Teaching Islam in an International School: A Bourdieusian Analysis

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Abstract: Recent years have witnessed the burgeoning growth of international schools in Qatar, where Islamic Studies is a statutory subject for all schools. This paper aims to investigate how Islamic Studies teachers navigate an internationalized setting where there is dissonance between local and global educational priorities. International schools aim to forge global citizens who perceive their identity in terms of global rather than religious belonging. To examine how Islamic Studies teachers view their work in such a setting, a qualitative study was conducted in an international school based in Qatar. The study employs Bourdieu's concepts of religious capital and field to explore how the Islamic teachers' pedagogical skills and knowledge are valued in a non-Islamic teaching setting. The study concludes that the international schooling field allowed Islamic Studies teachers to transform their religiosity into social capital, but they failed to convert their Islamic knowledge into cultural capital. However, Islamic Studies teachers positively view their work in internationalized milieu. They think that the international schooling field can help them to accumulate different forms of capital that are prized in Qatar.

Keywords: Islamic education; religious capital; Bourdieu; international schools; education in Qatar

1. Introduction

Over the historical span of Islamic education, teachers of Islam have been held in great reverence throughout Muslim communities. Their mission has been to disseminate Islamic knowledge and safeguard the Islamic identity; therefore, they are deemed to be the spiritual heirs of the prophet Mohammed. However, it has been argued that teachers of Islam have lost some of this status due to Westernized education introduced by European colonial powers (Hatina 2010; Tan 2018). Some authors indicate that those teachers are perceived to be pedagogically ill-equipped to cope with modern educational challenges (Karlsson and Mansory 2018; Rashed 2015). Additionally, teachers of Islam have a sense of inferiority when they compared with the teachers of other secular subjects (Arjmand 2018; Özdalga 2018). However, these assumptions have not been examined by empirical research which should aim at exploring the views of the teachers of Islam about the hegemony of Western-style education in contemporary Muslim communities and its impact on their role. In other words, anthropologically, the literature of Islamic education needs studies that can give an emic perspective on how teachers of Islam navigate an educational landscape where their influence has receded. To address this paucity of research, this study investigates how the religiosity and Islamic knowledge of a group of Islamic Studies teachers are valued in an international school. In doing so, the study deploys Bourdieu's heuristic concepts: capital and field to theorize the teachers' experience. By introducing Bourdieu's conceptual framework, I seek to address the scarcity of sociological analysis about the teachers of Islam. It has been noted that Bourdieu's conceptual tools have not been employed in religious education (Green 2012). This is because a colossal amount of research in the sociology of education is replete with the tropes of class and race, and neglects religion (Grace 2004). A number of studies have attributed this neglect to the secularization thesis, on which sociological research was

constructed (e.g., D'Agostino and Carozza 2019; Grace 2004). This argument can be extended to research on Islamic education which needs to adopt Western social theory to provide us with constructive interpretations. However, what might be an obstacle to shifting the research agenda of Islamic education is the common discourse within this field. Islamic education is conceived as a breeding ground for radicalism and terrorism (Gholami 2017; Thobani 2007; Brooks 2018; Brooks and Mutohar 2018). This is what I call a 'securitized discourse' on Islamic education, which has led to a proliferation of studies that are concerned with "counter-terrorism" and "deradicalization" (e.g., Ghosh et al. 2016; Arthur 2015). By contrast, topics such as parenting, school choices, the relationship between academic achievement and religiosity among the Muslim diaspora remain uncharted research areas. This securitized discourse fails to reveal the complexity of Islamic education, and the changes that have altered it.

Apart from this securitized discourse, there is an 'Islamization discourse' in which some Muslim religious scholars tend to be insular when they examine Islamic education. A number of Muslim researchers hold the belief that Islamic education could be refined by excluding Western epistemic traditions to safeguard Islamic identity (Niyozov and Memon 2011). This stance has created an ambiance in which 'there is little sociological research on the problems in Muslim society. Evidence-based critique of Islamic societies is suppressed either by the states or the radicalized religious groups' (Niyozov and Memon 2011, p. 19). As a result, Islamic education needs to be examined through different theories and philosophies. For example, postcolonialism, the Foucauldian notion of power/knowledge and the Gramscian concept of hegemony, all could equip academics with theoretical tools to dissect the relationship between religion and education in Muslim societies. Fancourt and Ipgrave (2019, p. 2) suggest that 'appropriate conceptual tools need to be developed and refined for placing education within general theories and philosophies about societies and religions'. The premise of this paper is that Bourdieu's heuristic concepts of field and capital can give us a springboard to transcend the binary discourse of security/Islamism concerning Islamic education. The purpose of this study is to re-orientate the research on teaching Islam from pedagogical questions towards revealing the contours of the complicated life of Islamic Studies teachers who work in newly developed fields of education such as international schooling. The study aspires to answer the following questions:

1   How is the religious capital of Islamic Studies teachers valued in an educational space governed by the ethos of international schooling?
2   What are the Islamic Studies teachers' views towards working in a Western-oriented institution located in a Muslim majority society?

