

THE EXISTENCE OF ISLAM IN THE FACE OF HOMOGENIZATION IN INDONESIA

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Abstract, A dialogic discourse suggests that globalization has marginalized the existence of religion. Religion no longer has the opportunity to address public issues. This is evident in the reality that globalization has shifted local values, including religion, and replaced them with homogenized values. Islam, as one of the world's religions, is aware that it has entered the global stage of preaching. Revitalization is one of Islam's efforts to face the challenges of the times. This article will address how Islam, as one of the world's largest religions, maintains the existence of its teachings and responds to the impact of globalization, namely homogenization. Several Western futurologists such as John Naisbitt, a scholar like John L. Esposito, and religious ideologists like Al-Maududi contribute their thoughts to this study. Using literature analysis, the author maps out the constructs of thought and responses of the Islamic community to globalization. In this context, there are differing perspectives between two groups. On one side, there are those who view homogenization negatively, believing it could destroy the existence of religion, while others believe that homogenization is not a threat but rather a motivation for Islam to maintain its existence.

Keyword: *existence of islam; homogenization*

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INTRODUCTION

In this modern era of globalization, human existence is experiencing a decline due to the rapid influence of globalization. The role of humans has been displaced by the advancements of the times, as humans are seen as machines controlled by specific interests. Human dignity and values have been destroyed by position and status. Globalization is a movement carried out by Western countries to lead humanity toward destruction. Globalization is the process of the internationalization of contemporary developments that significantly impact world progress. The major influence of globalization can eliminate various barriers, making the world more open and interdependent.

The impact of globalization is felt not only by those who embrace global culture but also by those who initially reject it (Hastuti et al., 2023). On one hand, religion strongly opposes the negative effects brought about by globalization. For instance, technological advancements lead people to neglect their religious duties and facilitate the spread of slander, fake news, pornography, and various other negative elements that contradict religious norms. As a result, globalization causes many changes, including how people practice their religion.

Mikel Burley's research suggests that as an alternative to addressing the tendency towards homogenization, D. Z. Phillips' contemplative philosophy develops a radical pluralist approach. This approach focuses more on deepening the understanding of religious diversity rather than enhancing individual theological preferences (Burley, 2020). Yayan Suryana posits that religious communities can respond to the rapid pace of globalization in two ways: by revitalizing religious life or by allowing religion to be swept away in the current of change (Suryana, 2020). Gita Aprinta explores cultural globalization, homogenization, and its impact on local cultural identity in the city of Semarang (Aprinta, 2023). Meanwhile, Charles Mercier examines religion and the contemporary phase of globalization from the perspective of John Paul II, stating that experts are deeply divided on whether religion has helped or hindered the latest strides toward globalization (Mercier, 2022).

Therefore, Muslims need to adopt a critical stance by analyzing each emerging issue from various perspectives. They should

also avoid rushing to support or reject the currents of globalization without a comprehensive understanding. This article does not aim to provide an in-depth explanation of the relationship between Islam and homogenization. Instead, the purpose of this study is to encourage readers to understand how Islam maintains the existence of its teachings and how Islam responds to one of the impacts of modernization and globalization, namely homogenization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

John L. Esposito's perspective on homogenization, particularly in the context of globalization, is that this phenomenon has the potential to integrate societies and cultures worldwide through the exchange of ideologies, values, and cultural practices (Suraiya, 2013). However, Esposito also acknowledges that homogenization can pose challenges, especially in terms of preserving unique local cultural identities. John L. Esposito, an expert in Islamic studies and interfaith relations, has contributed his thoughts on globalization in the context of religion and society (Maarif, 2022). He views globalization as a complex phenomenon that connects societies and cultures worldwide through various channels of communication and economic interaction. Esposito argues that globalization can have significant impacts on religion (Asep Arsyul Munir et al., 2018), facilitating the exchange of ideologies and values across cultures, and enhancing interreligious understanding and dialogue. However, he also acknowledges that globalization can pose challenges, such as increasing social tensions and interreligious conflicts in certain contexts.

The homogenization reflects the adoption and adaptation of various elements from outside into local culture, such as lifestyle, technology, and values that are increasingly integrated with globalization. John Naisbitt is known as a prominent futurist renowned for his work in predicting trends and socio-economic changes in the future. His most famous work is the book titled "Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives," first published in 1982. In his book, Naisbitt identifies ten major megatrends believed to reshape human life in the future, such as globalization, information technology, and the shift of economic power from the West to the East (Lloyd & Naisbitt, 1994). His work attempts to provide insights into how these changes will impact

various aspects of life, including culture, economy, and politics (Kaivo-oja & Santonen, 2023). These trends reflect Naisbitt's analysis of ongoing transformations impacting various aspects of global society.

