

Epigonism Vis A Vis Authentic Islam: Authority Claim And Novelty Production

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Abstract:

This study focuses on acute epigenetic phenomena still inherent in modern civilization today. Epigonism is also more severe in academic research results, which tend to experience repetition of research. This is marked by a sharp decline in interest in Islamic studies, which then tends to copy the classical legacy, considered a novelty in research. On the other hand, Epigonism and claims of Islamic authentication have not yet encountered a meeting point against the most valid claim of Islamic orthodoxy by blaming other groups who are not in line. Another phenomenon that is not inferior is also blaming each other for the results of research in each science discipline, one of which is the common ground for Covid-19. This study recommends that to achieve a complete understanding of Islam, one should harmonize textualism and contextualism to align with any civilization and culture. In addition, there must also be an appreciative attitude towards research results that are not in line with the disciplines that are the focus and dialogue between sciences, namely multidisciplinary research is more focused than monodisciplinary research, which tends to be repetitive even though the place and object under study changes.

Keywords: *Authentic Islam, Epigonic, Research, Dialogue.*

INTRODUCTION

Relaxation of thought and Islamic law is a necessity that cannot be avoided (Machsun, 2020) because technological advances and social-culture changes are not very predictive. This is marked by the beginning of the first hadith in 99 H-101 H by Umar Ibn 'Abd al-Aziz. Hadith bookkeeping does not have explicit commands in the Koran and Hadith, and there tends to be a strict prohibition from the Prophet. Therefore, Umar al-Thani is concerned about the traditions that are not collected ideally, along with the predictive loss of the second source of Islamic law (hadith) and the death of the Ulama Hadith (Nizar, 2019). An example of this phenomenon is relaxation or *al-qabd wa al-bast*, which Abd al-Karim Soroush initiated that religion and religious thought must be separated. Soroush's idea reflects the socio-cultural condition of the surrounding environment, which wilayah al-faqih restrains in the Islamic legal fatwas (Mas'udah, 2018). Such relaxation and flexibility is a way of life so that Islamic discourse is not seen as rigid and tends to separate itself from other scientific disciplines.

This authentic Islamic discourse originated with the emergence of a discourse on pure Islam, purification, and puritanism, which then re-emerged the movement to the Koran and Hadith. For supporters of this idea, Islam today (i.e., after the salaf era) tends to

be an intolerable error. It is considered to have deviated far from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Ihsan, 2014). Even the notion of this movement is attached to and is attached to a religious organization that tends to experience unclear directions and communication regarding nationality in Indonesia (A. Abdullah, 2018).

Another side of the Islamic paradigm that is not inferior is the fatalism of *taqlid* (Holis, 2019, p. 74) along with the *jumud* character in terms of religious understanding, which tends to reject the relaxation of Islamic law. The nature of *taqlid* itself cannot be applied to all aspects in which Islamic law principles must be relevant in every era and place they are used. The liberalist movement has become one of the leading figures in the current against *taqlid* (Zarkasyi, 2009). However, this movement, believed to have originated in the west, has experienced controversy and strong resistance from various elements of society (Yaqin, 2012, p. 37).

The resolution of conflicts that occur must be resolved wisely and not tend to blame existing perspectives and paradigms. This resolution can also be made by doing *al-jam'u wa al-taufiq* as in relaxation *na'sikh mansukh*. This term is better known as the idea of the integration of interconnections between Islamic scientific disciplines and several other scientific disciplines (Rohmatika, 2019). Such a resolution will not succeed if egocentrism adheres to each scientific discipline and claims the correct orthodoxy.

Resolving conflicts can also be done with tolerance, echoed by traditional Islamic boarding schools. However, some attitudes and views and the results of western research show that traditional pesantren tend to be intolerant and less friendly with differences (Abdillah & Ali, 2020). Din Wahid wrote the same thing that the construction of traditional pesantren, which is considered intolerant, is illustrated by the emergence of pesantren with salaf manhaj, which tends to be textual and very fanatical with the legacy of the classical century, which is considered a solution to all contemporary problems (Wahid, 2015). Warisan will be very friendly with this modern era if it experiences a paradigm shift for the flexibility of Islam which is friendly to all changes (Hakim, 2016).

