



The Study of Occidentalism: The Existence of Childfree in The East-West Paradigm

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Abstract

Islam has a very long history of civilizational development. Seeing Islamic civilization has always been oriented towards the Eastern world. Historically, Eastern civilization has never been separated from Western civilization. In fact, it can be said that the West is the center of civilization because a large part of the development of science and technology is currently developing in the West. In the study of Occidentalism, Islamic civilization is termed the Eastern region while European civilization is termed the Western region. This study needs to be carried out to release the East from two dependencies, namely dependence on the West and also dependence on Eastern discourse oriented towards religious theology only. To achieve this, Easterners set solutions, sometimes set things and set another, and still believe in relationships between one another. In this study, we will discuss childfree in the East-West paradigm. The end result, is the equality of civilization between East and West, so as not to blame each other or feel the most right for one civilization or the phenomenon that exists, in this case regarding childfree.

1. Introduction

Islam positions the Qur'an as the main guide for life and its position is very vital, in it covering the basics of law, guidance of worship and doctrine of the faith. The Qur'an greatly influences the way of life and also the perspective of its adherents, and is a foundation that can lead people to a better life. That way, Muslims will race against the Qur'an for problems that occur in social life to find solutions and solutions to problems in it. However, today the problems that arise in the contemporary era are so diverse and complex that they require a broader explanation. In this case, hadith, ijma' and also qiyas of scholars are needed so that the determination of a law can provide *benefits* and solve problems that occur. In addition, the Qur'an is a historical and universal source of civilization. The source of civilization in it will always be maintained and provide exemplary values that can be applied in social life.

Speaking of civilization, there will always be dynamics in every development of the times. Civilization is defined as the progress and intelligence of a nation. Civilization is also known as *civilization*, which is the process that makes a human being civilized or a society develops and advances related to social, economic, artistic, educational, and other things in life. The term civilization is often associated with culture, even though the two are different, culture is the

result of elements of creation, taste and *krasa* while civilization is more subtle and complex and more advanced than culture. So, it can be known that the position of civilization is more *tinggi* than culture. Islamic civilization will advance if it is able to interact with local culture selectively and stick to existing theological values. If Islam is not selective and follows the culture that develops in society, both local and foreign cultures, Islam will lose its distinctive characteristics and Muslims will be separated from its cultural basis.

In the study of Occidentalism, Islam is positioned and termed as Easterners while Europeans as Westerners. In the *dirkursus* of Eastern civilization, it will not be separated from Western civilization. This is because many aspects of the national and international life of Eastern countries still depend on the strength of Western countries. As has been explained, Islam itself must be selective in filtering cultures. They must instill a relationship that is the relationship between East and West, so that to the incoming culture they must be able to establish solutions, sometimes emphasize things and sometimes establish other things. Thus giving birth to the understanding that the necessity of change is not only in the Eastern or Western world, but a relationship that supports each other, does not blame or feel the most correct between one another. In looking at civilization, there are differences between East and West, this happens because of historical, regional, and ethnic factors. These three factors are used as important capital in science talks. Even if they differ in these three factors, but the side of similarity lies in each underlying empirical points as the basic benchmark for the truth of a civilization. Islam bases its truth through the sources of the Qur'an and Sunnah, while the West bases its truth with empirical and ratio.

The difference in the way of looking at a civilization will give birth to thoughts on various phenomena that occur in both Eastern and Western civilizations. In this article, we will discuss one of the phenomena born in the Western world, namely *Childfree*. The decision not to have children (*childfree*) as a Western culture does not have to be adopted by the whole nation. Regarding this phenomenon, Eastern nations can accept or reject the reality that occurs by not violating the existing theological rules. Thus, the main task of the study between East and West is to abolish Eurocentrism and return the West to its natural limits. If this is realized, there will be a cultural balance. There is no difference, it's a special culture and it's a culture that's not special or vice versa.

