Convergence of Islam and Democracy

Fajar
Lecturer at State Institute of Islamic Studies Bone
Email: fajarphilosophy@gmail.com

Abstract

This studyattempts to analysethe relationship between Islam and democracy objectively with logical rational arguments. It aims to clarify the differences between Islam and democracy in terms of values and concepts, in addition to explaining the reasons for the rejection of some Muslims against democracy and the arguments underlying their rejection. Then, itattempts to draw a theoretical relationship between Islam and democracy by asking critical questions, logical assumptions, and arguments that rely on the empirical practice of implementing democracy in Indonesia. Islam and democracy were born from two different ontological areas. Islam as a religion is believed to be sacred and absolute truth because ontologically its teachings come from God. While the democratic political system was born from the historical trajectory of human cultural development, it means that democracy is profane secular, and the truth is contextual perspective of the status quo of Muslim elite power politics. The concept of democracy in terms of genealogy, values, and orientation is not entirely the same as Islamic teachings, but it is not denied that Islamic teachings are in many respects substantially in line with the concept of democracy. Thus, Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, so it is fitting for Indonesian Muslims to become enforcers of democracy based on human religious values. That is a model of democracy that not only provides a place for the growth of people's beliefs or religiosity, but also provides space for the realization of human rights. Therefore, democracy as a concept, in its implementation, of course, must be adapted to the context and culture of the local community, especially Islamic communities such as in Indonesia and in the Middle East.

Kajian ini mencoba menganalisis hubungan Islam dan demokrasi secara objektif dengan argumentasi rasional yang logis. Hal ini bertujuan untuk memperjelas perbedaan antara Islam dan demokrasi dari segi nilai dan konsep, selain menjelaskan alasan penolakan sebagian umat Islam terhadap demokrasi dan argumen yang mendasari penolakan mereka. Kemudian, mencoba menarik hubungan teoritis antara Islam dan demokrasi dengan mengajukan pertanyaan kritis, asumsi logis, dan argumen yang bersandar pada praktik empiris penerapan demokrasi di Indonesia. Islam dan demokrasi lahir dari dua wilayah ontologis yang berbeda. Islam sebagai agama diyakini sebagai

kebenaran yang suci dan mutlak karena secara ontologis ajarannya berasal dari Tuhan. Sementara sistem politik demokrasi lahir dari lintasan sejarah perkembangan budaya manusia, artinya demokrasi itu sekuler profan, dan kebenarannya adalah perspektif kontekstual status quo politik kekuasaan elit Muslim. Konsep demokrasi ditinjau dari genealogi, nilai, dan orientasi tidak sepenuhnya sama dengan ajaran Islam, namun tidak dipungkiri bahwa ajaran Islam dalam banyak hal secara substansial sejalan dengan konsep demokrasi. Dengan demikian, Indonesia merupakan negara dengan penduduk muslim terbesar di dunia, sehingga sudah sepatutnya umat Islam Indonesia menjadi penegak demokrasi yang berlandaskan nilai-nilai kemanusiaan. Itulah model demokrasi yang tidak hanya memberikan tempat tumbuhnya keyakinan atau religiositas masyarakat, tetapi juga memberikan ruang bagi realisasi hak asasi manusia. Oleh karena itu, demokrasi sebagai sebuah konsep, dalam pelaksanaannya tentunya harus disesuaikan dengan konteks dan budaya masyarakat setempat, khususnya masyarakat Islam seperti di Indonesia dan di Timur Tengah.

Key words: *Convergence; Islam; Democracy.*

Introduction

The term democracy still has negative implications until the 19th century, as if to express a form of the law of the jungle and in some developing countries, the development of democracy is still associated with westernization. Liberals, conservatives, communists, and even fascists are very eager to proclaim the virtues of democracy and show themselves as a true democrat. When the great ideologies have collapsed since the end of the 20th century, the flame of democracy seems to be getting bigger. When the appeal of socialism has worn off, and the virtues of democracy have been questioned, democracy emerges as, perhaps, the only stable and strong principle in postmodern politics.[1]

An interesting statement from Winston Churchill on democracy, while addressing the British House of Representatives, 11 November 1947, *"Democracy is the worst form of government, but the best of all forms of government that have been tried from time to time".*[2]

As a political system, democracy has occupied the top stratum accepted by many countries because it is considered capable of regulating and resolving social and political relations. Both involving interests between individuals in society, relations between communities, communities and countries as well as between countries in the world. The collapse of the Soviet Union's communist ideology in

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[1] Andrew Heywood, *Politik* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014), p. 138.
[2] Andrew Heywood, *Politik, p.* 137.