2. Globalization and the Emergence of International Schooling in Muslim Communities

Globalization is an influential factor in shaping the education policies of the Muslim world. The influence of global powers on education in Muslim nations can be dated to the nineteenth century, when Western missionary schools were constructed in parallel to madrasas (Sedra 2011). Whereas Western-oriented schools have been seen as a ladder to success by local elites, the authority of Islamic education has been eroded (Hefner and Zaman 2007). The replacement of local institutions with European ones has not only impacted the indigenous epistemic traditions, but also has produced individuals who have internalized the superiority of Western education (Seth 2007). Similar to colonization, modern globalization has attracted criticism for its corrosive effect on local cultures and identities (Turner and Khondker 2010). Stromquist and Monkman (2014, p. 9) contend that globalization has shifted the focus "from child-centered curriculum to work preparation skills." Therefore, subjects linked to job markets, such as maths and science, will be superior to subjects that are less related to employment, such as Islamic Studies. Additionally, globalization has introduced a dramatic expansion in the privatization of K-12 and higher education due to the neoliberal policies that have resulted from the globalized economy (Ball 2012). Some scholars (e.g., Breidlid 2013; Andreotti and de Souza 2012) reported that global education is reproducing the hegemony of Western epistemology over local epistemic traditions in non-Western countries. In Muslim countries, globalization has caused a decline in the popularity of Islamic education. This is because parents think that this form of education

is unable to equip its graduates with the necessary skills to cope with a globalized labor market (Baytiyeh 2018). As a result, an increasing number of parents opt for international schools to prepare their children for a world dominated by a globalized economy (Benmansour 2017). To respond to the high demand for English-medium instruction schools, many international schools have been established in Muslim countries. For instance, there are 114 international schools in Dubai, which means it has one of the highest concentrations of international schools in the world (Bunnell 2014). Despite their unprecedented growth, international schools have been omitted from research on educational changes occurring in Muslim countries. However, there are a number of studies about international schools that are located in majority-Muslim countries. For example, Kanan and Baker (2006) indicate how international schools influence the individual and collective identities of the local students in the Gulf region. They argue that 'the effect [that] international schools have on local students could be a double-edged sword, especially regarding their influence on religious identity. The ramifications of such an influence may have social and political reverberations in the host country, especially in Islamic nations' Kanan and Baker (2006, p. 265). Therefore, conservative Muslims have voiced serious concerns about the adverse impacts of globalized education on Islamic identity (Baytiyeh 2018). Other scholars have directed their interest towards the expat teachers who work in these internationalized spaces. For example, Bailey (2015) investigates how local teachers are perceived by their expat counterparts in an international school located in Malaysia. In the same vein, Fimyar (2017) highlighted the subordinate position of locally hired teachers in an international school based in Kazakhstan. Hammad and Shah (2018) illustrate the cultural dissonance between Islamic culture and the ethos of international schools in Saudi Arabia, and how the leaders in those schools try to overcome this dichotomy. However, despite these scholarly efforts, Islamic Studies teachers who work in international schools have received little attention.

