



BERNARD RAHO¹ AND RELIGION IN SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Societal phenomena, religious activities that appear in the community are always the focus of attention for sociologists. Even religion is often referred to as one of the important institutional structures that complement the entire social system. This has clearly placed religion as a social institution that has different characteristics than other social institutions. This article will review how sociologists examine the religious phenomena that exist in society by focusing attention on the problem of the definition and characteristics of religion sociologically as well as discussions around the dual function of religion for society, especially as a force capable of uniting and at the same time divorcing a society, which always puts religion as a factor that is quite influential to the dynamics of society as a whole.

Keywords: *Bernard Raho SVD, Religion, Sociological.*

A. Introduction

By definition religion is a set of rules and regulations governing man's relationship with the unseen and more regulating his relationship with his god, as well as his relationship with fellow human beings and his relationship with the environment.

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In the study of religious sociology, it is not seen what and how the teachings and doctrines of belief are taught, but rather how their adherents conduct in realizing those teachings and beliefs in daily life. So religious sociology tries to understand the meaning born in society to a particular religious system by putting religion and human diversity as social symptoms.

Sociologists are certainly different in understanding these symptoms, depending on what theory is used in analyzing the phenomenon. Because basically religion will give birth to society and grow to create a culture so that in the dynamics of its development will give birth to a society that will eventually re-elicite religion and will continue to spin as causal interconnected between one variable and the other. The biggest turnover variables in this case are religion, culture, and social.

The discussion in this article is more about the theoretical aspects of sociology and religion and the definition of religion in the view of sociologists in understanding religion as its role to society.

B. Sociological Study of Religion

1. The Basic Sociological Perspective on Religion

In general religion is a belief system embraced by each person based on their own beliefs. Religion is an influential and most felt force in human life. Religion affects people in all aspects of life. Religion teaches people to believe and fear God and teaches how people behave well and properly.

Like other societal phenomena, religious activities that appear in the community have always been the focus of attention for sociologists. Even religion is often referred to as one of the important institutional structures that complement the entire social system.

Basically all religions are the same, which both teach us how to praise and worship God and live the commandments and avoid any prohibitions. Religion is also a guide to life that occurs after death. Religion here explains that there is still another life after death. Therefore religion teaches us how to behave in order to obtain eternal life after the death.

But there is no denying that in this religious life there is still a fanatical human nature to other religions. They have always compared their religion to that of others, and they think that their religion is the right one, while the other religion is not true.

In a sociological perspective it is argued that the reason a person chooses a particular religion is based not only on the values of truth contained in a particular religion but also because of other factors. For example due to regional and tribal factors, such as those found in Indonesia. In general, Acehnese are Muslim, Batak people are Christian and Flores people are Catholic.

Sometimes a person adheres to a particular religion not because of personal considerations after considering one religion and another, but because he or she was born in the region. This means that a person adheres to a certain religion because it follows the religion that their parents have embraced. This indicates that religion is passed down by parents to their child.

Although the religion comes from the beliefs embraced by parents who are also passed down to their children, it turns out that there are still we found in a societal life where in a family there are two different beliefs. For example, his father is Christian and his mother is Muslim.

And when they were married, they retained their religion. So in the end they married to the two teachings of religion that they aut. First they married with the ordinances that exist in christianity and then based on the existing ordinances in Islam. And when they have had children, they tell their children that their children are free to choose which religion they will anut. Will they follow the same religion as their father or follow the same religion as their mother?

Although they live with differences in beliefs, it turns out that they can keep and appreciate their religion with each other. Where when his father prayed then his mother would appreciate it. But when his mother prayed and fasted, his father appreciated him. In this case they can still live like other people even with two different suspicions in one house.

It's actually something wrong, too. It should be someone who lives in a faith alone. So that their child will also not be confused whether to follow the religion that the father or the mother believes in. Thus, there will be more comfort in the family.

2. Definition and Characteristics of Religion

Defining religion comprehensively that is able to encapsulate all aspects seems to be a strange problem even impossible to do given the breadth of aspects contained in the religion itself. Elizabeth K. Nottingham, for example, states that no definition of religion is truly satisfactory because religion in its almost unimaginable diversity requires

a description (depiction) and not a definition (of limitations). Nottingham further asserts that the main focus of sociological attention to religion is on human behavior in groups as a form of religious practice in daily life and the role played by religion for centuries to date in developing and hindering the survival of community groups.