2 Materials and Methods

Every scientific study must have its own method of preparation, while the method can be interpreted as an orderly method used to carry out a job to be achieved as desired. In order to achieve this, the method used in this study is qualitative by collecting data from various literature, articles and other sources that are scientific in nature that are coherent with the theme in this study. From these data sources, this study will collect data on the history and development of *childfree*, the Eastern view of *childfree*, the Western view of *childfree*, and the equality of Eastern and Western civilizations in responding to the *childfree* phenomenon according to the state of reality that occurs without violating the rules of theology that have existed. That way, we will get the concepts of how *the childfree phenomenon is* reviewed in the Eastern and Western paradigms. The end result of this concept was the creation of equality of civilization for world peace. The results of this study are expected to be useful by contributing to Islamic treasures in the scientific field, especially related to the study of occidentalism regarding the existence of *childfree* in the East-West paradigm and also providing motivation for the creation of a life that is not only oriented towards things towards the afterlife alone but also looking at the reality of the life being lived.

3 Results and Discussions

History and Development of *Childfree*

The term *Childfree* has appeared and spread since the 1970s, especially in northwestern Europe. In the Renaissance period, about 15 to 20% of women, especially in urban areas, chose not to have children during their lifetime, since

there was no specific period in their lives at that time. In the 1500s, when women in towns and villages in Northwest Europe began to marry in their mid-twenties, many women were uneducated. , choosing to stay single longer to achieve work goals, savings, and gaining the respect of both spouses and families. In fact, children began to be perceived as worthless along with the loss of economic value as a result of World War II. In Colonial America, children worked on family farms, and domestic servants at home and in other people's homes, even to the point of working in factories, before the 1920s children were considered assets of the head of the family. In fact, a divorced father has no responsibility to support their child in the eyes of the law.

The theme of child-free began to emerge and became a trend in the 1970s, with the widespread adoption of contraception and seeing it as a life choice considered profitable and liberating. Childlessness rates continued to rise in the 20th century, with one in five medieval-born American women remaining childless during their lifetime. At the beginning of the 21st century, *Childfree's* follower rate increased dramatically. Especially, the age of marriage is declining for both men and women. But in the 21st century, economic factors and parenting are not the only reasons behind the decision not to have children. The path to child freedom is becoming more and more complicated. As research on children's freedom developed, this topic slowly began to be debated and generally accepted. Childlessness, once seen as a social situation to be avoided, is now more often associated with being more liberal, individualistic, selfish, and financially dependent.

Several studies have been conducted on children-free from a psychological and sociological perspective. Research on child freedom can be categorized into four types: This study understands that marital happiness is not measured by having children or offspring, but marital harmony is the key to happiness. , Thirdly, the concept of not having children may indicate that having offspring may affect the health of the child.

Human thinking develops over time. Having children is not an obligation, it is a life choice, an agreement between a man and a woman. Having children is not just a matter of giving birth, nurturing and raising children,

but a great responsibility of how to realize the rights of children and raise them into quality children. Besides Gita Savitri Devi, Cinta Laura also stated that she has no children yet. Although he was not married, he chose to be child-free because he was concerned about the existing social reality. One of the social facts about the large number of abandoned children living. Laura Love argues that caring for abandoned children is better for her than multiplying. People who decide to perform this action mostly live in large cities, this happens as a result of globalization. However, the ease of entry and exit of information, has an impact on a lifestyle that easily enters Indonesia from outside, has an impact on the rigid concept of free reading for children. Therefore, this choice poses a risk to the individual, both in terms of language and marital instability. Therefore, the older generation tends to think that having children is the essence of a relationship/marriage.

In contrast to the very liberal Western culture, where women are aware that they have the right to their bodies, the change in women's high sense of existence due to having children is now directed at women who can work in new fields of work, education and work. Married couples in Indonesia face an Indonesian culture that demands children, in accordance with the construction of Indonesian culture that may see children as a sign of a harmonious family. From the saying, it is a fact that couples who already have children can build a very harmonious relationship. Those who agree with the absence of children are actually the ones who guarantee the realization of such a harmonious family as QS. Ar Rum (30) 21. But it is different from the hadith of the Prophet. explain the command multiply children.