A thinker and Islamic politician from Pakistan, Abul A'la Maududi (1903-1979), is known for his critical views on various aspects of modernity, including globalization. Maududi's perspective on globalization can be found in various works such as "Towards Understanding Islam" and "Islamic Way of Life". In his works, he often elaborates on how Muslims should confront the challenges of modernity and globalization while remaining faithful to Islamic teachings. Maududi views globalization as a tool of Westernization, where Western values and culture dominate and erode Islamic traditions and values (Maarif, 2022). He is concerned that strong Western influence through globalization could weaken the identity and morality of Muslims.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative method with a literature study approach focusing on phenomenological analysis. The literature sources utilized include books, articles, and other relevant materials. In this study, the researcher identifies various documents related to the researched topic. Data management follows the Miles and Huberman method. Once the data is collected, it is organized or cited as references for the findings, abstracted to provide comprehensive information, and interpreted to gain new knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of globalization's impact, namely homogenization, on modern society. Additionally, the study explores how Islam, as the majority religion in Indonesia, demonstrates its existence in confronting this homogenization.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Forms of Homogenization in Indonesia

Society, religion, and culture are closely interconnected. Culture and religion are often seen as inheritances that humans must accept. However, viewed as a process, culture and religion progress, becoming guidelines that can improve conditions. One consequence of globalization is the process of homogenization, which refers to the

increasing uniformity across various aspects of life, more so than in the past, and this is not only physical.

Rather than believing that local cultures can develop more rapidly, global pessimists argue that the strong currents of globalization in this digital era lead to cultural homogenization. Concerns over cultural homogenization are quite reasonable, considering the influence of culture—especially from the United States—through various media that create standards about life values deemed worthy, obligations to modernize, concepts of beauty with specific features, music considered beautiful, food deemed delicious, and so forth (Putri, 2018). In market-oriented or consumer-driven societies, perspectives on the world, including religion, undergo significant changes. Religion here is no longer just a source of values to shape lifestyles but more as a tool for the lifestyle itself. Irwan Abdullah provides an example of the pilgrimage ritual of Hajj, which is no longer solely seen as a sacred spiritual journey but also as a consumer product for "self-identification." Religion then functions more as a label identifying an individual or group (Fakhruroji, 2012).

Identity of religion becomes increasingly intertwined between public and private spheres, prompting many middle-class Muslims to showcase their piety publicly. This image is further bolstered by the consumerist tendencies of the middle-class lifestyle. The need to display piety and adhere to a certain lifestyle becomes unavoidable. For instance, the phenomenon of homogenization is evident when many upper-middle-class Muslims simultaneously adopt trendy Islamic clothing, such as branded hijabs, reflecting a blend of piety and modern social status (Pertiwi & Kalijaga, 2023). Thus, the lives of religious communities in the modern era are characterized by various dynamics and changes influenced by globalization, technology, and social shifts. Here are some key manifestations of homogenization in Indonesia:

1. In the realm of technology integration, the use of social media and the internet has led many religious followers to utilize these platforms for sharing religious teachings through platforms like YouTube or Zoom, enabling remote participation.
2. The intertwined identity of religion between public and private spheres is depicted in two aspects: 1) expressions of piety—many individuals express their piety in public spaces, such as wearing religious attire or engaging in social religious activities; 2)

influence of lifestyle—religious life is often adjusted to modern lifestyles, such as attending religious studies in cafes or community centers.

3. The increasing trend of homogenization and cultural adaptation occurs as globalization introduces external cultural influences that require religious communities to adapt. For example, modes of dress and religious practices can be influenced by global trends.
4. The rise of religious consumption is marked by the emergence of religious products such as trendy Islamic clothing, halal food in fast-food restaurants, and religious tourism. Additionally, religion is used for economic purposes, such as the pilgrimage industry for Hajj and Umrah becoming a major economic sector, or the publication of religious books and media.
5. Changes in values and norms are characterized by the contextualization of teachings, where religious doctrines are often reinterpreted to align with modern values and norms, such as women's rights and gender equality.

The challenges and conflicts faced by Muslims, as mentioned above, include tensions between fundamentalism and modernism, where there are differing views between groups seeking to uphold traditional interpretations of religion and those advocating for more modern and contextual interpretations. Additionally, religious identity often becomes involved in political and social dynamics, serving both as a mobilization tool and a source of conflict (Asep Arsyul Munir et al., 2018). In this context, religious identity can complicate political and social situations, creating complex dynamics within society. With influences coming from various directions, religious communities are required to navigate between tradition and innovation.

