

Islamic Religious Education Based on Religious Intersubjectivity: Philosophical Perspectives and Phenomenology of Religion

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This article discusses the idea of Islamic Religious Education based on religious intersubjectivity.

Design/methods/approach – This paper presents the idea of Islamic Religious Education based on religious intersubjectivity with a philosophical perspective or approach and religious phenomenology. The philosophical approach is to delineate and discuss three varieties of new paradigm for religion, namely subjective, objective, and intersubjective belief. Meanwhile, the religious phenomenology approach is used to develop an "intersubjective" religious area. Intersubjective diversity is an area of human religiosity that marries and engages in intense and sincere deep dialogue between the links of subjective and objective self-awareness of human which are in opposition to each other.

Findings – The formulation of this IRE model – based on the intersubjectivity of religion – must consider the following points:

1) Intelligent sorting of common patterns and unique patterns in history of religions and religious thoughts; (2) Epoche, which refers to the ability of a person or group to sincerely and purely set-aside the statements that are undermining, devaluing, demeaning, infidelizing, apostatizing, or hurtful to other groups in any form; (3) Eidetic vision, which is the search for the basic construction, core, substance or the deepest essence of human religiosity; (4) the historicity of religion; (5) Verstehen, which constitutes an effort to understand the essence of other religions earnestly and genuinely; (6) Compassion and harmony; (7) Inclusive-partnership and dialogical approach; and (8) Enlightening new religious thoughts, mentalities, and attitudes (*al-aql al-Jadid al-istitla'*).

Originality/value – Seeing the important meaning of religious intersubjectivity, this religious model is very appropriate if applied in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning.

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Introduction

In the 1990s, Samuel Huntington proposed a thesis on *the clash of civilizations*. This idea eventually led to the clash between Islamic and Christian civilizations, Hinduism and Islam, Christianity and Confucianism, Islam and Jews, and Islam and Confucianis. In the realms of national and international relations, after 20 years, the claim was interestingly proved that there were indeed some major incidents. The incident was the outburst of the clash of civilizations, more particularly between the advocates of secularism and religionism. The incidents of 11 September 2001 and the Bali bombings of 2002 in Indonesia, as well as various conflicts that took place in the middle east and some parts of Africa countries, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt, Syria and South Sudan, are eventually the empirical evidence that today's human civilization cannot deny. Moreover, clashes can also occur between fanatical-dogmatic followers even within one religious family, as is the case of Muslims who oppose Ahmadiyya, Shi'a, and so on. In addition to it, the research reports on religious social life also have stated that the world is increasingly becoming intolerant. There is a negative correlation between various regulations, laws, government regulations, legislation and the reality of increasingly hardening and disharmonious social relations, internally and between religious people, or even conflicts (social hostility index) (Thoyyar, 2011).

Not only does the clash of civilizations occur in the contemporary era but also in the cold war, during which there was a notable clash between the dogmas of secularism (the United States and the Western countries) versus the dogmas of religionism (the Soviet Union and the Eastern countries). Disregarding bloc politics, the history of the medieval period and even earlier was repeatedly decked with clashes in terms of warfare. Will this small planet with billions of populations be as miserable as claimed by Huntington? True or not, it will depend on the attitudes of wisdom among the world leaders, political leader and religious elites, including educational practitioners.

The world of education itself is experiencing big problems related to educational patterns and values , which must intersect with globalization and the development of science and technology. The progress of the current era, apart from having a positive impact on human civilization, also hurts the aspects of morality and religiosity of society. This is worrying because the global community is becoming more individualist, materialist, and capitalist.

This study has no intention of discussing Huntington's ideas; however, this is basically an attempt to explore the hardships or troubles mankind that they went through after the September 11, 2001 attack incident and the Bali bombings (Markham and Rabbi, 2002). Can humanity coexist peacefully, live comfortably, quietly, and serenely with neighbors, and establish equal social relationships regardless of the diverse background of ethnicity, tribe, race, religion, and skin color? Is there any postdogmatic religiosity? Is it possible to develop

a religiosity pattern with an intersubjective nuance, to reduce the frequent acute tension between exclusively-subjective religious (religiosity) patterns?

Methods

This paper will present and explore the notion of Islamic Religious Education on the basis of religious intersubjectivity with the perspective/approach of philosophy and phenomenology of religion. In the philosophical approach, this study used the concept of *Perpetual Peace* by Immanuel Kant (1795). The author here followed this philosophical approach to map out and dialogue three patterns of paradigm in religion: subjective, objective, and intersubjective belief. Immanuel Kant used to explain the in-depth difference between subjective and objective awareness within moral and religiosity areas, and declared the preeminence of the "Moral Law" (Beck, 1985). Meanwhile, religious phenomenologists developed a religiosity area in the "intersubjective" pattern. Intersubjective religiosity is an area of human religiosity that can deeply unite and dialogue intensely-sincerely between the subjectivity and objectivity of human religious experience that have been considered to date as the opposite and unable to meet. It is expected that the encounter and appreciation of this intersubjective area can lead the elite religious leaders and their followers to exercise refraining, tolerance, and understanding of the subjectivity of human religiosity and also the subjectivity of civilization in general. However, behind those diverse subjectivities, there is an area of objectivity in religion that cannot be simply dismissed and negated. The negations of this are will have serious consequences or impacts on the mutual life of interfaith communities in today's multicultural era. To maintain peace and mutual understanding of differences between various adherents of the world's religions—even the internal relations among the religious people themselves—and various indigenous and cultural stakeholders as well as human civilization, new efforts are required scientifically, culturally, socially, and politically

It is in this intersubjective area that, while seriously considering the areas of religious objectivity and subjectivity, the concepts of *eternal* and *perpetual peace* in human civilization and lives are likely to flourish. The *clash of civilizations* will certainly become a myth and soon turn to *inclusive partnership* and *dialogical collaboration* among varieties of religions, cultures, and civilizations brought (Adonis, 2006).

Result and Discussion

The various analyses that have been obtained lead to findings that point to three main keywords: religious subjectivity, religious objectivity, and Formulating a Model of Islamic Religious Education Based on Religious Intersubjectivity. The connection between these three aspects also shows that religious education needs to be based on philosophical elements and parts of religious phenomena that emerge in society. Religious education is usually the primary reference source for the community in facing global phenomena.

1. Religious Subjectivity

In terms of religion and social relations between the adherents of religions, particularly Christianity-Islam, Richard C. Martin (1985) cited a conflict between of subjectivist and objectivist communities. The conflict has been exacerbated divided since the subjective proponents believe in divine faith (fideistic), while the proponents of the objectivists rely on scientific methods in seeing the reality of the religious diversity in the world. In the discussion, Immanuel Kant, strictly distinguished between "ecclesiastical faith" (*kirchenglauben*) which refers to more subjectivity, and "pure religious faith" (*reine religionsglaube*) which tends to be more objective meaning.

