MODERNIZATION: AN UNFINISHED MASSIVE PROJECT
(A Study on Juergen Habermas Hermeneutics)

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Abstraksi: Banyak pujian yang disampaikan terhadap modernisasi, baik dalam hal pemikiran maupun perilaku. Modernisasi dianggap berhasil melepaskan manusia dari selubung mistifikasi dogma agama dan kekuasaan “Absolut” yang menindas dan metafisis sehingga tidak dapat disentuh dan dihampiri sedekat mungkin oleh manusia. Padahal di sisi lain, keberhasilan yang telah ditunjukkan oleh modernisasi juga dianggap telah memerangkap manusia ke dunia “mitos” yang lain yaitu mitos terhadap teknologi dan kekuasaan akal yang berlebihan. Seakan-akan dunia dikerdilkan hanya memuat dan layak untuk rasionalitas dan kekuasaan manusia saja. Manusia kemudian menjadi teralienasi dari dunianya sendiri, ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi yang sangat “didewakan” di abad modern telah memenjarakan dan menghancurkan manusia. Timbul persoalan apakah modernisasi harus diganti dengan proses yang baru karena dianggap sudah gagal, dalam bentuk postmodernisasi, atau perlu disempurnakan karena modernisasi dianggap sebagai proses yang belum selesai dalam bentuk neomodernisasi.

Kata kunci: rasionalisasi, kepentingan, konsensus, komunikasi

INTRODUCTION

The term “modern” comes from Latin word which means “now”, “new”, or “at the present time”. By referring to that definition, it can be said that human somewhat live in the modern time if he realizes the “newness” of his time. Generally, the scientists believe that the time when modernization was born starts in Europe at around the year 1500. Since then, the consciousness of human newness appears everywhere. Before, people did not realize that people are able to make changes or something new, not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively.

Modern does not only refer to time or period, but it also refers to the consciousness related to changes to something new. Thus, the core terms of modernity has a relationship with changes, progress, revolution, and growth. The understanding of modernity as a form of realization is considered to be more basic than the sociologic or economic understandings. In sociologic and economic understanding, modern society sees the growth of science, technology and capitalist system of economy. Nevertheless, the understanding about epistemological society’s modernity tries to see changes in the forms of realization or the society’s way of thinking (Hardiman, 2007).

The concept of modernity is started with Industrial Revolution and French Revolution. Modernity is one of human effort to free himself from mythology, ideology, domination and tradition. Modernity is an evident of human autonomy (especially through ratio) to overcome every problem that exists. Modernization in the form of rationalization and technology in every aspect of human life gives a new pattern that is completely different from the previous pattern or way of life. Rationalization in the form of technology has given a series of simplicities to human. Furthermore, the use of technology gives effectiveness and efficiency in every activity of human. It is an evident that rationalization has opened the curtains of darkness that have haunted human after all this time and for long has been considered taboo.

Modernism is cultural and epistemological concepts. Modernity is a period of history that appears in the middle ages. It is the pattern of human life post-traditionally that is symbolized by changes, innovations and dynamism. The bodies of modernity according to Giddens include industrialism (the processing of natural resources, environmental development), supervision (control of information and social administration), capitalism (capital accumulation in the context of workforce competition and product marketing), and military force (the control over the facility of violence in the context of war industrialization) (Giddens, 1990).

The birth of industrial work process needs improvement of measurement and job...
sharing, mechanization and job intensification. Shops and manufactures are used as the media to apply disciplinary and create a new habit of work. (Thompson and Hugh, 1990). Shops and manufactures symbolized the birth of the new forms of supervision. In Giddens’ term, “talking about modernity is not only talking about many kinds of organizations, but also about how to organize, about control of social relationship that is legally justified and goes across uncertain space and time.” (Giddens, 1990).

Science and technology are grown to help human. Human cannot live without technology. The function of technology basically is instrumental; it means technology provides tools for human. It is undeniable; technology has brought many advantages to human life. Technology has a big effect over human life. Therefore, technology must be put into consideration. Technology is gained through a planned and rationalized process. Technology is the way to control human rational and behavior (Ellul, 1964). Technology and rationalization are two tools of modernity. Although the products of revolution technology deeply influence human life, but the existence of human social is touched more deeply by technology as the method of controlling social mind or interaction.

