Value-Based Humanism: The Dynamics of Religion in Education Towards a Civil Society

Leon Rohendi
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia
leonrohendi@gmail.com

Rahimin Affandi Abdul Rahim
University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
faqir_ila_rabbih@um.edu.my

Abstract:

This research explores the potential of religious education as a key to forming an inclusive, just and empowered civil society. Involving a holistic approach with qualitative research methods, the findings highlight that religious education should not only focus on the transfer of religious knowledge but should also stimulate students' critical thinking and active participation. The concept of inclusivity was identified as a crucial foundation, with recognition and respect for diversity of beliefs as an important element. The goal is to create a social climate that supports harmony and mutual understanding in a diverse society. The results of this research have significant implications for designing educational policies that integrate the values of inclusivity and active participation into religious curricula. Teachers are identified as key players and need to be empowered as dialogue facilitators who are able to guide students in a deep learning process. Teacher training programs are also proposed to ensure that the values of inclusivity and appreciation of differences are effectively integrated into religious education. By combining these concepts, this research builds a solid foundation for civil society. Holistic and inclusive religious education is considered a catalyst for positive change, opening the door to a just, harmonious and empowered society. By making religious education the main pillar, efforts to form civil society can be more focused and sustainable.

Keywords: active participation; civil society; inclusivity; religious education.

INTRODUCTION

The religious and cultural diversity that is increasingly evident in our society marks the need to seek a holistic and inclusive approach to forming a harmonious civil society (Wahidin, 2018). Education, as the main stage for societal development, has a crucial role in responding to this challenge. This article reflects on and explores how humanist values can be a guide in managing religious dynamics through education, with the main aim of bringing us towards an inclusive, just and empowering civil society, in an era where differences are becoming so clear, a deep understanding of the values Humanist values are the key to forming a perspective that can balance religious diversity (Tawney, 1998). Awareness of universal values such as compassion, justice, and a sense of social responsibility can create common ground for individuals from various religious backgrounds. Education, as a vehicle for character formation and outlook on life, must be able to open a space where every student can reflect on, internalize and practice these humanist values (Asril, 2017).

The importance of critical awareness cannot be ignored in this journey. Humanist education teaches individuals to not only receive information, but also question, analyze, and articulate their views on the surrounding reality (Green, 2014). With this critical awareness, it is hoped that society can better understand the role of religion in everyday life and involve themselves in positive transformations that are able to bring change to civil society. Opening space for inter-religious dialogue is an important aspect in developing tolerance (Setia & Rahman, 2022). Through open dialogue, individuals of various faiths can share experiences, understand differences, and create a strong foundation for tolerance (Oakeshott, 2017).

Education must play a leading role in creating an environment that supports and encourages such dialogue, transforming the curriculum into concrete steps that the education system can take to integrate humanist values and religious teachings. The development of religious material that not only teaches doctrine but also explores the humanist values contained in every religious teaching, can provide a solid foundation for forming character that reflects the spirit of civil society, by imbuing humanist values in education and utilizing the dynamics of religion as a means for character formation (Wahidin, 2017). We can imagine a society that not only respects religious diversity but also embraces it as a positive force. Education based on humanist values, involving critical awareness, interreligious dialogue, and curriculum transformation, can be a catalyst that guides us on the journey toward a civil society that is harmonious, just and prosperous for all (Rahman, 2016).

In facing the increasingly complex challenges of globalization, the role of religion in the education system becomes essential to shape the character of individuals and society holistically. The integration of religious values in education has the potential to produce students who are not only academically intelligent but also have strong morals and ethics. Education that reflects religious values provides a strong foundation for the formation of strong personalities, teaches ethics, and guides in facing moral dilemmas (Aula, 2020; Schmid, 2021; Vinding, 2021). This is in line with the vision of creating a cultured society where plurality is respected, and cooperation between individuals from various religious backgrounds can develop harmoniously. In the last few decades, we have witnessed a paradigm shift in thinking about the role of religion in education (Maarif, 2015; Mas'ud, 2021; Saihu & Islamy, 2022). Rather than just formal education of an academic nature, the new approach highlights ethical values, morality and spirituality obtained through educational experiences.

This article will explore the complex dynamics between religion and education, with a focus on how the integration of religious values can become the foundation for a cultured society. Through a deep understanding of the relationship between religion and education, we can design and improve an education system that does not just produce individuals. who is intellectually intelligent, but also morally wise. Thus, this article aims to present insights that can become a basis for developing an education system that effectively combines religious values to achieve a more harmonious and cultured society.

