THE EXISTENCE OF RELIGION WITHIN TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS IN MODERN SOCIETY

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Abstract

Today science and technology are considered to be more prominent than others. Religion is believed to be a guide for life, but in modern life, religion is considered an obstacle to the progress of human civilization. Therefore, this article discusses the suspicion that religion delays the process of modernity, especially modern technology, and questions whether religion is the controller for humans to lead their lives. At the same time, the article examines rationality in taking over religiosity in modern life. The result of this study is that religion is not an obstacle to the development of modernity because religion provides space for rationality and encourages the development of science in the modern era. Thus, religion contributes significance and cannot be substituted by anything guiding humans in everyday life. This study concludes that religion makes humans have moral and human values.

Keywords: *Religion, Technology, Rationality, Modern Society.*

Introduction

Religion is a belief that has existed since humans lived in the world. In human civilization's development, religion always guides their life because it is one of nature and needs humans can-not be refused.[1] Religious aspects have always been inherent in human life, even though some deny or negate religion.

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[1] Isnanita Noviya Andriyani, "Menjaga Kesucian Fitrah Manusia," *Jurnal Komunikasi dan Pendidikan Islam* 4 (2015): 55–66.

Nevertheless, religion remains an essential element in life. The importance of religion can be seen in daily human life; with religion, human life becomes more orderly, harmonious, and peaceful. Religion demands humans, like the function of religion, to do good and right; at the same time, religion becomes a barrier for humans to behave as they please.[2]

However, along with the development of technology and the advancement of modernity, the view of religion has shifted. Technological progress as one of the manifestations of civilization's achievement marks the advantages of human rationality and science in the modern era. In this era, technological inventions and innovations facilitate almost all human needs. Then, how humans view the existence of religion and its relation to technological developments in this modern era is often questioned and examined. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the existence of religion within the development of technology in modern human life.

Several previous studies have been carried out, including Zainal Ilmi's research entitled *"Islam Sebagai Landasan Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Teknologi* (Islam as the Foundation of Science and Technology)."[3]

This research discusses the paradigm and development of science and technology based on Islam. However, this research only focuses on the Islamic faith as the basis for the development of science and technology.

In his research, *Refleksi Teknologi dalam Dimensi Agama (Reflections on Technology in the Dimension of Religion)*, Zamakhsari Abdul Majid discussed the epistemology of religion towards technology, and technology as religious fundamentalism, and Islamic faith is used as the primary basis for standardizing the development of science and technology. Majid supposed that science and technology should not oppose the Qur'an and Hadith because the Qur'an and Hadith are essential guidelines for Muslims in studying science and technology and using them in daily life.[4]

Another study, entitled "*Hubungan Agama dan Sains (Relation of Religion and Science)*" by Megat Mohd et al. discusses the Islamic creed as a basic guideline and the relevance of the Qur'an and Hadith to the development of science. This research focuses on the relationship between religion and the development of science and standardizing science to the Islamic faith so that it

2 Saifuddin, "Kajian Agama dan Filsafat tentang Kebenaran," *Islam Futura* VII, no. 2 (2008): 73–83.

3 Zainal Ilmi, "Islam Sebagai Landasan Perkembangan Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Teknologi," *Jurnal Komunikasi dan Sosial Keagamaan* 15, no. 1 (2012): 95–106.

4 Zamakhsyari Abdul Majid, "Refleksi Teknologi dalam Dimensi Agama," *Almarhalah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 2 (2020): 79–88. DOI: 10.38153/alm.v4i2.37.

can be helpful and does not result in mudharat in human life, especially in Muslims. This study also discusses the integration paradigm between religion and science and scientific models in the form of integrative models, integral models, and dialogical models.[5]

These previous studies on this topic only discuss the importance of religion in human life and that religion significantly contributes to human life[6] and changes their civilization,[7] as well as the impact of technological progress on social and religious behavior.[8] Therefore, these previous researches have not explained the existence of religion during the rapid development of technology in modern life. Thus, this study analysis uses the descriptive method toward the primary and secondary data relevant to the study's object to discuss the topic.[9]

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[5] Megat Mohd, et al., "Hubungan Sains dan Agama," in *Prosiding Seminar Tamadun Islam* 19 (University Teknologi Malaysia, 2018), 76–89.