The process of industrialism, capitalism, the supervision of country appearance can be called as “modernization”. On the other hand, modernism refers to the forms of cultures that concerns with this modernization. Being modern is the same thing as being in an environment that offers adventure, power, joy, growth, self transformation and our world, that at the same time also threatens to ruin every thing we have, everything we know and the whole of ourselves (Berman, 1982).

DISCUSSION

Modernization: An Effort to Get Out of Myth

Modernization is the greatest power in history. A power that triggers the development of human civilization that almost had no precedence in the past. Modernization raises an enlightenment spirit to commit demythologization. Modernization has brought the biggest part of human civilization into an unreachable world of reality, even the wildest dreams of the most primitive human. The radical and the fast progress of that kind of civilization is no doubt a human prestige that produces a long trace in his life (Bell, 1973).

Before, nature was considered as the true power of human and religion had introduced the concept of God that has the power over human and that functions as the owner of the absolute power of everything. In modernization framework, this concept is changed, nature is the room for human to realize the existence of his humane and now, nature is subordinated under human rules. The modernists optimistically believe that the development of knowledge, rationality and industry will make the better world.

The dynamism of modernity itself is based on the continuous revision of knowledge. The modern institutions are based on the principle of doubt that all knowledge is formed as the hypothesis that is open for revision. Ambiguity, hesitance, risk and continuous change, that are the characteristics of modernism, are manifested in the process of self reformation. Modernism appreciates changes, plan of life and reflexivity. For a modernist, self identity is a “reflexive project” that is “a process where self identity is formed by the arrangements of self narratives reflexively” (Giddens, 1991).

What is meant by identity project is the idea that identity is not stable, but continuous to be created and something worn is always in a process, a journey not an arrival. For the modernism, self is not the problem of surface appearance, but about a deeper structure. Modernism creates self as something more exciting. It promises the development of technology and the erosion of tradition to give space for the new ones. Human understands the world outside himself through the media of knowledge. Knowledge and philosophy are the first effort that tries to rock the basic belief over traditional myths. The breakthrough done through the media of knowledge and the philosophy foundation is a critical rational method to break through the beliefs over things and magical power that are considered as the representative of the Absolute Power. That breakthrough ends in a hesitance that is formulated into a form of effort of methodological investigation in checking the reality of the world.

Through the process of modernization, an event of historical mutation of the universe occurs. Human courage in this universe becomes
stronger and stabilized. The stabilization of human subject as the conqueror of the universe implicitly has shifted the supremacy of theological belief over the power of God in human relations. God has been represented by human that He may not exist in the creation of the world. Human becomes freer in realizing his life without other power’s interference outside himself. The lost of God means the opening of an unlimited opportunity for human to live the world. Modern human becomes the autonomy subject because of the breaking of the dependence chain over everything that is used to be considered magic or myth (Giddens, 1990).

The modern time is considered as a period in human history that tries to proclaim itself as a species that has been independent and mature, because he succeeded in releasing himself from the cage of mystical cosmology. Human releases himself from the persuasion of any myth about the secret of the world that makes him never grows up or at least becomes aware of their obligation to free himself. The modern era is a period in history that tries to create a life slogan, teachings and the rules of itself. It is a period that is able to reveal what must be done in relation with the general history of thought and the newness of it.

The essence of enlightenment is élan vital that tries to appreciate the importance of ratio as the guidance in human life history. It can be seen how human tries to open up the curtain of the secret of the universe and its relationship with this life rationally. Other revolution continuous to happen to stabilize the dimension of human existence emancipation so that human can get out of his own cage and gain his independent. As the enlightenment that starts modernization, it can be seen that it is also the event of the separation of religion from knowledge and philosophy (Bell, 1973).

**Rationalization and Humanization: Modernization Basic Characteristics**

Modernity is characterized by three things: subjectivity, critics and progress (Meyer, 1951). What is meant by subjectivity is that human realizes himself as a subject that is as the center of the reality that becomes the measure of something. Through modernization, human realizes himself more as an individual. The formulation of modern human realization is that human (individual) can find out the reality through his own ratio mind). Marx, that is inspired by Hegel, in the 19th century, stated that human is the subject of history. According to Marx, human is not drifted away by the time, but he is the designer of his own history that subjectivity is then understood in the context of his history.

