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The Challenge of Secularism in Modern Islamic Thot

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Abstract

Secularism, which fundamentally separates state affairs from religious authority, emerged from Europe's historical disillusionment with the church's abuse of power and its rejection of scientific advancement. This ideology spread globally during the 20th century, with Turkey becoming the first Muslim-majority nation to adopt it. This paper aims to examine the precipitating factors of secularism and its complex implications for the Islamic Ummah. Using a conceptual-historical analysis approach, this study highlights that the genesis of secularism was driven by five core factors within the historical European church: the arrogance of the clergy, the sale of indulgences, institutional arrogance, the establishment of the Inquisition courts, and open hostility toward rational science. When transposed into the Islamic world, secularism introduced profound multidimensional challenges. This research uses a conceptual-historical analysis approach. The primary implications include the marginalization of Islamic law in public and political spheres, a societal shift toward hedonistic moral values, and a religious crisis among the younger generation who increasingly view religion as irrelevant to modern life. Consequently, this study concludes that a strategic and sustainable response from that a strategic and sustainable response from educational institutions and religious leaders is imperative to bridge Islamic values with modern realities without compromising fundamental sharia principles.

Keywords: ***Secularism, Islamic World, Moral Challenges, Islamic Law.***

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INTRODUCTION

Education in the contemporary era faces the challenge of secularism to apply the noble values of religious teachings in the social life of Muslims who are very pragmatic, even opportunistic. Secularism in contemporary life is packaged through globalization and modernization, which is in line with the development of Western civilization. Secularism is an ideology that tries to eliminate religious values that come from revelation in the life of the world, or separate religious life from the world. Secularism as an understanding that continues to be spread results in human life being focused on the world and not relying on the norms of life against religion. This understanding of secularism is certainly very contrary to the beliefs and values of Islamic teachings which strongly emphasize faith, especially to Allah SWT. and faith in the last days. Islam as a teaching revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is called upon to be a human being. The rejection of secularism is due to the fact that da'wah wants to show that Islam actually glorifies the upholding of truth, democracy, tolerance, humanity, peace, respect, and protection of all humanity as a form of grace for the entire universe.

So far, responding to the challenges that cause rejection of secularism, the pattern of conveying Islamic teachings using da'wah. The terms "secular", "secularism", and "secularism" in the context of Islamic movements are still unclear. Its use is still considered inappropriate, and Muslim academics. refuses to apply it in the teachings of Islam. Those who reject this idea refer to the difference in historical and cultural experience between Europe (where the term originates) and the Islamic world. Many political and sociological academics state that the terms "secularization" and "secularization" can only characterize typical Western history, so they should not be extended to non-Western regions. This is due to the lack of direct experience of Muslims regarding the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, or the Enlightenment.

This condition ultimately triggers a very complex strategic challenge for Muslims in responding to the current of modernity. Because its presence is often accompanied by a westernization agenda, secularism in the Islamic world not only targets the separation between state and religion, but also penetrates into shifting moral values and increasingly materialistic outlooks on life. This demands a smarter and more sustainable response, not just a reactive rejection, but an effort to reformulate the role of religion in the public sphere. The main challenge is how Muslims are able to adopt technological advances and the modern political order without having to sacrifice the integrity of the monotheistic values that are the main foundation of their civilization.

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Overview of Secularism

Based on the literature review, it is consistently demonstrated that secularism is a cultural product born from a specific historical clash between science and the church in the West. Imposing this paradigm onto the Islamic world, which possesses a kaffah (comprehensive) theological foundation, will only lead to social imbalance and a crisis of morality. The long-term solution for Muslims is not to isolate themselves from modernity, but rather to undertake a civilizational reorientation through strengthening the integration of science and faith within the educational system, as well as reinforcing tawhid (monotheism) values as a dynamic filter in screening the currents of globalization.

History of the Emergence of Islam Secularism

Linguistically, the word "secularism" comes from the Latin saeculum, which means a certain time or place. More accurately, this word refers to the present and life in this world. Therefore, saeculum in English is often harmonized with the word worldly, which means worldly things. So, in simple terms, secularism can be interpreted as a view that only focuses on the present life in the world, without considering spiritual things, such as life after death, even though that is the main core of religious teachings.

