DISCOURSES ON ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY IN INDONESIA
A Study on the Intellectual Debate between Liberal Islam Network (JIL) and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)

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Abstract: This article discusses the relationship between Islam and democracy according to *Jaringan Islam Liberal* (JIL; Liberal Islam Network) and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this article shows that according to JIL, Islam is compatible with modern democratic values. Democracy contains all modern governmental elements which are also found in Islam, such as consultation, consensus, justice, freedom, equality, and tolerance. Islam, in the view of JIL proponents, perfectly fits in line with modernity. Meanwhile, HTI argues that Islam is incompatible with democracy, because the word democracy comes from Western culture which means capitalist and secularist. Democracy is perceived by the HTI activists as a revolt against God's sovereignty. These different views are influenced by their interpretation of Islamic values on the context of modern concept of democracy. In addition, this difference is also caused by the background of education, genealogy of knowledge, and condition of global politics.

Keywords: Liberal Islam Network (JIL), Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), democracy.

Introduction

The relation between Islam and democracy in Indonesia has been a topic of debate among Muslim intellectuals. Some intellectuals see the relationship between Islam and democracy as contradictory and conflictual (incompatible) with each other, while others argue that the correspondence between the two exist (compatible).

There are at least two major contemporary Islamic movements in Indonesia; namely "Islamic revivalism"[1] and "Islamic liberalism". Islamic revivalist movement rises and brings back the spirit of early Islam. The Islamic revivalist groups include *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia* (MMI; Indonesian Muslim Mujahidin Council), *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI; the Islamic Defenders Front), and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI).[2] The struggle of those who are outside the parliament has been supported by Islamic political parties, such as *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (PPP; United Development Party) and *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (PKS; the Prosperous Justice Party).[3]

Meanwhile, "Islamic liberalism" movement[4] requires the reinterpretation of Islam, rethinking of Islam*,* in order to get Islam in harmony with modernity. Islam is considered as a social fact, in a sense that Islamic teaching applied by Muslims is the result of a process of historical reinterpretation, subjectification, or objectification. These themes are related to social and political issues such as democracy, secularism, liberalism, pluralism, tolerance, gender equality, Sharia (Islamic Law), and human rights.[5] Charles Kurzman acknowledges this second group as "Islamic neo- modernism" or "Islamic liberalism".[6]

[1] Some experts prefer to refer to it as Islamic fundamentalism, militant Islam, Islamic Jihad movement, and radical Islam. See, Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam: A Source Book* (English: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. xi.

[2] Some experts often use other names such as neo-modernism, progressive Islam, and Islamic post-traditionalism. Liberal and progressive Islams are Indonesian Islamic ultimate movements that go beyond traditional Islam, moderate Islam, and modern Islamic movement. See, Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*; Omid Safi (ed.), *Progressive Muslim: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism* (Oxford: One World, 2006); Ahmad Gaus AF, "Islam Progresif: Wacana Pasca Arus Utama (Peta Pemikiran dan Gerakan Islam Indonesia)," *Tashwirul Afkar,* No. 22 (2007), p. 96; and Zuhairi Misrawi and Novriantoni, *Doktrin Islam Progresif: Memahami Islam sebagai Agama Rahmat* (Jakarta: LSIP, 2004).

[3] These groups are often referred to as the "Islamism", a movement or organization that seeks to change the Muslim community with the program and ideology taken from the text of the holy book of Islam. In general, the "Islamism" applies Salafism ideology: they teach the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Sharia textually, and they reject the interpretations written by scholars as an integral part of the tradition of religious understanding in Islam. See, Salwa Ismail, "Being Muslim: Islamism and Identity Politics," *Government and Opposition* 39, No. 4 (2004), p. 66.

[3] Khamami Zada, *Islam Radikal* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002).

[4] See, Kurzman, *Liberal Islam,* p. xii and Safi, *Progressive Muslim,* pp. 20-30.

[5] Luthfi Assyaukanie*, Wajah Islam Liberal di Indonesia* (Jakarta: JIL, 2002), p. 12.

[6] Kurzman, *Liberal Islam,* pp. xi-xv.