The second characteristic that is implicit in the understanding of subjectivity is so far faced with authority. Ratio does not only become the source of knowledge, but also becomes the practical ability to free human from tradition or to destroy the wrong prejudices. Kant formulated criticism as the courage to think outside the demand of tradition or authority that he calls as “being woken up from dogmatic sleep”. The critical capacity of the ratio makes human free from the prejudices of traditional thinking. In its turn, subjectivity and criticism suppose the belief in progress. The progress meant here is that human realizes time as the unrepeatable rare source. Time is experienced as the series of events that aims at one purpose aimed also by the subjectivity and criticism (Adorno, 1972).

The most important events that start the modern era are the renaissance, reformation, and the inventions in the fields of science and technology. Not only carrying human rationality independence and superiority, the modern era also lifts up human subjectivity and courage above all forms of power in the universe. Those thoughts center on human as subjectivity, ratio as critical capacity and history as progress. If the way of thinking in the Middle Ages is symbolized by unity, completeness and totality that are coherent and systematic and that appear in the form of metaphysic and ontology, the reality in the concept of middle ages way of thinking is described as a systematic and hierarchical pattern. Modern era criticizes and breaks all patterns and concepts of thought carried by the Middle Ages.

The history of modern era way of thinking can be considered as an intellectual rebellion toward traditional metaphysics. Philosophical way of thinking is based on ratio that becomes the autonomy of way of thinking based on faith known as theology. The enlightenment of the way of thinking done in modern era can be seen from two aspects. On one side, modernity can be considered as an intellectual disintegration. The modern era way of thinking shows itself more as an anarchy and
chaos rather than unity and order thus it is also considered as an intellectual decline. On the other hand, however, modern era way of thinking can also be considered as an emancipation, a progress in thinking out of the stoppage and metaphysical way of thinking that support the power of traditional church (Turner, 1990).

Modernization is a traditional crisis that becomes more powerful with the existence of ratio. Subjectivity, criticism and development do not allow ratio to be caged in and to be restricted by the traditional sources and religion mythology. By letting itself free from its previous cage, the modern way of thinking can produce a qualitatively new way of thinking so that in the end, ratio places the position of mythical authority and religion dogma that have been defeated. In other words, theocentrism has turned into anthropocentrism. Human abilities as subjectivity such as ratio, perception, affection, and willingness becomes the new topics and is very much favored in the modern era.

Modern era also raises human authority in his life in terms of humanization. It is characterized by the emergence of the belief of human capacity to replace the superior power, intellectual willingness and appreciation of intellectual discipline. The humanists believe that ratio is capable of doing everything and is more pertinent than faith. Since it believes in intellectual capacity, the humanists also stresses on the changes in social, political and economy. The absolute power of church seems to be declining everyday and must be replaced by human power (Smart, 1990).

Rationality idolization is reflected in the development of knowledge which, at that time was colored by the stronger position of knowledge that has an orientation to conquer the universe and stepped on a simple logic of relationship due to Aristotle legacy that is technically called modus ponens that is the science of the universe. In this kind of logic, the law of cause and effect is followed and can also be predicted on the other way around. In its practice, the scientists tried so hard to find the “cause” so that the “effect” can be predicted. Science prestige in predicting this “cause” and “effect” thing is then developed into an effort of manipulating in modern science and technology; when cause and effect are created in purpose (Seligman, 1990).

Rationality and Manipulative Communication

If reality can be controlled, automatically it can also be manipulated. It is this manipulation that bases the inventions of technology in conquering the universe. The first one realized is the understanding about technical control over nature. Human subject becomes the center of attention of the life itself. The modern knowledge, according to Habermas, takes over the exclusive function. Empirical science develops in a methodological system of reference since Galileo Galilei era that reflects a transcendental point of view about a probability of technical authority. Therefore, modern science results in a knowledge that in terms of forms can be used technically, although the applications might have the chances to be performed in the future.

Robert Marcuse in One Dimension Man reveals that the process of human rationalization ends up in a great tragedy. Modern human is trapped in an impersonal bureaucracy network and loses the meaning and his aspiration as a creature with dignity for idolizing rationality that at the first place, is considered to hand in autonomy and freedom. Rationality that at first is really critical toward traditional myths that terrorize human in its turn turns out to be a new myth or ideology in the form of science and technology. Society’s modernity has resulted in a new mythology by shifting the myth of nature to the myth of science and technology (Hardiman, 1993).