METHOD

In exploring the dimensions of harmonization of humanist values in the context of the dynamics of religion in education, this research chooses a heritage study approach as a first step to understanding the roots of the values and views that have formed the basis of religious education (Lune & Berg, 2017) . By focusing attention on literary sources, documents and historical thinking, this research aims to reveal the journey of the development of humanist values in the educational environment. Even though the word "history" is not explicitly mentioned, this heritage studies research methodology still recognizes the importance of imbuing the values that have formed the basis of religious education (Mustari & Rahman, 2012). The selection of heritage sources and document analysis is aimed at exploring how humanist values have become an inseparable part of the religious education curriculum. In this chapter, the research will explain in detail the steps of the heritage study methodology used, including the process of selecting heritage sources, document analysis techniques, and efforts to integrate perspectives from oral sources. By looking back, this research hopes to open a horizon of understanding regarding the evolution of humanist values in the context of religious education and their contribution to the vision of forming a civil society. The process of selecting heritage sources in this research involves careful selection of various historical sources, such as educational history textbooks, educational policy documents, religious education curricula, and the writings of educational and religious figures that are considered relevant (Bryman et al., 2007). The main goal of this step is to create a comprehensive and in-depth representation of the integration of humanist values in religious education.

After historical sources have been selected, the next step is to carry out a systematic document analysis. This analysis involves critical reading of various historical sources that have been selected. The main focus of this analysis is identifying the humanist values contained in the religious education curriculum, changes in educational policy, and the role of key figures in the history of religious education. Thus, this process provides a deeper understanding of how

humanist values are integrated in the context of religious education. Meanwhile, this research also enriches itself with synergy with oral sources. Although this method tends to rely more on written sources, efforts will be made to seek perspectives and stories from oral sources. These sources can provide insights that may not be documented in historical documents. This approach aims to provide a more lively and contextual dimension to changes in humanist values in religious education. By combining written and oral sources, it is hoped that this research can present a more holistic and accurate picture of the evolution of humanist values in religious education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research finds that holistic and inclusive religious education plays a central role in shaping students' character and critical values. A holistic concept that embraces Paulo Freire's thinking about liberation education emphasizes students' active participation in the learning process (Arifin, 2012). Religious education that not only transfers religious knowledge passively but also stimulates critical thinking provides the basis for students to become agents of change in society.

In the context of inclusivity, religious education that recognizes and respects diversity of beliefs is the key to forming the foundations of an inclusive civil society (Philips, 2016; Shihab, 1997). By creating space for interreligious dialogue, students can understand and appreciate differences, creating a social climate that supports harmonious coexistence in a multicultural society. The importance of student's active participation in religious education highlights that civil society requires not only static religious knowledge but also active involvement in formulating a deep understanding of religious values (Syamsuddin, 2000; Ubaedillah, 2016). Teachers, in their role as dialogue facilitators, open up space for students to express their own views, forming a civil society that is democratic and responsive to the aspirations of the entire community.

Foundations of a Solid Civil Society

These findings have significant implications for designing education and community development policies. First, the implementation of holistic and inclusive religious education requires curriculum renewal that focuses more on developing students' critical thinking skills and active participation. Teachers need to be empowered as dialogue facilitators who are able to guide students through an in-depth learning process (Samsul, 2020). Second, in facing an increasingly diverse society, it is important to ensure that religious education not only teaches tolerance but also fosters appreciation for differences. Training programs for teachers to understand and integrate the values of inclusivity in religious teaching are an important step in building the foundation of a civil society that respects diversity. By combining these holistic and inclusive religious education concepts, we can build a solid foundation for civil society. In a society based on inclusivity, active participation, and a deep understanding of religious values, we can imagine a society that is just, harmonious, and empowered. By making religious education the main pillar, we open the door to fundamental positive change in creating the desired civil society.