Choosing JIL as the representation of Islamic liberalism and HTI as the representation of Islamic revivalist movement is for a number of reasons: (1) In the post-New Order era, the two Islamic movements are very prominent and attract public attention because of liberal and radical characteristics. Among Islamic revivalists, on the one hand, HTI is the "loudest" one in exposing the decay of democracy and requiring the enforcement of Sharia and *khilafah Islamiyah* (Islamic caliphate). JIL, on the other hand, is the "loudest" group in communicating Islamic liberalism ideas in relation to democracy, human rights, freedom, and pluralism; (2) These two Islamic movements are classified as the most productive group in spreading their ideas; (3) Both JIL and HTI are global movements performing an effort to realize the idealized Muslim community.

Some political scientists state that Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim community, has not fully succeeded in practicing democracy. In his book entitled *The Failure of Political Islam* (1994), Oliver Roy has a cynical view on the existence and articulation of "political Islam" in the Muslim world.[7] The same thing was said by Frederic Volpi who sees the phenomenon of the emergence of democracy in the Muslim world as a "pseudo-democracy". It is "a political order that tries to resemble a liberal democracy without a real effort to become a liberal democracy".[8] While Vedi R. Hadiz refers to Muslim democracy as shown in Indonesia, as "illiberal democracy", a democracy in disguise, and not a true democracy.[9]

Discourse and counter-discourse on Islam and democracy developed by Indonesian Muslims have created an important part in Indonesia's political history, both at theoretical and practical levels. Therefore, the study of discourse that has been developed among Indonesian Muslims associated with Islam and democracy is important to note.

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[7] Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994).

[8] Frederic Volpi, "Pseudo-Democracy in the Muslim World," *Third World Quarterly* 25, No. 6 (2004), pp. 1061-1078. To learn more about the theory of "pseudo-democracy", see, Larry Diamond, "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy*, 13, No. 2 (2002), pp. 21-35.

[9] Vedi R. Hadiz, "The Rise of Neo-Third Worldism? The Indonesian Trajectory and Consolidation of Illiberal Democracy," *Third World Quarterly* 25, No. 1 (2004), pp. 55-71.

The focus of the research problem is how the Liberal Islam Network and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia understand the relationship of Islam and democracy in Indonesia in Post-New Order era. While the objectives of this research is to obtain an understanding of the relationship between Islam and democracy as understood by JIL and HTI.

Islam and Democracy

JIL scholars argue that *shura* has a meaning comparable and compatible with democracy. *Shura* implies modern Islamic governmental and political system or "Islamic democracy". Besides *shurā,* Islam also contains fundamental teaching such as justice *('adl),* equality *(musāwāt),* freedom *(ḥurriyah)*–including religious freedom and tolerance *(tasammuh).*[10]

According to Luthfi Assyaukanie, a founder and activist of JIL, liberal democracy is a political system built on the basis of representation, the rule of law, the constitution, and the protection of individual liberties and minority rights. Liberal democracy does not only emphasize on the election and the number of majority, but also on individual and minority rights freedom.[11]

Budhy Munawar-Rahman says that Islamic norms concerning egalitarianism, democracy, participation, and social justice is interpreted as a mutual relationship. Munawar-Rahman thinks that democracy must be put within the framework of *tawhid* (oneness of God) when it deals with modern politics. The framework of *tawhid* extracts the idea that Allah is the only transcendent and divine, and as a consequence, it should be viewed as something temporal and subject to criticism in the secular field.[12]

Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, another founder and activist of JIL, considers that Islam does not recognize a definite concept of polity as it is proven that the succession of authority (the changes of head of state) is the most principal thing in a governmental system. Apparently, there is no certain system regulating the issue of succession in the Islamic

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[10] Interview with Luthfi Assyaukanie, February 22, 2011; Interview with Ulil Abshar Abdalla, February 23, 2010; and Interview with Budhy Munawar-Rachman, February 23, 2011).

[11] Luthfi Assyaukanie, "Islam Liberal untuk Demokrasi Liberal," Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Islam Benar versus Islam Salah* (Jakarta: KataKita, 2007), p. 91.