1989, at least has become an important momentum for the expansion of democracy as a discourse of choice for a political system. The popularity of democracy as a political ideology was quickly spread by the development of critical discourse, which mostly revealed the failure of the practice of authoritarianism. The presence of democracy seems to have become a significant and real thing to overcome the socio-political problems that have been suffered by various countries.[3]

Today, democracy is widely accepted as the only meaningful form of political legitimacy. Democracy is considered as a medium to gain political legitimacy or legitimate power. Then how is the relationship between Islam and democracy, can Islam and democracy grow together in space and time at the same time?If Islam is understood not in a theological sense but in a sociological sense, it means viewing Islam as an institutionalized religious attitude in the latent actions of its adherents and not Islam in the meaning of sacred religious teachings.Such an attitude is not to secularize the sacred values of Islam, but to release the theological burden in seeking and finding a theoretical relationship between Islam and democracy. So that Islam is seen as objective side by side with democracy. Apart from being an effort to place democracy and Islam in an equally objective position.

If Islam is interpreted theologically, of course the search for the relationship between Islam and democracy will not bear fruit, because between the two are in different dimensions, Islam has an ontological dimension, it is said to have an ontological dimension because Islam comes from "*Ada*" (being) which makes it exists. While democracy has an axiological dimension, it is said to have an axiological dimension because it is born from the orientation and ethical actions of society that cross the historicity of the cultural development of human society from time to time.

Therefore, this study is an attempt to position the problem of the relationship between Islam and democracy objectively with logical and rational arguments. Clarifying the differences between Islam and democracy conceptually, explaining the reasons for some Muslims' rejection of democracy and the underlying arguments. Trying to draw a theoretical relationship line between Islam and democracy by asking critical questions and arguments that rely on the empirical practice of implementing democracy in Indonesia.

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[3]Heru Nugroho, "Demokrasi dan Demokratisasi: Sebuah Kerangka Konseptual Untuk Memahami Dinamika Sosial-Politik di Indonesia," *Jurnal Pemikiran Sosiologi* 1, no. 1 (2015), p. 1, https://doi.org/10.22146/jps.v1i1.23419.

Discussion

The Concept of Democracy

It is common knowledge that the genealogy of the term democracy can be traced back to Ancient Greece. The term democracy comes from the Greek, demos which means people, and kratos / kratein which means power. So democracy in terms of words is understood as power by the people, the people in power or government by the people. In the context of ancient Greek culture, the word demos refers to the 'poor' or the common people. That means democracy is rule by the poor, when referring to the early use of the word in ancient Greece.

The idea of democracy that developed in Greece was lost in the west, when Western Rome fell to the German tribes. In the Middle Ages, Western Europe adopted a feudal system. Social and spiritual life ruled by the Pope and religious official Lawuja Magna Charta who was born in 1215 is considered the way to open the re-emergence of democracy in the West. At that time, thinkers emerged who supported the development of democracy such as John Locke from England (1632-1704) and Montesquieu from France (1689-1755).[4]

Terminologically, democracy according to Joseph A. Schmeteras quoted by Muhammad Hasbi is an institutional plan to reach political decisions in which individuals gain important power directly or indirectly based on the majority agreement granted freely from the people.[5] Another opinion as stated by Henry B. Mayo in Hasbi, democracy is a political system which shows that public policies are determined on the basis of a majority by representatives who are effectively supervised by the people in elections, which are based on the principles of political equality and held in an atmosphere of guaranteed political freedom.[6]

Democracy is one of the great classical thoughts in the field of social science in the 20th century.[7] Democracy is a form of government in which the ultimate power is in the hands of the people, exercised directly by them, or by elected representatives in a free electoral system. Because of this definition, Abraham Lincoln, one of the former Presidents of the United States, said that the democratic process requires the participation of the people in deciding a problem and controlling the government in power.[8] In the modern world, the notion of

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[4]Kiki Muhamad Hakiki, "Islam Dan Demokrasi : Pandangan Intelektual Muslim," *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama Dan Sosial Budaya* 1, no. 1 (2016), p. 2.