An Eastern View of *Childfree*

East and West have different views on everything, be it about culture, lifestyle, traditions and much more. Along with

the development of the times of social changes also accompanied. An increasingly modern mindset makes individuals think step by step more advanced, rejecting various forms of oppression and injustice, and demanding rights over themselves. One of them is the concept of *childfree* that emerged in the 20th century. Prof. Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi considered that this was the result of feminist thinking that did not want to be busy with children. *Childfree*, namely the freedom of married couples not to have children or offspring as explained above, is a trend carried by the West. So what is the East's view of *childfree*?

Eastern culture, which in fact upholds high norms and religiosity, assumes that building a family is the same as building a generation, where if a family has many children or descendants, it is used as a sign of prosperity. In a study, it was stated that having children has a positive impact on married couples. The existence of the child indicates the permanence of the inhabitants of the world; the child shows the identity of his parents; the child passes on the surname; the birth of a child indicates the femininity and virility of a person; the child can be a savior in the continuity of an already threatened marriage; the child is the companion of the parents if one of them dies; the child suppresses the uncertainty of the fate of old age; the child has the function of accompanying and giving a sense of security. Meanwhile, on the other hand, there is a recognition that having children involves significant financial time costs and is able to reduce life satisfaction and happiness.

In Indonesia, *many children have a lot of fortune* not just a sentence, but a way of thinking and life cycle that has existed since ancient times where people still hold fast today. People believe that if they have many children, the fortune received by parents will be more and more. So do not be surprised if the concept of *childfree* is still considered strange in the view of the Indonesian people. Actually, the decision to have children or not is the choice of every individual, there are many reasons expressed by those who choose them, beyond biological reasons and physical conditions. Among them are worrying about not being able to cultivate and educate children properly later, as well as overpopulation (read: overpopulation). In the view of Islamic ecotheology, the destruction of nature is not due to overpopulation, but to a crisis of faith.

Childfree is a sign of the fragility of the soul and religious norms in those who choose it. It is stated that those who support the idea of *childfree* do tend to be less religious, so that not following the conventional rules of general gender roles, the abandonment of religious values in real life results in this concept being increasingly favored. To overcome this, in Islam it is taught that the best marriage is as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW to his wives. Marriage in Islam is the perfection of half the religion and aims to obtain offspring, which is contrary to the concept of *childfree*. As Ibn Sina suggested that in marriage have offspring, because marriage is an institution that preserves the species and proves the existence of God. The human fitrah is to have children and educate them, so he who chooses not to have children before making a business (endeavor), then he quits his fitrah.

The concept of *childfree* itself is not specifically mentioned in the Qur'an, but in a study that used the approach of the interpretation of *maqasidi* Q.S *Ali Imran* verses 38-39 it is stated that this verse is related to the story of the Prophet Zacharias and has a reason for the commitment to have children, asking descendants for the continuity of his proselytizing. The Qur'an provides space to always ask Allah for a child and bear his living through his parents. In addition Q.S *An-Nisa'*: 1; Q.S *Ar-Ra'd*: 38 and Q.S *An-Nahl*: 72 encourage humans to have a legitimate offspring from the result of marriage. Then the Prophet Muhammad SAW said that every Muslim married a fertile and loving woman to multiply offspring, because the Prophet was proud of the many children among his people (HR. Nasa'i no. 3175).

If you look further, *the choice of childfree* does have many negative effects, especially the reduction of future generations. If later the productive generation is gone, then who will continue the industrial system and the world

economy? Therefore, in the Islamic view *childfree* is prohibited if it is not based on reasons related to health and worldly affairs, such as the concerns that the author has mentioned above.

Western View of *Childfree*

The *childfree* phenomenon is increasingly being followed by Orientals, becoming a trend in itself where they choose to be child-free because of their choices. Densely populated or fear of not being able to nurture are the reasons some people choose the decision. In the West itself the term *childfree* gives rise to two arguments, where one side says that it is the result of an individualist and egoism nature (Siegel 2013; The Guardian 2015) then on the other hand called for a "child-free lifestyle" and "passing through" parenthood (Coat 2013; Walters 2012). From a feminist perspective, the decision not to have children is a picture of a woman who chooses to determine her own life, regardless of the way or traditions of previous generations establishing "how" women's lives as wives and mothers.