Islam in Maintaining the Existence of Its Teachings in the Midst of Homogenization

The global system has undermined personal identities and cultures that have been inherited and constructed by previous generations. Additionally, this system has spurred efforts to recreate and revitalize specific identities as a means to counteract the pervasive influence of globalization. In other words, the broad influence of globalization threatens traditions and local identities, prompting individuals to discover and strengthen their unique identities to

preserve the existence and authenticity of their cultures (Muttaqin, 2014). Globalization has both positive and negative impacts. One positive impact of globalization on religion is the ease of spreading values of tolerance and cross-cultural understanding. Through cultural exchanges and more open interfaith interactions, people can gain broad insights into diverse beliefs and religious practices (Suraiya, 2013). This can reduce tensions between religious groups and promote cooperation among cultural actors.

In addition to the positive impacts of globalization on religion, there are also negative effects such as homogenization or the unification of cultural and religious diversity. This can lead to the loss of unique cultural identities and religious traditions due to the dominant influence of stronger global cultures and religions. Furthermore, globalization can accelerate the spread of ideologies that contradict specific religious values, potentially causing societal conflicts and tensions. This aligns with Aprinta's view that globalization is not solely about homogenization, but individuals or societies have the right to choose ideologies or beliefs that spread rapidly through global flows (Aprinta, 2023).

The development of new ways of thinking, often referred to as modern thought, has emerged. For example, the kenduren ceremony, a tradition that blends Javanese culture and Islam, serves as an expression of gratitude. Interestingly, in modern times, traditions like kenduren have thrived due to enhanced communication and information accessibility that increases public awareness. Moreover, this tradition attracts tourists, further introducing kenduren to a wider audience. This demonstrates that modernity does not erase traditions but instead serves as a means to introduce them to the public. Ultimately, modern human thinking now acknowledges traditions as part of national identity. Therefore, our heritage must be preserved by society and not allowed to disappear (Dian Cita Sari, 2020).

In the context of this research, there are differing perspectives between two groups. On one side, there are those who view homogenization negatively, fearing it may erode the existence of religion. Conversely, another group sees homogenization not as a threat but as a source of motivation for Islam to maintain its existence. This article focuses on the group that perceives homogenization as not posing a threat and instead sees Islam

continuing to demonstrate its existence in the global world through the following revitalization efforts:

1. Utilization of technology and digital media (*cybermuslim* or *cyberdakwah*), with the emergence of applications like Muslim Pro, digital Qur'an, daily prayers, and Islamic articles. Moreover, religious figures like Ustadz Adi Hidayat are actively using platforms like YouTube to deliver religious lectures and studies.
2. Establishment of more Islamic institutions or schools in Indonesia, such as Integrated Islamic Schools, which combine national curriculum with comprehensive Islamic education. These institutions are designed to provide general knowledge while deepening understanding and practice of religion.
3. Production of Islamic-themed films in Indonesia aims to promote and disseminate Islamic values through popular media among the public. Additionally, the world of religious music plays a crucial role, with singers and music groups like *Sabyan Gambung* creating songs with Islamic messages.
4. Participation in interfaith dialogue forums organized by organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah plays a significant role in promoting peace and tolerance in Indonesia. Moreover, Indonesia's involvement in international organizations like the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) demonstrates the country's commitment to addressing global issues relevant to the Muslim community.
5. Initiatives to enhance women's roles in society are evident in various empowerment programs led by organizations like *Fatayat NU* and *Aisyiyah*. Additionally, the emergence of Muslim women leaders in various fields, underscores women's significant roles in public and professional life.

Through various efforts of adaptation and actualization of Islamic teachings, Muslims in Indonesia demonstrate their ability to remain relevant and exist amidst rapid global changes. By integrating Islamic values into technological innovations, modern education, Sharia economics, strengthened roles of women, as well as through

media and contemporary culture, Muslims are able to preserve their religious identity and values while interacting with a constantly evolving world. This reflects the Muslim community's capability to confront the challenges of globalization in a progressive manner and strengthen their position in modern society.

CONCLUSION

Globalization, as a significant and influential force in religious life, introduces external values that differ from religious values, yet it will not easily replace religious values in human life. This holds true as long as religious activists confront these changes with spirit and optimism. Religion has long served as the character and guide for humanity in understanding the world. Religion, as a system of norms and ideology, must once again effectively play its role in its functional and performative dimensions. Revitalization efforts, such as those in Islam, continue to demonstrate their existence in globalization, such as through the use of the internet for preaching, the establishment of modern Islamic education, the offering of Sharia-compliant banking products, the increase in interfaith dialogues organized by religious societies to promote tolerance, the growing participation of women in society, and more. This study still has limitations in data exploration. For future researchers, it is hoped that they can access literature, especially from primary sources or international studies, so that the resulting data is of higher quality and provides readers with a more global insight into the forms of homogenization occurring and how religions worldwide perceive such homogenization.

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