3. Teachers of Islam in the Literature of Islamic Education

There is a consensus among scholars that the relationship between education and Islam has been given considerable attention in academia in the aftermath of 9/11. (Berglund 2017; Gholami 2017; Hefner 2009; Boyle 2004). Nevertheless, little research has been conducted into Islamic Studies teachers (Jamjoom 2012). Rashed (2015) surveyed the articles published between 2001 and 2011 to grasp the ideas of the 21st century curriculum for Islamic education. Drawing on Rashed's study, it may be safely said that there is a relatively small body of literature that is concerned with the role of teachers of Islam. This view is supported by Memon (2011, p. 289), who reports the underrepresentation of teachers in Islamic education research, and states: 'Despite the growth of Islamic day schools, there has been no formal, research-based deliberation of the principles of an Islamic pedagogy and the training of teachers with a nuanced understanding of their teaching environment'. However, there are a number of studies that have attempted to direct the focus of Islamic education research towards teachers. For example, Tamuri (2007) discusses Islamic teachers' views on how to teach moral values in the Islamic studies curriculum in Malaysian schools. Others alluded to the status of teachers of Islam within education systems in some Muslim countries. They suggest that teachers of Islam are paid less and little importance is attached to their role compared with the teachers of other subjects. (Arjmand 2018; Özdalga 2018). Pedagogically, Khalfaoui (2019) reports that teachers of Islam tend to embrace memorization and the teacher-centered approach as their main method of teaching. According to Khalfaoui, to reform the methods of teaching Islam, we should liberate it from the predominant pedagogical practices that are followed by teachers in mosques and madrassas. Teachers of Islam ought to 'reject rote learning in favor of deliberation' (Niyozov 2016). It might be argued that learning by rote, which is prevalent in Islamic settings, is attributable to the role of Quran memorization. Sai (2017) notes that memorization occupies a greater space in Islamic Studies classrooms due to the importance of memorizing the Quran. Similarly, Berglund (2017) indicates the importance of memorization in Islamic education, and she employs the concept of cultural capital to describe how Quran memorization is highly valued in Muslim communities. However, when Islamic Studies teachers move outside of a

context dominated by the Islamic ethos, this capital can be depreciated. In other words, when Islamic Studies teachers work in a context where memorization can be placed at the bottom of the hierarchy of learning skills, they can struggle to be acknowledged as competent teachers.

Although Islamic Studies teachers' pedagogy can be underestimated in non-Islamic settings, their pastoral role can be accentuated. This is exemplified in the work undertaken by Svensson (2010), who investigates the interplay between Islamic Studies teachers and a secular educational context in Kenya. According to his study, Islamic Studies teachers see themselves as role models for students. In return, students see Islamic Studies teachers as religious advisors, or "Muftis," and pose moral questions. However, this dualism between being a preacher and an academic teacher can cause a professional predicament. For example, Jamjoom (2012) conducted research to examine how female Islamic Studies teachers make sense of their teaching practices. She found that Islamic Studies teachers face two kinds of dissonances. Firstly, between their role as a subject teacher and being religious advisors; secondly, as role models, teachers face dissonance between the Islamic moral codes that they teach to students and their personal lives.

All of the studies reviewed here support the premise that further studies are needed to give a sociological account on teaching and learning Islam. Instead of answering the question about the best pedagogical practices that teachers of Islam can adopt, we need to examine the teachers' views about their profession in a globalized world. In this respect, Riaz (2014, p. 161) alludes to the flawed approach that narrows the focus of research on Islamic education to extremism. "Such an approach assumes that the message from all formal institutions of Islamic education is homogeneous". She implies that globalization has created various forms of Islamic schooling. Therefore, it would be interesting to assess the relationship between globalization and Islamic education within Muslim countries. The research on teachers of Islam could be driven by the overriding question of the sociology of teaching which is 'what teaching does to teachers' (Waller 1932).

4. Contextualizing the Study

The education system of Qatar has witnessed dramatic changes over the past two decades (Nasser 2017). One of these transformations is the exponential increase in international schools where English is a medium of instruction. According to the Qatari educational jurisdictions, there are 462 international schools, outnumbering 302 national schools (Qatar Ministry of Education 2018). It has been argued that these changes contributed to the diminishing role of Islamic tenets in shaping the Qatari education (Fromherz 2012). For example, in a frequently cited article published in the Washington Post, Glasser (2003, p. A20) states that Qataris are "learning less Islam and more English". Similarly, Kanan and Baker (2006) suggest that the Qatari students who are in international schooling are inclined to demonstrate a weakened sense of religious identity. Graham et al. (2019) report that some local students, who are enrolled in international schools, can experience cultural dissonance between their Qatari identity and the philosophy of this style of schooling. To dispel these concerns about the identity of its citizens, the Qatari government imposes teaching Islamic Studies in international schools (Qatar Ministry of Education 2016). Therefore, there is a growing number of Islamic Studies teachers who are joining the international schools in Qatar. These teachers are seen by the Qatari educational authorities as a safeguard for the Islamic identity of the students, and the constructors of the Islamic identity of Qatari students in international schools. To accomplish their mission, the Islamic Studies teachers have to navigate this internationalized setting, which is administered by Western expatriates and where the official language is English. To investigate the lived experience of those teachers, a case study was conducted in an international school based in Qatar.