For Kant, the pure religious faith is not the contradictory or conflicting option to the ecclesiastical proponent's faith. Rather, ecclesiastical faith is a frame for pure rational faith in which there is a rational belief or religious intellectualism inside, which were usually named *pure religious faith* (Kant, 1960). Therefore, philosophically, as with science and the rest of the practical world, religion involves two inseparable points, namely the realm of pure-intellectual theory for theoretical reason and the practical-empirical area for practical reason. Looking back on the past, the Muslim philosopher al-Farabi (deceased 950 AD) highlighted the similar point. He disagreed with the distinction of science which was classified into "foreign" (imported; *dakhiil*) and "indigenous" (original; native domestic products). Rather, he further believed and corroborated the division of science into "theoretical reason" and "practical reason" (Walker, 1994). Accordingly, there is no need for a painstaking and backbreaking debate on which one is more significant? "language" or "logic"? in which it happened in the time of al-Farabi, the debate between Abu Bishr Matta (870-940 AD) and Abu Said al-Sirafi (893-979 AD) (Leaman, 1985; Arkoun, 2006).

The characteristics of subjective religiosity include the following: 1) *Normative*, refers to viewing and seeing the diversity of other people or groups through his or her own religious lens, rather than looking through the lens commonly used by the followers of the other religions in question. This normative perspective is inclined to commit a dogmatic theology. In other words, the normative religion refers to the understanding that many believe only their religion to be the truth, while the others are considered worthless (Adam, 1976). Therefore, the pattern of *al-'uqul al-mutanafisah* (the mind or the logic that always tends to polarize), the entities of "al-ana" and "al-akhar" are always attached to it; 2) *Involvement* or full involvement, is commonly required by the *da'i/evangelicals*, the givers or deliverers of preaching or teachings, the leaders of religious organizations, as well as the leaders of religious sects to their followers (Barbour, 1966).

This mandate for full involvement is good, but sometimes the element of fanaticism (*'asabiyyah; ta'assub*) enters unnoticed and unconsciously. If fanaticism has entered, then "emotions" will also sneak in. In certain cases, when emotions strengthen, actions that do not use logic and common sense become unpreventable and uncontrollable. Then, the follow-up result is the difficulty in discerning the debate of *Usul al-din* (the universally accepted religious fundamental-essentials) and the *Usul al-madzhab* (the fundamental things that only apply to one's own class and group). 3) *Insider*, basically tends to

observation from within. A normative religiosity will naturally lead to the habit of religious believers to observe the existence of religiosity outside of themselves and their groups from the internal side of their own religious teachings (insider). It is extremely hard to establish the position as religious insiders, moreover, to shift, to try to view the others in the "outsider" perspective through scientific approaches, perspectives, methods and data; 4) *Certainty* constitute exact or *qat'iy* or absolute, as opposed to the scientific viewpoint. This puts more emphasis on probability, what is demanded from and by the religionists thus is a certainty. Truth and certainty are closely linked in religion. This certainty is familiarized with the term of "*faith*" or "*iman*".

The following consequence and implications are somewhat difficult for us to notice the term of "*faith*" (the religious belief) and *faith "in tradition"* (the faith or belief in daily life practices in a time-honored, deep-rooted tradition). Subsequently, it is hard to distinguish "*faith*" and *belief arising as a result of individual or group interpretation and understanding*" (*Asy'ariyah* interpretation differs from *Mu'tazilah's* interpretation, and both differ from *Maturidiyyah*; *Sunni* interpretation and *Shi'i* interpretations; *Imam Shafi'i* and *Hambali* interpretations; *Hanafi* and *Ja'fari* interpretations, the interpretations of *Catholic* and *Protestant* traditions with their various denominations and sects; the interpretations of the *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* groups, and henceforth); 5) *Defensive Apologetics*, is usually excessively defending oneself and its group from outside attacks or criticism. Accordingly, religious descriptions and literature become polemical and defensive at the same time. It is quite reasonable to produce and reproduce these polemical-defensive-apologetical religious descriptions since they are used as a tool to defend against attacks coming from outside, whether from followers of other religions, socio-religious researchers, or even from the internal circles of their own religious followers who happen to have different perspectives and use different scholarly perspectives.

The religious discussion involves *ad hominem* which refers to the arguments that what people's belief are true and avoided discussion and rebuttal from the interlocutor (Ess, 1992); 6) *Non-dialogic absolutists*, refers to the accumulation of mindset and religious attitude which tends to a rigid-stiff-absolute knowledge in dealing with various socio-societal problems, let alone political issues. Religious attitudes and views that are non-compromising and do not know the concept of consensus, culminate in their non-dialogical character. This stiff-rigid-absolute attitude is indeed necessary due to the feeling of insecurity (feeling insecure) both as reality and imagined creation, as well as suspiciousness and prejudice against anything that comes from outside, especially those related to or associated with religion and social issues. The feeling of oneself and community that they have always existed within the confines of a minority, although factually they are part of the majority, or vice versa, they are a minority (like Muslim immigrant communities in Europe) who think like the majority, hindering the process of dialogue between civilizations (Haddad, 2002; Kettani, 2005); 7) *Militant-extreme* view appear when the path

of compromise and consensus is completely closed and there is no alternative path that can be pursued, aka deadlock, especially in matters related to political interests and power associated with religion, thereby the assemble and intercrossing of the number of elements will turn into shoots, embryos or forerunners or sources of religious movements that have recently been touted as radical-militant-extreme as they lately embellish various events or incidents of international relations between nations, between tribes and races, between ethnicities and relations between various adherents of world religions (streams, madhabs, sects, denominations, organizations) in different parts of this increasingly narrow planet Earth (Saeed, 2006; Husain, 2007)