Change for the sake of change is a necessity for humanity as a form of progress in civilization. However, from several existing modifications, there is local wisdom that modernity cannot simply be put aside, which can be used as a resistance to contemporary issues such as environmental damage (Rozi & Taufik, 2020). However, local wisdom is increasingly not getting a proper place in contemporary Islamic discourse due to Islamic authentication or the purification of Islamic teachings (Muliono, Suwarko, & Ismail, 2019).

The purification of Islamic teachings does not necessarily extend to various existing fields. Like the contribution of the NU tarekat in the 2019 Indonesian presidential election with an astonishing vote. Even though the tarekat is a movement made aware, actual religious values are implanted in such a way (Jamil, 2021). Another phenomenon that is no less far away is the Islamization that exists in the people of the Leuwidamar Banten area. Religious conversion alone can change the identity of the existing local community (Komarudin, 2021). the convergence of religious change can change the cultural identity. So is it that with the changing times, the research atmosphere in universities does not change the existing paradigm? Various research methods do not guarantee the birth of novelty every time the writing appears in several scientific journal publishers.

DISCUSSION

Methodological Authenticity

The efforts made to explore the dynamics and progressiveness of religion in the context of Islamic studies in the contemporary era are not impossible. This must be accompanied by methodological changes and a shift in the paradigm of religious thought of each Religious community in responding to and articulating its spiritual teachings. Changing methodologies and paradigms is complicated to do because the discourse of religious belief that circulates and develops in society often places the legacy of classical religious thought as valid and inviolable, except only to the extent to be followed based on what is recorded in the sacred text (M. A. Abdullah, 2020a, p. 5).

One of the crucial issues in contemporary Islamic studies is the adaptation of methodology and epistemology developed in the West as a perspective to respond to study themes considered frozen and undeveloped because they do not follow contemporary scientific developments. Apart from these problems, the lack of Islamic studies does not lie in the material or content but the absence of processing and presentation of the material, namely the method problem (Martin, 2010).

The reality of a change must be addressed in flexibility because of the changes in natural law and the majesty of God. The difference in question is in the realm of un-truth claims regarding methodology. This procedure can refer to an example of Jasser Auda's thinking using a systems approach in analyzing *Maqasid al-shari'ah* (Fasa, 2016). Auda's breakthrough was an attempt to escape the rigidity of Islamic studies. which is supported by mere content.

The discourse of contemporary Islamic studies and the diversity phenomenon can be seen from various approaches. Islamic studies cannot be seen only from normativity studies of revelation teachings. However, this cannot be avoided because the study of normativity has long been attached to Muslim scholars. For example, in solving social problems, we can use the framework proposed by Bryan S. Turner in his writings on religious relations and contemporary social theory (Turner, 2012).

Religion and social phenomena are inseparable and tend to be mapped into each scientific discipline. Religious and social phenomena can create a fundamental understanding according to the reality of the situation. This is because the science of religion cannot stand alone. Insiders cannot conclude and test hypotheses from mere religious texts (normativity). But sometimes, insider researchers can also study through the historicity approach proposed by Prof. Amin Abdullah in his book, *Religious Studies: Normativity or Historically?* (M. A. Abdullah, 2015).

For a methodological device to be harmoniously structured and interwoven, insider researchers need to learn how to move imaginatively outside their religious perspective to get as many ideas as possible as other audiences of researchers. Meanwhile, outside researchers with a non-religious viewpoint must imagine what the world looks like when there is a sacred area (a place where all order and perfection exists) (Pals, 2018, p. 281).

The two groups are working towards a phenomenological epoche, the imagination to enter the world of others, but the mentality of the researcher who is owned by each can be different from arriving at that goal. Each insider researcher who studies their religion faces challenge after challenge. Can you view your religion as reviewed by an outsider researcher? Can they see themselves as others see them? (Connolly, 2016, p. 5).

These insider and outsider descriptions represent Kimm Knott's anxiety regarding the boundaries of the study of religious areas, namely between faith and tradition. In this

case, Kim Knott's anxiety originated from academic questions or anxiety that emerged in the mid-1980s discussing the problems of the Sikh religion and the contribution of scholars' writings on understanding the Sikh religious tradition (Hinnels, 2010, p. 259). This restlessness gave birth to a new paradigm in the methodology of Islamic studies, which is increasingly interesting to be studied from various points of view.