[12] Interview with Budhy Munawar-Rahman, February 23, 2011.

history. Occasionally, the systems employed are *istikhlāf* (as in the case of Abu Bakar and Umar bin Khatab), *bai'at* (as in the case of Abu Bakar), and *ahl-ḥall wa al-'aqd* (formation system). All three models occur only in 13 years. In fact, succession is an urgent issue in state affairs. This problem would have not occur if Islam had set a firm system of governmental succession since the companions of the Prophet are the most obedient people who always obey the Prophet.[13]

Those ideas of JIL show that the values of Islam and the values of democracy are not contradictory. In other words, there is a conformity between Islam and democracy. *First,* Islamic moral values such as deliberation, justice, equality, tolerance, freedom, and other elements are in accordance with modern democratic values. *Second,* in relation to the government affairs and political participation, the Qur'an explains: "O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you." (Q.S. 4: 59). *Third,* Islam teaches the principles of *shura* (consultation). *Fourth,* Islam teaches people to be tolerant and uphold human rights. Islamic elements are also present in the elements of democracy.

The construction of democracy as performed by JIL is opposed by HTI. HTI refuses democracy because they believe that Islam is a perfect system. As a product of the divine, Islam is clearly more perfect than any human product. Therefore, in assessing democracy, HTI activists confront God's versus human's "sovereignty".

A strict conception of democracy as proposed by HTI is closely associated with Hizbut Tahrir (HT)'s view as formulated by Abdul Qadim Zallum. Zallum's principal thinking has become a sort of "sacred text" and a compulsory guide used by HT activists around the world including HTI. The essence of Zallum's thinking about democracy is actually conveyed in his classic book entitled "*Al-Dimuqratiyah Nizam Kufr*".[14]

Based on his arguments, Zallum finally concludes that Muslims are forbidden to believe in and spread democracy as well as establish a political party based on democracy. Zallum suggests Muslims not to

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[13] Interview with Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, February 23, 2011.

[14] 'Abd al-Qadim Zallum, *Al-Dimuqratiyah Nizam Kufr* (n.p.: Min Mansurat Hizb al-Tahrir, 1995).

deal with democracy since it is considered as a *kufr* (infidelity) system and *taghut* (evil) law that has nothing to do with Islam.

Ahmad Sajid, another HTI activist has the same opinion as Zallum. In his article entitled "*Demokrasi Peradaban Sampah*" (Democracy a Rubbish Civilization),[15] Sajid clearly looks down democratic system and sees it as incomparable to Islamic system. Democracy is derived from humans' intelligent but Islam is originated from the divine revelation of Allah. In addition, in terms of principle, democracy is contrary to Islam because of three things: 1) sovereignty is in the hands of the people; 2) people is a source of authority; 3) warranty of the four freedoms: religion, opinion, ownership, and behaviour.

HTI scholars understand democracy as something different from Islamic government system, that is, Islamic caliphate. Democracy is interpreted as a government system of secular capitalism [16] According to Al-Khaththath, a former chairman of HTI, democracy means:

> It is no difference as to cast the absolute authority of Allah and His Prophets as *Musharri'* (lawmaker), and replace it with the people as the sovereign. This corresponds to the principle of secularism or the separation of religion from public life; separation of religion from politics; and separation of religion from secular life which have been promoted and implemented by the infidel Western civilization. It is not a surprise if the Western people have always supported the jargon of democracy and encourage democratic elections.[17]

The same affirmation is stated by Ismail Yusanto, a spokesperson of HTI. According to Yusanto, the Islamic movement in Indonesia sees democracy from two perspectives; democracy as an ideology and as a way. As an idealism, HTI clearly rejects democracy because it believes that the sovereignty is on the hand of Allah, not humans. Therefore, when Allah states something, HTI has no other choices but follow it. HTI also rejects the concept of democracy as a way because

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[15] Ahmad Sajid, "Demokrasi Peradaban Sampah," *al-Wa'ie*, No. 14 Year II (1-30 October 2001), pp. 30-35.

[16] Masdar Hilmy, *Islamism and Democracy In Indonesia: Piety and Pragmatism* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Studies, 2010), p. 139.