[6] Ali Imran, "Peranan Agama dalam Perubahan Sosial Masyarakat," *Hikmah* 2, no. 1 (2015): 23–39."

[7] Ilmi, "Islam Sebagai Landasan Perkembangan Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Teknologi."

[8] Ratnah Rahman, "Peran Agama dalam Masyarakat Marginal," *Sosioreligius* 4, no. 1 (2019): 80–89..

[9] Wahyudin Darmalaksana, "Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Studi Pustaka dan Studi Lapangan," Digital Library UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung (2020), 1–6. *Preprint.*

Morality and Religious Values in Modern Life

In religious teachings, it contains values and norms that become life guidelines for its adherents, either as social beings or as individuals. Religion also affects people's behavior and daily life. Psychologically, religion also functions as intrinsic motivation (within itself) and as an extrinsic motivation (outside of itself). Motives driven by religious beliefs are of enormous power, exceeding profane doctrines and idealistic non-religious beliefs. Therefore, humans encounter a decisive view of life to construct moral and social values in religion. Although religion has regulations and restrictions, adherents may determine their religious rights. Thus, the fundamental religious values provide space for rationality and morality in daily life.

Religion provides certain norms in human life as a basis for constructing moral values for people's behavior. These moral-religious values have specific meanings and characters in society, both individually and socio-culturally.[10]

Emile Durkheim's theory of religion states that religion is a collective force that transcends the individual in society. Individuals, on the other hand,

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[10] Diana Ana Sari, "Makna Agama dalam Kehidupan Modern," *Cakrawala: Jurnal Studi Islam* 14, no. 1 (2019): 16–23. DOI: 10.31603/cakrawala.v14i1.2483.

represent religious communities when performing religious rituals. In this way, religion becomes a place for individuals to identify their society, despite many differences between individuals, because religion as a collective force of society dominates individual strengths. In addition, religion also answers the problems and needs of life for the community and individuals.[11]

The transformation of modern society's life impacts changes in the social order. The values of socio-religious morality shifted to individual-instrumental and functional morality. Moral-social-religious norms that unite the elements of society, such as professions and education, and others,[12] shift their function to be individual competition. These have become the standard reference in the daily life of modern society. So that society is fragmented in such a way.

The Function of Religion in Human Life

Religion has the following functions in human life: *first*, the educational function. Religion has an educational function. Religious people believe that their religion teaches moral values and their purpose in life in the world. Religion teaches people to accomplish the right attitude by the moral-religious standard. So, religion also regulates their way of life. *Second*, religion functions as control of life. Religion controls people through norms, suggestions, obligations, and prohibitions on human behavior to have the noble character for improving human life. *Third*, religion functions as a savior. People always want to be safe wherever they are. Religion promises salvation in the world and the hereafter for those who are believers and obedient to religious teachings. *Fourth*, religion functions as a means of peace. Religion provides for people who are sinners or guilty to obtain forgiveness through religious guidance such as sincere repentance and penance for sins with commendable behavior so that he feels calm and at peace spiritually.[13] *Fifth*, religion became a facilitator of brotherhood and solidarity. A Muslim becomes a brother to another Muslim in the faith of God. This sense of solidarity and unity strengthens the social sense among other Muslims. *Sixth*, religion has a transformative function. Religion can change a person's person-

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[11] Nahriyah Fata, "Tinjauan Sosiologis tentang Pentingnya Agama dalam Perubahan Sosial," *Al-Maqasid* 2, no. 1 (2016): 239–54.

[12] Herly Janet Lesilolo, "Kepemimpinan Transformasional dalam Rekonstruksi Peran Agama di Indonesia," *Jurnal Pembangunan Pendidikan: Fondasi dan Aplikasi* 1, no. 1 (2013): 83–93. DOI: 10.21831/jppfa.v1i1.1053.

