. “Worldview: History, theology, implications,” *After worldview* edited by J. Bonzo, and M. Stevens, (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt Press, 2009), 6.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Dickens, *Great expectations*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Oxford English Dictionary (UK: Oxford U.Press, 1989).

<sup>10</sup> Signe Sandsmark, *Is Worldview Neutral Education Possible and Desirable*, (UK: Paternoster P, 2000), 5.

<sup>11</sup> Sandsmark, *Worldview*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Arthur F. Holmes, *Contours of a Worldview*, (WIEP Company: Michigan, 1983), 52.

<sup>13</sup> Per M. Aadnanes, *Livssyn*, (Oslo: Tano, 1992), 13-14.

<sup>14</sup> Sandsmark, *Worldview*, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Sire, *Naming the elephant*, 12.

<sup>16</sup> Baker, *A study of the effect*, 95.

<sup>17</sup> Brian. J. Walsh - J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision. Shaping a Christian World View*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1984), 10.

watered-down version or eclectic view. Each of these views gives a meaning of the term using the notion 'way of life or world'.<sup>18</sup>

Most meanings of worldview that are utilized by specialists follow the socio-cultural pattern, characterizing it as far as essential presuppositions about the world, self as well as other people, that are corporately held and socially/culturally shaped. Thus, worldviews tend to develop central, unifying themes about everything observed or experienced by individuals and communities. Worldviews could be exclusively collective and cultural<sup>19</sup> or individual and personal private.<sup>20</sup>

## 2. Characteristics of Worldviews

Despite the definition of the concept of worldview and the nuanced difference in meaning according to varied contexts, a synthesis of the multi-faceted concept of worldview can be made. Some have suggested, however, that other terms may be more helpful. This section will discuss the general characteristics of worldview.

The term worldview, with varying meanings and other similar concepts, have been used in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the fields of philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and the philosophy of science. Examples include: Heidegger in philosophy; Jung in psychology; Berger in sociology of knowledge with "plausibility structures"; Kearney in anthropology with his insight that worldview theory is itself worldview dependent; and Kuhn and Polanyi in philosophy of science.<sup>21</sup> Despite the conflicting assumptions contained in the above uses of worldview, religious traditions (Christianity, Islam) have continued to appropriate the term and affirm many of the insights from the various fields. Educationalists have used a worldview approach to bring theological truth to bear on the field of education and on the disciplines of knowledge.

The characteristics of worldviews deal in five broad contexts; they are religious, cultural, theoretical, subjective/objective or personal/collective, and multi-dimensional. These shall be discussed in more detail below.

### 2.1. Religious Characteristic

Worldviews are religious in nature in that they address ultimate meaning.<sup>22</sup> They are a "religious phenomenon and intensively spiritual."<sup>23</sup> Worldviews are connected with faith and they are founded on ulti-

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<sup>18</sup> Sandsmark, *Worldview*, 6.

<sup>19</sup> Baker, *A study of the effect*, 96.

<sup>20</sup> Aadnanes, *Livssyn*, 66.

<sup>21</sup> Griffieon, 1989; Naugle, 2002; Sire, 2004

<sup>22</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the whole Bible as Christian scripture*, (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000). - Klapwijk, Jacob. "On worldviews and philosophy: A response to Wolters and Olthuis", *Stained glass: Worldviews and Social Science*, edited by P. Marshall, S. Griffioen & R. Mouw, Lanham, (MD: University Press of America, 1989), 41-55.

<sup>23</sup> Walsh - Middleton, *Transforming*, 34.

mate faith commitments. Faith is an essential part of human life and where people place their faith determines the worldview that they will adopt.<sup>24</sup> According to Walsh and Middleton, people's ultimate faith commitments 'sets the contours of their worldview which shapes their vision for a way of life.'<sup>25</sup> However, this raises the question 'What is a faith commitment?' Walsh and Middleton answer this as follows:

Who am I? Or, what is the nature, task and purpose of human being? 2) Where am I? or, what is the nature of the world and universe I live in? 3) What's wrong? Or, what is the basic problem or obstacle that keeps me from attaining fulfillment? In other words, how do I understand evil? And 4) What is the remedy? In other words, how do I find salvation?<sup>26</sup>

Middleton and Walsh believe that when people have answered these questions and they settle their faith, they then begin to see and experience their reality in a pattern that makes sense to them. A worldview without faith commitments and proper answers cannot endure human life. However, such answers are rarely held consciously, although they can be brought to consciousness and made cognitively explicit these questions and answers are not theoretical in nature.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the connection between faith and worldview, Olthuis asserted, worldview is the integrator between life experience and a faith or, put another way, the integrator between faith and the way of life.<sup>28</sup> Olthuis also argues "when world viewing is accented as fundamentally an activity of faith (in which faith perceptions are patterned into coherent and cohesive frames for viewing life), worldview is still a serviceable concept."<sup>29</sup> Worldviews have a religious or faith-based direction.<sup>30</sup> Even a particular religious teaching (Biblical, Qur'anic, Scriptural) as supporting the notion that the way we view the world is dependent on our faith position.

In short, regarding to these characteristics of worldviews addressed up, although there are non-religious secular objections and worldviews; they are mostly religious because they answer fundamental questions as mentioned above: *Where am I? Who am I? What's gone wrong? How can it be fixed?*<sup>31</sup>; *Where am I going? Is there a god? How can I live and die happily?*<sup>32</sup>; *Why is it possible to know anything at all? How do we know what is right and wrong? What is the meaning of history?*<sup>33</sup>; or *What is reality? Who is well off or blessed? Who is a truly good person?*

<sup>24</sup> A.H. DeGraaff, "Towards a New Anthropological Model", *Hearing and Doing*, edited by J. Kraay and A. Tol (Toronto: Wedge, 1979).

<sup>25</sup> Walsh - Middleton, *Transforming*, 35.

<sup>26</sup> Walsh - Middleton, *Transforming*, 35.

<sup>27</sup> Walsh - Middleton, *Transforming*, 35.

<sup>28</sup> James Olthuis, "On worldviews," *Stained glass: Worldviews and Social Science*, edited by P. Marshall, S. Griffioen & R. Mouw, Lanham, (MD: University Press of America, 1989), 38.

<sup>29</sup> James Olthuis, "Where there is love, there is vision: Witnessing in/under/through worldviews," *After worldview* edited by J. Bonzo, and M. Stevens, (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt Press, 2009), 89.