[17] Ibid., p. 139.

it believes that instead of democracy, Islamic system is the only way to fight for Islamic truth.[18]

Islam and Secularism, Liberalism, and Pluralism

Related to the values of democracy such as secularism, liberalism and pluralism, JIL activists can fully accept those ideas. They consider that secularism is an idea of separating religion and politics. However, the idea does not mean anti-religion. For JIL, secularism is a prerequisite for democratic society and without it, it is impossible to apply a true democracy in Indonesia.

In this context, Luthfi Assyaukanie states:

> The fundamental of democracy is secularism and a state applying the value is a secular one. It is an axiom which is not bargainable. It is impossible for democracy to grow up in an anti-democracy country which has a certain religious or ideology country. By applying the axiom, I want to state that if Islamic countries apply the democracy, then they have to adopt the principles of secular countries. By adopting it, democracy has an opportunity to develop. Therefore, if Indonesia still insists on the democracy, it has to be a secular country.[19]

According to Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, the general definition of secularism is the separation of religious authority from state power. Secular country means that it is not ruled by the power of clerics (*ulamas*) as in Iran which is familiar with the concept of *wilāyāt al-faqīh* (the power of *ulamas*). In addition, Ulil emphasizes that secularism does not hinder the role of religion. The country should be neutral in dealing with its citizens' belief. Theologically, a neutral country is an interpretation of the Quran principle *lā ikrāha fi al-dīn* (there is no compulsion in accepting religion). Furthermore Ulil states:

> In my opinion, we cannot avoid secularism due to modernism. The role of religious institutions decreases because of the differentiation and specialization process in the society. Nowadays, religions cannot deal with everything. The core of secularism consists of the impossibility of totalitarianism and total domination, such as of a religion or country. So, secularism is a

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[18] Interview with Ismail Yusanto, February 22, 2011.

[19] Interview with Luthfi Assyaukani in the office of *Freedom Institute* in February 22, 2011.

system in which differentiation occurs in each area. So, if the field of religion consists of rituals and life meaning, then religion lives only in those fields.[20]

Ulil's explanation on secularism and secularization is similar to that of modernization theoreticians who believe that modernization, characterized with social differentiation or work-share and rationalization in society, decreases the role of religion especially in political domain. However, a structural differentiation will not cause the religion losing its significance in politics.

But then the implementation of secularism raises a big question. Will the role of religion be marginalized from the public area? Ulil believes that a religion may have its role in public area, but not in a traditional way. He explains further:

> ….it does not mean that the religion loses its entire role in public life. By implementing secularism, the concept of religion as culture, life meaning, or a set of values may influence public life. It possibly occurs. The question is no longer on whether we can see the religion in public area or whether it is being separated or not, but on how we involve the religion in our life. In my opinion, it is allowed. We should question the way the religion is involved in public area: Is it in traditional way? For example, should an *ulama* be a governor? Or, should Islamic parties upholding Islamic rules be in charge? I don't think so. …..We need more sophisticated ways to involve the religion in public area.[21]

From the explanation, it is clear that religion still can have its role in secular society, but it needs a more substantial understanding. According to Ulil, religion is not a ready-to-use formula, but it has to be seen as a set of basic values which becomes a sort of norm.

Discourses on "anti-secularism" means a rejection of separating Islam and the state. The HTI activists dream about an Islamic state, which at least started with sharia formalization. They fight for anti-secularism, which means they also fight for anti-liberalism and anti-pluralism. The context of upholding the sharia can be accepted as a form of anti-secularism. According to Ismail Yusanto, sharia offers a comprehensive solution for any problem faced by humans. To deal with the problems, HTI starts creating Islamic society, both for

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[20] Interview with Ulil Abshar Abdalla in February 24, 2011.