5. Theoretical Frameworks and Methodology

This study draws on Bourdieu' concepts of field and capital. According to Bourdieu, we need to examine the social context of individuals to understand their practices (Thomson 2008). The social milieu is conceptualized as a field, which can be defined as a sub-space 'in which individuals occupy

positions in relation to one another in a struggle over the production, control and consumption of forms of capital specific to that sub-space' (Rey 2014, p. 154). Therefore, to analyze the field, we need to inspect the power relations between the different actors (Albright and Hartman 2018). Every field has legitimized capitals and the agents who possess them have a dominant status, in contrast to the individuals who lack capital and occupy subordinate positions (Albright and Hartman 2018). However, there are different forms of capital, such as social, economic, and cultural, and they are interchangeable (Burke 2015). According to Bourdieu, fields have the power to legitimize certain sorts of capital and devalue others. To move from being subordinate to dominant, agents need to gain capitals that can enable them to gain legitimation in agreement with the field rules. However, the legitimized forms of capital are not easy to acquire for new agents who have recently entered the field (Albright and Hartman 2018). As a result, there is a 'symbolic struggle' for individuals to exert influence in the field where they are situated (Stahl 2015). By theorizing international schooling as a field, we can explore the legitimized capitals that teachers of Islam need to accumulate within a non-Islamic setting. Additionally, this concept can furnish us with a theoretical tool by which we can pinpoint the dominant and subservient groups within the field of international schooling in Muslim countries. International schools are the by-product of global neoliberalism which has eroded the leverage of local actors such as teachers of Islam. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 17) mention that 'a field is simultaneously a space of conflict and competition, the analogy here being with a battlefield, in which participants vie to establish monopoly over the species of capital effective in it'. As such, the competition over cultural authority between local and global factors can be well-examined in the international schooling field, where locals are exemplified by Islamic Studies teachers. Those teachers bring to the field of international schooling their Quranic and pedagogical knowledge, and it is important to see how the culture of this form of schooling evaluates these skills. In other words, Bourdieu's concept of field can show if the religious capital of Islamic studies teachers, which was produced by Islamic epistemic traditions, can be convertible to other forms of capital within international schools.

In addition to field, I have deployed the concept of 'religious capital' to capture the dynamics between Islamic studies teachers and their non-Islamic context. Religious capital can be defined as 'forms of socially and/or culturally produced capital (possession understood either as an object belonging to or a trait or authority inherent to) pertaining to the religious field' (Rey 2014, p. 155). Religious capital can be divided into 'two forms: religious symbolic systems (myths and ideologies), on the one hand, and religious competences (mastery of specific practices and bodies of knowledge)' (Verter 2003, p. 157). Drawing on the second form of this concept, memorization of the Quran and Hadith, and being well-acquainted with Islamic traditional scholarship, are all deemed to be religious capital. It is imperative here to indicate the value of this capital fluctuates, depending on the social milieu where this capital is demonstrated (Rey 2014). However, despite the reliance of my study on the Bourdieusian notion of religious capital, I needed to exercise prudence while employing this concept. This stems from the argument that Bourdieu's analysis of the religious field and religious capital was heavily influenced by his perception of the Catholic church in France (Rey 2014). For example, Verter (2003) levelled criticism against Bourdieu's interpretation of religious capital in terms of the hierarchical structure of the Catholic church. This view has led Bourdieu to restrict his discussion of religious capital to the attempt of clergy to monopolize and accumulate their religious capital within the religious field (Verter 2003). In light of this critique, I have extended this concept beyond the sharp demarcation between international and religious fields. Additionally, the application of the notion of religious capital to my study aimed to assess how globalized education has contributed to the deprecation of the Islamic knowledge in Muslim countries. This can be achieved by measuring the convertibility of the religious capital of Islamic Studies teachers into cultural, economic and social capitals in an international institution. I argue that the convertibility of religious capital of the studied teachers hinges on how their peers and school administration estimate the worth of Islamic Studies in international schooling. This is due to the fact that educational spaces have their own official knowledge, they evaluate teaching prowess according to it. Schools tend to overvalue certain bodies

of knowledge and undervalue others. Therefore, when teachers enter a setting, they try to adapt themselves to suit this institutionalized knowledge. If the teachers fail to gain this knowledge, they can be relegated to inferior positions (Pennington 2007). Applying this to our study, if the dominant discourse in international schools values the knowledge of certain approaches in teaching, such as student-centered techniques and critical thinking, Quran memorization skills and teacher-centered methods can be devalued. As such, when teachers of Islamic Studies, who lack valued knowledge, work in international schooling, they may face impediments to being perceived by their colleagues as knowledgeable and highly skilled teachers. As a result, their religious capital can be transformed into a symbolic deficit. Furthermore, the value of the religious capital of the teachers of Islam can be measured by the judgment of students on the importance of Islamic Studies as a subject in international schooling. Furthermore, parents play a major role in valuing religious capital and making it interchangeable. As an illustration, when parents take great care over their children's achievement in Islamic Studies, teachers can gain recognition for their Islamic knowledge pedological application. In other words, the value of any given capital depends on its accordance with legitimized capitals in the field.