In defining religion, social scientists usually use two kinds of defenisi that can complement each other, namely substantive defenisi and functional defenisi. Substantive defenisi seeks to explain what religion looks like. That is, in this case religion is explained as to what it is and its truth according to the boundaries and categories that distinguish it from the non-religious. While the definition of religion functionally emphasizes the function of religion that should be carried out as it should and does not care about the content of religious beliefs and practices.

This means explaining what religion should make and do for an individual, group or society. It is not what an individual, group or society does to religion. Where in this case it also explains that the content of religious beliefs and practices is less important than the consequences of that religion for people's lives.

Sociologists who follow the inclusive definition model include: Durkheim, Bellah, and Yinger. The definitions of religion put forward by the three figures:

- A religion is a belief system united by practices related to sacred things, i.e. things that are permissible and forbidden – beliefs and practices that unite a moral community called the Church, all those who are related to each other.
- Religion is a set of symbolic forms and actions that connect man with the final state of existence.
- Religion can be formulated as a system of belief and practice where a group of men struggle with the problems of the end of human life.

The first definition put forward by Durkheim was a definition that was already quite popular and often cited by sociologists. For Durkheim, one of the important characteristics of religion is that it is oriented to something formulated by man as something sacred as opposed to the world in daily life (profane). The second and third definitions emphasize that religion, above all, is oriented to the "ultimate concerns" of mankind. In this case, the final suffering according to Yinger's conception means that concerns relating to the reality of death, the need to overcome frustration, suffering, tragedy, hostility and egocentrism as well as forces that endanger our lives, etc., are the essence of religion itself.

From the three examples of the above definitions, it is clear that the inclusive definition model allows everything to be referred to as a religion as long as all of these things identify purified concerns or relate to the question of the final meaning. This is because this definition model does not look at whether or not a belief system is the existence of a supernatural world.

C. Religious Sociological View

1. Karl Max

Marx did not make specific studies of religion as was the case with Max Weber or Emile Durkheim. His thoughts on religion are reflected in his various writings criticizing capitalist society. There are some points of Marx's thoughts on religion.

First, Marx regarded religion as an alienation. In this case, Marx's intent and purpose was to criticize the capitalist society that had inflicted alienation within the laborers. According to Marx as the capitalist economic system has caused labor to be alienated, so too has religion turned people's attention to the real situation of the world and directed it to the post-death world. According to Marx in this case religion has changed the way of human thinking in order to believe in circumstances beyond reality and in religion it is explained how man himself to achieve something beyond that reality as intended.

It means that in religion there is explained about the still being of another life after a person dies. The intended life is eternal life that comes from God. If we think according to our own logic, it is actually not possible that there is another life after death. This is completely absurd. But that is what is said in religion and we cannot possibly oppose it. We also as religious people generally believe in the absence of another life after the death. And in religion it is explained that the way that we can live in that eternal life is to do good to all people, to live the command of God and to avoid his prohibition.

In addition, an act in which praying to God to plead for the success of life was not approved by Marx. Because for Marx the ability to succeed is in man itself and there is no need to pray to God to ask for the success in question.

Actually, if I think the point of Marx's statement is that it is impossible for a person to succeed if he only prays to God without working. And in this case to achieve the success and success of life that is needed is for our efforts and hard work that is hopeless. But if I think we should also pray to God that whatever we do and do is blessed by Him, with a record we pray while working and trying.

Marx also said that the characteristics imposed on God are nothing other than human characteristics projected on God controlling man through his commandments. Therefore, Marx added that it is not God who creates man in his image but rather man who created God in his image or shadow.

If I think the point of marx's statement is how can we possibly believe and know that God created man in his image while we have also never seen what the image and like of God looks like. So, in this case it is man who makes God exist and man believes that God does exist according to the image or shadow they see in the stories, films and pictures of God.

Second, Marx regarded religion as an ideology. Marx says religion is an ideology because of the many realities about humans that are reversed. The point of the statement in my opinion is that religion is only a view of human life. Man believes in eternal life. So that man strives to live every commandment of God and avoid his prohibition by seeking patience and willingness to suffer in living life in this world. In this case in marx's view their actions were wrong, because they put God first and did not care if they had to suffer so that in the end they lived in poverty. This is to the detriment of man himself, and he will not be able to do so.