<sup>30</sup> George Pierson, "Evangelicals and worldview confusion," *After worldview* edited by J. Bonzo, and M. Stevens, (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt Press, 2009), 29-42. - Seerveld, Calvin. "The damages of a Christian worldview," *After worldview* edited by J. Bonzo, and M. Stevens, (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt Press, 2009) 55-80.

<sup>31</sup> Walsh - Middleton, *Transforming*, 35.

<sup>32</sup> Olthuis, *On worldviews*, 31

<sup>33</sup> Sire, *Naming the elephant*, 20.

How does one become a truly good person? How do we know which answers to the previous questions are right?<sup>34</sup> These questions have been shown as the characteristics of worldview with religious understanding.

## 2.2. Cultural Characteristic

Worldviews are culturally produced and individually internalized networks of culturally constructed significations of the world in which we live our lives. They are basically descriptive and normative symbolic representative significations of our world. Worldviews may be considered to be images of and ideals and norms for the world. These images, ideals and norms are simultaneously the culturally shaped, mental apparatuses for our being in the world.<sup>35</sup>

Humans possess culture and cultures. They are able to develop and assimilate knowledge and thereby attribute meaning to their natural and social worlds. Each human does this in his or her own way. People display this cultural capacity not only as individuals, but also as members of the group they are born into, or become part of.<sup>36</sup> Humans are cultural beings in all of the contexts to which they belong, both in the course of a day, and throughout their lives. Anything can be subjected to this act of attributing meaning, and the interpretations that result may differ widely, between societies and also between individuals.

The universal human capacity to link persons, social relations, objects, events, time, space (and any other perceived phenomena), with meaning and words could be called culture in the singular, implying an exclusive and uniquely human potential to establish a relationship with reality. Culture then becomes the human capacity for meaning-making in terms of ideas, beliefs, artifacts, customs, actions, social patterns, and so on, it is thereby more or less synonymous 'with way of life'.<sup>37</sup> Thus, worldviews are constructed by the culture that people live in.

According to Valk et al, there are six cultural dimensions of worldviews which were largely pioneered by work of Ninian Smart.<sup>38</sup> These cultural dimensions are comprised of: 1. Texts, scriptures, narratives, stories; 2. Teachings, doctrines; 3. Ethical principles; 4. Rituals, symbols; 5. Community /social gathering of the devotes (cathedrals-sporting facilities, shopping malls, financial institutions); 6. Ekstasis (experiences which strengthen this worldview: sporting events, rock concerts, Eucharist..) Therefore, today, in our modern and global societies, worldviews (also beliefs and values) are still shaped by cultural circumstances, but they are also impacted by a variety of thought patterns much more heterogeneous in nature.

## 2.3. Individual/ collective or Subjective/Objective Characteristic

"Worldview is the dynamic belief system of the individual, formed and shared through life-long interaction with one's culture, society, and environment, which disposes individuals and communities toward

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<sup>34</sup> Dallas Willard, *Knowing Christ today*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2009), 45-50.

<sup>35</sup> Andre Droogers - Anton van Harskamp, *Methods for the study of Religious Change*, (Sheffield, UK: Equinox Press, 2014), 180.

<sup>36</sup> Droogers, *Methods*, 180.

<sup>37</sup> Droogers, *Methods*, 20.

<sup>38</sup> John Valk - Halis Albayrak- Mualla Selcuk, *An Islamic Worldview from Turkey*, (CA: USA, Palgrave, 2017)



acceptance or rejection of actions and ideas.”<sup>39</sup> Baker takes note of that worldview is a conviction framework (belief system) that is dynamic; its dynamism lives in the way that as an individuals from communities, the convictions of people are both tested and asserted routinely, and as reasonable, thinking creatures, people re-structure their convictions and beliefs as indicated by an intricate snare of interfacing insights and loyalties<sup>40</sup>.

Wolters asserts that a worldview is particular to the individual, being one’s own perspective of the ‘world’, causing a worldview to be both personal and socially constructed.<sup>41</sup> However, Baker concedes that while one’s worldview is personal, it usually reflects the “negotiated mores and perspectives resulting from involvement with a cultural group.”<sup>42</sup>

As indicated by Middleton and Walsh worldviews never have a place with only one individual, they are constantly shared, or common. In fact, genuine local area is conceivable just when individuals are bound together by a typical lifestyle established in a common vision of life.<sup>43</sup> At the point when an entire society is overwhelmed by a specific worldview, a cultural pattern arises.

On the other hand, Aadnanes talks about a worldview’s ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ aspects, arguing that it is important to include both. The ‘inside’ is the personal, subjective side, with emphasis on individualistic features, emotions and experiences. The outside is “the collective, socio-cultural, historic, and thus objective aspects”.<sup>44</sup> To this ‘outside’ belongs, what he refers to as the worldview framework, including the social, cultural and cognitive aspects of society that we are more, or less, aware of, as well as specific religious, philosophical and political traditions.<sup>45</sup>

Worldviews sway and affect all everyday issues, managing, deciding and shaping what is viewed as significant, what merits doing, and what may require sacrifice. Individuals and gatherings of people regularly figure out what is significant and why in their educational, financial, shared, political dynamic as per metanarratives or viewpoints.<sup>46</sup> Aadnanes discusses that the notion of a personal worldview is an expression of individualism. In collectivist cultures and epochs the frameworks and traditions would to a large extent determine people’s views, but our secular, pluralist, and individualistic time leads to a focus on personal, subjective worldviews.<sup>47</sup>

#### 2.4. Theoretical Characteristic

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<sup>39</sup> Baker, A study of the effect, 99.

<sup>40</sup> Baker, A study of the effect, 99.

<sup>41</sup> Albert M. Wolters, *Creation regained: a transforming view of the world*, (Leicester: InterVarsity P., 1985), 19.

<sup>42</sup> Baker, A study of the effect, 99.

<sup>43</sup> Walsh - Middleton, *Transforming*, 35-40.

<sup>44</sup> Per M. Aadnanes, *New Age Som Livssyn*. (Ph D dissertation University of Oslo, 1997), 66.

<sup>45</sup> Aadnanes, *New Age*, 74-76.

<sup>46</sup> Richard Putnam - David Campbell, *American grace: How religion is reshaping our civic and political life*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010). - Kristina Nelson, *The Art of Reciting the Qur’an*, (London: University of Texas Press, 2001).

<sup>47</sup> Aadnanes, *New Age*, 78-80.