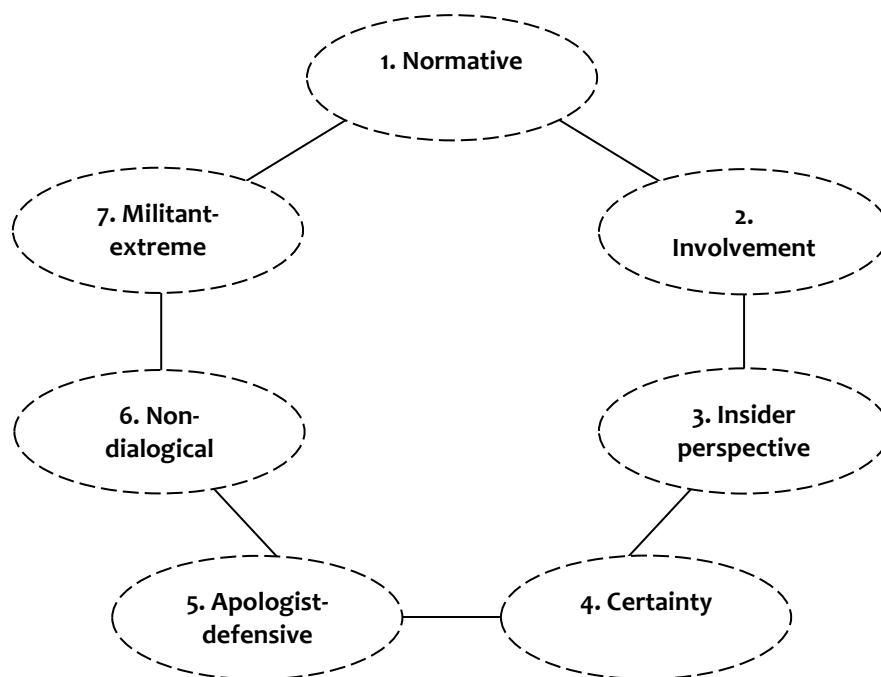


Chart 1. Subjective Religious Model

The teaching of world religions in other parts of the globe generally still takes the religious education pathway of a "normative-subjective" pattern. Many experts in religious studies refer to the religious mindset of this model as "Fideist Subjectivism" in which many call it *al-Aql al-Lahuty-al-Siyasy* (Theo-political rationality). One can imagine how difficult it is to explain the diversity of religion and how to address it. If what is being introduced to the protégé is "only" a model of religious education and teaching that refers to normative-subjective inclination, which is more egoistic (not altruistic), only selfishly concerned about himself and his own group and forgetting and even negating the existence of other people or groups of followers of other religions (the Others). There is almost no loophole at all to view and see the adherents of other religions (which may also apply to other ethnicities, races, tribes, and skin colors) as traveling companions to the village of the peace (*Dar al-Salam*; abode of peace). Such a teaching model may be suitable for oneself and the internal group and in a situation where a world is still tightly closed from the increasingly open

international world interactions as it is in the present day. Unfortunately, the model of religious education subjectivity can hardly give to synergetic religious thoughts, unable to have thoughts and give solutions to the increasingly open world interactions between nations and between followers of religions in the world. Moreover, the model of religious education subjectivity is not able to do anything when it faces the other parties (interest groups) who always want to fish in troubled waters. Those interest groups, either political, economic, social, or cultural, are always lurking and at any time can juggle with or manipulate the subjective, closed, emotional and rigid pattern of religiosity to accomplish their own interests (Abdullah, 2005). Tensions in other parts of the world ranging from Serbia, Bosnia, Palestine, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Somalia, Nigeria the Philippines, Southern Thailand, Indonesia to Ireland. Almost all of them exploit and benefit from this normative-subjective religious factor as a trigger and driving force. Not to mention the emergence of militant-radical-extremist groups these days from religious groups in the world who obviously take advantage of the "emotions" of those groups stemmed from the subjective, normative, closed and religious teaching as the instrument and dimension of their fight.

2. Religious Objectivity

Observing the mindset, teaching model, and subjective religious attitude, which are seemingly not favorable to the social interaction system between nations and more so between the variety of religions' followers in the world that is getting smaller due to technological advances in transportation and communication, thereby religious scholars, especially those who are pursuing the field of religious studies, more particularly the phenomenology of religions, have thought hard and aloud to describe the objectivity of human religiosity, instead of merely the religious subjectivity. Social sciences, in the beginning, like sociology, anthropology, psychology, and history played a very significant role here, which was then evolved into social sciences of religion such as sociology of religion, anthropology of religion, psychology of religion and history of religions. The social scientists in religious studies are eager to present that the reality of religion has both subjective and objective dimensions. Objectivity in religion is outside the will and desire of a person or his group of followers. They are willing to explain and map out the fundamental structure of the objectivity of religions, although in historical practices it also largely relied on the subject "understanding" of the doers and their leaders. Through empirical scientific points of view and studies, obtained through field research (ethnological-anthropological), religious people cannot resist the fundamental structures inherent in the historical, anthropological, and sociological realities of those religions.

The religious objectivity can only be carried out through in-depth research. Research institute and higher education institutions have a significant role in the study of the objectivity of human religiosity. Objective understandings in religion are, among others, characterized in the following points: 1) *Descriptive-empirical knowledge*, at this point, refers to the whole picture of what religion which is suitable to its respective adherents.

Afterward, researchers record, transcribe, classify, categorize, and look for any significant relationship between the findings of one data and another, and interpret them based on the social studies of religions in the scientific perspective; 2) *Detachment* is distant from or having a distance from the object of study. In contrast to the attitudes and perspectives that ascertain the need for full engagement and involvement in subjectivity belief, hereby what is needed here is the ability of researchers and religionists to be impartial in observing and viewing the fundamental construction of religion. To avoid and reduce excessive biases of subjective interests and understandings in religion, the research methods and theoretical framework are necessarily employed here; 3) *Outsider* perspective is easy to understand when religious researchers and people are no longer merely content being confined and trapped by *insider* horizons and perspectives (as is the case in subjective religiosity), rather they are eager to be able to play their role in viewing religion from the outside (McCutcheon, 1999). Again, the fundamental instrument here are the procedures and scientific approach which in the description above the author has referred to as the objectivity or theoretical thought of religion and not only stopped at the subjectivity or practical reason (or often referred to as '*amaliah*'). This is where the striking difference between the social sciences and the social sciences in religious perspective. A religious researcher is a scholar who has a religious experience and utilize methodology and a scientific approach to the human religiosity which is indeed incredibly diverse. Meanwhile, being a purely social researcher does not necessarily mean they have a religious experience. They, in general, are equipped with sophisticated methodological tools and scientific approaches but lack adequate religious comprehension. The same is also true with religionists, more particularly their elite leaders, which are required to have an objective attitude in the scientific perspectives to understand the r religions. By and large, those leaders of religion are incapable or less capable of taking a position as scholars of religions since they are unable to get out of the bonds and traps of their respective religious subjectivity and lack of experience of being an *outsider* in a scientific perspective. It needs to be affirmed here that outsider does not mean moving out of the religion they believe in (Knot, 2005); 4) *History* of human has produced a series of scientific answer. In the objective religious views, they strictly distinguish between the territories of *Faith* and *Faith in Tradition*, namely the implementation and practice of faith in the history of humanity. In other words, the historicity (*tarikhiyyah*) of human religiosity is highly considered by the descriptive scientific pattern of religions. Culture, history, tradition and *habits of mind* are of important in religious scholarship because basically all religions have formed a long history with strong traditions for centuries in their respective environments. It can be described Historically and anthropologically how the system and knowledge of rituals in religions started (*origin*), then undergo change and further evolve. Language is used as a means of communication and the way the social relations are built among people in the perspective of religion (sociology) and the system of belief (anthropology); 5) *Reductionist and relativist* groups tends to view phenomena in basic terms and deny objectivity. There are criticisms directed toward a Descriptive-empirical approach to religious phenomena.