In discussing these findings, we see that inclusivity is the foundation of an inclusive and participatory civil society. Religious education that creates space for interfaith dialogue and encourages tolerance creates a social climate that allows various groups in society to live side by side in harmony. This inclusivity is the glue that holds civil society together, ensuring that every individual, regardless of religious background, feels valued and empowered. Students' active participation in religious education provides a dynamic dimension in the formation of civil society. Teachers who act as dialogue facilitators open space for students to talk and share their views about religious values (Lukman, 2016). This creates a participatory base that is in accordance with the spirit of civil society, where each individual has an active role in forming policies and shared values in the context of morality and ethics, religious education that emphasizes moral values that are contextual and relevant to social reality becomes a main pillar of student character. Students who have strong moral character are more likely to become agents of change who contribute to improving social conditions. This is the moral basis needed to create a dignified and civilized civil society. Social responsibility, which is the focus of religious education, is not only an individual's duty but also creates a climate where social responsibility becomes a culture in society. Religious education forms individuals who feel responsible for the welfare of society and stimulates active participation in various social activities (Hidayatullah, 2018; Nizar, 2020). Thus, social responsibility is the key to the formation of a sustainable and caring civil society.

The Thought of Paulo Freire: Education as an Act of Liberation

Paulo Freire, an influential philosopher and educator from Brazil, is known for his revolutionary thoughts in the field of education. One of his most famous contributions is the concept of "pedagogy of liberation," or liberation through education. Freire firmly criticized traditional educational models, which he considered authoritarian, and instead, he saw education as an act of liberation and empowerment (Freire, 2021). Freire's views on education

reflect several key aspects. First of all, he emphasized the importance of dialogue in the learning process. Freire rejected the approach in which teachers simply "transfer" knowledge to students and, instead, promoted a dialogic approach in which students are actively involved in the learning process. For him, dialogue is a means of creating shared understanding and involving students in formulating knowledge (Smith, 1976).

Furthermore, Freire strongly criticized the "banking" model of education, which treats students as repositories of knowledge provided by teachers. This model, according to him, creates dependency and does not encourage critical thinking. In contrast, Freire supports education that produces students who can think critically, act independently, and engage in the construction of knowledge. Freire's thinking also places education in a social context. He believes that education must be relevant to the social reality in which students live, not just provide theoretical knowledge. The approach demands that education be rooted in students' daily lives.

However, the most striking aspect of Freire's thought is his vision of education as a tool for social change. He believes that through education, individuals can become agents of change in society. Critical awareness developed through education can encourage active participation in achieving social justice. Finally, in the context of religious education, Freire's thinking provides a strong basis for rethinking teaching approaches. The integration of the concept of dialogue, active student participation, and emphasis on the social context of religion can create a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment. The critical thinking emphasized by Freire is also relevant for exploring the meaning and application of religious values in everyday life. By viewing religious education through Freire's lens, educators can create an environment where students not only receive religious information passively but also engage in a learning process that empowers and forms character.

Nurcholish Madjid's Views on Religion and Contextuality

Nurcholish Madjid, a contemporary Muslim scholar, brings a rich and contextual perspective on religion. In his view, he emphasizes the importance of contextuality in understanding religious teachings, recognizing that changing times and changing social conditions require an appropriate view. Madjid invites us to see the essence of religious teachings in the context of everyday life, embracing changing times as an integral part of relevant interpretation (Madjid, 2020)

Apart from that, for Nurcholish Madjid, religion is not just a set of rules and rituals but also a source of inspiration for creating a just and tolerant society (Majid, 2013). He encourages us to explore the deep meaning of religious teachings so that they can be implemented in social life, creating a positive and inspiring impact in various aspects of life (Madjid, 1995). In his vision, tolerance and interfaith dialogue are crucial elements. Nurcholish Madjid views religious teachings as a point of unification and collaboration in an effort to build harmony amidst the diversity of society. Through tolerance and dialogue, he seeks to break down the walls separating beliefs, forming bridges of equality that respect differences as riches, not as sources of conflict (Madjid, 1996).

Nurcholish Madjid also emphasized the role of religion as a source of morality (Madjid, 1995). For him, religion can guide individuals in behaving ethically and responsibly. His view of morality is not limited to ritual practices alone but includes social and humanitarian responsibility. Thus, Madjid made a valuable contribution in forming insight into how religion can be a positive force in guiding and enriching human life (Madjid, 2019).