[21] Ibid.

individuals and the collective. It makes the law as an alternative for secularism, which is now becoming a foundation for nation-state.[22] The upholding of sharia, according to Yusanto, is not a compulsion but our obligation to prevent Muslim from being *munkar* (evil deeds) and to use our power to exalt the words of Allah. Therefore, all Muslims have to be involved in this upholding attempt.[23]

The above perspective and attitude, according to Saiful Mujani are meant to replace the existing perspectives with a new religious perspective.[24] The movement, according to John L. Esposito and Greg Fealy, is often considered at the same level as political activities, extremism, fanaticism, puritanism, militant, jihadist, Islamic, and anti-Americanism. These movements are developing discourses on the relationship among Islam, politics and society.[25]

HTI is also strongly against the existence of Western, especially United States, in Islamic countries. According to HTI, US is a serious threat for Islam. In addition, it has an unfair foreign policy due to its non-Islamic culture and civilization. Therefore, Muslims should not learn from this country. As explained by Yusanto, anything related to US is against Islam. He states:

> US foreign policy until now is having an old slogan, even though many people believe that it is irrelevant. But I still see the spirit of gold, glory, and Gospel. Gold represents how it dominates the economy sources. Glory is a spirit in dominating politics and Gospel is a spirit of missionary. In my opinion, it will not change. So, we should ignore their offers on democracy, pluralism, tolerance. No facts found for all that stuffs. Now I don't buy everything said by US.[26]

To face the ideological attack and Western hegemony, there is no other way for HTI but to implement the formalization of sharia and

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[22] Budhy Munawar Rahman, *Reorientasi Pembaruan Pemikiran Islam: Sekularisme, Liberalisme, dan Pluralisme Paradigma Baru Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: LSAF, 2010), p. 294.

[23] Interview with Ismail Yusanto on February 23, 2011.

[24] Saiful Mujani, "Fatwa MUI Pengaruhi Arus Radikalisme Islam Di Indonesia," http://www.islamlib.com., accessed January, 22, 2011.

[25] John L. Esposito, *Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 132; and Greg Fealy, *Jejak Kafilah Pengaruh Radikalisme Timur Tengah di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 2007), p. 29.

[26] Saiful Mujani et.al., *Benturan Peradaban: Sikap dan Perilaku Islamis Indonesia terhadap Amerika Serikat* (Jakarta: Nalar, 2005), pp. 87-88.

state of *khilāfah*. This goal is not only obligation for Muslims, but also the only way to create a fair societal life. Therefore, the implementation of sharia by HTI is a must. Using this understanding, HTI clearly declares its anti-secularism idea—and support the fatwa concerning the prohibition of secularism.[27]

On the contrary, the JIL activists accept the concept of liberalism. Liberalism or the freedom ideology, especially in accepting religion, is an important civil right since it is related to one's belief. According to Hamid, the ideology concerning human as a free individual is natural and undeniable. In liberalism, the freedom is limited by other's freedom. He emphasizes that the basic spirit of the Qur'an is individualism. Every man takes responsibilities on his or her own deeds to God and there is no possibility of helping or being helped by other".[28]

Meanwhile, according to Luthfi even though the liberalism movement in Indonesia adopts the idea from Western ideology, the Islamic intellectuals are familiar with the concept of freedom. The tradition of Islamic philosophy teaches the freedom of thought which gives an alternative for orthodox understanding.[29]

In this context, Musdah Mulia states that if liberalism is accepted as an appreciation for basic rights including public matters such as the right to live, to express the thought, to accept, to choose religion, and so on, then the religion becomes the *elan vital* of change. Among other freedoms, the freedom to accept any religion—with the concept of no compulsion in accepting a religion—is an important principle to the life of state and nation.[30]

The JIL agrees with liberalism as the foundation of democracy. Liberalism inspires the freedom of thought. Its principle highly supports the individual freedom, the political freedom in democratic participation, human equality, and pluralism. Ulil Abshar states:

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[27] Interview with Ismail Yusanto, February 23, 2011.

[28] See, Interview with Hamid Basyaib, as cited in Budhy Munawar-Rahman, *Membela Kebebasan Beragama: Percakapan tentang Sekularisme, Liberalisme, dan Pluralisme*, (book 1) (Jakarta: LSAF and Paramadina, 2010), pp. 595-627.

[29] Interview with Luthfi Assyaukanie, February 22, 2011.

[30] Siti Musdah Mulia, "Potret Kebebasan Berkeyakinan di Indonesia (Sebuah Refleksi Masa Depan Kebangsaan Indonesia)," Paper PSIK University of Paramadina, 2007.