[5]Muhammad Hasbi, "Wacana Demokrasi dalam Pemikiran Politik Islam" 45, no. I (2011), p. 144.

[6]Muhammad Hasbi, *Wacana Demokrasi dalam Pemikiran...* p. 144.

[7]Ubaidillah Ahmad Mahfud, "Sosialisasi Nilai-Nilai Demokrasi Abdurrahman Wahid dalam Islam Modern." *Jurnal Al-Harakah* 3.01 (2020), p. 4.

[8]Kiki Muhamad Hakiki, *Islam dan Demokrasi Hakiki...* p. 3.

democracy is more emphasized on the meaning of the highest power in political affairs which is in the hands of the people.[9]

Abraham Lincoln's statement may be relevant to clarify the meaning of democracy, namely government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The statement is short but can be interpreted in various meanings. In our opinion, the word from the people means that the source of political power comes from the people. There is power because of the people. Thus, it is said that sovereignty is in the hands of the people, meaning that a political power or authority is said to be valid or legitimate if that power is recognized by the people. Hence, there is no power without the legitimacy of the people.

If the terminology of the philosophers of social contract, John Locke, Tomas Hobbes, can be understood, power is born because of a social contract (social agreement) between individuals in society. Individuals in the community agree to give some of their power rights to certain individuals or institutions to form a system of power in order to realize a common political unity and for the common good of all the people. The relationship between the people and the ruler is based on an agreement or contract that gives birth to rights and obligations between the two.

The question then is, who are the people? Of course, the imagination is focused on the entire population in a country, society as a whole in a country. But historically, in practice, democratic political systems have always provided limited political participation. For example, the practice of the democratic political system in Athens, the people's political rights are limited to male citizens aged 20 years and over. Meanwhile, women, slaves, and traders who came from outside Athens did not have political rights, in the sense that they did not have the right to participate directly in the political processes contained in the Polis.

Thus, in the practice of modern democracy, according to Heywood, restrictions on voting rights in western countries continued into the 20th century, usually in the form of wealth requirements or the exclusion of women. Universal suffrage was not achieved in England until 1928, when women were granted full suffrage. In the US, this was not achieved until the early 1960s when African Americans in southern states were able to vote for the first time.In Switzerland universal suffrage was only achieved in 1971 when women finally got the right to vote. An important limitation continues to be practiced in all democratic systems in the form of the exclusion of children from political participation, although the age

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[9]HotmatuaParalihan, "Islam Dan Demokrasi." *JurnalFilsafat dan Teologi Islam* 10.1 (2019), p. 64.

of the majority of the population ranges from 15 to 20 years. Technical restrictions are also often imposed, for example the insane and imprisoned criminals.[10]

Then what does 'rule by the people' mean in Lincoln's statement above? The meaning of the statement is that the political configuration of democracy must provide a medium or arena in which the people can participate and fully channel their aspirations. If we refer to the historical practice of democracy in ancient Greece, the people participated directly in political processes, such as the process of making and implementing political policies in the Polis (city state), which is called direct democracy. It is different from the current practice of democracy, where the people exercise their power by participating in channeling their political rights in general elections. They are given the power to choose candidates who will represent their interests in political institutions such as the legislature and executive. There is an impression that people's power stops only in the voting booths, while real power is exercised by the representatives they choose in electoral politics or general elections. That is the form of a representative democratic system that is commonly implemented in modern countries today.

In addition, the people are also given space to participate in monitoring and influencing political processes outside state institutions. The goal is to input what is in the interest of the general public. The democratic political system provides a deliberative space, a space where public debates and public opinion related to government policies are discussed and tested with debates within the public. That is the extent to which the policies that will be and have been taken by the government have a good impact on the community. In the sense of whether the policy has fulfilled the aspects of justice and equitable distribution of welfare to the community or vice versa. Thus, it is said that a good democratic political system is one that provides a deliberative public space where public discourse related to political processes can be revived.