Concerning the methodology, I adopted case study as a design for my research because it can yield detailed data on a particular educational case in a real school. It "provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles" (Cohen et al. 2011, p. 289). Additionally, case study data tends to demonstrate multiple views concerning a specific case. This multiplicity can produce a holistic image of a case and make educational policy makers able to discern the impacts of the decisions they will make in the future (Simons 1996). Case study does not only present realistic detailed data with a diversity of perspectives, but also it allows researchers to "retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin 2013). By drawing on Bourdieu's conceptual model, these strengths of the case study design can assist me in exploring how the participant teachers negotiate their religiosity in a complex situation. Furthermore, realistic and detailed data that would be generated from the case study can offer me an opportunity to explore the dialectical relationship between the religious capital of teachers and the field of international schooling. However, one of the limitations of case study is its inability to generalize its findings; therefore, this approach of research generates limited knowledge due to its particularity. This criticism can be countered by arguing that the aim of this study is not to generalize its findings, but to achieve what Thomas (2011) calls 'exemplary knowledge'. According to Thomas, the overarching purpose of 'exemplary knowledge' is to present context-related ideas to inform other researchers and practitioners when they face similar issues. This can be exemplified in my case study, in which I attempt to uncover the unexamined perceptions of teachers of Islam about working in a non-Islamic context.

The data were gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews with six Islamic Studies teachers, two of which were female. The participants were interviewed twice, and each interview lasted from 50 to 70 min. Prior to working in international schools, the participants worked in national schools where a monoculture prevails. The participants are aged between 26 and 46. The criteria for selecting the participants were, firstly, Islamic Studies teachers. Secondly, they had to be working in international schooling. The participants were invited and recruited after the approval of the gatekeeper, who is the director of the school. The preference for interviewing in this research is ascribed to its capacity to discern the 'participants' experiences and viewpoints of a particular topic' (Turner 2010, p. 754). Additionally, the interviewees can express their beliefs and experiences in their own words (Kvale 2008). Edwards and Edwards (2017) confirm that semi-structured interviews can give the teachers a space to explain their views, beliefs, intentions and aspirations in relation to the career of teaching. Drawing on these views, it is evident that the semi-structured interview would be instrumental in examining how Islamic Studies teachers experience international schooling. The interviews seek to examine how Islamic Studies teachers perceive the value of their skills and knowledge within a space dominated by the Western expats. Therefore, I phrased a set of open-ended questions to probe the teachers' capital and how they view the field of international schooling. To give the teachers freedom to express

their views freely, the interviews were conducted in the participants' mother tongue, which is the Arabic language.

The interviews were manually transcribed verbatim into Arabic. Subsequently, they were coded to reduce the volume of data into manageable categories (Patton 2002). The codes were developed from the transcripts (Corbin and Strauss 1998) and reflected the interviewees' views on the teaching environment of the school and their reaction to it. Afterwards, the data were thematically analyzed. Thematic analysis can be defined as "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (Bogdan and Biklen 2002, p. 145). The emerging themes were coded, analyzed, and interpreted using Bourdieusian concepts field and capital.

6. Findings and Discussion

6.1. Inconvertibility of Religious Capital

Teachers of Islam have a lofty status in Islamic traditions. From an Islamic perspective, they are successors of the prophet Mohammed and the repository of Quranic knowledge. Learning the Quran and its exegesis "has been the normal starting point of Muslim education" (Robinson 1996, p. 210). Despite this, the interviewed teachers expressed the belief that their religious knowledge, which is an invaluable asset in the field of Islamic education, is devalued by the students and the parents in international schooling. They believe that the majority of students and parents are more concerned with achieving well in subjects such as math, science and English at the expense of Islamic studies. One teacher expressed this view in the following excerpt:

> 'It is rare to receive parents inquiring about why their children are underachieving in Islamic Studies, although the parents attend the meetings with other subjects' teachers. In addition, most of the students have tutors at home to help them in all subjects except Islamic Studies.'