One of them is the overemphasizing of the externalities (*lahiriyyah*) of a religion. This is understandable as the early generations of religious researchers did mostly come from the traditions of the positivistic social sciences. They have not acquired training in the study of more comprehensive-humanistic religions. These deficiencies will later be refined by the phenomenological approach of religion.

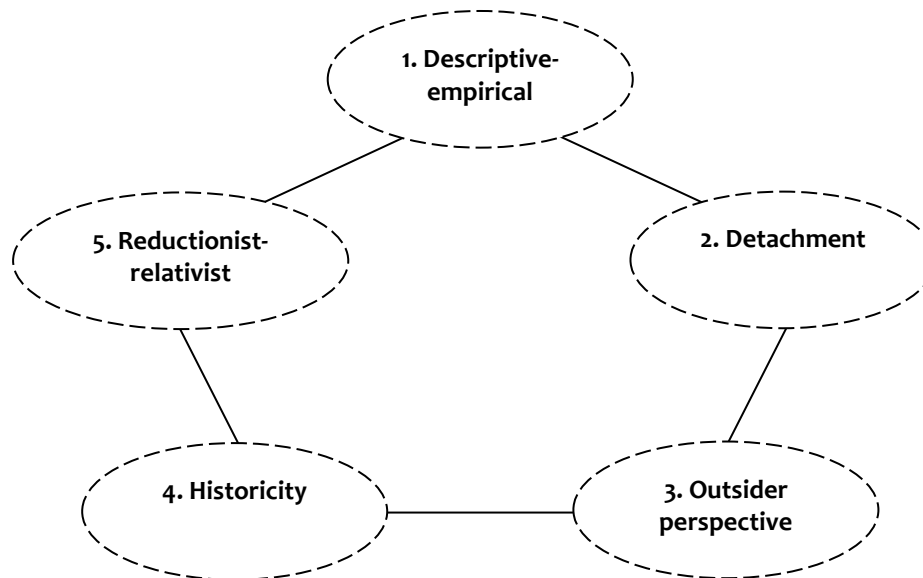


Chart 2. Objective Religious Model

It is seemingly easy to observe in the world of religious lives in the field that subjective (fideistic subjectivism) and objective (scientific objectivism) approaches in the study of religions is separable and do not speak to each other. The study of Islam (or Buddhism or Hinduism, Christianity, and Catholicism) which can be normative and subjective on various levels does not know the study of religion that is descriptive-objective-historical. However, general education under the Ministry of Education and Culture which should concentrate more on objectivity to religion and without neglecting the subjectivity – does not provide as it should. The disparity between those ideas is so widening. Is all this true that religion can achieve global peace? If the two, subjective-normative norm in religious education and objective-scientific style are too disconnected, no dialogue and a close-knit relationship between them, not talking to each other – in other words, there is a tremendous dichotomy of scholarship – it will certainly have serious consequences both soon and in the long term. At least, the closest consequence is the "narrowing" of knowledge and religious experience (narrow-mindedness; religious communalism; religious fanaticism), the insecurity, religious illiteracy and clash within oneself, the difficulty faced by religious leader and elites, educators, and religionists, by and large, for determining their attitudes towards the existence of the others around them. *Religious illiteracy* has indirect lead to violations of rights of religions guaranteed in the constitution. Moreover, these days the modern people tend to instantly learn religion, through Facebook, the "fast food" sites, no need to struggle to acquire. Accordingly, the subjective-normative-exclusive and

instantaneous approaches increasingly become the preferable options. Students and lecturers who pursue science and technology, as well as the conventional Islamic religious knowledges (*Ulum al-Din*) – which the author distinguishes from the *Dirasaat Islamiyyah* – are not very familiar with religious scientific discussions that are academic-comprehensive from various perspectives, not as detailed and in-depth as supposed to be (Fadl, 2007). The religiosity pattern obtained is dogmatic, where the synergy of religiosity becomes too difficult to achieve.

In his observation, Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi' (2002), a Muslim scholar from Palestine, asserted that the social approach within Islamic studies is of significant as the empirical evidence showed that many students receiving scholarship pursue their education in Middle East countries that educational atmosphere is seemingly lack of criticism. In the west, people develop the scientific tradition to study religion. Therefore, students from Arab countries are widely expected to build academic's capacity in Islamic studies (*Ulumu al-Din*) and there is no statement again saying that sociology of religion is a *bid'ah* in the modern Arab world.

In other word, the students and lecturers obtaining scholarships, or especially those pursuing self-funded education, prefer more practical things, that are easy to hold, and can instantly be implemented (practiced), without the slightest depth of thinking. In the modern era religious thinking is experiencing drought and even losing the major spiritual values that can maintain a plural-diverse mutual lives. Either the Subjectivity and the objectivity would bring about the reduction of externalities and simplifications according to their respective versions and they both seemingly faces a dead end.

Then, what are the efforts of religious scholars to respond the contemporary religious thought at standstill, especially to deal with achieving the global world peace and harmonious relations between nations and many adherents of religions? What are their attempts to shift the paradigm (shifting paradigm) from a dogmatic religiosity to a post dogmatic one?

3. Formulating a Model of Islamic Religious Education Based on Religious Intersubjectivity

A multireligious and multicultural society in the form of the nation-state with the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is a sociological and political reality as well as the national lives in Indonesia. The way of communicating, thinking, mingling, and socializing in a constitution-based nation-state is quite a contrast to those in the religious state era (theocracy). Equal citizenship is one of the characteristics of the nation-state era lives (Achadi & Fithriyana, 2020). The nation-state after World War 2 is also different from the previous one.

The Post-World War 2 nation-state, more particularly after the founding of the organization of world nations (United Nations) or the UN, its members are also bound by a mutually regulated agreement of the world organization. After the United Nations has

been founded, human civilization's history covered three significant values: local religious traditions, the nation-state, world citizenship values. Demanding value "vary in religion, ethnicity, race, class but one" (*Bhinneka tunggal ika*) is so different from the demands of religious teachings, which commonly prioritize and unite the religious groups they adhere to. This transition and encounter of values are considered not easy, and not all citizens are ready to accept it.

Perpetual peace and religious harmony in a diverse society entail the extreme change and transformation in the religious perspective of an individual and group since the world peace is not possible without peace between leaders and adherents of religions. According to Hans Kung (1986), there will no world peace without religious peace. Some believe that "*al-istibdad al-siyasy mutawallid min al-istibdad al-diniy*" or political dictatorship existed as a result of religious dictatorship (Al-Razzaq, 2003). The truth claims usually held as the foundation of the dogmatic, exclusive, subjective belief and attitude (ecclesiastical faith) among the followers of religions, has become a drawback and the first stumbling block for many religious adherents to show respects to others and other religious adherents (*the others; al-akhar*). They encounter formidable hurdle in order to grasp, view, and perceive what other people or groups understand, see, and identify themselves (*self; al-ana*) with their intact rights and obligations – without any reduction.