A public space is said to be ideal and democratic as long as it can accommodate various entities (groups, communities, associations, associations) with various interests. Public space, in this case, has levels of publicity, which is largely determined by the amount of its capacity for various forms and public interests. The greater the absorption and the more variety it absorbs, the better the publicity of a space.[11]

This includes building a balance between the power of the state and the power of civil society, namely building a balance between political order and the

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[10]Andrew Heywood, *Politik*, p. 154.

[11]Yasraf A. Piliang, *Transpolitika: DinamikaPolitik di dalam Era Virtualitas* (Second Print; Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2006), p. 247.

political freedom of citizens. If the state is stronger than the people, allowing a power leads to authoritarianism. On the other hand, if the people are stronger than the state, the existing system will lead to social anarchism. Therefore, there must be a balance between the forces that exist within the state and the social forces outside the state. So that both can control each other to create a good political climate for government, in addition to political freedom for citizens.

Therefore, democratic government is presented to limit power, including through general elections that are held periodically to circulate power, and power sharing so that power is not centralized to only one person or certain institution. Such as the division of power into three main institutions, the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. Power is also exercised constitutionally, meaning that the power and authority in a democratic government is limited to what is stipulated in the constitution, the basic law of the country and its derivative laws. The goal is to avoid the state government from the tendency to abuse power. As Lord Acton stated, *Power tends to corrupt, but absolute power corrupts absolutely*.

Furthermore, still within the framework of Lincoln's statement, 'power for the people' is understood as the goal of the entire implementation of state government directed as much as possible to realize the benefit of the people. In the form of realizing security, economic welfare, political rights, access to education, and access to good health. That is what is called the common good for all people. There is a hypothetical belief among modern political scholars, that a democratic government will last if it is directly proportional to the growth of the middle class. Namely people who have access to good education, good economic, and good health. The existence of broad access to education, economy, and health, will encourage the growth of social forces in society, in which social power is in the form of autonomous civil society associations. In addition, the community is independent and separate from the government, which has a function as an intermediary agent between the people and the government as the implementer of public policy. These associations in addition to inputting the aspirations of the people into the political system, also function as a medium that bridges the interests of the people from the grassroots with the government elite as makers and implementers of public policies. So that the policy is expected to benefit all parties.

For this reason, a democratic government system is said to be legitimate, if it fulfills three elements: *first*, the government is carried out based on standard laws, laws agreed upon and determined by the people; *second*, the law that forms the basis for the implementation of government and political policies is believed to be correct by the people and political authorities, both at the philosophical, juridical,

and sociological levels; *third*, the power is widely recognized by the community as legitimate power.

Contradictory Relationship between Islam and Democracy

The pages of the history of Islamic politics, especially prophetic politics, find many aspects of political implementation that are in line with the spirit of the basic principles of democracy. So hypothetically the point is, Islam is in line with democracy. But it must also be realized that between Islam and democracy were born from two different ontological areas. Islam as a religion is believed to be sacred and absolute truth because ontologically its teachings come from God. While the democratic political system was born from the historical trajectory of human cultural development, it means that democracy is profane secular, and the truth is contextual perspective. But the question is, is something different that contradicts one another? Of course, the answer is, no!

In the same vein, Fahmi Huwaidy said that Islam has been discredited in two ways: *first*, when compared to democracy; *second*, when it is said that Islam is against democracy. Because comparing between the two is wrong, just as it is wrong to think that they are opposites.In terms of method, the comparison between the two things above cannot be justified, because Islam is a religion and a treatise that contains the principles governing worship, morality and *muamalah*. Meanwhile, democracy is only a system of government and a mechanism of cooperation between community members and a symbol that carries many positive values.[12]