[13] Mulyadi, "Agama dan Pengaruhnya dalam Kehidupan," *E-Saintika: Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengkajian Ilmu Pendidikan* 2, no. 1 (2016): 1. https://ejournal.uinib.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/alawlad/article/view/424.

ality or group life following the accepted religious teachings. Religious teachings can also be transformed through or into the culture and norms of people's lives. *Seventh*, religion functions to encourage the faithful to be productive, innovative, and creative in their lives, both in their daily lives and in their professional fields, for the benefit of themselves and others. *Eighth*, religion also has a sublimation function. Religious teachings can sanctify all human endeavors in the world. All these efforts have religious values (*ukhrawi*) as a form of worship to God, as long as they are carried out with sincere intentions and do not violate the teachings of religion and humanity.[14]

Ali Shariati stated that religion involves the soul and can contribute to liberating humans from their uncertain lives. However, the function of religion has been changed as an instrument only to meet the needs of the hereafter. Because religion is separated from human life in the world, religion loses its meaning and keeps people away from their life in the world. The positive progress of science and technology has shifted the function of religion as another force that is material and measured by practical value. With the advancement of technology, people are moving towards individualistic modernization. In short, humanity's interaction and social sense are reduced,

as is the positivism paradigm, which only emphasizes rationality.

Peter L. Berger has explained that modern humans suffer from anomie. Anomie is a condition in which each individual feels he has lost the bonds that provide a sense of security and stability with fellow human beings, causing humans to lose direction and meaning in life in this world. The emergence of modern institutional structures also causes people's dissatisfaction with their lives. This anomie and disorientation cause human frustration directly or indirectly in the technology economy. Modern technological production brings anomie in social relations, and individuals are threatened not only by anxiety at work but also by losing meaning in their relationships with other people in their daily lives. Due to the complexity of these technical-economic problems, these social relations become increasingly ambiguous. After all, this all leads to pressure (stress), disappointment, and even the most extreme alienation from other people.[15]

For Berger, modern people have long believed they can conquer the world and live in the evolution of science and technology marked by the rapid development of the information industry so that people shift from primi-

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[14] Mulyadi.

[15] Ernita Dewi, "Transformasi Sosial dan Nilai Agama," *Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Usuluddin dan Filsafat*, no. 128 (2012): 112–21.

tive to the stressful modern world. Contemporary criticism and research were based on rational domination when the modern world worked. Berger straightly says that modernization descends from rationalization and secularization. Modernization seems like a giant steel hammer breaking down and destroying the institutions and structures of traditional values. As a result, modern societies have lost their safety received from traditional institutions. Berger also examines that religion's role is misunderstood in modern society. Therefore, the role of religion should be a sacred canopy, wracked with emptiness and mental crisis, as well as providing a sacred heavenly shadow for modern human life.

Meanwhile, according to Samuel Honing, changes in society, both internally and externally, occur due to changes in the pattern of human life. On the other hand, according to Selo Soemardjan, all societal changes occur in the social system—such as group values, attitudes, and behavior patterns. Consistent with this, Robert Mac Iver wrote, in his book *A Textbook of Society,* that social change affects society's social system, which is related to changes in social balance.[16]

For some people, religion is more than just an institution that establishes and maintains rules, moral standards, and obligations. Therefore, religious

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[16] Dewi.

knowledge must be studied with a sincere heart. Religion is a fundamental basis for all aspects of human life. The foundation of religion is faith, a person's closeness to his Lord, and the inspiration of life. Religion is associated with intellectual responsibility so that people are open to better understanding the teachings and understand and communicate evidence of life in the world. Religion is also associated with moral teachings rooted in scriptures and traditions. Moral teachings contain values that promote individual and collective life in society. Religion associated with worship (divine dimension) describes brotherhood with fellow human beings and their God in prayer or worship. Religion is an institution or organization that helps adherents understand and fulfill their obligations in association with humans in social life. If religion is understood only to emphasize one of the aspects above, then it will lose the spirit of renewal for its followers and life so that religion tends not to be able to illuminate life during global changes in science and technology.[17]

Religion and Changes in Behavioral Patterns of Modern Society

All religions and humans need

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[17] Ch Suryanti, "Refleksi dan Tantangannya dalam Mengembangkan Moralitas Kaum Muda," *Orientasi Baru* 19, no. 2 (2010): 155–70.