Modernity that is forced through technology and rationalization not only helps human to be prosperous, but in its process, it also threatens with the destruction of human kind. The reality seen today is not the need of human to determine the process of production, but that need is created so that it will have a value to sell. The development of technology is now following its own rules and free from human nature. The happiness offered by consumptive industry is deceit happiness. This kind of happiness does not bring human to an ownership of himself. On the contrary, it makes human depend so much on things that he/she consumes.

Human no longer works to secure his real needs and develop himself, but is forced to own more and more consumptive things; konsumzwang. This condition forces human to look for more and more money. Modern technology does humanize the process of work,
but put human into slavery. In the end, every smoothness of facilities do not increase communication between human. In contrast, it isolates many individuals. There many other facts of modernity imbalances occurred in human society (Sindhunata, 1983).

Society’s modernity, taking example on capitalist society that Habermas called Spatkapitalism does not go in balance. It is because it only put purposeful rationalization rational action subsystem in the first priority and set a side rationalization of institutional framework or communicational practice. As a consequence, modernization is trapped in ethical pragmatics. The starting point of myth has been an enlightenment, but it bears also myths. (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1972).

Habermas sees that science and rationality exist in capitalist era are deviated to against human, empowerize cultural life and worsen pathological condition and not being used for the sake of human kind. Therefore, critical theory is needed to fight the negative form of this positivistic science and change it into an emancipating activity that tries to put political and social condition into a better one. Habermas tries to finish the modernity project that has been started since the enlightenment era. Thus, criticism toward science point of view that is completely instrumentalist and dominated capitalism during the post war is very much needed (Habermas, 1987).

Habermas, just like the other member of Frankfurt system, stated that theory may not be taken away from practice. There is no knowledge that is free from values. Theoretical behavior is always understood and directed by the certain humanize importance. Human does not get new knowledge based on a neutral relationship with the reality, but he will always be guided by certain importance that directs him into an introduction to something. There are three kinds of importance in this case according to Habermas: technical introductory importance, practical introductory importance and emancipated introductory importance (Lechete, 1994).

Society’s modernity nowadays is characterized by a big intervention from the country into civilian society’s life, while society is being depoliticized. In this context, the country functions to handle systematic dysfunctional and hopefully in that way, the country will get its technocratic legitimation. It is one way to keep the quo status and triggers the occurrence of repolitization or something like country’s refeodalization (Hardiman, 1993).

To preserve its intervention, modern country counts on mass loyalty that is the loyalty that can be gained through formal democratic practice that Habermas thought as just a pseudo-democratic. In its practice, election is executed periodically. Nevertheless, it is up to the bureaucrats to do the rest of the policy, not the mass society. The continuous country’s intervention in the name of “purposeful-rationality” in the end will demythologize power. Consequently, the need for legitimation based on meanings increases, while the source of meaning is getting rare due to rationalization.

The crisis that occurs in the early capitalist (the stage of capitalism criticized by Marx) will reoccur in the next era of capitalism (Weber’s stage of “rationalization”) with different pattern that is there will be more intervention from the country for the sake of system stability and the emergence of science and technology as the main production power. A critical view about social science that looks at different interests will unconsciously direct science to view society differently.

If social science is still related to a technological orientation, it will not be able to bring society to an understanding about itself, since unconsciously the science itself needs first the understanding about the determining interest. A theory cannot be separated from practice in that there will be no knowledge without values. Theoretical behavior is always understood and directed by a certain humanize interest.

### Conclusion

Juergen Habermas is one of famous members of the second generation of Frankfurt system in the field of social research. He was born in 1929 in Dusseldorf. He got his Ph.D title after succeeded in finishing and defending his dissertation about the controversy between the Absolute and the history in Schelling way of thinking. Between 1958 and 1959, he became the assistance of Theodor Adorno in Frankfurt. After that, he was chosen as the Professor of Philosophy and the director of Max Planck Institute in Starberg. Like other members of Frankfurt system, Habermas is very much...
influenced by Hegel and Marx way of thinking on one side, but on the other side he also criticized Marx’s theory.

Habermas differentiate explanation with understanding. According to him, we cannot understand completely the meaning of a fact, because there are also facts that cannot be interpreted. We cannot even interpret fact completely. We have no ability in explaining things that is impossible for us to understand. An explanation demands an application of theoretical propositions toward facts that are formed freely through systematic supervision. Understanding is an activity where theoretical experience and understanding united. Habermas stated that explanation must be in the form of objective application of a law or theory over a fact and understanding becomes part of its subjective part (Sumaryono, 1995).