The relationship between religion and democracy, there are at least three models as expressed by KamaruddinHidayat in Hasbi. The first model: the paradoxical or negative model, states that religion and democracy cannot be reconciled and even contradictory. Among these adherents are Karl Marx, Max Weber, Nietzsche and Sartre.In the view of Karl Marx, a figure of communism, the expression of religious life is basically an expression of social suffering. Religion is the complaint of oppressed citizens. Religion is the sentiment of an inhuman world. Religion is the opium of society that only provides temporary, artificial sedation, but is unable to dismantle and eliminate conditions that cause suffering.[13] In line with Karl Max, Nietzsche and Sartre view that religion and church rulers are conservative forces that shackle human reasoning and freedom to build the world

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[12]Fahmi Huwaydi, *Demokrasi, Oposisi, dan Masyarakat Madani: Isu-isu besar Politik Islam* (Bandung: Mizan Publishing, 1996), p. 151.
[13]Muhammad Hasbi, *Wacana Demokrasi dalam Pemikiran...* p. 146.

autonomously without being restrained by the hand of God who is present through the power of religious institutions and rulers.[14]

The second model: the secular or neutral model, states that the relationship between religion and democracy is neutral. Religion and politics, including democracy, go their separate ways. Therefore, the role of religion for humans is only limited to the issue of the relationship between humans personally and their God and the search for the meaning of life. Whereas in social interaction, democratic values such as in political life are used as social manners and ethics. And in this case, religion cannot play its part. In other words, in the worldly field, human behavior is free and sterile from the normative teachings of religion. In another expression, it is explained that the relationship between religion and politics goes separately or that religion is separated from politics (political secularization).[15]

The third model: the theo-democratic or positive model, states that religion and democracy have parallels and compatibility. In this third model, religion, both theologically and sociologically, strongly supports the process of political, economic and cultural democratization. Religion as a normative teaching in many ways has an allusion to the normative value of democracy, so that the interaction between the two can support each other, the existence of religion can be a spirit as well as an inspiration for democratization. This is indicated by evidence that the presence of all religions with their prophetic missions (religious prophetic missions including liberation, justice, and peace) has always had an impact on reforming the structure of society, which is gripped by dispotic, tyrannical, tyrannical and authoritarian powers, towards the realization of structures and democratic social order.[16]

Sukron Kamil quotes John L. Esposito and James Piscatoris, saying, there are at least three schools of thought in the discourse of democracy, *first*, the sect that accepts democracy completely; *second*, the sect that rejects democracy, and;*third*, the sect that agrees with the principles of democracy, but on the other hand recognizes the differences. For those who fully accept it, democracy is not seen as a problem that must be disputed. For example, some Muslim scholars see that in the history of thought, democracy was proclaimed for the first time by Islam. Therefore, Islam in itself is democratic.[17] The same thing was said by Yusuf al-Qordhawi, the substance of democracy is in line with Islam, because the Qur'an and democracy both reject

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[14]Muhammad Hasbi, *Wacana Demokrasi dalam Pemikiran...* p. 145-146.
[15]Muhammad Hasbi, *Wacana Demokrasi dalam Pemikiran...* p. 146.
[16]Muhammad Hasbi, *Wacana Demokrasi dalam Pemikiran...* p. 147.
[17]Sukron Kamil, *Pemikiran Politik Islam Tematik* (Jakarta: Kencan, 2013), p. 91-92.

dictatorship.[18] Islam is a complete religion, in which there is also a state or political system.[19]

In Indonesia, NurcholishMadjid and Gusdur also view democracy as being in line with the ethical principles of Islamic teachings. For this group in Islam there are basic principles of governance that are in line with democratic principles, such as *amanah*(trust),[20], *musawah*-(equality), *adl* (justice), *shura* (deliberation), *ijma'* (consensus), and *bai'at* (social contract). Even the conception of the Medina charter is recorded as the first written and phenomenal constitution than in the west.[21]

Actually, the rejection of democracy by many Muslim rulers, especially in the Middle East, is more based on the desire to maintain the *status quo* so that their power is not displaced. By some elites in Muslim countries, democracy is also rejected because there are doubts about the effectiveness of democracy in protecting and realizing the interests of the lower classes, as well as doubting the effectiveness of democracy on the integrity of the nation, because democracy is often seen as creating social chaos.The clean governance that is expected in democracy has not yet arrived, because of the rampant money politics and cronyism as a result of the politics of giving back to those who have contributed to the direct election of the president or regional head, and especially often, democracy is not directly proportional to the improvement of people's economic welfare.[22]

Another reason for the rejection of democratic politics is the theological burden. Democracy is considered to be a threat to the faith of a Muslim, so they conclude that there is no proper place for the notion of democracy in Islam. Democracy is seen as a Thagut (idol) teaching, because in terms of values it is far from Islamic teachings, and closer to the Christian West.