In the middle of the 20th century Western European countries began to see the emergence of radical changes in the behavior of the population, one of which was the increasing number of permanently childless women and men. Furthermore, in the late 20th to early 21st centuries there was a significant transformation in the reproductive experience of women, in Great Britain, Western Europe, and the United States had few children and the average age of women giving birth rose compared to the previous time, and most notably the increasing number of women choosing to be child-free.

In the literature, "voluntary" and "involuntary" are classifications to distinguish between biological reasons for not having children and other reasons. The issue that is debated in it is the relationship between delayed fertility and childlessness. While some experts have claimed that childlessness can be understood as a series of involuntary fertility delays (Rindfuss et al. 1988; Morgan 1991), another argues it is a clear and conscious lifestyle choice.

The influence of social norms and religious doctrines made previous generations suppressed into parents, so methods in birth control were inefficient. So that the ability of the current generation to "choose" to have children is considered a new achievement in postmodern life (Burkart 2007; Gillespie 2001; Mayer 2004). After the pre-industrial period, women born in 1900 also chose not to have children. According to Morgan (1991: 782) 25% of US women of this group do not have children permanently. Rowland (1998: 20) estimates Australia to reach the 30% mark, similar estimates coming from European countries. In general it has to do with the social and economic upheavals that followed the great depression of the 1920s (Rowland 1998). In addition, the distorted sex ratios caused by World War II also affected.

In the UK Ann Berrington in her paper writes that the cause of British society not having children is because it does not find the right partner. Then in France it has a lower percentage of *childfree* than the British, but in their place those who decide not to have children are mostly those who are educated and work well established. Subsequently Kreyenfeld and Konietzka explored the trend of childlessness in East and West Germany, as a result of which West Germany was among the "Pioneers" of *childfree* in postwar Europe and for East Germany initially had a low level, but after the unification of Germany *childfree* began to increase gradually. In Austria and Switzerland it is reported to have high *childfree* figures, alongside West Germany. From the above facts, *the childfree* rate in Western countries has increased significantly either because of education or because of agreement between spouses.

In feminist debates, efforts were made to eliminate the term childlessness and replace it with the term "child-free". For experts, the term "childless" has a negative connotation because the suffix "without" implies that "there is a lack, deprivation, unfortunate" (Underhill 1977; 307) whereas the term child-free implies that not having children is a deliberate choice (Gillespie 200; Hoffman and the Levant 1985).

The rise of feminism and the participation of women in broader work are seen as key in the features of social change (Barlett 1996; Campbell 1985; Ireland 1993; McAllister and Clarke 1998). Giddens (1991) argues that late modernity has given rise to fundamental transformations that have a profound effect on the nature of the self. In addition, she also said modernity has created new possibilities for becoming a woman that excludes motherhood. Western countries are also pronatalis countries, where initially not having children was a deviant thing. But for a variety of reasons and reasons Western societies began to build the idea that "childlessness" was an individual choice.

East and West Equality Of *Childfree* Reality

From the many discussions above, it can be understood that *childfree* can be interpreted as the lifestyle of couples who are committed to not having children, even though their reproductive system is healthy and good. This lifestyle was chosen because the lack of confidence in the ability to care for and nurture children is one of the considerable concerns and is often experienced by millennials, who in the process of navigating their marriage they choose not to have children or *childfree*.

Based on the results of research conducted by Houseknecht, it is explained that couples who choose to do *childfree* are couples who have a high education and tend to live in urban areas. The higher the level of education, sometimes some couples decide to choose *childfree* in order to focus on pursuing their respective careers. Those (The West) who agree with *childfree* argue that a woman's success is no longer measured in the domestic sphere, but also in the public sphere, such as career achievements, achievements, and others. Therefore they consider that the choice of *childfree* is legitimate, which is a personal freedom and perhaps a joint decision in the family. Another argument, for example, is that the decision to choose *childfree* is privacy. Thus, other people or the public have no right to intervene in the privacy of others. The decision to have children or not to have children does not take away a person's humanity.