New life values that prioritize more non-discrimination principles, either in the spheres of political, social, religious, economic, or cultural lives, without prejudice (*su'u al-dzan*) among individuals in religious communities, an equality among numerous religious adherents before the law of a nation-state, and the view that followers of other religions are fellow travelers who help each other in dealing with problems, have become difficult to sow. The values of civility are of important to preserve the unconditioned perpetual peace that all the community members of religious adherents in the world covet. The humanity and civility values are indispensable to building harmony among religious people.

This new religious perspective and philosophy (*new fiqh*) ensure the importance of a reform of methodology in the religious studies, including Islamic religious education, which has been running so far. The Islamic religious education model in question is an education that is more sensitive, responsive, and adaptive to new numerous humanity and civility values evolving in the international interactions and associations between world nations, tribes, races, ethnicities, and religions; and a thorough or meticulous education concerning the development of thoughts and realities of interfaith relationship work at the level of local, regional, and international.

This change is very crucial so that Islamic religious education is hopefully able to respond ongoing developments outside the curriculum and syllabus that seem to have been regulated by the state or by religious organizations, as well as by individual initiatives. In the religious studies, the new religious view, or the new jurisprudence (*new fiqh*) in the

area of inter-religious relations of the world is academically introduced by the phenomenological approach of religion.

The phenomenology of religion is an approach to the study of religion dealing with the issues in the study approach and religious attitudes that are inclined to be subjective-normative-exclusive (ecclesiastical faith) and solely objective-descriptive-scientific (pure religious faith) – as stated by Kant— that loses the spirit, ethos or spirit to coexist peacefully in other parts of the world. The bridge connecting the two facets of religion is what the author refers to as the "Intersubjectivity" of religion.

The intersubjective approach to the phenomenology of religion is basically to understand the other's beliefs of other groups, to tolerate or respect and recognize the existence and right to life of each existing (subjective) religion, without any slightest prejudice or reduction, yet still always be cautious and attentive so that each side will not stumble and slip into the direction of a rigid, exclusive, dogmatic truth claim, which is unhealthy. Therefore, in addition to paying attention to and strengthening the religious subjectivity side, it also needs to pay attention to and strengthen the objective sides of the historical side (historicity; *tarikhiyyah*) of the existing religious traditions, in which their presence is undeniable. The history of religions that are full of "interpretations" – not to call them "interests" – leaders, religious leaders, political party figures, the ruling power, clerics (scholars), *kyai*, teachers, lecturers, Buddhist monks (*bhikku*), priests, pastors, intellectuals, as well as laymen. The historical side that cannot be avoided from the process of formation (origin), change (change), and development according to local, regional, and international challenges faced by the context of the times, political, social, cultural situations, and levels of knowledge evolving in a certain era. In the end, the phenomenology of religion wants to affirm the existence of *common patterns* (*al-tsawabit*) among the existing religions and at the same time affirm the existence of *particular patterns* (*al-mutaghayyirat; al-mutahawwilat*) wrapped in the skin of the history and traditions of world religions. The disputes, tussles, debates, in-depth discussions, and dialectics between the two will usher in the establishment of new attitudes and views called empathy and sympathy between fellow adherents of various religions as one of the requirements for psychological interfaith relations toward the formation of new values of humanity and civility that lead to the establishment of postdogmatic religiosity, peaceful coexistence, integration, the synergy of religion, and alliances between civilizations.

Therefore, the formulation of an Islamic Religious Education model based on the intersubjectivity of religion must consider the following things:

- 1) Intellectual classification of the *Common* and *Unique Pattern* in the history and thoughts on religion. Religious diversity and plurality are the fact that individuals experience in their daily lives. A certain religion adherent claims that the religion he embraces is the most correct one (truth claim). The essentials of the Subjectivity in religious perspective are illustrated above on seven points. In dealing with tensions

between these one-sided claims, the phenomenology of religion thus provides religious concepts and approaches which are rationally to determine between unchangeable or common/universal patterns (*al-tsawabit*) that are invariable in many religions and changeable pattern or particular/unique pattern (*al-mutaghayyirat*) in many religious beliefs. Those patterns are clearly easy to grasp and delineate through the basis and radical intellectuals of *ijtihad* (the use of logic; not only the use of language or *lughah*), as well as the intimate knowledge and spirituality in-depth. Meanwhile, the changing side of religion, the religious pattern of special-unique-typical or *al-mutaghayyirat*, is clearly explained through research activities by sticking to the research rules and methodology. That research are conducted with empirical perspectives and sociological, anthropological, or psychological and historical approaches according to the differences in the geographical location of the place of birth of religions, the language used, and the socio-political-economic conditions that existed when the religions appeared (origin) along with changes and further development experienced by many religious adherents through their long history. The common and unique pattern Basically are similar to the idea of the Subjective and Objective terms mentioned above, but with considerable emphasis on each. The phenomenology of religion would like to highlight that religious studies in the recent times always should set and involve the two patterns into one and an inseparable attitude pattern between them. To put it another way, a phenomenological method in religious studies believes that the religious studies are always subjective-cum-objective or vice versa. Separating the two diametrically is not the real religious study.

- 2) *Epoche*. *Epoche* is the ability of an individual or a group to govern self-regulation from giving statements or expressions sincerely and purely that are detrimental, insulting, demeaning, infidelizing, apostatizing, or hurting to other groups in any way. To release or express the statements is locked up or postponed from the very first. Statements and judgments, both positive and negative, directed at or aimed at other religious people or groups and their following communities are *postponed* first. To put it another way, this *epoche* technique is essentially to minimize the involvement and combination of uncontrolled emotions and those that cannot be publicly and rationally accounted for. This is not only limited and applied to religious areas but also involve race, tribe, clan, gender, ethnicity, age group, differences in education levels, and people with disability. The postponing technique for a while is practically not to hastily judge other people or groups but to acquire an obvious illustration, intact, comprehensive, non-distorted, or to avoid the bias of any interest. This sort of thinking step needs to be passed first, before continuing to the next stage.
- 3) *Eidetic vision*. Grasping the essence of religions is not that simple. It is this pursuit that phenomenologists refer to as *eidetic vision*. This can be illustrated through marking with multiple *curly brackets* (the sign { }, then followed by another parenthesis of square brackets [], and followed by the next round brackets (), and so on) to variety

of information such as news, reports, social gossips, accusations regarding religious faiths and beliefs among individuals and communities from various (sometimes untrustworthy) sources (in Islam, it is called *tabayyun*). *Eidetic vision* is the exploration towards the core of human religiosity in which it asks and distinguishes which one is the *skin* and which is the *meat* (content), which one is *a universal, common pattern*, and which one is *a specific, particular pattern*? Which one is a *shared value*, and which one is a *distinctive value*? This is indeed not easy since it is always an inherent human nature to take shortcuts, the easiest pathways, which do not require the application of in-depth reflections. In the historical and sociological perspective, religious practice among humans show a difference, let alone in terms of their natural and physical appearance. Individuals' or group's religiosity, belief, or faith are definitely dissimilar to the truth in an absolute manner (*certainty*) to date. Given that, it shows that *there is no congruous religion in this world due to the factor of the long historicity through which it went through. However, behind the diversity, there is a fundamental structure that coats it.*