Three forms of Muslim attitudes towards democracy are that some of them accept democracy totally, others totally reject it, and others accept it with some critical notes. There is no doubt that some Muslims reject democracy because they see democracy as a concept that originates from the western world, which allows it to worsen the image of the Islamic world, especially Muslim Arab countries. It is clear that this rejection is not only due to the perceived incompatibility of democracy with Islamic teachings, but rather that the concept originated in colonial western countries. There is a historical burden of the past that is so heavy that it

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[18]Sukron Kamil, *Pemikiran Politik Islam…* p. 91-92.

[19]Hamzah and Samiang Katu. "Pemikiran Islam tentang Hubungan Negara dengan Agama." *DirasatIslamiah: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* 1.1 (2020), p. 65.

[20]Lihat, Abidin Nurdin, "Dialectics in Relationship Between Religion and State: A Correlation of Religious Principles and Ideals of Law in Indonesia." *Al-Bayyinah* 4.1 (2020), p. 111.

[21]Faiq Tobroni, "The Similarity of The Medina Charter and The Indonesian Constitution in Human Right's Protection." *Al-Bayyinah* 4.2 (2020): p. 218.

[22]Sukron Kamil, *Pemikiran Politik Islam…* p. 93.

gives rise to doubts among Muslims, even rejection of the practice and concept of democratic politics which is basically rooted in the culture of the western world.

Huwaydi, citing John L. Esposito and James Piscatoris, said that some Jemaah Islam was worried about the western model of democracy and the system of government that Britain had introduced into their country.Actually, this negative reaction is an expression of a complete rejection of European colonialism, and as a defense of Islam in reducing Islam's dependence on western countries, which results in a complete rejection of democracy.[23] The rejection is more meaningful protest and resistance to hegemony and injustice due to western policies in various areas of the Islamic world. The decline of Islam in history is seen as a result of western conspiracies, and also as a continuation of the Crusades. All thoughts and socio-political arrangements offered by the west are understood as nothing more than a vehicle for oppressing the power of Islam. As a solution, they invite people to return to the true teachings of Islam, and reject everything they value is western, be it science, rationalism, or democracy.[24]

In addition, there is a pervasive impression in the minds and psychology of the Islamic world that the west is identical with colonialism and moral corruption, even disbelief, so that anything that comes from the West must be contrary to the holy teachings of Islam. Some consider that the principle of popular sovereignty in the concept of democracy is contrary to Islamic teachings which emphasize the sovereignty of God. Recognizing the sovereignty of the people is tantamount to denying the sovereignty of God as the only source of law and eternal truth.

While others have criticized the principle of majority in the concept of democracy, arguing that justice cannot be measured in quantity, with many people agreeing on a law. There are concerns that some Muslims, the principle of majority vote, which is one of the basic principles of democracy, will allow the birth of legal products that are contrary to Islamic law, for example by justifying what is prohibited in Islam. There are also some Muslim scholars who criticize the concept of equality, they state that in the context of social life there will always be differences, such as, for example, differences in degrees between the rich and the poor, intelligent and non-intelligent, knowledgeable and not knowledgeable, and so on. So, they stated, equality is something that cannot be realized in any political system, including democracy.

Such thoughts should be understood because of their lack of understanding of the concept of democracy itself. The meaning of equality in the context of democracy does not necessarily equate people according to social stratification, but

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[23]Fahmi Huwaydi, *Demokrasi, Oposisi, dan Masyarakat... p.* 153.
[24]Irfan Tanwifi, *Islam dan Kegagalan Demokrasi* (Surabaya: UIN SA Press, 2014), p. 31.

rather the equality of political opportunities for every individual in society. Everyone has the same right to take advantage of existing access, both in the political, economic and educational fields and in various other social sectors.