The outsider researchers' stereotypes and prejudices certainly bring fresh air (positive impact) and adverse effects. One of the positive impacts is the broad understanding and perspective of Islamic studies from various perspectives from any circle. This is as stated by Kim Knott (Hinnels, 2010, p. 260) that insiders and outsiders in religious studies have boundaries and areas that must be respected, and there are also boundaries that religious reviewers, especially Outsiders researchers, must define.

In the insider group (pure participant), Knott gave the example of Fatima Mernissi as an illustration of a pure participant / religious believer; Knott saw Mernissi's idea when he wrote *An Historical and Theological Inquiry* in 1991 about women in Islam. As a feminist Muslim sociologist, Mernissi hardly had a wide choice. Mernissi cites a case in which Islamic journal editors denounced him as a liar and a figure who does not represent Islamic tradition. He is certainly not an Islamic leader or an authoritative theologian but a Muslim writer who intends to describe the essence of Islamic teachings by exploring Islamic treasures to understand women's rights (Hinnels, 2010, p. 263).

Several examples of research in contemporary Islamic studies have experienced progress in terms of accurate methodology and are not just doing research that is struggling and mere repetition. The incidence of repetition research is reduced if researchers from insiders and outsiders offer a scientific paradigm of interconnectivity between existing scientific disciplines. This interconnectivity paradigm aims to be a cure in terms of the complexity of the Islamic studies phenomenon that continues to stand alone. Cooperation, greeting each other, mutual need, mutual correction, and interrelation between scientific disciplines will be more able to help solve the complexities of human life (M. A. Abdullah, 2012).

The inter-scientific cooperation or integration applied in several Islamic universities is not very significant in its application. This can be seen from several final assignments in the form of a thesis, thesis, and arrangements written by students (Subchi, 2020, p. 117). The cause of the lack of studies and research results on integration between science and Islamic studies is the lack of appreciation of the issues that are responded to by each of these. The patterns of problems that appear on the surface are susceptible if they are directly related to Islamic narratives that tend to be right in several well-known universities in Indonesia (Hakam, Anggraeni, & Fadhil, 2020).

Epigonality Vis á Vis Transdisciplinary Islamic Studies

The Epigonic tradition (taqlid) is still rife among academics; in other words, there are many repetitions in research and research results. This phenomenon is caused by research after research which is trapped in the mere content description. The efforts made by researchers have also been maximized; one of the reasons that the authors observe is the lack of confidence of a researcher in other scientific disciplines, and the sense of superiority in the work involved has an impact on the rigidity of the research results. The transfer of the methodological system from rigidity to flexibility must be massive due to rapid technological advances and the influential covid-19 pandemic, changing the learning system and prohibiting outdoor activities that can accelerate virus transmission (Siahaan, 2020).

Changes must also be followed for the sake of change, namely changes in the human mindset that tend to copy and paste classical heritage. The changes experienced by science must also be made by religion. As Albert Einstein said, "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind (Jammer, 1999, p. 155). This statement indicates an exciting relationship between science and religion and will significantly change the mindset and future of human civilization. Science and religion are tendentious themes to study, apart from the list of problems in the relationship between the two fields(2019, p. 2).

Cooperation between scholars must be a way out of the piles of existing problems. As expressed by Abu Rabi that the academic atmosphere of the Middle East, which rejects social science disciplines coupled with Islamic studies, makes Arab countries experience difficulties in encouraging the advancement of science, especially those that are currently booming and being intensely studied in the West (Markham & Rabi', 2002, p. 36). The sciences that study various complex problems in society must collaborate and relate to each other, and Islamic studies is a fundamental study (Iskandar, 2016).

The harmony between science disciplines will form an achievement, namely the triumph of human civilization, as happened during the Abbasid era. For this triumph to be realized, a clear vision of society is also required. One of these visions is supported by a solid scientific epistemology and leads to the inability to understand the essence of the problem and formulate creative solutions (M. A. Abdullah, 2020b, p. 144). The science he is involved in and the results of his research are not supported by other scientific disciplines and only walk alone as if the complexity of human life problems is resolved from a monodisciplinary perspective with the help of the powers they have (Kebung, 2017).

Other problems, such as the acute trap of subjectivity among religions and scientists, can be solved by understanding the area and the elements of objectivity in each discipline of science. In the next turn, there is an inter-subjective problem of academic and mental positions that can dialogue intelligently between the objective and subjective worlds of a scientist and a cleric in dealing with the complexities of life, both in the world of religion, science, and culture (M. A. Abdullah, 2020b, p. 272).