It is inferred from the excerpt above that the teachers made the judgment that students undervalue Islamic studies based on certain signs and factors. For instance, because Islamic Studies is excluded from the Middle Years Program (MYP) and the International Baccalaureate (IB), teachers think that the subject is not important for the students. A participant clarified this point:

> 'Islamic Studies is not an MYP subject and is not listed as an official subject in the IB organization. But because we are in a Muslim country they are forced to teach it. The number of Islamic Studies lessons here are less than the lessons allocated in national schools.'

The respondents think that because the main aim of the parents is to develop their children's English skills, Islamic Studies is not a top priority. This opinion is supported by the literature. For instance, Benmansour (2017) found that most of the parents of children in international schools in Qatar believe that these schools are of a higher quality than national schools. Therefore, their children are more able than their counterparts in national schools to secure a good job. Despite these advantages, the parents acknowledge that international schools might exert a pernicious influence on students' cultural and religious identities. The parents' preference for the schools that impart Western knowledge and teach European languages is not a recent phenomenon in many Middle Eastern countries. According to Fortna (2002), education underwent a dramatic transformation in the early twentieth century in Muslim countries. One of the consequences of this change is the rising status of Western schools and the diminishing role of Islamic schools (Hefner and Zaman 2007). As a result, the elite in Muslim societies favored European schools and saw them as "a better road to upward mobility than Islamic education" (Hefner and Zaman 2007, p. 18). Similarly, Zubaida (2009) contends that the role of Islam in shaping educational policies had receded by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Due to all these changes, Islamic education has been marginalized in the past two centuries (Tan 2018).

The ramifications of this shift in the educational scene of Muslim countries have led to the devaluation the religious capital of Islamic Studies teachers. This is evident in the case of Islamic Studies teachers in this study, where their religious capital is no longer convertible into the cultural or economic capitals. Moreover, their religiosity can convey a lack of intellectuality. For example, a female teacher expressed this view in the following excerpt:

'When I talk to people in English or when they notice that I am well-educated, they think that I am a science or math teacher. They are surprised when they know that I am an Islamic Studies teacher.'

Another female teacher indicates:

'Students believe that Islamic Studies teachers lack culture and knowledge. This stems from the students' expectation that Islamic Studies teachers are not fluent in English. My students usually are surprised when they discover that I am good at technology. For example, there was a party in the grade 6 class to celebrate a female student deciding to wear a veil (Hijab). When I asked the students can I take a selfie photo and send it to you through Snapchat, they kept looking at each other in shock. This is because they had expected that I would not be able to use these apps.'

The aforementioned views are in accord with Boyle's argument (2004) that Islamic bodies of knowledge, such as the ability to recall the Quran from memory, have been considered a cultural capital in the Islamic context. But, when the teachers of Islam work in non-Islamic context, this capital can be devalued. For example, Berglund (2017) indicates in her study that when Quran teachers move from an Islamic to a secular context, they feel that memorization skill, which is very important in teaching the Quran, can be regarded as a rudimentary method of learning.

As a consequence, their religious capital can be inconvertible outside Islamic educational spaces. More tellingly, 'what can be understood as a capital in the Muslim context risks turning into a cost when brought outside the Muslim context' (Berglund 2017, p. 96).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that the vast majority of students in the school, where this study was conducted, were Muslims, the teachers believed that their religious capital might be valued depending on parents' religiosity. The statements below clarify this point:

'If the parents are devout Muslim, they would be concerned about Islamic Studies. This group of parents usually needs to protect the religious identity of their children. They think that their own culture and religion should be maintained. Simultaneously, they believe that international schooling has an advanced education. These parents might be in a dilemma between preserving religion and being progressive who seek their countries to be like the West.'

Another teacher stated:

'Some parents pay a full attention to Islamic Studies. They think that Islamic Studies is a subject in which students learn how to live as observant Muslims. However, others neglect Islamic Studies and are just concerned about the marks. I think it depends on the environment where the parents are coming from. If they are coming from religious families, they will attach importance to Islamic Studies.'

The Islamic Studies teachers link the importance of Islamic Studies to the parents' observance of Islamic traditions. This can reinterpret the concept of 'Muslim context', which has been mentioned in the above study of Berglund (2017). Bourdieu (1991, p. 22), links between the value of religious capital and the firm adherence of social actors to their faith, and he states that 'religious capital depends, at a given moment in time, on the state of the structure of objective relations between religious demand

(i.e., the religious interests of various groups or classes of laity) and religious supply'. As a result, in a school where the demand for English language learning and enrollment in Anglophone universities overrides Islamic Studies, it is contended that Islamic knowledge is inconvertible to cultural or symbolic capitals. It is remarkable to find that, like the teachers of this study, teachers in Catholic education might face the inconvertibility of their religious capital like the teachers of this study. Grace (2002, p. 237) reports that:

> 'Generations of school leaders and teachers in Catholic education are unlikely to benefit from this matrix of sources for spiritual capital. The reduced influence of the religious orders in schooling and in teacher formation and radical changes in the religious life of families have resulted in a weakening of this matrix.'