The fourth characteristic of worldviews is that they reside in the ‘theoretical dimension’.<sup>48</sup> Griffioen claimed that, “all theorising is to an important degree, regulated by visions stemming from the pre-theoretical realm”.<sup>49</sup> However, the point of a worldview approach is to make the implicit explicit and to check for belief consistency. Thus, those engaging in worldview discourse inevitably move from the pre-theoretical to the more theoretical.

Griffioen noted that, “the influence of faith on theoretical knowledge goes through the medium of a worldview”.<sup>50</sup> In addition, he also acknowledged that the influence could go the other way. Arthur Holmes commented on this two-way influence when he asserted that although science impacts worldview, worldview influences science paradigmatically and personally.<sup>51</sup>

Every worldview is an intuition. Redfield calls “everyman’s worldview includes space and time, birth and death. Also it includes meaning, morality, identity and contradiction.”<sup>52</sup> In this sense, theoretically, a worldview is never merely a vision of life; it is always a vision for life.<sup>53</sup> connection between 'of life and for life' is two way cooperative. What we see everyday routine means for the existence we experience; it oversees both the oblivious activities we participate in and the activities we contemplate prior to acting, implying that our individual worldviews is regularly fairly fluid. In some cases, because of an emergency or an abrupt knowledge or acknowledgment, our worldviews moves such a lot of that transformation is the best term to portray the change. In non-emergency customary association with the world external oneself, our perspective differs just somewhat.<sup>54</sup>

## 2.5. Multi-dimensional Characteristic

In a multidimensional conception of worldview, Sire, in his definition, added behavior, heart-orientation, and narrative expression, he writes:

A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.<sup>55</sup>

Sire’s main point is that worldview is not strictly about information, beliefs, or knowledge, but equally can encompass ‘heart-orientation’ and behavior. Furthermore, Ryken adds another feature when writing that ‘a worldview is a set of presuppositions, but also ‘the orientation of our soul’.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, Brown defined the term worldview in a way that incorporates this multidimensional conception of it when he suggested

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<sup>48</sup> Naugle, *Worldview*, 250.

<sup>49</sup> Griffioen, *The approach*, 106.

<sup>50</sup> Griffioen, *The approach*, 82.

<sup>51</sup> Naugle, *Worldview*, 82.

<sup>52</sup> Sire, *Naming the elephant*, 242.

<sup>53</sup> Walsh - Middleton, *Transforming*, 17.

<sup>54</sup> Walsh - Middleton, *Transforming*, 99.

<sup>55</sup> Sire, *Naming the elephant*, 122.

<sup>56</sup> Philip G. Ryken, *What is the Christian worldview?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 7.

that: “A worldview is first of all an explanation and interpretation of the world and then an application of this view to life”.<sup>57</sup> It can be argued that Brown’s definition includes the orientation of the heart when he says that “your worldview is not just a mind-set; it is a will set”.<sup>58</sup> Behavioral aspects were important to Brown, he states that “you may not live what you profess, but you will live what you believe ... We are great at professing things, but the way we live really demonstrates what’s at the root of what we believe”.<sup>59</sup> Henceforth, Brown incorporated all three dimensions, namely propositional truth, behavior, and heart-orientation into his conception of worldview.

### 3. Worldview Study Frameworks

There are three different worldview frameworks this article explores: ultimate/existential questions framework; ontological and epistemological framework, and worldview dimensions framework. Here, I present these frameworks and how religious and secular worldviews approach and answer them in relation to the Islamic and Western context.

#### 3.1. Ultimate or Existential Questions Framework

One worldview framework is the “ultimate or existential questions” framework.<sup>60</sup> It centers around questions like purpose and meaning, duties and commitments, knowing right from wrong, the presence of a higher force/being/power rising above people, and life after this life.<sup>61</sup> Such inquiries are basic to all worldviews yet render reactions that guide out the essential boundaries of a perspective and demonstrate that perspectives relating to these inquiries can be extensively unique. Atheistic and theistic worldviews contrast fundamentally, for instance, with respect to the presence of God and even post-existence. Further, reflective people and communities by their very nature persistently refine their intuition to give more prominent profundity to the convictions, values and beliefs they embrace considering difficulties that come their direction, the unforgiving real factors of life, or because of the individuals who embrace profoundly alternate points of view.<sup>62</sup>

How do Secular worldviews and Islam answer these existential four worldview questions?

##### 3.1.1. Where are we? Meaning and purpose of cosmic life

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<sup>57</sup> Wilson E. Brown, *Thinking worldviewishly*, (Cedarville Torch, 2004), 6.

<sup>58</sup> Brown, *Thinking*, 7.

<sup>59</sup> Brown, *Thinking*, 7.

<sup>60</sup> Naugle, 2002; Olthuis, 1985; Sire, 2004.

<sup>61</sup> John Valk “Worldviews of Today”, *Values, Religions and Education in Changing Societies*, edited by Sporre K., Mannberg J. (Springer, Dordrecht, 2010), 111.

<sup>62</sup> John Valk “Stories of our elders: Exploring traditional Wolastoq knowledge and knowledge transmission,” *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issue*, 12, (2008): 278–288.

In secular worldviews (particularly naturalism), prime reality is matter, which exists eternally and is all there is; God does not exist.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, something always was; but that something is not a transcendent Creator, but the matter of the cosmos itself. So, the cosmos is ultimately one thing, without any relation to a Being beyond; there is no 'god', no 'creator'. Natural history (cosmology) begins with the origin of the universe; something happened an incredibly long time ago- a 'big bang' or sudden emergence- that ultimately resulted in the formation of the universe we now inhabit and are conscious of.<sup>64</sup> It exists as a uniformity of cause and effect in a closed system. It is not open to reordering from outside by a transcendent Being. Therefore, there is no God who gives meaning or purpose to the universe; the only meaning or purpose is what humans add which can be whatever they choose.<sup>65</sup> Along these lines, we are in a universe of regular assets that can be known dispassionately by methods for the logical strategy (scientific) and constrained by innovative force (technology). As indicated by modern worldviews we understand what the truth/reality is, and we realize how to examine, comprehend and control it. Such a view is expressed by those who embrace a worldview identified by Charles Taylor as Exclusive Humanism and includes Naturalism, Scientism, Atheism, Secularism, Humanism, and more.<sup>66</sup>