Convergence of Islam and Democracy

This discussion departs from several basic questions and assumptions, Islam and democracy are not contradictory. As long as you ask the right questions, such as, under what conditions Islam and democracy can grow together in a country? Isn't Indonesia, for example, the third largest democracy in the world with a Muslim majority population?If democracy is rejected by some Muslims for theological reasons, the question then is, is there any majority of Muslim communities that are hindered by the democratic political system from carrying out their beliefs?Although there is a slight deviation from the implementation of democracy in Indonesia, of course it will still answer, that, in the experience so far, Muslims have actually got the widest possible space in the democratic political system that runs in Indonesia. So, it is clear that Islam and democracy in the context of Indonesia can go hand in hand and grow together, it can even be said that they need each other in a complementary way.

If what is meant by democracy is respect for human rights, then it is clear that democracy is in line with Islam. For example, John Locke as a social contract theorist, stated that the purpose of forming a state is to protect the three main natural rights of humans, namely the right to life, the right to liberty, the right to property (life, liberty, and property).Thus, the three things are contained in the five objectives of Islamic law: protection of life, protection of religion, protection of reason, protection of offspring, and protection of property or personal property. As long as democracy provides space for the realization of the five main objectives of Islamic law above, the practice of democratic politics can be said to be in line with the spirit of Islamic law. The general assumption is that there is no democracy without human rights.

For example, if it is related to the human rights narrative, then what is meant is the fulfillment of the right to life for every human being. Protection of religion, in the context of human rights, can be interpreted as the fulfillment of the rights of every citizen to practice religion in accordance with their respective religious beliefs.Intellectual protection, in the context of human rights, can be understood as the fulfillment of the right to education to develop every citizen's intellectual potential through educational institutions, by providing the widest possible access to education for every citizen. While the protection of offspring, can be understood as the fulfillment of the right to marry, including in this case the protection of the

survival and development of children, for example in the Indonesian context regulated in the law on child protection and the child criminal system. Lastly, property protection can be understood as the widest possible access to economic development and private property ownership. However, if in the west private property is for personal use alone, in Islam private property is understood to have a social dimension or social function. For example, in Islam it is regulated about *zakat fitrah* and *zakat mall*, in addition to *infaq*, *waqf* and alms as a form of social responsibility for every Muslim.

Therefore, it should be emphasized that, Indonesian Muslims as citizens of majority in the country, should not view democracy in a negative way. Democracy as a globally agreed political system today must be seen as a medium or space where Islamic teachings can be implemented effectively. The mistakes so far when talking about democracy as a concept originating from the west are associated with the interpretation of religion and exclusive religious beliefs. So that the theological burden hinders seeing the logical possibilities of the principal similarity between Islamic values and democracy in a substantive manner. Thus, it is possible for both of them to grow together in a country.

As long as a state or power is formed to realize the benefit of the people, of course that power is in line with the spirit of Islamic law. As understood, politics in Islam is aimed at realizing activities that are closer to goodness and keep people away from damage even though these activities are not regulated in the Qur'an or practice in the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). This perspective can be used as a theoretical basis for viewing democracy as a political activity that is very likely to bring benefits to Muslims and to society in general.

The forms of damage that are protected by the democratic political system are authoritarian and totalitarian forms of government that allow arbitrary actions against the people, as well as forms of power that tend to be corrupt or misused. The democratic political system protects the potential for abuse of power by limiting power through periodic elections, creating a power control system through the division of power into legislative, judicial, and executive institutions, as well as the authority of the rulers being constitutionally limited by laws and regulations.In addition, democratic politics provides a deliberative public space as a space where public discourses or civil society debates related to political policies are carried out continuously without any pressure and restrictions from the state apparatus.