Harmonization Between Text and Context

The field of textualism studies has been mentioned a lot by Amr Osman about the *al-zahiri* madhab. The madhab pioneered by *Da'ud al-Zahiri* is not part of the fundamentalists' fanaticism of literalism. Even Amr Osman mentioned that *Da'ud al-zahiri* was a textualist who was *ahl al-ra'yi*. According to Osman, textualism is not a study that only focuses on understanding literal meaning. Textualism is closer to contextualism than textualism is perceived by many people. As a well-established study material that is strengthened by the science of religious anthropology, semantics, and pragmatics as well as other conventional sciences, Osman concludes that this school of *al-zahiri* cannot be 100% certain whether *al-zahiri* was born from textualism. However, Osman's *hangtag* conclusion is that textualism is not anti-rationalism and contextualism; in fact, it is synonymous with rationalism and contextualism (Osman, 2014).

When viewed from Osman's frame of mind, it is very much in line with what was initiated by Robert Gleave, who stated that the tradition of interpreting religious texts is very thick with textual nuances. Through *usul al-fiqh*, the *fuqaha* and *muhaddithin* try to interpret the literal religious text with the meaning desired by the author. As a result, different schools of thought emerged, even though each of them

strongly adhered to its textualism. Gleave took several samples such as Madhan Shia, Sunni, and Za>hiri>. The three samples for Gleave are very thick with the nuances of their textualism. Gleave gives a few examples when interpreting religious texts with the meaning of mafhu>m, which uses textualism. For Gleave himself, the scholars from the Madhab who usually use Arabic are a very rationalist group. Even Hanafi-muktazili is very consistent with literalism (Gleave, 2012).

One of the ways to understand Islam is through some classical works of scholars. However, this method is not the most valid one. The acclaimed writing by classical scholars responded to the socio-culture at that time. To be precise, the writings of classical scholars were very suitable at that time, and some are still relevant to current conditions. This taken-for-granted nature has resulted in the decline of Islam with all the stagnation and camouflage of the classical heritage, which is considered the most valid and authoritative in solving all things (al-Ghurabi, 1959, pp. 18–19).

Some groups were born out of an embryonic understanding of text and context that was very disharmonious. These groups claim the truth of the ideological path of understanding Islam, which is considered absolute and inviolable. This condition will, in the future, give rise to terrible divisions because each group has its own theoretical claims (Nasution, 1992, p. 21). Such conditions cannot be ignored, given the unpredictable development of human civilization.

Such rigidity has triggered the backwardness of Islam until the present modern century because Muslims are still busy with uncompromising theological matters. Meanwhile, the western world has risen with the awesomeness of technology (Mouleman, 1996, p. 1). Seeing this, Tibi analyzes that it is time that the discourse of Islamism, which has become rowdy, can be used as a resistance to Western hegemony (Tibi, 2012, p. 1). The discourse of Islamism has become a unique attraction for Abdul Karim Soroush (Setyawan, 2017), that these two things must be separated, considering that sacred and profane things cannot just be put together (Pals, 2018, p. 70).

The cause of the stiffness and trapping of Muslims in textualism is triggered by the dogmatic reasons that know the Islamic ummah. This led to an unnecessary long debate. Even according to Abu Rabi ', Muslims are not that interested in modern science. The opinion of Abu rabbi 'can be proven by the position of the Muslim ummah, which has experienced setbacks and is even afraid of Western hegemony. Even this fear is fabricated with no critical character by analyzing some contemporary phenomena. Another cause that is not inferior is the support or supremacy of the political elite on the status quo, the stagnation effect of scientific development, and Islamic studies that do not touch on the ongoing socio-political problems to be resolved (Markham & Rabi', 2002, p. 27)

One of the antidotes is the idea put forward by Abi al-Jabiri, namely the Criticism of Arabic Reason which promotes the modernization of Islam and tura> th, which is an offer related to the combination of western and eastern cultures because the west is considered more advanced as a stimulus for Muslims with awareness. In all its shortcomings, (Harb, 2003, p. 186). Another offer is not the idea of baya> ni> towards the burha> ni; this idea is used as an autocratic to the traditionalists. However, the second idea offered by al-Jabiri does not criticize the stagnation of traditionalists alone with all their textualism fanatics (al-Jabiri, 1991, pp. 14–15).