On the other hand, in Islam, the fundamental reality is God (Allah) who is described as monotheistic, infinite, personal, transcendent, immanent, omniscient, sovereign and good. These attributes emphasize His oneness, transcendence and sovereignty. In Islamic worldviews, Allah created the universe "ex nihilo, and all creatures are responsible to him".<sup>67</sup> Notwithstanding, the world is a shut framework to the extent that nothing occurs on the planet outside of His heavenly announcements. The purpose and meaning of earthly life is for humans to live fruitful and responsible lives in harmony with others and the natural environment. Allah's strategy for creation is essentially to talk a thing into existence. This arrangement is represented in the Qur'an concerning the formation of Adam, "He created him from dust, then said to him: 'Be'. And he was"<sup>68</sup>. Basically, Allah is the creator and owner of the universe, and nothing happens within it that would be outside of His plan. The universe is orderly, and Allah provides human beings with clarity. The nature of universe and God's character are thus closely related; there is orderliness and regularity to both. Allah has the power to know and to govern the universe. The cosmologies of Muslims are not based on evolutionary, materialistic, and separatist models, but on the cosmology of spiritually, sanctification, unification, and creation and other interrelated factors.

### 3.1.2. Who are we? Nature and purpose of the human and human life

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<sup>63</sup> James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009)

<sup>64</sup> Sire, *Universe*, 10-20.

<sup>65</sup> John Watson, Including secular philosophies such as humanism in locally agreed syllabuses for religious education, *British Journal of Religious Education*, 32 (1): (2010) 5-18.

<sup>66</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 2007).

<sup>67</sup> Sire, *Universe*, 246.

<sup>68</sup> Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Quran*, (Amana Publication:UK, 2004), Al-Imran 3/59.

In Western culture, naturalism claims that human beings are complex ‘machines’; personality is an interrelation of chemical and physical properties we do not yet fully understand.<sup>69</sup> Human beings are a part of the cosmos and there is one substance called matter that humans are comprised of. The laws applying to issue apply to people. They don't rise above the universe in any capacity. At the point when the matter that goes to make up an individual deteriorates at death, at that point the individual is no more.<sup>70</sup>

People are an aftereffect of a long developmental and evolutionary cycle that has no larger or broadly useful or meaning (Nihilism-Darwinism). Human existence is just here because of cycles that, while not totally random, are surely programmed and unguided by nature: a ‘Blind Watchmaker’.<sup>71</sup> The theory of evolution was given a ‘mechanism’ by Charles Darwin.<sup>72</sup> The theory supposes that the origin of life and species lies in the concept of ‘adaptation to the environment’. According to Darwin, living species were not individually created by God, but came from a common ancestor and differentiated from each other as a result of natural selection.<sup>73</sup> The Darwinian idea “is about as secure as any in science”; that “human beings are products of evolution” is held to be an undisputable fact.<sup>74</sup> Naturalists demand that with the beginning of mankind evolution abruptly took on another dimension, for individuals are self-conscious, and are accepted to be simply the lone cognizant creatures known to man.<sup>75</sup>

Walsh & Middleton gives an example answer for a person who lives in North America:

I am me, an individual, the free and independent master of my own destiny. I stand in a world full of natural potential, and my task is to utilize that potential to economic good. While I am hindered in this task by ignorance of nature and lack of tools for controlling it, nevertheless my hope rests in the good life of progress wherein nature yields its bounty for human benefit. Only then will all find happiness in a life of material affluence, with no needs and no dependence.<sup>76</sup>

In the Islamic worldview, human beings are ‘the pinnacle of God’s creation’.<sup>77</sup> They have been given abilities that other creatures, such as angels and jinn, do not possess. However, these abilities carry with them a concomitant responsibility to live up to God’s standards<sup>78</sup>. Islam explains that the person is a free, separate species and isn't biologically evolved. The human is contained a double nature, internal and external. The interior idea of people alludes to ruh (soul) and 'aql (intellect), and his/her external nature is made out of the actual body. Consequently, individuals are comprised of soul and body, they are not simply material creatures, therefore they ought to be seen as having a coordinated character.

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<sup>69</sup> Sire, Universe, 71.

<sup>70</sup> Sire, Universe, 72-74.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The God delusion*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006).

<sup>72</sup> Anthony JF Griffiths - Gelbart William M. - Miller Jeffrey H. *Modern Genetic Analysis*, (New York: W. H. Freeman; Darwin’s Revolution, 1999).

<sup>73</sup> Tracy I. Storer - Robert L. Usinger - Nybakk-en, James AV. - Stebbins, Robert C. *Elements of Zoology*, (New York McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977), 14.

<sup>74</sup> Daniel.C. Dennett, *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea*, (Simon & Schuster: USA, 1995), 19-48

<sup>75</sup> Sire, Universe, 40-55.

<sup>76</sup> Walsh - Middleton, Transforming, 36.

<sup>77</sup> Sire, Universe, 257.

<sup>78</sup> Sire, Universe, 258-60.

Islam underlines that people are creatures recognized from others since they have been blessed with insight (intellect) and freedom of thought (free-will). Intellect is a special component in individuals that raises them over the remainder of creation<sup>79</sup>. Ashraf contends that Islam sees a human's mind to be the result of three distinct powers: the soul, the intellect and the enthusiastic soul connected to the body<sup>80</sup>. The profound idea of people is obvious from the breathing of Allah's soul into them.<sup>81</sup> The body addresses the animal dimension. As an integrative creation, people have biological requirements for activity, food, and sex; social requirements for affection, having a place, and status inside a society; and otherworldly necessities identifying with something bigger and beyond one's self, that is, the need to reach God.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, a human being is dignified as being the vicegerent (caliph) of Allah on earth.<sup>83</sup> To uphold this important position as caliph, human beings were equipped with potentialities to enable them to fulfill this substantial responsibility.