> The core of liberalism, in my opinion, is the civil liberties. So you are free to think and do whatever you want as long you do not disturb others. It is a basic principle of liberalism. It creates its own law. It means that in the end the liberal society will create laws to protect civil rights. Liberalism never leads to destruction, it prefers the law or social norms creation to protect civil rights. That's what I mean by liberalism…[31]

To support his opinion that the freedom in accepting a religion is one of main teachings in the Quran, Ulil refers to the following verses: (1) Surah al-Kafirūn/109: 6: "….For you is your religion, and for me is my religion"; (2) Surah al-Baqarah/2: 256: There shall be no compulsion in (acceptance of) the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing; (3) Surah Yunus/10: 99: And had Your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed – all of them entirely. Then, (O Muhammad), would you compel the people in order that they become believers; (4) Surah al-Kahfi/18: 29: And say, "The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills – let him believe; and whoever wills – let him disbelieve." These verses explain that people can not be forced to accept a religion. In fact, they have a freedom to accept a religion.

Unlike JIL, HTI is a group supporting anti-liberalism. It considers liberalism as a dangerous virus threatening Islam and Muslims. Islam is not in accordance with liberalism. The followers of liberalism will change the law of religion if it is not suited with their thoughts.

Nanik Wijayati—a female activist of HTI Jakarta—states:

> By supporting the individual freedom, liberalism allows people to do anything they like. They do not have to hold on the rules of religion anymore. Moreover, they may reinterpret God's rule, if it is not suited with their will, to synchronize it with the principles of liberalism. So, it is common if any immorality —such as the case of homosexuality, free sex, and abortion—can be considered legal since it is justified by the reinterpretation of God's verses.[32]

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[31] Interview with Ulil Abshar Abdalla, February 24, 2011.

[32] Nanik Wijayati, "Demokrasi dan Liberalisme Mengancam Keluarga," as cited in Farid Wajdi and Shidiq al-Jawi, et. al., *Ilusi Negara Demokrasi* (Bogor: Al-Azhar Press, 2009), pp. 239-240.

According to Abdul Qadim Zallum, Islam dose not acknowledge freedom of religion. It is forbidden for Muslims to renounce their faith and for those who disobey will get punishment. In Islam, apostasy will get a death penalty.[33] In Zallum's view, Islam gives freedom for human to accept their religion. But once they accept Islam as their religion, they will lose their freedom. They have to obey and follow the rules, the do's and don'ts in Islam.

In relation to the ideas of religious pluralism, JIL activists fully accept this concept. According to Nurcholish Madjid, the pioneer of liberal Islam in Indonesia, the nature of all right religions is *"al-Islam"*, that wholly teaches submissive attitude toward God the Almighty. In the Holy Quran it is emphasized several times that the religions of the prophets before Muhammad all are *al-Islam* because all of them teach the submission to God. The differences of all religions are only found in the exoteric level, while the beginning of esoteric (spiritual) level is relatively the same.[34]

Principally, the concept of pluralism brought by JIL is the derivation from Madjid's concept. Ulil Abshar-Abdalla states that "The truth of God is greater than Islam itself as the religion of a social entity called Muslim. Islam is just a never ending 'process'. That is why he states that the verse *Inna al-dīna `inda Allāhi al-Islām* (the Qur'an 3:19) is more appropriate to be translated as "Surely the right way of religion is a never ending process to loyalty (for God Almighty)."

In his article published in daily newspaper *Kompas*,[35] Ulil discusses about pluralism. The article soon invited controversy among Muslim activists, including MUI. In that article Ulil writes the interpretation of the Qur'an (3: 19) which is different with the original translation issued in the Quran and by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which says, "Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam".

Budhy Munawar-Rahman, one of JIL contributors gives a legitimacy for 'the true of all religions' that the believers of all religions are deserved to be called 'men of the faith' which means 'men who are faithful and believe in God' because it is appropriate with the Qur'an (49: 10-12) stating that those believers are brothers having the same

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[33] Abdul Kadim Zallum, *Demokrasi Sistem Kufur* (Bogor: PTI, 2001), pp. 79-80.