In terms, secularism has the meaning of an understanding that separates the state and religion. That is, the state is considered an institution that regulates people's lives based on worldly or secular values without interference from religious teachings. Secularism is an understanding that separates worldly life and the afterlife in all aspects, such as religion, economy, education, politics, and social. Secularism also supports everyone to live their lives without having to follow religious rules. Secularism, in other words, believes that all activities and decisions taken by humans are entirely human affairs themselves, without religious interferenceSecularism has become a topic that steals the attention of many circles, such as scientists, theologians. scholars, thinkers, and groups that study religion. This is because the worldly thinking developed by secularism often causes various problems. Secularism itself comes from the Western world which refers to policies that separate the affairs of the government from the government or the state. The concept of secularism, which had become part of Western culture, then developed so rapidly that almost everything was designed to be secular. In this process, people tend to prioritize material life over spiritual life. Religion is considered a private affair and should not enter public life, According to Sayyed Hosein Nast, secularization has succeeded in eliminating the spiritual element in various aspects of human thought and spheres.

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The beginning of the secularization war was the result of the westernization (reinterpretation) of the teachings of the Prophet Jesus. As is known at first, the teachings of the Prophet Isa were still original, namely the teachings of monotheism. Many people did not like it so the followers of the Prophet Jesus were always pursued and lived in pressure for a period of about 200 years. It was in such a long period of time that the teachings of the Prophet Jesus experienced various kinds of deviations. During the reign of Emperor Constantine (306-337 A.D.) there were two camps of followers of the Prophet Jesus: (1) The followers of Arius who rejected the Trinity and (2) the followers of Athanasius who supported the Trinity. To break the deadlock, the Council of Nicaea was convened in 325 C.E. But this council ended with a vote and the Followers of Arius were declared defeated after the Emperor declared his support for the followers of Athanasius. Since then, there has been a distortion of the teachings of the Prophet Isa. That clean religion has now been tainted by Greek mythology. The longer it goes on, the farther it is from its originality, but at that time there was no term secularism.

Secularism is a concept that has influenced many aspects of human life throughout history. From politics to education, law, social, and economics, the separation of religion from state affairs or public life has become a focal point of change and development in many societies around the world. To understand the history of secularism in various fields, it is important to look at its development over time as well as its impact on social and political change. There are several histories of secularism in various fields, including:

1. Secularism in Politics

The separation of religion from political affairs is at the heart of the concept of political secularism. The history of political secularism can be traced back to the Enlightenment era in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. Thinkers such as John Locke and Voltaire championed the separation of church and state, emphasizing the importance of religious freedom and pluralism in society. Works such as "A Letter Conceming Toleration" by John Locke and "Traité sur la tolérance" by Voltaire became the cornerstone for the thought of political secularism at the time.

The application of political secularism in practice occurs through political and constitutional reforms in various countries. For example, the Constitution of the United States provides for secession. between church and state in the First Amendment, while the French Revolution at the end of the 18th century brought about a major change in the relationship between political power and religion.

2. Secularism in Education.

Secular education is a concept that emphasizes learning that is not based on certain values

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or beliefs. The history of secular education can be traced back to the era The Enlightenment in Europe, when the general education system began to develop as part of an effort to separate religion from the state. The development of public education systems in countries such as France and Germany in the 19th century is an example of the application of this concept in practice. In many countries, secular education is the foundation for the development of an inclusive and pluralistic society. This is reflected in the education policy that emphasizes the teaching of science and practical skills without taking sides in one particular religion or belief.

3. Secularism in Law

Secularism in the field of law refers to the establishment of a legal system separate from religious authority, where the law is based on secular principles and the judiciary is independent. The process of unification of laws in various European countries in the 18th and 19th centuries became an important step in the development of secular law. The concept of secular law allows for the achievement of more objective and just justice, which is not influenced by certain religious or belief considerations. It forms an equal legal basis for all citizens, regardless of their religion or belief.

4. Secularism in Social Aspects

Secularism is also influential in the social sphere, with increased tolerance for various beliefs and lifestyles. The 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights affirms the right to freedom of religion and belief, reflecting international recognition of the importance of secularism in promoting social justice through tolerance. Applying secular principles in daily life results in a more inclusive and pluralistic society, where every individual has the equal right to live his or her life according to his or her beliefs without fear of discrimination or oppression.

5. Secularism in Economics

Although not directly related to religion, the principles of secularism can also influence economic policies based on the separation of religion and state. The implementation of secular economic policies in various modern democratic countries creates a more inclusive and sustainable environment, where economic decisions are based on rational considerations and the public interest rather than on specific religious or doctrinal considerations. Secular economic principles also promote social welfare and a more equitable distribution of wealth, reduce economic inequality and increase accessibility to economic opportunities for all levels of society. Thus, the history of secularism in various fields reflects the evolution of societies towards inclusive and egalitarian principles, in which individual freedom and equality are valued as the foundation for social and political progress.