Accordingly, a Muslim may assert:

I am the pinnacle of God's creation, who believes Him and obeys what He orders and dependent on His wise and loving rule. I am God's representative on earth, higher than any other living creatures. My entire life is in submission to Him. This is intrinsic to our creature hood. I am not autonomous. God has placed me in a position of authority over the earth to cultivate and develop it. Servant hood is central to my humanness.<sup>84</sup>

### 3.1.3. What is the problem/wrong? And what is the solution/right?

In the secular Western worldview, ethics is related only to human beings. For a naturalist, values are constructed by human beings. According to a naturalistic position, "if there was no consciousness prior to the existence of humans, then there was no prior sense of right and wrong. And if there were no ability to do other than what one does, any sense of right and wrong would have no practical value".<sup>85</sup> Thus, there must be consciousness and self-determination for ethics. Sire states that no natural law is inscribed in the cosmos. Secular worldview says that ethics, like knowledge, is a linguistic construct and social good is whatever society takes it to be. As maintained by the postmodernist, "the truth about the reality itself is forever hidden from us; all we can do is tell stories".<sup>86</sup> According to secular worldviews, right and wrong is individually and collectively determined, and often culturally specific; there is no universal or objective truth criteria by which to measure right and wrong.<sup>87</sup>

In secular worldviews, a few different interpretations come into the agenda, such as Marxism, secular humanism, Nihilism. Marx claimed that 'since human beings are material, their lives must be understood in

<sup>79</sup> Al-Tin 95/4

<sup>80</sup> Husain, Sherif. S. - Ashraf, Sherif. A. *The Crisis in Muslim Education*, (Jeddah: King Abdulaziz University, 1979), 77-78.

<sup>81</sup> Al-Hijr 15/4.

<sup>82</sup> Hashim Rosnani, *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implication for Theory and Practice*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 2002)

<sup>83</sup> al-Baqara 2/ 30-34.

<sup>84</sup> It is our own definition drawn from Walsh and Middleton.

<sup>85</sup> Sire, Universe, 77.

<sup>86</sup> Sire, Universe, 222.

<sup>87</sup> John P.

terms of the needs to work to satisfy their material needs'.<sup>88</sup> His solution rests on controlling the economic order for the satisfaction of humans. Another solution arising from a secular worldview is secular humanism. It is a form of humanism that is framed within a naturalistic worldview. Humanism itself is the system of thought centred on the belief that 'human beings are of special value; their aspirations, their thoughts, their yearnings are significant'.<sup>89</sup> It contains an emphasis on the value of the individual person.

Alternatively, in Islamic worldviews right and wrong are based on the teachings of the Qur'an, as amplified by the Hadith and interpreted by the schools of law, the sharia. Islam holds that human beings, endowed with the ability to choose between right and wrong, need guidance, which God has provided through the Qur'an and the Sunnah, or tradition of the Prophet. Both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims follow the Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions, but differ in their worldviews regarding the religious implications of Muslim leadership.<sup>90</sup> People have turned away from Allah and have become self-centred, they need ultimate purpose, a point of orientation for their lives. Either they serve to Allah and obey what He says in the Qur'an, or they practice whatever they want in disobedience.

Arguably, in all of their activities, humans constantly face the above duality. Dualism is a split-version worldview. It separates reality into two fundamentally distinct categories: holy and profane, sacred and secular<sup>91</sup>. So the problem is basically questioning of obedience or disobedience.

In accordance with the Muslim worldview humans are preparing for eternal life. Allah Almighty calls humans to the everlasting land and shows them the ways to attain everlasting happiness. In accordance with the purpose of creation, a human's duty is firstly to have true faith and afterwards to perform the worshipful duties, which are the requirements of faith, to ornament their hearts with good thoughts, and to be successful in the examination of servitude by acting in accordance with moral standards.

In Islam, Allah is the beginning of everything; He is also the end. At the end of time, there will be a day of judgment with Allah as the judge. He creates heaven and hell, where justice reigns and all evil will have disappeared. To believe in Judgment Day helps a person achieve a feeling of responsibility; a person who carries the feeling of responsibility pays attention to their actions. Real solution is to be bound close to Allah, the Creator, and to live according to His will. Every person is responsible to God for the way they lead their life in relation to nature, other people, and to God.

### 3.2. Ontological and Epistemological Worldview Framework

The next structure to develop individuals' comprehension of worldviews is the "ontological and epistemological" framework.<sup>92</sup> In spite of the fact that again to a great extent philosophical in nature, this framework helps with investigating how individuals comprehend the idea of being (ontology) and furthermore the idea of their knowing (epistemology). Such inquiries can be of incredible help to curious personalities

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<sup>88</sup> Karl Marx, *Das Kapital, Capital: Volume I*, (Hamburg- NY, 1867).

<sup>89</sup> Sire, Universe, 85 ( Humanist Manifesto II, 1973)

<sup>90</sup> Al-Aswad, El-Sayed. *Muslim Worldviews and Everyday Lives*, (Altamira Press: UK, 2012).

<sup>91</sup> Walsh - Middleton, Transforming,

<sup>92</sup> Daniels, Denise- Franz Randal S.- Wong, Kenman. "A classroom with a worldview: Making spiritual assumptions explicit in management education." *Journal of Management Education*, 24(5) (2000): 540-561.-also look at McKenzie, 1991; Baker, 2002

looking for more prominent comprehension into the nature of the reality they experience. Ontological inquiries become central inquiries and portray an unmistakable worldview sort.<sup>93</sup> Darwinism, Naturalism and Marxism, for instance, respect a definitive nature of being as physical (material) and consequently reject any idea of an otherworldly God. From another perspective, Hinduism, Eco-spiritualities and Native Spirituality see reality as a mix of the physical and spiritual, yet separate themselves from Islam, Judaism and Christianity which insist that the idea of reality comprises of the reconciliation of the physical and the otherworldly attributable to the inventive demonstrations of an extraordinary God<sup>94</sup>.

A worldview relates to the world or reality. Simply, it is 'a way of looking at reality' or is a 'vision of life'.<sup>95</sup> According to Philosophical Naturalism, "we can know nothing about the existence of anything beyond, or distinct from physical matter or the physical universe. All that constitutes human and universal life originated at, and from the Big Bang'. Consequently, "there is no greater Being, spiritual dimension or realm distinct and separate from the material or physical universe".<sup>96</sup> Modernity is portrayed by the conviction and belief that the world can be known objectively by methods of science. Henceforth, the truth/reality is given, everyone lives in a similar world, and convictions and beliefs are private augmentations.<sup>97</sup>

Epistemological questions compel people to think deeply about the foundation of their belief systems. Questions concerning what we know and how we understand what we know challenge all to ponder the wellsprings of one's assurance. Finding the sources of their insight and ideas of truth and the idea of the authority of these sources challenge understudies to consider what they acknowledge with conviction and the purposes behind doing so. Specifically, individuals go to the acknowledgment that nobody remains at an apex or mountain ridge ready to observe with extreme information or assurance the idea of the real world, rather we as a whole take 'leap[s] of faith'.<sup>98</sup>

In Islamic worldviews, the most important source of knowledge for Muslims remains the Qur'an, the tradition of Muhammad and human experience. Allah's knowledge is infinite and reliable, this perspective is grounded in a central epistemological starting point; it is the main approach in traditional Islamic epistemology. In the confounded speed of day-by-day life and in numerous every day experiences, notwithstanding, the Qur'an need not be viewed as the only source preferred by its followers, Muslims likewise offer supremacy to human encounters. Issues of a scientific, educational, social, political, logical, or economic nature frequently require other non-Qur'anic sources for profundity of comprehension. Muslims are called to include themselves in the cultures and traditions of their day. This included the way of life, culture, and

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<sup>93</sup> Valk, Worldviews, 111.