[34] Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2000), pp. 425-441.

[35] Ulil Abshar Abdalla, "Menyegarkan Kembali Pemahaman Islam," *Kompas*, November 11, 2002.

faith. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the issue of pluralism in religions, a view believing those who have faith in whatever the religion is equal before Allah because our God is only one.[36]

Abdul Moqsith Ghazali, the current JIL coordinator, says that religious pluralism is absolute. Moqsith says, "Someone cannot be discriminated because he/she chooses a certain sect and interpretation in religion. Ministry of Religious Affairs is not allowed to intervene and make decision whether one interpretation and ritual act of worship is digressed or not. Someone cannot be treated as a criminal because of doing certain religious ritual but rather because that ritual contains a criminal action like violence which humiliates human value".[37]

Religious pluralism discourse is clearly refused by HTI activists. Ismail Yusanto explains pluralism as follow:

> Religious pluralism is an ideology which states that every religion is the same. Based on this ideology, every religion is only another way to the same truth. Therefore, the truth-claim from any religion which says that certain religion is the most truthful, and the truth salvation which believes that people can be saved from the torment in hellfire if they profess certain religion are not allowed. Based on this concept, the existing religions are only different ways to the same truth, thus, all religions will surely bring their believers to the heaven. Religious pluralism must be rejected because it is contradictory to the Islamic principles.[38]

Syamsuddin Ramadhan, the council of *Lajnah Thaqafiyyah* HTI, explains that pluralism is a deviating belief which is contradictory to the Islamic belief. Whoever admits a religion other than Islam or believes that Jews and Christians will enter the heaven, then he/she is apostate. Therefore, pluralism is forbidden for Muslims.

Based on the analysis above, JIL's idea that Islam is compatible with democracy strengthens the compatibility theory of democracy in Muslim society as proposed by John L. Esposito, John O. Voll, Robert N. Bellah, and Robert Hefner. On the contrary, the idea of HTI activists strengthens the essentialism approach, as espoused by

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[36] Budhy Munawar-Rahman in Adian Husaini et.al., *Membedah Islam Liberal* (Bandung: PT. Sanvil Cipta Media, 2003), p. 65.

[37] Abdul Moqsith Ghazali, "Pluralisme Agama di Indonesia: Masihkah Kita Berharap?, http://islamlib.com/id/artikel/pluralisme-agama-di-indonesia/, accessed in January 12, 2011.

[38] Interview with Ismail Yusanto on February 25, 2011.

Huntington, Kedourie, and Lewis who argue that Islam is not compatible with democracy. The view of essentialism about Islam is identical with Islamism and the opinion that Islamic politics is not in line with the democracy principles. The simple explanation about doctrine and the complex Islamic civilization as well as the ignorance of personal interpretation through the works of al-Nabhani and Zallum, only strengthen the opinion of essentialists.

In the perspective of critical discourse analysis (CDA), the conflict between JIL and HTI is affected by global context of Islamic thinking movement in other areas. The global context which affects JIL's way of thinking is democratization movement in the third world countries, like Africa. The African black people movement led by Farid Esack and the defense movement of minority performed by Abdullah Ahmed an-Na'im in Sudan indirectly gives support in the spirit of change in Indonesian Muslim. Esack's book entitled *Al-Qur'an and Pluralism* has been translated into Indonesian by Mizan publisher with the title *Al-Qur'an dan Pluralisme* (1998). This book explains the importance of perspective of freedom for minority (Islam) in non-Muslim countries. The work of an-Na'im entitled *Toward Islamic Law and Human Right* is translated into Indonesian by LKiS publisher with the title *Dekonstruksi Syariah*. It discusses the human rights in Islam and the needs of sharia reinterpretation in responding new era development. Those books have inspired Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, especially in 1990s because those books are used for references in Islamic discussions.

The global context which affects the emergence of HTI is a struggle which aims to awake Muslims from serious decadence, liberate them from the ideas, regulation and law system considered infidel, and liberate Muslims from the domination of infidel countries.[39] This movement is led by an-Nabhani and Zallum in Jordan as the center of Hizbut Tahrir. They want to uphold Islamic sharia and rebuild the Islamic caliphate. It is within such circumstances that ideas developed by the HTI activists are developed and constructed.