However, whereas the religious capital of Catholic teachers has been downgraded due to accelerated secularization in the West, the capital of Islamic studies teachers in this study has been relegated due to the internationalization of education. This can motivate researchers to examine the relationship between the internationalized education and religion in Muslim societies.

6.2. Interchangeability of Teachers' Capital

As discussed above, the structure of the school hinders the teachers from converting their religious capital to other forms of capital. However, teachers' capital has been transformed successfully into a social capital. All teachers in this study agreed that their religiousness enabled them to strengthen the bonds with students and parents. According to them, students see Islamic Studies teachers as counsellors; they indicate that students unburden themselves to Islamic Studies teachers. Male teachers express this view:

> 'Students come to Islamic studies teachers to unburden themselves. They see them as a refuge. Some students consider Islamic Studies teacher like his brother, despite the fact that others see him as a person who lacks technological knowledge.'

Another teacher:

> 'Students love Islamic Studies lessons. This is because teachers play religious and educational roles. Islamic Studies teachers pay attention to the concept of mercy (Rahma). Therefore, they are merciful with students; even more, teachers can be less strict than the teachers of other subjects. Additionally, students think that Islamic Studies is an easy subject, and they can exploit this to raise their overall marks or their GPA.'

A female teacher agrees:

> 'We are on intimate terms with the students, and the expat teachers are not. Firstly, they consider us more merciful. Therefore they think that Islamic Studies teachers are lenient with them due to this mercy (Rahma). Secondly, it might be the reason why students love Islamic Studies teachers is because the subject is a sort of activity. It is not a serious and demanding subject such as math and English.'

It is noticeable that two teachers mentioned the word "mercy", or as it is called in Arabic, "Rahma". It is intriguing to find that this word resonates with the literature on Islamic Studies teachers. Memon (2011, p. 292) contends that Islamic Studies teachers show little inclination to take punitive actions to address behavior issues. Instead, they express their need for an approach that can correct 'inappropriate actions with mercy (Rahma)'. This tendency for mercy and kindness with students could be ascribed to Islamic tradition, in which teachers are seen as parents (Panjwani 2016). Therefore, as a parent, the teacher needs to express sympathy by being merciful, and in some cases to be lenient with students. Due to this parental-like relationship, which emanates from Islamic

tradition, teachers succeed in transforming their religious knowledge to a social capital in the field of international schooling.

The findings also show how Islamic studies teachers in an international context see their role as a religious counsellor outweighs their role as a knowledge transmitter. Whereas the teachers in this study tend to feel comfortable with their role as a religious counsellor, those teachers who teach in the national schools may face dissonance between both roles (Jamjoom 2012). This might be attributed to the international schooling field, where transmitting Islamic knowledge has been devalued. As a consequence, the role of being an adviser to students was accentuated among the teachers in this research.

6.3. Organizational Practices: Working with Non-Authoritarian Administration

Although teachers indicated that they felt their religious capital was debased in the school, they said that working in an international setting gives them the privilege of being free from authoritarianism. They have a perception that the administration in national schools across the Arab world tends to be authoritarian. For example, a participant compares international management style with national administration:

> 'The administration in national schools limits teachers' freedom. As a teacher, I don't have autonomy over teaching methods and decision-making. By contrast, in international schools you have freedom. Here, I can choose themes and use the teaching styles I like. Therefore, I can think out of the box.'

Another teacher:

> 'In most of Arab countries, the public schools are authoritarian, and teachers should be submissive. They don't justify their decisions. On the contrary, in an international setting, I have freedom to make pedagogical decisions'

The passages quoted above accord well with the literature on the educational administration in the Arab world. A number of scholars suggest that the educational administrations in the Arab world are authoritarian (e.g., Watfa 2000; Herrera and Torres 2006; Soraty 2009; Faour 2013). As a result, Islamic Studies teachers hold the view that the ethos of the school promotes freedom in making pedagogical and curricular decisions. The Islamic Studies teachers commend expat educational leaders for their democratic approach of taking decisions. Moreover, they think that Western administrators show kindness and consideration in their management style; as a female teacher said, 'they place humans over administrative issues'. Surprisingly, the teachers feel that the ethos of the school, which is based on humanist Western traditions, could be advantageous for them. For instance, the interviewees talked about how the non-authoritarian ethos of the school allows them to negotiate with the administration to organize school trips. They said that they are permitted to leave the school in case of emergencies. For Islamic Studies teachers, such benefits do not exist in public schools where Islamic Studies is highly regarded.