<sup>94</sup> Valk, Worldviews, 111.

<sup>95</sup> Michael Kearney, *Worldview*, (Novato, CA: Chandler& sharp, 1984). and John P. Newport, *The new age movement and the biblical worldview: conflict and dialogue*, (Grand Rapids, MI: B. Eerdmans Publishing company, 1998).

<sup>96</sup> Valk et all, Islamic worldviews, 102.

<sup>97</sup> Walsh - Middleton, Transforming, 43.

<sup>98</sup> Valk, Worldviews, 112.



encounters of the networks in which they dwell, these also fill in as sources. For Muslims all in all, notwithstanding, people should decide for themselves what educational sources are most appropriate to reveal insight into the issues before them. From this perspective, Muslims are quite open to change.<sup>99</sup>

### 3.3. Worldview Dimensions Framework

A third structure to improve individual's comprehension of worldview is the 'worldview dimensions' framework, demonstrated after that originally utilized by Ninian Smart<sup>100</sup>. This structure investigates convictions, beliefs, values and principles as passed on through narratives or stories, rituals, customs, teachings, social commitment and experiential freedoms. The substance of these constructions is regularly given a specific shape by the culture in which worldviews are implanted.<sup>101</sup>

In Worldview Dimension structure, Valk, Albayrak and Selcuk utilized six components to recognize people's worldviews. The first component centers around texts, holy sacred writings, accounts or stories that educate one's worldview<sup>102</sup>. Among strict individuals of different customs and religions over a significant time span, myths, consecrated writings and sacred texts (like the Qur'an, Torah, Holy Bible, the Tao teaching and Bhagavad Gita) structure a significant hotspot for convictions, ethics and belief and values.<sup>103</sup> Narratives, novels, logical and scientific theories rising up out of texts become the hotspot for their worldviews.<sup>104</sup> The second component centers on the doctrines and teachings that emerge from the sources to which one gives priority. Those disciplines may concern the beginnings of the universe, the earth and people, as caught in creation legends in holy sacred writings and stories or even in science writings and speculations.<sup>105</sup> They may train how we should carry on with a good and moral life, or recommended rituals for living and dying. Instructing and conventions can likewise be of a secular kind (like Scientism, Capitalism, Marxism, Secularism, and Darwinism) and structure the premise, recognized or unacknowledged, of instructive or political frameworks in different spots on the planet.<sup>106</sup> The third component centers around moral rules that rise up out of narratives, teachings and texts. These moral standards serve to manage and coordinate the contemplations and activities of disciples, regardless of whether they are individuals, groups or even substances. Ethics includes knowing living a decent life. As indicated by Singer, this includes deciding for oneself a life that merits experiencing or one that is fulfilling and beyond the limits of religious morality.<sup>107</sup> However others reject such an individualistic way to deal with morals and attest that with the goal for people to prosper ethics should be grounded in a specific religious tradition.<sup>108</sup> The fourth component centers on rituals and symbols that reflect specific worldviews. Rituals are not solely connected to religions, however surface on the whole worldviews. Also, symbols swarm both secular and religious

<sup>99</sup> Valk et al, Islamic worldviews, 122-23

<sup>100</sup> Ninian Smart, *Worldviews*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983).

<sup>101</sup> Valk, *Worldviews*, 112.

<sup>102</sup> Valk et al, Islamic worldviews, 123.

<sup>103</sup> Joseph Campbell, -Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, (New York & Toronto: Anchor, 1991).

<sup>104</sup> Valk et al, Islamic worldviews, 18.

<sup>105</sup> Bill Moyers, *Genesis: A Living Conversation*, (Toronto: Doubleday, 1996).

<sup>106</sup> Joseph Campbell, *Myths to Live By*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 19..

<sup>107</sup> Peter Singer, *The Life You Can Save: How to Do Your Part to End World Poverty*, (New York: Random House, 2010).

<sup>108</sup> Simon Blackburn, *Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

worldviews. The way that they can make debate is declaration that they generally point beyond themselves, are amazing and pass on powerful messages.<sup>109</sup> The fifth component centers around communal and social engagements. These become critical to any worldview for it is in such commitment that worldview obtains support and authenticity. Social gatherings, for example, church dinners, occasions for youngsters and week-by-week gatherings fill in as significant capacities for the religiously minded in that they make group solidarity and pass on group convictions, beliefs and values. Parties whatever their assortment serves also significant capacities for secular minds of individuals.<sup>110</sup> The sixth component centralize those unique sorts of exercises that make phenomenal bliss, delight and energy, or even craze as well as joy in followers. There are both secular and religious counterparts. Partaking in a Eucharist, a journey to Mecca or a Jewish mitzvah are occasions that leave an imprint on the members, reinforcing their religious confidence, convictions and values. Similarly, vicarious investment in sport games, walking in July fourth parades or in any event, spinning hotly at stage performances can offer ascent to delight, bliss and happiness and even euphoria that teaches faith, convictions and values of a secular kind in the member or follower.<sup>111</sup>

#### 4. Worldviews and Muslim Identity

Today Muslims mostly construct their worldviews and identity based on the fundamental principles of Islam, whether they are live in the West or the East. According to Ramadan, Muslims ‘define themselves on the basis of points of reference that explain their sense of belonging to the same community of faith and at the same time root them in the universe of Islam’<sup>112</sup> throughout the diversity of their national cultures, the essence of their faith, their identity, and their being in the world. I believe that the fundamental principles of Islam empower all Muslims for evolution, adaptation and transformation to a variety of social and cultural environments.

The central question of identity ‘*Who are we?*’ has occupied today’s young people’s minds<sup>113</sup> and is also a vital question for young Muslims, for example, in Turkey.<sup>114</sup> It is imperative that young Muslims define what they are, what they want to be, and how they place themselves in this new world; their worldview will shape their answers. Islamic culture becomes identified with the young generation’s adaptation or negotiation to another social and cultural context. It also represents their way of being authentically Muslim in today’s Turkey. Therefore, recognizing the elements of Muslim identity which are based on religious principles is very important to allow young Muslims to live in any environment; moreover “cultures that are a specific way of living out these principles, adapted for a variety of societies, none having more legitimacy than any other provided that it respects the religious injunctions”.<sup>115</sup> There are four foundational pillars

<sup>109</sup> Valk et al, *Islamic worldviews*, 19.