changes in their lives. *Religion* and *change* are two entities that, although different, are not opposed to each other. The two entities can complement each other. In fact, *change* is also considered the essence of religious teachings.[18] In the development of science and technology, religion is challenged to make an intellectual contribution that enlightens modern society. It is not enough to understand religions only at the level of doctrine (deductive and authoritative) and laws that lead humans to the afterlife. Religion must help humans to reflect and interpret their various concrete experiences in human life in this world. Moreover, in a modern spirit that prioritizes the power of reason (rationality) and optimism, religion is led by cultural and material processes, not only natural processes, in changing human life.[19] Changes in various aspects of human life, including social, economic, cultural, political, and religious, require individuals to adapt quickly and confidently to these changes. In reality, not everyone and people can do it well because of the complexity of each problem.[20]

In the 18th century, modern science developed rapidly, creating new technological-scientific innovations. The emergence of various innovations significantly impacts human life on a scale that has never been in previous times.[21] One of the famous discoveries in scientific developments is communication technology tools such as the internet, computers, cellphones, cyberspace, and social media. Technology for humans in this modern era cannot be separated. Relationships and technology are in every activity we do, and humans are never separated from technology. It means that today's technology is one of the basic human needs, in addition to the need for food, clothing, housing, and others.[22] However, technological advancements that make life easier nowadays make people miss each other easily and get trapped into egoism and individualism, which is antisocial and spiritually poor.

Modern Society's View against Religion

Technological developments and lifestyle changes affect people's views and attitudes towards religion. Some people begin to question the role and

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[18] Fata, "Tinjauan Sosiologis tentang Pentingnya Agama dalam Perubahan Sosial."

[19] Suryanti, "Refleksi dan Tantangannya dalam Mengembangkan Moralitas Kaum Muda."

[20] Dian Radiansyah, "Pengaruh Perkembangan Teknologi terhadap Remaja Islam," *JAQFI: Jurnal Aqidah dan Filsafat Islam* 3, no. 2 (2018): 76–103.

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[21] Islah Gusmian, "Mengurai Benang Kusut Hubungan Sains dan Agama," *Jurnal Tribakti* 20, no. 1 (2009): 1–20.

[22] Radiansyah, "Pengaruh Perkembangan Teknologi terhadap Remaja Islam."

function of religion because religion is a stutter in responding to technological advances. Whereas technology, as the application of science, has a real contribution to the progress of modernization and civilization of human life. Therefore, technological advances have implications for modern humans to be optimistic and confident, explaining all natural phenomena in detail, scientifically, and logically.

Religion often tends to be considered a problem for this progress because religion has become institutionalized, so construct some exclusive religious group identities. Religion loses its primary purpose in guiding human life. Instead, it threatens the safety of human life. Man's relationship with his religion turned into an emotional and exclusive relationship, even extreme, so it was forbidden or taboo to criticize religion. In this case, various religious communities have different understandings of these changes, which today cross territorial boundaries in modern society.[23]

However, religion allows its adherents to express their ideas and innovations, especially in technology. Some people often misunderstand this understanding that religion is an obstacle to this progress. Religion commands its adherents to always behave in their lives according to religious orders. Religion provides limits to humans so that

humans both think and act in control of the norms and values of human virtue. If humans have lost their direction and purpose, it will endanger and threaten the survival of human life. In urban or industrial societies, competition for life occurs in all fields. These conditions allow spirituality and morality to guide people in solving modern society's problems. Therefore, religion was needed and could not be substituted in this period.[24]

Conclusion

Although some people assume religion is an obstacle to the technological progress of modern society, religion is always relevant to people's problems in everyday life. This scientific dan religious understanding implicates changes in people's behavior patterns and social relations. It is rooted in modernism which glorifies reason as the controller of human life. Indeed, the modern era significantly impacts convenience in everyday life. In the development of modernity and civilization through science and technology, humans realize the importance of religion in guiding the progress of their lives and providing value to society's order. However, religion and technology are two parts that are always inherent in human life. Thus, religion in modern society is not an obstacle to technological progress and

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[23] Radiansyah.

[24] Radiansyah.

development. Religion does not forbid humans to think broadly and create the latest innovations to facilitate human life. In addition, religion provides directions and rules for humans not to lose their human nature and the meaning of their life.

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