6.4. Investing in Yourself by Being a Teacher in International Schooling

When the teachers were asked if they would continue to work in international schools, they gave different answers. Three participants said they would continue working in international schools. The other three said they hoped to leave international schools to work in higher education as lecturers. However, all the teachers rejected the idea of working in the national schools. Even the teachers who aspired to work in higher education mentioned that if there was no opportunity to change their career, they would remain in international schools.

They are of the opinion that teaching in international schools can equip them with required capitals. The participants stated that there are many capitals they can amass by working in those

schools. Furthermore, these capitals, which are gained in the field of international schooling, can be convertible to other fields. One of those capitals is the symbolic one. For example, the teachers who aim at working in higher education stated that their experience in international schools can boost their opportunities of working in their desired career. These views can be summarized in the following quotes:

> 'In Qatar, they think that international schools are more sophisticated and creative in teaching and learning. Therefore, if I want to work as an educational leader in the Ministry of Education, they would prefer me because I am working in those schools.'

Another teacher adds:

> 'Unfortunately our communities overvalue anything relating to the Western culture. Therefore, there is considerable kudos attached to teaching in international schools.'

This symbolic capital is not only exchangeable in educational spaces but also in the social life of the Islamic Studies teachers. For example, some teachers think that by working in international schools, they acquire cachet in their wider community. This idea was reported in Hayden's book (Hayden 2006, p. 28), which found "the international school may have a prestige" for local teachers.

Apart from the symbolic capital, teachers reported that they could gain the linguistic capital by working in an international context. Most of the teachers think that employment in international schools, where English is the common and the legitimate language, enabled them to develop their English skills. Therefore, they can improve their job prospects and social status. It can be argued that the value of English as a linguistic capital for Islamic Studies teachers is not only ascribed to its role in the sub-field of international schooling in Qatar, but also to its worthiness in the fields that encompass the sub-field of international schooling. It has been suggested that "less autonomous fields are subject to greater outside influence upon the contested value of capitals within them" (Albright and Hartman 2018, p. 5). In Qatar, fluency in English not only can improve career prospects, but also it endows the individuals with a greater social status and economic gains (Barnawi 2017). In other words, the symbolic and linguistic capitals gained in the school are governed by the logic of economic and political fields of Qatar.

7. Conclusions and Discussion

This study has investigated how a group of Islamic Studies teachers engage with their profession in an international IB school based in Qatar. The data analysis reveals that teachers' knowledge, skills, and religiosity, which are theorized as religious capital, have been relegated in the context of international schooling. This can be attributed to the stance that views Islamic education as "inferior to modern western forms of schooling" (Berglund and Gent 2018, p. 126). Additionally, the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate (IB), which has been adopted by the school, is based on Western humanist tenets (Drake 2004; Van Oord 2007) and does not acknowledge Islamic Studies as an official subject. All of these factors have caused the loss of religious capital; moreover, this capital has been turned into a symbolic deficit in the field of international schooling.

However, although their religious capital has been downplayed by the structure of the field of international schooling, the teachers have expressed a willingness to continue their career within the school. Rather than perceiving international schooling as a Westernizing force, Islamic studies teachers are in favor of working in this setting. Furthermore, they have developed a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu 1988, p. 782) by embracing the discourse of international schooling, in which the English language and the student-centered method are indispensable.

For the teachers, the main reason to stay in international schools is to equip themselves with different forms of capital that can be gained in those institutions. For example, the teachers pointed to the development of their English language skills. According to them, the linguistic capital of English can improve their employment prospects. Moreover, by working in international schooling, they

can be held in high esteem by their communities, which can be translated into a symbolic capital. The transferability of the linguistic and symbolic capitals from the international schooling field to other fields in the state of Qatar resonates with Gonzalez et al.'s research (Gonzalez et al. 2008). They argue that the English language is a vital instrument by which individuals can secure a well-paid job in the Qatari labor market. Socially, the English language and Western institutions have a high status in Qatar (Barnawi 2017), while qualifications from Arabic universities are undervalued (Vora 2018). Therefore, whereas the teachers have lost the value of their religious capital, they see their work in international schools as an investment to gain capitals that are highly regarded in Qatari society.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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