This phenomenon, of course, when viewed from eastern traditions, will be contrary to the values it brings. Given the instilled understanding that marriage is one way of perfecting religion and one of the missions of marriage is to have children. Eastern groups argue that a person's fitrah is to want or want offspring. The reason for fear of hurting a child because of feeling incapable of responsibility, cannot be justified. The reason is, humans need to deal with other humans to give each other benefits. Thus, those who are *childfree*, are not in harmony with their fitrah. Responding to this reality, one must be wise in choosing decisions and accompanied by awareness of the consequences. Which in the case of *childfree* today, the relationship and responsibility of parents towards the child, and also vice versa, the responsibility of the child to the parents when they are old and vulnerable, *childfree* is certainly a difficult choice.

In some cases that indicate that being part of a childless senior (*elderly*) group in an individualist environment, a person will experience vulnerability. Although this also happens to families who do not do *childfree* also in some cases. Therefore, social engineering is needed, such as taking foster children who have grown up, have a community, and or prepare social capital that is ready to share when vulnerable. Meanwhile, those who choose to have children, must also be accompanied by a sense of responsibility to educate and grow the child in order to bring benefits to the people. It's not just having as many children as possible, but not being prepared for the quality.

Choosing *childfree* or rejecting it is a form of accountability for him to find the desired happiness. In fact, Allah Almighty has called in Q.S. Al-Qashash: 77 to always maintain a balance to be happy in the affairs of the hereafter and the world.

And B Tg in the coming Ok to Allah House to Aa Khri and do not forget your share of Denny Ya and Ah age as a age to Allah to K and do not repent g to corruption in 1 1 R1 1 God does not love Mev Sadin 77

That is to say: *And seek upon that which God has bestowed upon you (happiness) of the land of the hereafter, and do not forget your part of the worldly (pleasures) and do good (to others) as God has done good, to you, and do not do mischief on (the face of) the earth. Indeed, God does not like those who do mischief. (Q.S. Al Qashash : 77)*

That way, everyone has the right to determine their happiness, including in terms of having or not having children. Those choices need to be respected. All choices have consequences. Therefore, when the choice falls on the choice to have children, either because it is driven by religious orders or because of other interests, it should be that the choice of a woman to carry out her natural functions is lightened by other family members, especially by their spouses. In addition, the choice to have children will also have an impact on the responsibility to educate them to become a quality generation that will bring benefits. As for being a Muslim, keep in mind that every activity and choice should be oriented towards the goal of worshipping Allah Almighty. Unmarried or unmarried, married and then choosing *childfree* or not, should also be based on the sincerity to forge oneself as part of God's servant and His representative in prospering the earth

4 Conclusion

Islam as a teaching, has a very long and diverse historical civilization. Islamic civilization is oriented towards the Eastern world which is sometimes influenced by the West. The existence of this influence gives the Dependence of the Eastern world to the Western world. In fact, in looking at a civilization, each has its own paradigm in accordance with the existing normative foundations and laws. As in looking at *Childfree*, in the

Eastern view, deciding not to have children is a form of unnaturalness, this is due to the purpose in marriage in Islam one of them is sure of *hifdzun nasli* (guarding offspring). One way to maintain offspring is to have children from the marriage. Meanwhile, in the Western view, gagasan that not having children presents an individual choice with various reasons dan reasons Western society itself. The existence of this difference of views is due to the ideology that has been embedded. Islam bases its truth through the sources of the Qur'an and Sunnah, while the West bases its truth with empirical and ratio. So, it is only natural that there are differences of views in looking at a phenomenon that occurs. That way, everyone has the right to determine their happiness, including in terms of having or not having children. As for being a Muslim, keep in mind that every activity and choice should be oriented towards the goal of worshipping Allah Almighty and spreading benefits on earth.

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