The first idea offered by al-Jabiri, namely baya> ni>, does not only doubt the understanding of textuality, which is considered *jumu>d* (stiff). This line of thought is more precisely a method of thinking to achieve complete knowledge or as an explanation with all

textualities, and al-Jabri emphasizes that the middle-aged reason he offers is an attempt to perfect the objectives behind the text (al-Jabiri, 1991, pp. 14–15). So a red thread can be drawn that the source in the middle age epistemology *bayanī* is the text itself because the textual culture at that time was one of the Arab cultures (Choir & Fanani, 2009, p. 184).

Arkoun also criticized Islamic reasoning in terms of the Arab-Islamic tradition. Arkoun offered a solution that seeing a phenomenon should use historical glasses. Because history plays a vital role in the relevance of text and context, the approach provided by Arkoun can see new directions in the significance of the text and context. Besides that, Arkoun also offers historical methods with linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and semiology to grammatology. Arkoun's plan aims to find the hidden meaning behind religious texts to contextualize meaning (Arkoun, 1996, p. 14).

An idea that is no less interesting is the contextual interpretation proposed by Abdullah Saeed. The main reason for Saeed is because the commentators always use a language approach in interpreting, especially against legal verses. This is seen by Saeed as less relevant to the socio-historical context when the rules exist in the current context. However, Saeed accepted the limitations of language because these principles can also provide a whole meaning to the Koran, so Saeed's thoughts are very relevant to the present. Saeed believes that contextual thinking is also very flexible, with changes over 150 years that have significantly changed how humans see the world (Saeed, 2006, p. 2).

Daniel W. Brown also emphasized that the vast majority of Muslim religious styles will give birth to a single strong root in the past. The past alluded to by Brown is a prophet tradition in the form of prophetic traditions. The whole spectrum that cannot be separated from the very diverse traditions of the Prophet is a factor in modernity. Likewise, a modernization that is so strong will not be able to leave the existing prophetic tradition. Because the prophetic tradition also cannot go through written texts, which are not much different from epigonism until now (Brown, 1999). This prophetic tradition is known as the *sunnah ghairu tasyri'iyyah* initiated by Yusuf al-Qaradawi from Egypt. The conclusion raised by Brown is in line with what was created by McDonough, who examined the traditionalism of three modernist scholars (McDonough, 1970).

The contributions made by contemporary Islamic thinkers are none other than an attempt to escape the text's intolerable totality. Some prejudices prove that rigidity in the text can also give birth to radicalism. However, ignoring the text and the contextual focus will also result in a thought product in an obscure direction like a shooting arrow. In this case, there is a need for dialogue between Islamic scholars, Islamic thought, and Islamic studies (M. A. Abdullah, 2020b, p. 20). The conference serves as a solution and a deconstruction of a rigid classical tradition that is still upheld. The effort to acculturate textualism and contextualism combines Islamic studies with modern scientific approaches, both human sciences and natural sciences, without leaving classical traditions such as jurisprudence deconstruction, which response to humanitarian and state problems (Prihantoro, 2019).

CONCLUSIONS

It turns out that the concept of epigonism is still acute in several official government agencies, especially universities. This is indicated by the results of research that do not mix with other disciplines and the nature of the research methodology that is not very appreciative of studies across these disciplines. Attitude for attitude must be taken for the establishment of a scientific vehicle that is friendly to other scholars and complements each other, and plays their respective roles in overcoming all national problems.

The problem of Islamic studies has stagnated interest in all themes. This is marked by the emergence of a super religious Islamic discourse and blaming paradigms and mindsets that do not suit the group. This phenomenon is due to the results of studies or research concerned with mere content, an acute epigonist (*taqlid*) characteristic of classical inheritance and does not experience novelty. As a result of this epigenetic nature, it will appear that Islam is unfriendly to all changes in civilization because the classic 7th-century legacy is still recognized as a fundamental law in all matters. To prevent this, study and research planning must mingle with other scientific disciplines, establish harmonious relationships, and foster appreciation of research results from outsiders and insiders deemed incompatible with classical heritage.

This research is very far from perfect. Therefore, it is necessary to update and review the research methodological framework that focuses on the synergy between scientific disciplines and is responsive to actual phenomena. This goal will not be achieved if the dialogue between disciplines is far from familiar.

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