- 4) The historicity of religion. The objective-scientific religious studies are considerably contributing to the phenomenology of religion. This discipline eventually employs accurate data gathered and collected through in-depth empirical and historical study using various socio-religious scientific approaches (the principle of evidentialism), both from the sociology of religions, history of religions, the psychology of religions, and the anthropology of religions. The unique pattern (*al-mutaghayyirat* area) can only be identified obviously when the phenomenology of religion is able to analyse the data and field findings. These actually involve seven components concerning the empirical and historical life of religions, regardless of the religion name. *First*, every religious follower must focus on performing particular activities regularly, routinely, and repeatedly (*ritual*; religious services; *fiqh*); *Second*, to trust or believe in something (faith system, *aqidah*, or doctrine); *Third*, to appreciate leaders who are considered to have a great influence (prophets, apostles, clerics or *ulama* as heirs to the prophets); *Fourth*, to respect the scriptures (the Holy Qur'an, the gospel/Bible, the Torah, the Zabur, Vedas, and other books); *Fifth*, having a history that the founders are depicted as heroic icon and the succession of continuity of the next generation until the present day (*Tarikh* or chronology, era; *Sirah* or prophetic biographies, genealogy); *Sixth*, having a moral and ethics code as a reference to attitudes of its legitimate adherents (*akhlaq*); and *Seventh*, receiving supports from solid institutional organizations (social, educational, political institutions) (Cox, 2006; Smart, 1996).

Again, stated at this discussion above, it says that there is no congruent religion in this world. A religion is basically unique and distinctive, and it cannot be generalized. It will be too reckless (injudicious) and oversimplified to assume that all religions are similar. Those claims or even allegations are not proven academically with evidence.

Even, theologically, Islam is doubtful of its validity. What equates to or more accurately “resembles” among the major religious groups is the belief system and the socio-religious system that keep in their existence and characterized by the 7 (seven) dimensions outlined above and even can be further added and subtracted according to the development of field findings. Herein lies the importance *al-mutaghayyirat* in religions. At this point, there is the separation point between the social approach to religion which is contented only with the external part of the religions (*reductionist*) (Adams, 1976). Meanwhile, the social sciences of religion approach always involve the hypothesis towards the existence of "non-falsifiable postulated alternate realities" factors (assuming the presence of an alternating reality that is unfalsified/doubtful) inherent in the world's religions (Cox, 2006). This last factor exacerbates and adds to the complexity of human religious issues on the world stage since it is inherently attached to the theistic or fideistic religious subjectivity mentioned earlier in this paper.

- 5) *Verstehen* (*understanding-in-depth*). Having apprehended that the existence of human religion is indeed highly complicated, thus it is closely linked with the very thick, even non-falsifiable (unmistakable, unquestionable, unfalsified) subjectivity factor. However, we are also aware and understand that the subjectivity of religiousness cannot but be deeply wrapped up in the historicity of humanity. Furthermore, religious experts are also well-informed towards the religiosity which tends to have objective belief (in terms of the terminology of Immanuel Kant, called pure religious faith,) and this essentially exists if only intellectual *ijtihad* and sharp logic and in-depth of insight exist. As a result, the phenomenology of religion establishes an important requirement for the study of world religions. This discipline is popular with the term “*Verstehen*” which refers to an attempt to truly and sincerely grasp the nature and existence of religions in the world. In this point, it does not either judge other religion's followers or to vilify or let alone to refer to infidelity. Contemporary religious studies are hopefully able to create perpetual peace and religion harmony and those establish if the collaboration of leaders, elites and religious adherents in this earth, different cultures and world civilizations, among races, tribes, and ethnicities which more prioritize and put first the spirit, desire, and fundamental desire to recognize seriously and get to know (*al-ta'aruf*) either similarities or differences among each other. It is about not judging each other, scorning, discrediting, discriminating, insulting, degrading, marginalizing each other, asserting to be the rightest one, feeling more superior to others, or do not understand the feelings of other people or groups, and disrespect other people and groups. Here applies the mutual understanding principle (the need to acknowledge each other, understand each other's feelings and thoughts, strengthen mutual solidarity between each other, reinforce the fight against abuse of power, injustice, and discrimination. The religious phenomenologists believe that all human life (*hayah*; life) along with the beliefs, faiths, and belief systems and ordinances of living

them are of significant and precious to each person and group who believe and hold them. Scorn, insults, cynicism, sarcasm, and more particularly acts of violence directed at other groups are definitely incompatible with social ethic and spirit ethos that religious phenomenology seeks to sow. These kinds of things, i.e. actions and attitudes that prioritize the willingness to completely figure out the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of other people or groups with equal enthusiasm, according to Immanuel Kant's ethics, are categorized as "unconditioned." This is also what he refers to as "ecclesiastical faith" is an outer part or shell in which there is an innermost part or "kernel" as "pure rational faith" in religion. Those things are basically ideas that Kant wanted 200 years ago when dealing with social-political conflict and religious tension between Catholics and Protestants in Europe after the emergence of the Protestant religious movement in the "renaissance" period and during pre and post the French revolution in the 18th century. The difficulties and anxieties that Kant felt at that time, are now increasingly multiplied, due to the encounters among nations and the increasingly complex and complicated adherents of religions since they involve various actors stemmed from the warhead of the many world's injustices in the economic and technological spheres.

- 6) *Empathy and sympathy*. The Holy Qur'an asks people not to despair. The outpouring of thoughts to solve religious problems needs to be constantly pursued. If scarcity in the food area, then encourages humans to think hard about overcoming it by making breakthroughs in creating high technology of biotechnology engineering, then they need to do the same regarding scarcity (shortage) in the area of humanities. Creative-innovative new ways of thinking to solve complex problems faced by religious people need to be continuously showed by their leaders. The irrelevant models long ago needs to be redesigned. The religious approach that is very subjective or the one that stops at the Objectivity, apparently has not been able to penetrate the major problem of life among religious people and even in the step to achieving any proposed solution. *Living together and lasting peace* are still far from the expectation of all who yearn for it. In religious studies, the phenomenological approach seems to open up a space where the heavy emphasis is on the believer's perspective. Religious constructs and the mode of religious thinking need to be unceasingly sought together. Without any pretension of having to change the system of religious beliefs and faiths as its adherents have always believed and held to date, religious phenomenologists want to highlight and add to the need for a sincere-genuine awareness of the religionists that there is "the Other religious adherents.

