

Rethinking the Culture of Knowledge and its Implications for Peace and Sustainable Developments in the Philippines

Assalamu 'alaykum Wrt. Wbt.

I would like to congratulate the Dept of FIDS for organizing this SAP 2021 as a platform to continue and develop the culture of research and publication during this pandemic.

Before I will embark on the main issue of my presentation, allow me to say few words about the intended purpose of my paper.

In conjunction with the plan to offer a new intellectual spectrum for new students of IIIUM, we have been mandated to develop courses to deliberate and advance arguments that the Qur'anic or tawhidic paradigm, the Shari'i approach to the culture of knowledge and civilization is the ultimate solution to many problems faced by modern man provided such culture of knowledge is profoundly understood following the perspective of Islamic scientific tradition.

When we say Islamic scientific tradition, we fundamentally mean the knowledge culture that is consistent with the primary source of Islam, the Qur'an and Sunnah, and the proper contextualization of social realities.

It is worth mentioning at this juncture that the formulation of knowledge culture is meant to develop integral or holistic personality and the realization of the concept of *rahmatan lil alamin*, which mean, to bring the meaning of mercy for the entire humanity.

The title of my paper is "Rethinking the culture of knowledge and its Implications for Peace and Sustainable Development: the Case of Muslim community in the Philippines."

Social scientists, particularly sociologists views culture as an important social force that influences human behavior and beliefs. It is impossible to understand human society without understanding human culture; for the social behavior of man, whether it is domestic, economic, political, legal, moral, or religious is dominated by the culture of his group.

Such a given definition underscores the role of man and his intellect as the center of everything.

Due to the prevalence of such an anthropocentric approach in understanding man and his culture, it is unfortunate that modern man has succumbed knowingly or unknowingly to a system of thought or action that is primarily based on nature, interests, and ideals of man that resulted in the detachment of man from his primordial nature and ethical origin.

From the perspective of Islam, the knowledge of the Truth which is the source of man's belief and culture has been challenged by modern, nontheistic, rationalist, and ethical conduct that is devoid of the conception of God and religious tradition.

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The study is a humble attempt to understand the current culture of knowledge and its importance for resolving epistemological clash between two opposing cultures- the Christian majority and Muslim minority and its implications for peace and sustainability in the Southeast Asian region.

The study provides a panoramic view on the past and present socio-economic landscape of the Muslim community in the southern Philippines and its implications for transnational integration via education that allows Western philosophy and worldview as the basis for reform of culture of knowledge system.

The study seeks to revisit government policies on the development of Islamic institutions within the context of secularism and post-colonial discourse.

While the public universities have been mandated by the government to realize peace and sustainable development, it is pertinent that the study should delve into re-evaluating the mechanisms for the development of Muslim education and its role in advancing the cultural conversation and civilizational dialogue.

The study aims to endorse possible areas for integration of knowledge projects which will place Muslim education in a new positive light in the eyes of humanity.

As such, the unresolved root of conflict emanating from the intellectual segregation between the Christian majority and Muslim minority has been addressed in the paper.

Also, the challenges on how to generate experts on the integration of knowledge as a new strategy for the transformation of Muslim education have been highlighted.

The methodology of the study is qualitative. It relies on primary sources such as government documents, unpublished works, and interviews in addition to library research.

Several recommendations can be tentatively made in the present study: firstly, the gradual recognition of tawhidic worldview and epistemology as driving force of civilizational dialogue and understanding.

Such a move should not be seen as dichotomous modes of existence but as a seamless continuum in the history of education in the Philippines.

Secondly, intercultural discourse can be spearheaded by Muslim institutions of higher learning to build bridges and channels of academic, scientific, and technical cooperation with other systems and educational institutions at the national level.

Thirdly, the philosophy of integration of knowledge should serve the interest of the country and beyond.

Keywords: *Muslim education, peace, and sustainable development, integration of knowledge, and worldview.*

Outline

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- Developing Culture of Knowledge and its Implications for National Unity in a Secular State

- Bridging the Socio-Cultural Gap
- The Problem of Exclusivist Approach to Cultural Reform
- Humanizing Culture of Knowledge and its Implication for a Sustainable Peace
- Responses of Muslim Intellectuals to the Problem of Contemporary Knowledge
- Conclusion and Policy Recommendations