Conclusion

In regards to the debate on Islam and democracy in Indonesia, there are two different camps; the first camp argues that Islam totally

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[39] Some of the big events of HTI can be further read in *Mengenal Lebih Dekat Hizbut Tahrir* (Bogor: HTI, 2002), p. 35.

compatible with democracy, while the other one argues conversely. This depends on how Islam is constructed by its believers. JIL understands Islam rationally, substantively, and depends on the individual interpretation in contextualizing Islamic values in order to be relevant with modernity. HTI understands Islam as a way of life in its totality, which universally can be implemented on every condition, place and time. For HTI, it is not Islam which must follow the temporal development, but the temporal development must follow Islam.

According to JIL, Islam contains every element of modernity such as democracy, deliberation, consensus, justice, oath of office, different perception, freedom, equality and tolerance. Therefore, JIL maintains that Islam and democracy are compatible. This strengthens the theory discussed by John L. Esposito, John O. Volls and James P. Piscatori, and Robert Hefner. Meanwhile, genealogically, JIL's substantive Islamic view is greatly affected by neo-modernist Muslim figures such as Fazlur Rahman, Nurcholish Madjid, Harun Nasution, and Abdurrahman Wahid.

HTI refuses democracy which is believed to be derived from human's intelligence, while Islam comes from Allah's revelation. Based on this principle, democracy is also believed to contradict Islam because of these three things: 1) Sovereignty is in the hand of the people; 2) People as a source of authority; 3) Warranty of four freedoms: religion, opinion, ownership, and behavior. In Islam, according to HTI, sovereignty belongs only to Allah, not humans.

Genealogically, HTI's Islamic view is greatly affected by Islamic figures such as Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and especially Taqiyuddin al-Nabhani and Abdul Qadim Zallum. These Islamists try to present Islam as an ideology to replace the Western secularist ideology which is not relevant with Muslims' condition.

JIL's view which fully accepts democracy and HTI's view which is anti-democracy are clearly constructed by the condition of global, national, and internal dynamic of Indonesian Muslims. These three factors are considered dominant in the emergence and development of JIL and HTI's thinking. The elements contained in those three factors such as genealogy, social interaction, and education, play important roles in the growth of JIL's and HTI's thinking.

The reason behind the refusal of HTI toward democracy is the spirit to build Islamic sharia and *khilāfah*. These integral and

fundamental solutions aim to end the secularism system including liberal democracy believed by Muslims. According to HTI, Islamic sharia is not only for Muslims, but also for all human beings. Using sharia, non-Muslims' freedom in having religions and prayers will be more warranted.[40] HTI maintains that *khilāfah* system is the only solution to save Muslims from deterioration. In *khilafah* system, the leadership of Muslims in every area is put in one's hand. In other words, Muslims are united in one political leadership.[41] In this context, referring to the theory of Dekmejian and Esposito, HTI is the example of Islamic revivalism because it tries to rebuild the Islamic *khilafah* system which has been destroyed centuries ago.

Meanwhile, Islamic vision developed by JIL tries to unite the correlation of modern thinking with the religious argumentation. Islamic vision which is tried to be developed by JIL is Islam which is inclusive, tolerant, and contextual. Referring to the analysis of Kurzman,[42]-- liberal Islam as an analysis tool—JIL wants to relate the past and the present through reinterpretation so that Islam becomes a dynamic religion. As Muslims live in a dynamic situation, they need a new view or interpretation in seeing and understanding religion in order to make religion relevant to the modern world.[]

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[40] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[41] Deny Suito "*Demokrasi dan Romantisme Khilafah* http://www.cmm.or.id/cmm-ind_more.php?id=A2158_0_3_0_M accessed on October 21, 2010 and Farid Wadjdi "*Khilafah Vs Demokrasi*" http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id/2010/07/16/ khilafah-vs-demokrasi-2/ accessed on October 21, 2010.

[42] Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*, p. xiii.

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