A set of rights that have been recognized and agreed upon by world bodies such as the United Nations and are supported by International Law. Understanding the set of human rights declared by the United Nations in 1948 and ratified by the world's nation-states is a new task for today's Muslim intellectuals to share understanding with other fellows Muslims. In the context of the Muslim world, this task of

understanding and making others understand is what is commonly touted as the new Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) in the social context. Basically, the phenomenological methods provide such the mode of thought through *epoche* and *eidetic vision* techniques which aims to think critically towards variety of religious thought recently. The key point of phenomenological approach is to show and give sympathy and empathy towards individuals and adherents of religions in the world. Without distinguished into majority or minority, individuals or groups can have similar negative feelings such as anxiety, hurt, pain, fear, elimination, discrimination abuse and marginalization. Also, we may experience the responses which are rather same with those or others whom we consider as different. In short, the discipline highly highlights those significant ideas so that empathy sense can be able to deal with the disparity between subjectivity and objectivity among Muslims themselves and other religious adherents.

- 7) Inclusive-partnership-dialogical. The *epoche* and *eidetic vision* techniques and other procedures that followed have not meant anything for attempts to pursue Perpetual Peace and religious harmony unless they have formed a broad perspective of religion and ethical values in religious life that reflect more inclusive, partnership and dialogical. Social ethics and humanity values can ultimately lead to the religion's future. It is not easy for people, more especially groups, to get to this level or *maqam*, since it is the result of constant, continuous attempts at *tafkik* (breaking; demolition; positive deconstruction) carried out with great patience to break the granite stone crust of standardized and frozen religious subjectivity. Dialogic means the possibility of community groups and religious leaders to establish and engage in dialogue equally discussing the common difficulties facing humanity in any region. There will be intense, friendly, and equal communication between them, halving any communication gap and stopping any negative thinking (*su'u al-dzan*) between variety of religious communities. It only requires a sense of empathy and sympathy that a genuine dialogue process can take place by promoting inclusive-integrative values. They do accordingly not forget the existence of others. This rule does apply to both inter-religious and intra-religious relations. In the public area, we need to bring others in on it and they are closely linked with our entity. The term of *the others* (*al-akhar*) basically refers to the idea that is segregated and distantly separated from us long time ago. If this exists, the politics of segregation, discrimination, marginalization, subordination, and elimination will come up again. Hence, basic human value will definitely not be respected and then, the tension of conflict cannot be avoided. It is worth noting that to build togetherness definitely require the idea of partnership and participatory which involves other religious communities to reciprocally deal with severely increased problems of humanity such as the crime of illegal drugs, child and women trafficking, abuse of power in the form of corruption, environment, poverty, global warming and violations of human rights. *Epoche* and *eidetic vision* eventually can be achieved through innovative thinking so that religious

groups and individuals take the lead in this initiative. Those vision involves universal values such as human values (virtues kindness), fairness (justice), compassion (*rahman-rahim*), honesty, altruistic (putting the interests of others first), respect and mutual (*ihitiram al-ghair; al-ta'aruf*), mutual trust, modesty, equality (equity; *al-musawah*), tolerance (*al-tasamuh*), and an awareness of the human confines (humility; self-restraint), prioritizing patience and self-control in solving various socio-humanitarian problems (forbearance; *al-Sabr*); willingness to forgive (*al-'af*; forgiveness); self-discipline (*zabt al-nafs*); prioritizing the path and attitude of moderation (*al-tawazun; al-tawassut*), and problem-solving patterns that avoid any violence (non-violence; *al-'unf, al-ghuluw wa al-tatarruf*) either physiological, physical, social, or cultural violence, more particularly religious violence.

- 8) Enlightening fresh perspective of religious thoughts, mentalities, and attitudes (*al-aql al-Jadid al-istitla'*). When exploring the implications and consequences of the subjective model of religious thought pattern (*al-aql al-lahuty-al-siyasy*; the politically nuanced pattern of divine reasoning) and understanding the implications and consequences of the objectivity in religious perspective as well as investigating (*al-aql al-tarikhy al-'ilmy*; the scientific-scientific pattern of religious thought)), the existence of religion is of significant and closely linked with human life. Although in the modern sociology of religion, August Comte asserted that religion would disappear in the positivist period. Almost all contemporary sociology experts of religion rejected the truth of the modernity thesis (Manemann, 2006). The phenomenology of religion puts forward another thesis. Although Religion has any impacts and consequences for its followers, it is worthwhile. The existence of religion, which it comes later is guaranteed to be better than the preceding one is no longer valid. Thereby, in the new era the study of religion aims to establish perpetual peace and its impact on lives practically occurs when its adherents can respect and trust each other (mutual trust) and guarantee the peaceful coexistence and religion synergy continuously. Similar to the Science and Social Science that are always being developed continuously through further in-depth investigation and innovation using and utilizing different theoretical models and scientific approaches, there is an urgent need to develop religious and socio-religious lives (including Islamic studies). The phenomenology of religion is basically to accelerate development of religious thinking that can disclose information for all communities, both the internal circles of the religion itself (insiders) and outsiders and social observers (outsiders), as well as the results of interactions and encounters between the two. This new mindset borrows Arkoun's terminology ((2002) or can be simply called the new leading-edge religious thinking, mentality, and attitudes (*al-aql al-jadid al-istitla'i*), rather than *al-aql al-diny al-taqlidy* which is more dogmatic-exclusive-closed, or more especially *al-aql al-jadid al-'unfiy-al-tatarrufy* or extreme, radical, and violent religious paradigm. The thought processes, the state of mind, the new religious mind set to be built, and the

system of work that have been outlined in the above points will more or less contribute to coloring and determining the future of the world's religions.