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The Challenges of Islamic Secularism

Secularism is a serious challenge for Islam because it seeks to separate religion from public affairs, politics, education, and morality, and prioritizes materialism. The main challenges include the marginalization of Islamic law, the shift in moral values towards Hedonism, and the crisis of religious understanding among the younger generation who consider religion irrelevant to modern life. The Main Challenges of Islam to Secularism:

1. Separation of Religion from State (Politics): Secularism rejects the divine Law in the constitution and state law, which is contrary to the principle of Islam as a system of life comprehensive (Kaffah).
2. Materialism and Hedonism: Focus on worldly achievements making spiritual values neglected, encouraging a lifestyle of luxury, usury, and momentary pleasures that often violate the limits of the Shari'a.
3. Education and Morality: Secular education tends to reducing religious education, mixing male and female students, and obscuring moral norms, such as same-sex marriage or normalized promiscuity.
4. Decline of the Role of Religion: Religion is considered only a personal matter in the mosque, not a guide in economics, politics, or science.
5. The Muslim Identity Crisis: The influence of Western secular thought make some Muslims fascinated, complacent, and adopt a way of life that is not based on revelation.

Factors of the Emergence of Islam Secularism

In the context of education, secularism has resulted in a separation between science and religious values, making it difficult to integrate faith and knowledge. Islamic education, which is supposed to be a moral and spiritual fortress, is often considered irrelevant by some circles, especially if it is not able to adapt to the development of the times and global challenges. As a result, Muslims face an alarming moral and ethical crisis, with a growing number of deviant behaviors that are no longer controlled by religious teachings. Secularism also restricts da'wah and Islamic teachings in the public sphere, making religious activities often considered incompatible with the spirit of modernity and extreme pluralism.

Nonetheless, various efforts have been made to address this challenge. Islamic education needs to be strengthened with a more integrative approach, harmonizing between academic curriculum and spirituality, in order to be able to form a critical and religious generation of Muslims.

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Technology and social media must also be used intelligently to spread contextual and creative da'wah, so that Islamic values remain alive and relevant in daily life. In addition, interreligious dialogue and the strengthening of multiculturalism values are important to build a harmonious social life, as well as a response to secularism which often gives birth to polarization between religious and national values.

Although secularism offers freedom and value neutrality in public life, its implications for the lives of Muslims are complex and demand serious attention in responding to them strategically and sustainably. The factors for the emergence of secularism Islam include:

1. The Arrogance of the Priests in Religious Matters

The institution of the Roman Catholic church claimed that the clergy of the church had an inner relationship with God. Thus they have spiritual power over man because they are the intermediary between man in general and Allah.

2. Sale of Certificate of Forgiveness

According to the Roman church it was encouraged to ask for something from the mother of the Prophet Jesus (a.s.) named 'St. Mary' because the church institution believed that the request of the Mother (Mariam) to the child (Prophet Jesus a.s.) as God would not be denied. Therefore, the church has sold a certificate of forgiveness and guaranteed a Special Paradise

3. Scientific Arrogance by the Church

The church considers ignorance to be a tip of faith and knowledge brings infidelity. The church considers that knowledge from sources other than them is dangerous. Therefore, they separate religion from the sciences that bring progress coming from the Muslims, most students from Europe who want to study knowledge are only found at the Islamic University in Spain.

4. The Growth of the Court of Inquiry

The church has tried to oppose Islam and science at the same time. Establish a Court of Inquiry to investigate and punish those who oppose scientists who do not agree with the teachings of the church and Muslims.

5. The Hostility of the Church to Science

The great mistake of the Roman Catholic church is to be hostile to knowledge and to make tyranny in worship and not actually follow the teachings.

So Secularism is a very foreign concept and contrary to Islam. Islam encompasses all aspects of human activities. All Muslim acts and behaviors are always bound within the scope of the sharia jurisdiction. All areas of a Muslim's activity can be considered worship if they are carried out according to the commandments of Allah with faith and good deeds. Islamic education is not

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only oriented towards the advancement of Islamic civilization which is purely physical. Because the manifestation of the civilization of the text is not only in the form of thoughts and knowledge, but also deeds and real works that can change the future and orient the benefits of humanity. Islamic education with a vision of advancing Islamic civilization must be multidimensional, multicultural, and with an insight into the world-hereafter. In conclusion, in general, the term secularism is a doctrine that has the view that religion does not have to interfere in state affairs or worldly affairs, including political and cultural problems. The scope of religion is enough to include religious rituals only, therefore Islam has no potential for the realization of development.

Secularism is an idea that separates the state from religion, and secularism begins with the distrust and disillusionment of the people of Europe with the church, closing the door to science and technology, putting aside rationality, using power arbitrarily and oppressing the small people. This idea spread in the 20th century and began to spread to Islamic countries, which at that time Turkey became the first Islamic country to adhere to secularism. Although secularism offers freedom and value neutrality in public life, its implications for the lives of Muslims are complex and demand serious attention in responding to them strategically and sustainably. The following factors influenced the emergence of secularism Islam; The arrogance of the Oaderi in religious questions, the sale of Certificates of Forgiveness, the arrogance of the Church's scholars, the growth of the Court of Inquiry, and the hostility of the Church to science.