Third, Marx regards religion as a society's opium. This means that religion has comforting and temporary characteristics as dope that provides a temporary release from the treatment with the risk of harmful side effects. For example in everyday life when we are sick, we will take medication to heal. In this case the drug serves to relieve temporary pain or can even bring healing when we consume it. The same is true of religion, where religion teaches that when we are patient and willing to suffer for God's sake then we will have eternal life. Here people think that what they are doing is right and are temporarily comforted by what is said and explained in religion. So for Marx, the religion has the characteristics of comforting people who are temporary when they are depressed or suffering that can make them patient and survive.

Fourth, according to Marx religion should be abolished. Marx asserts that religion must be removed because it offers illusory happiness before they achieve actual happiness. The point of Marx's statement is that religion should be removed or ified because every teaching is delusional and illusory. So that man does not have to suffer and be depressed in living in this world in order to obtain eternal life after a death that is considered unreal.

However, religion is the product of societal conditions, so it cannot be removed. The only way to erase religion is to eliminate the conditions that bring suffering and misery to human life. Moreover, according to Marx, religion has no future. Religion is not something inherent in humans, but a product of certain social conditions. The religious sentiment in him is a social product.

2. Emile Durkheim

In addition to Marx, Durkheim also has several points of thought about religion. As for some of Durkheim's points of thought about religion.

First, Robertson Smith's influence over Durkheim. In this case Durkheim's description of religion was heavily influenced by previous social thinkers. One of them was Robertson Smith who did a study of ancient semitic religions. In relation to religious life it is explained that Robertson Smith preferred religious practices over beliefs. According to Smith, the most important thing in religion is the practices of religious life such as religious ceremonies and not especially beliefs. It means to prove that if we believe in a particular religion then we must perform religious ceremonies in accordance with the beliefs and beliefs we follow.

Smith also said that a person adheres to a particular religion because the person has no choice but to follow the religion that already exists in the community. Thus Durkheim considers that religion is a collective representation of society.

According to Smith, religion has nothing to do with saving souls, but is an attempt at conciliation or group strengthening. Emile Durkheim developed Robertson Smith's thinking and based his analysis on data when he made a study of the arunta tribe across Australia. He said the main purpose of his study was to take a close look at the most primitive and simplest religions in the Australian tribes. According to Durkheim, the most primitive and simplest religion was totemism.

Second, Durkheim's understanding of Totemism. According to Durkheim, these totem symbols are emblems of the tribe itself just as the flag is a symbol for a country. Durkheim then showed how the totem system is a cosmological system and how categories such as class have something to do with totemism.

First, Durkheim noticed that man took part in the sacred. As members of the tribe who have sacred totems and believe that they are derivatives of those sacred totems, they believe in his sacredness. Second, in the totem thought system everything that is identified has a relationship with the totem of one of the tribes. All known things are

sacred because they take part in sacred totems. According to Durkheim, the totem classification system is the first in the history of human thought and takes on models such as social organizations.

Third, Marx thinks totemism is that society worships itself. In this case totemism is not a religion that believes in animals, plants, humans or certain images but rather a belief in an impersonal and nameless force that is behind the creatures that are made into totems themselves. Durkheim therefore concluded that tribal gods or tribal totems were none other than the society itself personified or symbolized by plants or totem animals.

Durkheim also explained that society had everything in him to awaken something divine in the minds of its members so that they obeyed him. Something divine is called a god in religious terminology that is superior to man and man depends and obeys his will. This causes members of the public to fear the community itself as much as they fear the gods.

D. Conclusion

In fact, religion does not affect his people in living his social life, only gives an idea of the social boundaries that will affect him when interacting with certain people. But at least we can know where the sociologists study when examining religious issues that occur in society.

The breadth of the religious dimension stipulated can be a consensus of the tendency of sociologists to define religion inclusively. In fact, this has opened up a wide opportunity for various perspectives in sociology to be able to make maximum contribution in the effort to understand people's social behaviors as the embodiment of the implementation of diversity of beliefs and religious doctrines.

Nevertheless, sociological discussions about various religious phenomena that developed in society during this time tend to be centered around the problem of dual religious functions for society, namely integrative and disintegrative functions. Because before we attempt to apply various sociological perspectives to reveal broader and complex religious phenomena, we need to look back at how sociologists describe the dual functions of this religion. From here at least we will get an idea of how the social consequences that arise from a series of rituals and religious practices are viewed from a sociological perspective.

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