What Habermas hopes from Hermenetic is a type of explanation that shows that the order of words in a “pure language” is not making it possible for a communication to happen, although indirectly, thing that is completely individual. There are three classes of life expression in hermeneutic understanding, they are: linguistics, action and experience. Communication can be done through action or activity while explanation is directed toward the final target, meaning and scope of action. In every hermeneutic, we will find combination of language, action and experience.

Language and experience, in Habermas logic, must go into dialectic with action so that if we want to make a correct interpretation, we have to have a dialog between language and experience on one side and with action on the other side. There are three kinds of science and each of them is related with certain kinds of interests. Instrumental or mechanical interest empowers the science of empirical analytics. Practical interest influences the science of historical hermeneutic and interest in emancipation is related to social science that has something to do with criticism, or critical social science (Habermas, 1987).

In the beginning of modern society development, “rationality” that obeys the rule of language games and communicative action collide with purposeful rationality that obeys the rules of purposeful rational action. Modernization that becomes the project of capitalist society leads to bureaucratic totalitarianism and technocratic for capital accumulation. Capitalist modernity is a form of distorted project of modernity because it reduces communication to the social works. The effect of this reduction is modernity pathology in the form of meaning erosion. Habermas shows that since the beginning, modernization project sets a side and oppresses communicative aspects of society that he called “institutional framework” and “ethical-practical rationality” to build the dimension of social work called “purposeful rational action sub-system” and “instrumental-cognitive rationality” ( Ricoeur, 1974).

Power according to Habermas should not be legitimated, but should be rationalized. What we call rationalization here is not understood in work paradigm, but it is in communication paradigm. Basically, society is communicative and the one that determines social changes are not only the development of production and technological powers, but also the process of learning in ethical-practical dimension. Technology and other objective factors will be able to change society if society integrates it into communicative action that has its own logic. Communicative society is not a society that criticizes through revolution with violence, but through argumentation to reach the consensus. Taking Karl Marx’ historical materialism, Max Weber’s rationalization and Freud’s psychoanalytic as the starting point, Habermas wants to complete and handle the problem of Critical Theory of his predecessors, through a form of communicative rationalization, as the other dimension of communicative rationalization that has ethical practical orientation. Normative modernization does not destroy the values in the life world, but it directs it to the complete realization that is modernization toward society’s maturity. Habermas Critical Theory becomes an anticipation for social transformation toward a more humanized modernity (Habermas, 1988).

Habermas himself realizes the development of society will be in itself influencing the development of rationalization like purposeful rationalization and communicative rationalization. However, every individual in a society must always struggle for a communicative dialog so that there will be no more hidden interest for legitimation or for maintaining the quo status. Communication will be achieved in an open and free condition. One
thing that should be noted is that communication will always be open and developed forever in a sense that the consensus needed will always be open, the important thing is that communication in society will have to be done always so that there will be no imbalance and oppression in modernization.

This condition of society’s modernity that is packed with many hidden interests is the one criticized by Habermas. The point of Habermas critics is colonization of life. Since it is ruled by capitalists’ relationships that determine material defense in modern society, the life world is colonialized by economic and political subsystem. Money media and power will not only color human relationship in the system of society, but also will sneak in the life world and there, it will force communication. To handle this so that the project of modernization can still go through, communicative rationalization between society’s members will have to be open in the form of consensus reached through dialogic process. Thus, all members of society will know the interests aimed by the people involved in communication, no longer wrapped in a false rationality package (Habermas, 1988).

Communicative rationalization is done in the form of rational argumentative that is dialogic and communicative, either in the target group itself as the self defense or between other groups to arrange the condition of understanding and reach consensus. The class struggle in Marx’s sense is changed into “rational dialog” by Habermas (Hardiman, 1990). Rationalization in the field of interaction (communicative rationalization) in itself will not lead to a better function of society’s systems, but will equipped the members of society with an opportunity for further emancipation and the process of progressive individuality (Hardiman, 1990).

The truth of communication with self reflection in society will be realized through consensus to determine public interest of which the rules of the game will also be reached through dialog and communication. Through purposeful communication that aims at work paradigm and communicative rationalization that has ethical dimension, emancipated modernity that is modernity for every sides will come to a realization.
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