It is also important to remember that Islam, like democracy, places great emphasis on the interests of humans and the people as a whole. Thus,Gusdur's logic regarding the implementation of Islamic teachings as quoted by Aksin Wijaya, said that Islam is a religion that defends the interests of the people. Precisely Islam

defends the interests of the common people. The people must be prioritized in the manifestation of Islamic teachings. According to Gusdur, the government's actions must be determined by the benefit and welfare of the people. Because the government's actions in the view of Islam must be based on the interests of the community, the Islamic world view according to Gusdur can take the form of accommodation to existing realities as long as it helps to realize the benefit of the people.[25]

Gusdur continued in Aksin Wijaya, as long as the country helps fulfill human welfare, then any form of state will not be a problem, whether it is an Islamic state or a democratic state. However, said Gusdur, because Indonesia is a country of moderates, it is not appropriate for an Islamic state to be applied in Indonesia. With such an understanding, Gusdur gave his discussion on the relationship between religion and democracy.Gusdur acknowledged the differences between religion and democracy but supported each other. Both are different in terms of the nature of their basic values. Religion is based on the normative view of its scriptures, and is assumed to have only one permanent truth, namely the truth that it adheres to. On the other hand, democracy provides the widest opportunity for changes in values by the community, so that it can threaten the eternal values contained in religion, for example regarding religious conversion.[26]

Muhammad Husein Heikal in Hakiki, argues that freedom, brotherhood, and equality which are the watchwords of democracy today are also among the main principles of Islam. The rules set by the current understanding of democracy are actually Islamic principles.[27]Similarly, Amin Rais, who is an Indonesian intellectual as quoted by Hakiki, does not see any conflict between Shura (consultation) and democracy. It's just that according to him, the term democracy today has been misunderstood according to the political interests of the ruling regime. He further stated three reasons for his acceptance of the concept of democracy; *first* ,Conceptually, the Qur'an commands Muslims to carry out shura (deliberations) in solving their problems. *Second*, historically, the Prophet. practice deliberation with friends. *Third*, rationally, Muslims are ordered to resolve their dilemmas and problems through deliberation.[28]

With some of these logics, it is correct to say that Muslims can accept a democratic political system as a medium for realizing the benefit of the people, but

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[25]Aksin Wijaya, *Menusantarakan Islam: Menelusuri Jejak Pergumulan Islam yang Kenjung Usai di Nusantara* (Second Print (Jakarta: Ministry of Religious Affairs of Republic of Indonesia, 2012), p. 175-176.

[26]Aksin Wijaya, *Menusantarakan Islam: Menelusuri Jejak...p.* 177.

[27]Kiki Muhamad Hakiki, *Islam dan Demokrasi Hakiki...* p. 5.

[28]Kiki Muhamad Hakiki, *Islam dan Demokrasi Hakiki...* p. 6.

that acceptance must rely on human values which are essentially in line with religious ethical values. Because Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, it is fitting for Muslims to become enforcers of democracy based on religious human values.

The religious human values in question are values that are desired by God and also desired by humans, such as; *syura* (discussion), *ijma'* (consensus), *hurriyah* (freedom), *musawah* (equality), *'adl* (justice), *ta'ah* (obedience), and *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar* (calling for goodness, and rejecting injustice). These values become the basis or foundation for the establishment of religious democracy. Democracy which not only provides a place for the growth of people's beliefs or religiosity, but also provides space for the realization of human rights. Islam highly upholds human dignity, so the logic of government in the view of Islam is aimed at the glorification of humans, in addition to welfare both materially and spiritually.

The principle of *syura*, for example, has the same spirit as democracy, even some Muslim scholars consider it very close to democracy. As a medium for channeling the aspirations of the people, shura has a meaning not only related to the political arena, but also has a strong theological backing in solving people's problems fairly.

Conclusion

The concept of democracy in terms of values and orientation is not entirely the same as the teachings of Islam, but it is not denied that the teachings of Islam are in many respects substantially in line with democracy. Therefore, Muslims can accept a democratic political system as a medium for realizing the benefit of the people, but this acceptance must rely on human values which are essentially in line with religious ethical values. Thus, Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, so it is fitting for Indonesian Muslims to become enforcers of democracy based on human-religious values. A democratic model that not only provides a place for the growth of people's beliefs or religiosity, but also provides space for the realization of human rights. Therefore, democracy as a concept, in its implementation, of course must be adapted to the context and culture of the local community, especially Islamic communities such as in Indonesia and in the Middle East.

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