<sup>110</sup> Valk et al, *Islamic worldviews*, 20.

<sup>111</sup> Valk et al, *Islamic worldviews*, 20.

<sup>112</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, (Oxford University Press: UK, 2004), 9.

<sup>113</sup> Walsh - Middleton, *Transforming*.

<sup>114</sup> Uzeyir Ok, “Faith Development and Perception of Diversity among Muslims in Turkey: construction and Initial Test of a Measure for Religious Diversity in Islam”, *Din Bilimleri Akademik Arastirma Dergisi*, Ondokuz Mayıs University Press, Samsun: Turkey, VI, no: 3, (2006).

<sup>115</sup> Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 78.

defining the meaning of ‘Muslim identity’; which Tariq Ramadan explores in his book ‘Western Muslims and the Future of Islam’ which shall be considered in more detail in the accompanying sections<sup>116</sup>.

#### 4.1. One Faith, One Practice, and One Spirituality

One of the most significant principles of Muslim identity is *faith*, which is a personal sign that an individual believes in the Creator without identifying anything with Him. This is the message of the main concept of ‘tawhid’, or belief in the oneness of God and which is proclaimed by the ‘shahada’, a wholesome and honest demonstration of the nature of Muslim identity, surpassing all barriers. Shahada is expressed in religious activities such as prayer and fasting. Spirituality is closely linked with these two facets of Muslim identity, referring from an Islamic perspective to how an individual strengthens and enriches his/her faith. Spirituality involves memory and the passion required in the fight against the natural inclination to lose track of one’s faith. All religious activities recommended by Islam, primarily prayer, are methods of ‘dhikr’, which means remembering: “Truly I am God; there is no god but I. So worship Me and perform the prayer in order to remember Me”.<sup>117</sup>

According to Islam, all Muslims should strive for exemplary behavior that consists of achieving a state of complete remembrance and recollection. The Prophet Muhammad said that ‘al-ihsan’, which means excellence, is “to worship God as if you could see Him, for even if you cannot see Him, He sees you”. In other words, an individual must think of God at all times. Many discussions between sociologists and political scientists often forget to mention this aspect, implying that concepts such as faith and spirituality are not thought of as concrete data with an objective character.<sup>118</sup> However, it is important to note that the word ‘Islam’ means ‘submission’ to God and refers specifically to the religious act of reverence. Therefore, identification with the Muslim identity requires acknowledgement of this first and rudimentary element of faith, enabling Muslims to perform religious practices that enrich their spiritual life. Faith and spirituality support these activities, which convey the existence of a necessary belief that gives life meaning; to take these away from Muslims is akin to separating them from their being.

#### 4.2. An Understanding of the Texts and the Context

It is difficult to acquire true belief without understanding, for Muslims, this requires understanding the origins of the Qur’an and the Sunnah, in addition to the circumstances in which they live. Therefore, Muslims must develop an understanding of the origin of their sacred texts and also of the context circumstances so that they may realize how to remain faithful to the directions of Islam. This is the primary teaching of Islamic practice, which has occurred ever since the time of the Prophet and has continued to inhabit the ulama. Therefore, it can be said that Muslim identity is not restricted and inflexible. Rather, it is built upon solid reasoning and active movement between the sources and the context with the main aim being to live a balanced life. This is the reason that, for Islam, the development of intellectual abilities is absolutely

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<sup>116</sup> Ramadan, *Western Muslims*. 78.

<sup>117</sup> Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 79.

<sup>118</sup> Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 79.

important and serves to promote the teachings of Islam. To be Muslim requires striving to develop one's abilities and to continuously gain knowledge, so much so that it can be argued "to be Muslim is to learn." According to the Prophet, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim man and woman."<sup>119</sup>

Broadly speaking, knowledge is a prerequisite for comprehending the Islamic sources in addition to the Creator, creation and all created beings. The Qur'an states that one can intensify one's awareness of God through knowledge and understanding. There are two factors of understanding, the aforementioned being the first. The second factor is that Muslims should use this capacity to assist in making decisions between what is good and bad so that they may find the most appropriate way to please God regardless of the circumstances in which they are living. It is important to note that there can be no freedom without choice, and further, that there can be no knowledge or understanding without choice. Apart from faith and spirituality, another important element of the Muslim identity is, understanding which is gained through knowledge and choice, and is built upon freedom. Therefore, Muslim identity is flexible because it is based on intelligence combined with an understanding of the sources and the context. Ultimately, Muslim identity is notable for its emphasis on intelligence, which is based upon knowledge, freedom and responsibility.<sup>120</sup>

#### 4.3. Education and Transmission

Faith (*iman*) is a vow or pledge (*amaana*), and Muslims are obligated to share the vow with their children before friends and relatives who act as witnesses. To be Muslim requires teaching and sharing knowledge and this is something that was ordered by the Prophet when he said: "Warn those who are closest to you". Muslim identity is not restricted to the individual and the personal realm, but it requires espousing and communicating a view of life to others that is built upon faith, spirituality and understanding of ethical commands. Parents play a very important role in this by providing their children with the notion and essence of *what they are* so that they can ultimately choose to become responsible human beings and decide *what they want to be*.<sup>121</sup>

Muslims are convinced that the Qur'an is the last sacred Revelation and that therefore, it has a universal facet. Their duty before God is to make the meaning of the pledge recognized and to describe it in detail and as clearly as possible. This is where the responsibility ends since the concept of converting people is not one that is familiar to Islam. To share the meaning is to invite people to gain knowledge of the existence of God and towards a genuine understanding of His teachings. Conversion can only be accomplished by God through His revelation and this is something that occurs on an individual basis. The reason for this is that it concerns the heart of an individual, and as such no one else has the right to get involved.<sup>122</sup>

#### 4.4. Action and Participation

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<sup>119</sup> Ramadan, Western Muslims, 80.

<sup>120</sup> Ramadan, Western Muslims, 80.

<sup>121</sup> Ramadan, Western Muslims, 81.

<sup>122</sup> Ramadan, Western Muslims, 81-82.