Secularism is a serious challenge for Islam because it seeks to separate religion from public affairs, politics, education, and morality, and prioritizes materialism. The main challenges include the marginalization of Islamic law, the shift in moral values towards hedonism, and the crisis of religious understanding among the younger generation who consider religion irrelevant to modern life.

CONCLUSION

This article aims to discuss Social Learning Theory, Linguistically, secularism originates from the Latin word saeculum, which means the current time or worldly matters. Terminoligically, secularism is an ideology that separates religious affairs from worldly affairs (such as state, politics, law, economy, education, and social life). Its history is rooted in the distinct Western experience in Europe from the 17th to the 19th centuries (the Age of Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution). This ideology emerged as a form of disappointment, protest, and resistance from the European public and scientists against the authority of the Roman Catholic Church at that time, which was deemed corrupt and arbitrary. Some of the triggering factors included: The

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arrogance of religious leaders (clergy).

The commercialization of religion, such as the sale of indulgences (sijil keampunan). The church's hostility toward science and scientists.The establishment of the Inquisition Court (Mahkamah Penyiasatan) to punish those who opposed the church. Secularism is considered highly foreign and contradictory to the creed (aqidah) and values of Islamic teachings. In Islam, religion is not merely a private matter confined to the mosque, but a comprehensive system of life (kaffah). All human activities—whether political, economic, or social—are always bound by sharia law and possess the value of worship (ibadah) if performed for the sake of Allah SWT with an orientation toward both this world and the afterlife. The spread of secularism, packaged through the currents of globalization, modernization, and westernization, brings highly complex challenges, such as:

The Marginalization of Islamic Law: Rejecting divine law in state constitutions.
Shifts in Moral Values: Promoting a materialistic lifestyle, hedonism, free association, and usury (riba). Identity Crisis Among the Youth: The emergence of a moral crisis where the younger generation views religion as no longer relevant to modern life.

The Secularization of Education: The separation between general knowledge and spiritual values, thereby triggering an ethical crisis.In facing these challenges, Muslims must not merely react defensively or reject it blindly without direction. Smart and sustainable strategies are required, including:The Integration of Islamic Education: Strengthening educational curricula that harmonize academic achievement (knowledge) and spirituality (faith/morals). Contextual Dawah: Utilizing technology and social media creatively to spread Islamic values that are relevant to the modern era. Preserving the Integrity of Tawhid: Adopting technological advancements and modern political structures without sacrificing the core foundations of faith.

Secularism was born out of the West's historical trauma regarding religious institutions, making it inappropriate to be applied to the Islamic world. To safeguard the ummah (community) from the impacts of secular materialism, Islamic education must be reformed multi-dimensionally to produce a generation that is intellectually advanced yet morally and spiritually steadfastparticularly in the aspects of connectivism and constructivism. The key concepts of both approaches align remarkably well in primary, secondary and higher education. There exists a significant recognition, as illustrated by learning approaches such as connectivism and constructivism, that there is much more to educational contexts, mathematical skills, or historiography than trying to master an organized body of subject matter. Enculturation is required if a student is to ultimately become an analyst, a member of the group in a profession,

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instead of someone watching the subjects completely from the outside. Building is a theory which affirms that learning is a process for the student. According to this theory, people will try and make sense of all information that they consider, and as a result, every other person will formulate one's purpose from such details. Constructivism approach is one of the most important concepts in academic achievement. It has far-reaching significance because of how educators teach and learn to educate. If we are to achieve success in reshaping outcomes for all students, we must closely work with them. The emphasis on student-focused learning could be constructivism's greatest significant contribution. Individuals possess unique understanding, perspective, and aspirations to the educational process. As per connectivism and constructivist learning approaches, those distinctive aspects link in constructing the students' knowledge. Teachers and students both contribute to the facilitation and creation of knowledge. Students are expected to challenge one another's comprehension and clarify one's points of view. These possibilities aid in the transfer of knowledge from the authority to the students. Furthermore, constructivism promotes productive instead of rote learning, as well as the use of group-based collaborative learning, which are mostly taking place via communication technology.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

"There are still various limitations and shortcomings in the main discussion of this paper, owing to limited knowledge and a shortage of relevant references. Therefore, the author welcomes constructive criticism and suggestions from readers to improve this manuscript in the future. Hopefully, this paper proves useful for related educational purposes and offers meaningful benefits to its readers.

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