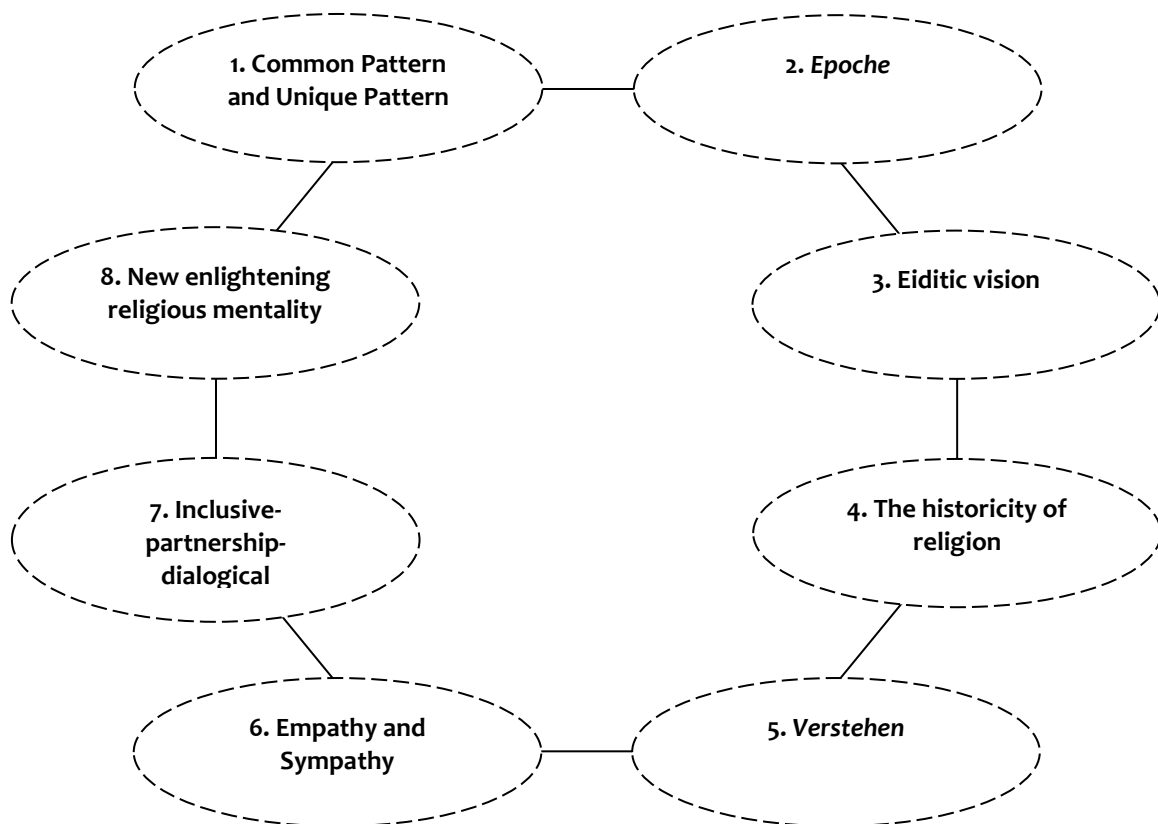


Chart 3. Intersubjective Religious Model

Conclusion

The author is eventually well aware that the role of religion as a force in peacemaking in world's future, more particularly the perpetual peace, and the harmonious religion in a plural and multicultural society will not be enough merely through Islamic religious education. There are certainly many other significant factors, such as economic difficulties, security policies, education, culture, social, world justice and double standard politics of certain countries. They are indeed interrelated. Still, all of them create a continuous relationship that will eventually instill the religious sense. Accordingly, there will be no world peace, no religious harmony without involving the the elite leaders and the religious adherents at the same time. The relationship between the three dimensions and at the same time the pattern of human religiosity: subjectivity, objectivity, and intersubjective belief cannot be presumed as separate entities, not interrelated, or without greeting each other (integrated entities). In fact, the three of them move in a circle, touching each other and meeting each other in the religionists themselves. The fusion of these three dimensions, patterns, and religious awareness will lead to a new religious paradigm that is possible to produce the harmony of religious life in our country, following the national

motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. This is not easy since, in general, religious education in our country and other countries is still in the subjective phase. Indeed, the objectivity has fully not accomplished and attained and of course, intersubjective belief is also ignored. Quite possibly, an individual understands well or is highly literate for his or her own religion, however highly illiterate, poorly understands the religiosity of other people and groups. The connectivity of the religious patterns: subjective, objective, and intersubjective models will be definitely a meaningful dialogue (*hiwar*) among various religious leaders and followers. They are not in the form of *jadal* (debate), which is polemical, defensive, and apologetic. There is the most genuine (sincerest) willingness to work towards *eidetic vision* (the essence and substance of different human religions) accompanied with strong logic and profound insights from individuals' conscience (*qalbun salim*). Criticism of the practice religious life is basically permitted since human beings cannot be free at all from the error of "interpretation". Our religious interpretations of a certain era are likely correct, however, it does not apply to other eras, conditions, situations, and when the research findings of the researchers prove the contrary.

By rejecting this possibility of misinterpretation, it will be very easy for religious people to fall into the authoritarianism way of thinking, committing things in religion's name, convincing with scriptural equivocation, and arguing in the name of God. Religious thoughts and interpretations (*al-afkar* and *al-tafasir al-diniyyah*) with their respective subjective individual thinking foundations (in the body of religions; *al-adyan*; *al-milal* in its plural form) seem to be imprecise or erroneous. If it is indeed a misinterpretation, then religious people must be humbly and sportively willing to correct it after going through transparent and accountable public input, criticism, and testing. Scientific methods and ways of thinking are once again highly indispensable here for evaluating the legitimacy of religious claims in public. Only in such humility, self-restraint, and critical ways, new patterns and models of religion (religiosity) – that are *more polite, inclusive, integrative, transparent, open, dialogical, not closed, not easily prejudiced (have negative thinking), and accountable in public* – will bring about the realization of a new civilization of religions in the world that supports the embodiment of perpetual peace and religious harmony between leaders and religious adherents.

One significant point for the new religious perspective and mindset toward perpetual peace and religious harmony is to construct the ability of religious elites not only as religious leaders but also as community leaders. In general, religious leaders subjectively use idiomatic expression, protect, and defend their own class regardless of the feelings of other people and religious groups when expressing and leading in public spaces. This is the prominent characteristic of subjectivity in religion. Meanwhile, the leaders of religious group who acquire in-depth understanding and inner call that they are also community leaders, will adjust their grammar, speech, vocabularies, mentality, facial expressions, *solah bowo*, *muna muni* (Javanese), and word choices to the demands of objective religious

patterns (awareness of the existence of other people, followers, and groups outside of ourselves and groups that we have objectively).

It is this combination of subjective and objective that this paper refers to as an intersubjective pattern of religiosity. Intersubjectivity in religious patterns is basically the power and awareness of the elites concerning the existence of others which is required to appreciate and protected their rights. The leadership pattern of the intersubjective religious elites requires them to always use a Bilingual language (dual languages; two world views) in nature, nuance, and content by mastering the language and idioms of traditions and the basic sciences of their religion (which are inclined to be subjective) and at the same time, understanding, being sensitive, and mastering the vocabularies commonly practiced by religions and the demands of other people or groups (which tends to objectivity). The choices and strings of words expressed by community leaders who practiced bilingual nuances will be good to hear by other groups and they will also be able to yes, without feeling ridiculed, excluded, marginalized, offended, and discriminated against. The new civility principle supported by such religious literacy is what is indispensable for building religious harmony in multireligious and multicultural societies in our country. In this context, the Islamic Religious Education model based on the intersubjectivity of religion finds its significance and relevance.

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