The fourth keystone of Muslim identity is constant communication based on the acts of educating and disseminating which have been defined as the very basis of being Muslim.

The external expression of Muslim identity is communication and presentation of the faith through behavior. To be Muslim means to behave in accordance with Islamic teachings, regardless of the surrounding circumstances, and nothing in Islam stipulates that one must withdraw from the community so that one may be closer to God. Instead, the opposite is the case, and according to the Qur'an belief is connected with good behavior. The Prophet emphasised this aspect of Muslim identity and its development includes the potential an individual has of behaving according to what an individual is and what that individual believes.<sup>123</sup>

The way an individual acts is built upon four factors of human life: expanding and safeguarding spiritual life in the community, spreading religious as well as secular education, advocating justice in every aspect of life and lastly, encouraging unity with all classes of people who are disregarded or marginalized. Regardless of location, a Muslim is a Muslim when he or she comprehends this important aspect of his or her existence on Earth: to be with God is equal to being with human beings. It is important to note that this does not mean only Muslims, but all of human kind and according to the Prophet: "The best among you is the one who behaves best toward people".<sup>124</sup> One is obligated to participate in their community, this puts forth the idea of action in a community with other citizens who make up said community.<sup>125</sup> The fourth keystone of Muslim identity combines the two aspects of *acting* and *participating*, which can be likened to the individual and the social being which describe being Muslim in connection to community and the world.

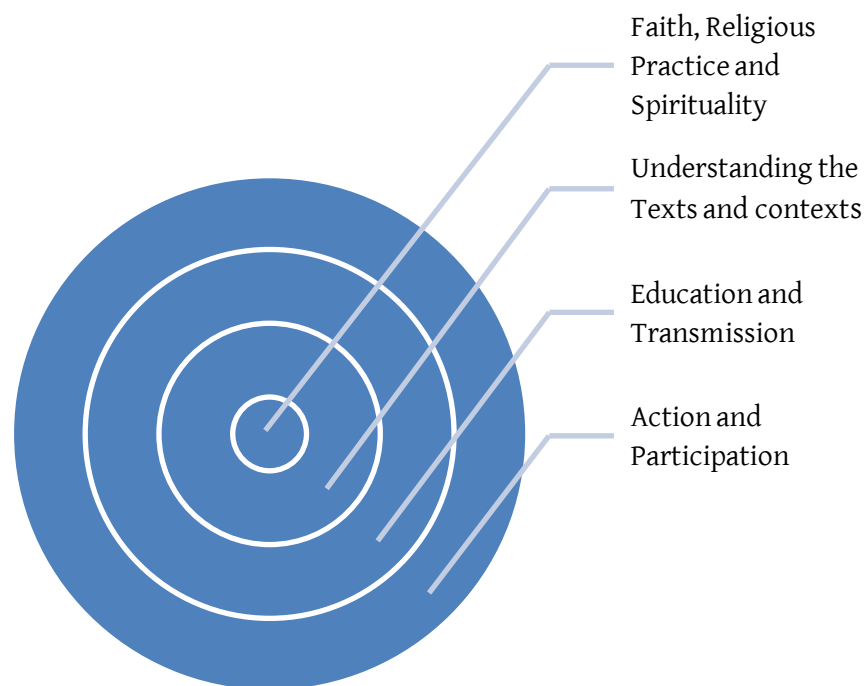


Figure 1: Muslim Identity and Worldviews

<sup>123</sup> Ramadan, Western Muslims, 82.

<sup>124</sup> Ramadan, Western Muslims, 82.

<sup>125</sup> Ramadan, Western Muslims, 83.

These four aspects provide sufficient idea of the basics of a Muslim identity, individual and social, set apart from its cultural reading in a particular area of the world. The essence of faith with practice and spirituality is the perspective from which life and the world can be viewed. Understanding of the source texts and context permits one to organise one's mind both on an individual level and in respect to their environment. More generally, education and transmission allow for the sharing of the pledge as a gift and for the ability for the message to be passed on. Finally, on an even larger scale, action and participation are the complete representation of Muslim identity through the manner in which one behaves towards oneself, other people, creation, the community and all of mankind. It becomes clear then, that the meaning of the Muslim identity is flexible, active and based on important principles whilst at the same time being in continuous interaction with the environment.<sup>126</sup>

### Conclusion

The article has outlined a number of different theoretical perspectives of worldviews, including the term worldview's history, definitions and characteristics of it. It has discussed some of the current theoretical worldviews study frameworks with giving answers from Islamic and secular worldviews. Moreover, it has described the relationship of worldview and Islam with a focus on identity and Muslim worldviews. The aim was to describe worldview and to contribute to discussions by sharing some of the rich intellectual history of the often disputed definition of worldview in Muslim communities. If the religious community wants to progress, there must be a common understanding of what worldview means in religion and how that understanding can be effectively taught to students.

Contemporary Muslim worlds are characterized by ethnic, cultural, and ideological diversity. It is difficult and perhaps even impossible to understand Muslims' modes of behavior and thinking without paying attention to their multiple worldviews, interpenetrating domains, and points of reference correlating with cultural constructs that render different experiential worlds, real or imaginary, comprehensible. Islam, nonetheless, is defied not just with numerous cultures or worldviews of various Muslim communities, yet in addition with Western efforts to force its basically secular worldview through the interaction of globalization. Increments and changes in trans-correspondence, worldwide progressions of culture, capital, and material powers have as of late and simultaneously opened new scenes for Muslims to reevaluate certain methods of both their social lives and worldviews.<sup>127</sup>

In conclusion, while worldview can be interpreted in a variety of ways within the religious community, there seems to be a trend toward constructing worldview as all-encompassing rather than equating it to non-religious worldviews. It does, however, pose a number of important questions, such as the distinction between institutional/organized and personal/individual levels, as well as the contractedness of worldview as a Western liberal concept.

This article hopes to encourage scholars, policy-makers, and teachers to engage with children and young people as they work towards a new vision for religious education. It is revealed as a subject which

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<sup>126</sup> Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 78-83.

<sup>127</sup> al-Aswad, *Muslim*, 6.

explores how we all cope with, make sense of and make the best of our lives, and question where our ideas and attitudes come from through learning about religions and beliefs. In this way, it is directly relevant to all children and young people, whether or not they identify with a religion, or describe themselves as 'religious'. For pupils who do identify with a religious tradition, it enables them to recognize their experience of belonging to a religious community in a subject which acknowledges the diversity of these communities and the often messy, but always interesting, reality of belonging to them.

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