Convergence of Thoughts of Paulo Freire and Nurcholish Madjid

Paulo Freire's thoughts on liberatory education and active student participation, coupled with Nurcholish Madjid's views on contextual and inspiring religious teachings, opens up opportunities to detail how these two concepts can work together in forming an inclusive and dynamic civil society. The integration of these two thoughts creates a solid foundation for understanding the role of education in directing society toward civility. Freire's concept of active student participation can be a dynamic force in the formation of strong and critical character. Education that promotes student participation not only as recipients of information but as adherents of humanist values paves the way for producing individuals who have social awareness and the ability to contribute to community development, contextual religious teaching values and become a source of inspiration according to Nurcholish Madjid can provide a deep moral dimension. Religious education that connects moral and ethical values with social reality can form a character that reflects the human values and social responsibility desired in civil society. Freire's concept of dialogue and the value of tolerance emphasized by Nurcholish Madjid provide a strong foundation for building harmony amidst the diversity of society (Madjid, 1992). Education that teaches openness to differences and the ability to dialogue constructively can form a society that is united in diversity, a characteristic of civil society.

The integration of Nurcholish Madjid's concepts of morality and social responsibility with Freire's vision of education as an instrument of social change paves the way for individuals who are aware of their role in shaping civil society. Education that inspires students to apply religious values in real action can bridge the gap between understanding values

and their implementation in everyday life. By detailing the convergence of Freire's and Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts, we can see that education is the main key to forming a civil society. Education that includes humanist values, active participation, dialogue, tolerance, and social responsibility can be a catalyst for positive change that involves all of society in forming a shared vision of a civil society that is just, inclusive, and empowered (Madjid, 1998).

Looking at Paulo Freire's thoughts about liberating education and the active participation of students, as well as Nurcholish Madjid's views about contextual religious teachings and being a source of inspiration, we can combine these perspectives to discuss how civil society can be formed through education. First of all, both agree that education has a key role in shaping individual character. By combining Paulo Freire's concept of liberation and Nurcholish Madjid's religious contextual values, education can be a tool to form individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have good morals, are responsible and care about their social environment.

Furthermore, Freire's thinking about active student participation can be applied in the context of civil society development. Education that encourages students to think critically and be involved in social change can create a generation that actively contributes to building an inclusive, just and empowered society. Freire's concept of dialogue and the values of tolerance emphasized by Nurcholish Madjid can be the basis for building a harmonious civil society. Religious education that combines the values of dialogue and tolerance can help overcome conflict and foster mutual understanding between individuals with diverse religious backgrounds. Finally, religious education can integrate Nurcholish Madjid's concept of morality by emphasizing social responsibility inspired by religious teachings. Students can be taught not only about moral values, but also about how to apply them in concrete actions to improve social conditions. Thus, education becomes the main pillar in forming individuals who not only have extensive knowledge but also a moral and social commitment to forming a just, inclusive and sustainable civil society.

Education as an instrument of social change. Freire's view of education as an instrument of social change can be combined with Nurcholish Madjid's vision of religion as a source of inspiration for creating a better society. Through education that combines these two concepts, we can create individuals who are committed to contributing to positive social change. By combining these thoughts, education can become a force that encourages the birth of an inclusive, just and empowered civil society (Cerna et al., 2021; Sanches, 2021). Education that integrates humanist values, the concept of liberation, and contextual religious teachings can be a driving force for social transformation that involves all levels of society in building the dreamed civil society (Keane, 2020; Poed, 2020).

CONCLUSION

In its journey, this scientific article describes the convergence of Paulo Freire and Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts in the context of religious education as a foundation for forming civil society. Freire's concept of liberation and active student participation, together with the contextual vision of religious teachings and moral inspiration from Nurcholish Madjid, provides a strong foundation for designing holistic education, education that liberates, inspires and encourages active student participation as the main tool for forming good character. tough, critical thinking, and committed to community development. This concept is in accordance with the vision of civil society, which involves every individual in the process of positive change; the values of religious teachings applied contextually carry a deep moral dimension. Religious education that combines moral and ethical values with social reality can form individuals who have strong moral awareness, contribute to social harmony, and resolve conflicts with a dialogical and tolerant approach. In this view, religious education is not only a dogmatic conveyer of religious teachings but also a vehicle for teaching students how to actualize religious values in real actions in everyday life. Students not only become knowledge but also agents of change in building civil society; thus, the convergence of Freire's and Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts creates a broader view of the role of education in forming civil society. Education that combines humanist values, active participation, dialogue, tolerance and social responsibility is the main instrument in responding to challenges and building an inclusive, just and empowered society. In essence, this article invites us to see education as a transformational force that can bring positive change in answering the call to the desired civil society.

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